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THE TEMPLE
OF HIS BODY

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GOOD FRIDAY ADDRESSES

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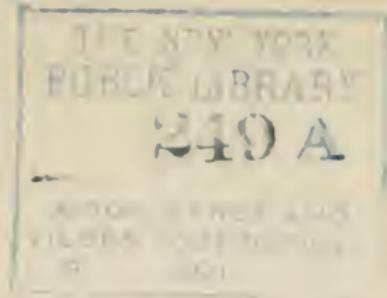
THE TEMPLE OF HIS BODY

BEING GOOD FRIDAY ADDRESSES ON THE SEVEN
WORDS FROM THE CROSS

BY
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PREFACE.

THESE Addresses embody the substance of the Good Friday Meditations given in the Church of the Ascension, Chicago, in 1904. They represent an attempt to draw somewhat away from the more subjective line of thought usual in Good Friday Addresses.

There is perhaps some ground for the question that is beginning to be asked, whether the growing popularity of the Three Hours' Service may not contain in itself the danger of substituting devotions mainly subjective in their character for the Liturgical Offices of the day? One may recognize this danger, and yet feel reluctant to discourage the use of a service which has done so much to impress the lessons of the Passion upon our people.

The Three Hours give to the pastor an opportunity which he must feel unwilling indeed to surrender. Not only is it an opportunity of bringing home to his own people the teaching of the Cross, on the day when all must be most disposed to listen to this teaching and to be moved by it; but of reaching many others less at home in the stated services of the Church who are drawn to these devotions and gladly take part in them. It may even be that a deference to this latter class is responsible for the subjective tone and somewhat indefinite character of addresses given in the Three Hours. Yet it would seem that the presence of so many who are unfamiliar with the distinctive teachings of the Church, ought rather to incite one so to preach Christ Crucified as, if possible, to win souls to the love of the Church which He purchased with His Blood.

The line of thought taken in these Addresses, The Temple of Our Lord's Body, seemed to lend itself to the twofold purpose of turning the mind, in the first place, away from self to the Person of our Lord; and secondly, while doing this, of keeping prominent the truth that He is now repre-

sented in the world by the Church which is His Mystical Body.

The Addresses are printed as a humble effort to do, what, when it shall be done successfully, will perhaps turn a threatened danger into a positive help. So far from detracting from the prescribed Offices of the Church, the Three Hours' devotion ought in the end to minister to them. The love and gratitude to the world's Redeemer which such a service fosters should lead to a deeper appreciation of the Church's Liturgical system, as well as to a worthier estimation of her Sacraments which were purchased at so great a Price.

INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS.

“He spake of the Temple of His Body” (St. John ii. 21).

As on this Good Friday we gather again, in the mercy of God, for our watch beneath the Cross, it will perhaps be helpful to follow in our meditations a line of thought suggested by words of our Lord, spoken at the very beginning of His public ministry, and never forgotten by the Jews: “Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”

It was on the occasion of the first cleansing of the Temple, recorded by St. John immediately after the narrative of the Marriage Feast in Cana, and following this “beginning of miracles” by the interval of only a few days.

“The Jews’ Passover was at hand, and Jesus

went up to Jerusalem, and found in the Temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: And when He had made a scourge of small cords, He drove them all out of the Temple, and the sheep and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; and said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not My Father's house an house of merchandise. And His disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of Thine house hath eaten Me up. Then answered the Jews, and said unto Him, What sign showest Thou unto us, seeing that Thou doest these things? Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this Temple in building, and wilt Thou rear it up in three days? But He spake of the Temple of His Body. When therefore He was risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this unto them; and they believed in the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had said" (St. John ii. 13-23).

The accusation made against our Lord in the

judgment hall of Pilate by false witnesses, who remembered, but perverted, His saying, "Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up," connects these words significantly with His Passion. But besides this, we recall the earlier events of this great week; the solemn entry of our Lord into the Temple on Palm Sunday, His revisiting it, and a second time cleansing it on Monday, His spending the whole of Tuesday within its precincts in teaching and in answering questions. Late in the afternoon of that day He left the Temple for the last time, and while the disciples spoke with admiration of the stones of which it was built, foretold its utter ruin. Later still, He surveyed it from the opposite slope of the Mount of Olives, and spoke of His final judgment and of the end of the world.

All these things connect the Temple, and therefore the analogy which our Lord borrows from it, very pointedly with His Cross.

As we dwell upon this analogy, other sayings of our Lord, or words spoken in Scripture concerning His Passion, recur to us with a new force. An example is that saying of the Psalms which

on this very occasion the disciples called to mind: "The zeal of Thine house hath eaten Me up." Like others who did not perceive the hidden reference of our Lord, they thought only of His zeal for the Temple of Israel, but how the prophecy grows in the depth of its significance as we apply it to the Temple of His Body: that Temple not made with hands, in which, for our sakes, He sanctified Himself!

It is in this Temple of His Humanity, "through the veil, that is to say, His Flesh" (Heb. x. 20), that our great High Priest by the way of His Passion is to enter the Holy of Holies, consummating the typical sacrifices of the ancient law, and making full atonement for the sins of the whole world.

We shall therefore try to use these most solemn hours in which we are gathered about the Cross of our Redeemer, in reverent and loving contemplation of the Temple of His Humanity. The sacred hands, the undefiled lips, the pure and holy eyes of Jesus seem in a manner to associate themselves respectively with the first three Words uttered on the Cross. Under the Fourth

Word, our hearts and minds will be directed to the contemplation of the sufferings endured by our Lord in His sinless soul. These words veil a deep mystery, into which we cannot enter, but as we stand without at the time of the Sacrifice, we may at least learn to sympathize more deeply with the unknown and unimagined sufferings of the Holy One. The Fifth Word may well be taken as putting before us all that the Temple of His Body had to bear in physical pain as the sinless Victim was made perfect through suffering. The Sixth Word, "It is finished," has its bearing upon the Eucharistic Sacrifice which in the spiritual Temple of the Catholic Church, the Mystical Body of Christ, perpetuates the Sacrifice of Calvary, and ever prevails through the merits of our Lord's accomplished work. The Seventh and last Word carries us into the Holy of Holies of our Lord's Spirit, which as the veil of the temple was rent, He commends into His Father's hands.

Thus listening to the dying words of our Redeemer, all the faculties of our soul may be riveted upon the Person of the Divine Sufferer. Surely it is in some such exercise as this that we

shall best employ these sacred and most precious moments. Other opportunities will recur throughout the year for merely moral reflections, practical and necessary as these are. But now we are at the death-bed of the Saviour of mankind, and our own best and dearest Friend. As we cherish the last precious moments of some earthly loved one, and watch the fleeting life before it goes forth, our last communings are not in the nature of consecutive and coherent words. It is through the silent pressure of the hand, the eager watching of the lips, the unspoken language of the eyes that we convey and receive the last messages of love. In like manner, but with infinitely greater tenderness and gratitude and love let us now take our place at the Cross of Jesus, and draw near to the Temple of His Body.

FIRST WORD.

“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”
(St. Luke xxiii. 34.)

THE SACRED HANDS.

OUR LORD has now traversed the Way of Sorrows. Calvary is reached, and the Cross is lifted from His shoulders and laid upon the ground. The air is rent with the din of angry shouts. The multitude is pressing upon Jesus. It is with difficulty that the Roman guard restrains the crowd and forces it back, as the soldiers demand space in which to execute their work. A clearing is made. The implements of crucifixion are collected and brought nearer. There is perhaps a sudden hush, as Jesus deliberately lays Himself down upon this hard bed upon which He is to die. Without a murmur He surrenders Himself into

the cruel hands of His executioners. He straightens His Body, as of His own act, upon the tree of shame, He places His Feet together upon the wood, and as giving Himself up for the sins of the whole world, extends His arms upon the breadth of the Cross.

Upon what now follows, we could not have borne to look; nor can we now, even in imagination, dwell upon its terrible details. The Roman soldiers have carried out their orders. The demand of the Jewish multitude in their cry of "Crucify," has been fulfilled. Jesus is nailed to the Cross.

It was probably during these first moments of the agony, and perhaps at the very instant when the blows were struck that nailed the sacred Hands to the Cross, that our Lord breathed forth the prayer: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

The prayer and this supreme act of surrender go together.

It is so that the Psalmist associates them: "Let my *prayer* be set forth in thy sight as the incense, and let the *lifting up of my hands* be an

evening sacrifice." And truly the word and the act are suited to each other. It is as if He said: "Behold, O Father, what I am receiving at the hands of men, yet look not upon it to take vengeance upon their deed, but to forgive this and every sin. They who do this with their cruel hands, know not what they do. But I know what I do, for I came to do Thy will, and therefore I lay My Hands upon this Cross, I stretch them out of My own free will, that receiving in them the price of sin, I may pay that price to Thee, and by the lifting up of My Hands make expiation for the sins of the whole world."

We must keep therefore in mind throughout all our watch by the Cross, the great truth that our Lord is here making expiation for sin. Reverently we have drawn near, that with hearts full of gratitude and love we may look upon Him "Who His Own Self bare our sins in His Own Body on the Tree" (I. St. Peter ii. 24). And as we connect these sayings from the Cross, with that other saying of our Lord, in which He likened His Body to the Temple, we shall be helped both to realize our need of His expiation, and to under-

stand better how perfectly He has met and satisfied that need. Our hands, our lips, our eyes are, as it were, the outer court of the temple of our bodies. It is through these principal gates of the senses that for good or evil, we have our conversation in the world, and are brought into contact with a multitude of human things both good and bad that throng about our life, and press within the avenues of our senses. It was in like manner that a promiscuous crowd habitually mingled within the outer court of the temple, and streamed back and forth through its gates, so that the worship was disturbed by the noise of the traffickers. Our Lord whose zeal twice purged His Father's House of this abuse, and which even went so far as to forbid that one should carry a vessel through the Temple, cannot be indifferent to what takes place in the temples of our bodies. In the Sermon on the Mount, words are spoken by Him which, as we listen to them, make us realize how strict is the scrutiny of His all-seeing eye. It is as if He entered these temples of ours, and, as once in the Temple of Jerusalem, paused and "looked round about upon all things" (St. Mark

xi. 11). As He does so, our eyes, our lips, our hands, all come under His scrutiny. He notes the words of our lips, and He who elsewhere warns us that "every idle word that men speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment" (St. Matt. xii. 36), admonishes us, "Let your communication be Yea, yea, Nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil" (St. Matt. v. 37). He looks into our eyes and notes whatever defiles them, or turns them away from God. "The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil thy whole body shall be full of darkness" (St. Matt. vi. 22). "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee" (St. Matt. v. 29).

And He looks also upon our hands.

Ah! there is One to whom our hands indeed reveal a history. Think of Jesus, as if taking your hand within His most pure and holy Hands, He said: "If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off and cast it from thee, for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and

not that thy whole body should be cast into hell” (St. Matt. v. 30).

As He now stretches forth these holy Hands of His upon the Cross, we are present to His Mind as truly as if for us alone all these sufferings were borne. All our misdeeds He foresaw. He beheld the long series of sinful acts which we should commit against His holy will. Nor was it only as far off that He knew them. He felt them as in their power to hurt they were made present by the hands of the wicked men into which He was contented to be betrayed, and whose work it was to nail Him to the Cross. Alas! with what awful fidelity our guilty hands were there represented. An officer of the Chief Priest with his hand struck Jesus, and others smote Him with the palms of their hands. Hands of men blindfolded Him, buffeted Him, entwined the crown of thorns and pressed it upon His Head, bound Him, scourged Him, led Him forth to Death, and, as we saw just now, nailed Him to the Cross. In every such act our sins were present. Our lust, our anger, our grasping selfishness, were all there, and the malice

of our sin was felt in the wounds inflicted in the sinless holy Hands of the Son of God.

And yet it was for this He came. Long before this, His Voice had spoken through the Prophet Isaiah: "Can a woman forget her sucking child that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, she may forget, yet will I not forget thee." And then, as the proof of that love which time should reveal, "Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My Hands" (Isaiah xlix. 15, 16). He had looked upon the flood of sin increasing upon the earth, and overwhelming in its tide such multitudes of men, and had foretold the salvation His Cross should bring: "He shall spread out His Hands in the midst of them as He that spreadeth out His Hands to swim" (Isaiah xxv. 11). He had anticipated the surprise with which men should behold the strange contradiction of the Cross, "One shall say unto Him, What are these wounds in Thine Hands? Then shall He answer, Those with which I was wounded in the House of My friends" (Zech. xiii. 6).

As then we behold Him on the Cross, where

our sins have nailed Him, let us consider wherein lies the efficacy of this perfect Sacrifice, and how it is that these Hands have made Atonement for the sins of the world.

First, He who bears this punishment is Himself innocent. The Hands laid upon the Cross for us are unstained by any touch of sin. The earthly priest before going to the altar has need to wash his hands in token of his sense of defilement, and of his need of cleansing before he presumes to handle holy things. "I will wash my hands in innocency and so will I go to Thine Altar" (Psalm xxvi. 6). But the great High Priest who here goes up to the Altar of the Cross, needs for Himself no cleansing. He who ascends the hill of the Lord, who shall afterwards, His Sacrifice completed, rise up to intercede for us in the Holy Place, has the clean Hands and the pure Heart of the God-Man.

These holy and venerable Hands now made fast upon the wood, never offended. Instruments of His mercy as He stretched them forth in the days of His ministry in healing and blessing upon the sick and afflicted, their last work for us

is to suffer without resistance during these hours of the Passion, that so they may be stretched forth for evermore in mercy and forgiveness upon all who turn to Him for pardon.

But what is chiefly to be remembered, since everything depends upon this, they are the Hands of God. "The hand of the Lord." How often is the expression used in Holy Scripture! These are the Hands that created the world. And yet their work in creation was not so wonderful as their work here. It cost these Hands no effort to make the world, but what do they not suffer in order to redeem it! It was by these Hands that the Almighty showed His wonders of old, when He redeemed His people Israel leading them through the Red Sea and through the wilderness and with His mighty Hand and His stretched-out Arm brought them into their inheritance. In these Hands "He bare them and He carried them all the days of old" (Isaiah lxiii. 9). Be it remembered, then, that no mere creature, however exalted, or however holy, could have wrought salvation for us. He who suffered on the Cross, though He suffered in man's nature, was not a

human person, but the Person of the Son of God in human flesh. By sharing man's nature, He is able to suffer for man, and by laying human Hands upon the Tree of the Cross to atone for the transgression which began when in Eden human hands reached forth in disobedience upon the forbidden tree. But while He suffers as Man, it is His true Godhead which gives efficacy to His Atonement, and obtains the answer to His prayer: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Our watch by the Cross to-day should tighten our grasp upon the blessed truth of our Lord's Atonement for sin. While the world goes on its way, boasting its progress, and making light of its sin, God forbid that we should glory save in the Cross of Christ. We have a double reason for spending these hours beneath the Cross. For, first, what the Son of God, the Holy, the Innocent, the undefiled here suffers, He suffers at our hands. This is the Prince of Glory whom we, by wicked hands have crucified and slain. We come to lament the work of our hands, as with the sons of Jacob, we confess, "We are verily guilty concern-

ing our Brother" (Gen. xlii. 21). But O, thanks be to His infinite mercy and love, there is another reason. The injuries He receives from us, consecrated by the touch of His sacred Hands, are turned by Him into blessing. The cruel sufferings our sins have inflicted upon His sacred Humanity, the Power of His Godhead applies to the Salvation of our souls. Truly He could say, "They know not what they do." They know not the wrong they inflict upon Me. They know not the miracle of My love, the chief manifestation of My power in turning even this into their deliverance from sin.

SECOND WORD.

“Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise” (St. Luke xxiii. 43).

THE LIPS OF TRUTH.

THE Cross, with its precious weight, has been raised into its place. Jesus is now lifted up and exposed to the gaze of the multitude. It was the occasion of a fresh outburst of calumnies.

“Then were there two thieves crucified with Him, the one on the right hand, and the other on the left. And they that passed by railed on Him, wagging their heads and saying, Thou that destroyest the temple and buildest it in three days, save Thyself. If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the Cross; Likewise also the chief priests mocking Him with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others, Himself He cannot save.

If He be the King of Israel, let Him come down from the Cross, and we will believe Him: for He said I am the Son of God. The thieves also that were crucified with Him, cast the same in His teeth" (St. Matt. xxvii. 39-45).

The "verily I say," with which our Lord introduces this second utterance from the Cross, calls attention to the Person and to the authority of Him who speaks, and thus throws into bolder relief the contrast between His most pure and holy lips, and those words of blasphemy and falsehood which the lips of wicked men were uttering against Him. As then we behold Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, it is as the Word of God, Truth Incarnate that we contemplate Him. We mark the movement of these dying lips, drawn with pain and pallid from loss of blood, as they bestow upon penitence the gracious promise of this Word, and we reflect that they are the lips of Truth, nay of the Truth itself and of the eternal Wisdom of God. All that was ever spoken of old in the revelation of the mind of God, through the Scriptures and the Prophets, was the utterance of these lips, the lips

of Him who is by nature the Word of God. "The lip of truth," says the Proverb, "shall be established forever" (Prov. xii. 19), and these lips themselves have said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My Word shall not pass away" (St. Matt. v. 35). And again, the Proverb says, "A divine sentence is in the lips of the king" (Prov. xvi. 10). But this is the King of kings whose sentence shall be pronounced upon all men at the last great day.

It is in the light of this consideration that we must weigh what Jesus suffered and still suffers from the lips of men. Our evil words, however uttered, and to whomsoever addressed, are in reality directed against the Person of Christ. The wrong they inflict upon ourselves, and the injury they work upon our neighbor, are nothing compared with this, that they contradict Him who is the Eternal Truth. In our falsehoods, our irreverent speech, our unseemly conversation, we take up the calumnies and contradictions of the jeering multitude about the Cross, and we, like the thieves, "cast the same in His teeth."

Yet think of the patience with which the Word

of God Himself submits to this outrage: before Pilate, silent; before Herod, silent; before false accusers, answering never a word. O the mystery of that condescension, in which Truth Eternal submits in silence to be thrice denied by St. Peter, to bear with the "Hail, Master," of Judas, as the traitor's lips are pressed against His cheek, to be examined by the High Priest, to be made to listen to the mockery of the soldiers as in the early morning of this day, to be impudently questioned by Herod, to be asked by Pilate, "What is Truth?" to accept without question the sentence of His unjust condemnation which the clamor of the angry multitude have exacted from a cowardly judge.

Let us look into that Face, and as we consider those lips so accustomed to silence under wrong, let us mark how He makes reparation for our sins of speech. "Woe is me, for I am undone because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips" (Isaiah vi. 5). O Jesus, patient and silent under wrong, be Thou the atonement for my sins of word.

And now let us consider the legacy which the lips of Jesus have left us. The Gospel contains

the record not only of His works, but of the words of Him who spake as never man spake. At the very beginning of His public life, immediately after the temptation in the wilderness, He goes to His own city, Nazareth, and in the synagogue, standing up to read, finds that place where it is written in the Prophet Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor, He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord" (St. Luke iv. 18). And then, as sitting down, He applied this prophecy to Himself; all bare Him witness and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. As He began His earthly ministry, so now with like gracious words He is closing it. Let us then, in this solemn hour, call to memory all the holy doctrines which He taught; the sublime precepts of the Sermon on the Mount, the inexhaustible treasures of the Parables, the simplicity of that wisdom in which He gave meek answer to His adversaries, and laid

bare their hypocrisy, the woes spoken in sternness, yet in merciful warning against Scribe and Pharisee, the love in which He shrank not from declaring the eternal punishment which must overtake the impenitent, all the high discourse concerning the Kingdom of God, and the unflinching and uncompromising enunciation of the nature and the necessity of those Sacraments without which we have no union with Him, and through which alone we can share in His victory over death, and be made partakers of His everlasting life.

Truly was it said, "Never man spake like this man" (St. John vii. 46), nor is it wonderful that outside the pale of the Church, and even outside the number of those who call themselves by the Christian name, the world itself recognizes in Jesus the greatest and the most sublime of all teachers, the supreme Master of the spiritual life, who while He could challenge the world to convict Him of the slightest moral fault, is still for mankind at large the only perfect model, the only infallible interpreter of conscience.

Yet how much more is Christ than this!

Great as is this Teacher, if He were no more than a teacher, the words here spoken to the dying thief would have left him uncomforted, unabsolved. Let us put ourselves in the place of this penitent as St. Luke brings the scene before us.

“And one of the malefactors railed on Him, saying, if Thou be the Christ, save Thyself and us, but the other answering, rebuked him, saying, dost thou not fear God ; seeing thou art in the same condemnation, and we indeed justly for we receive the due reward of our deeds, but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise” (St. Luke xxiii. 39-44).

To this man, knowing his death to be so near, his conscience now aroused so that he sees his sins and the wretchedness of his wasted life, something more is needed than moral teaching, even though it were the most sublime that lips of man could utter. Does he not confess it ? “Lord, remember me,” is his prayer. But what mere man could have met this need ? Which one of all the world’s

teachers could have given the definite assurance spoken by Christ: "Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise"?

Let us note well, for everything turns upon this, the difference between Christ and every other teacher. Others were at best seekers after Truth. Christ is the Truth. Others professed themselves learners of a truth greater than themselves. Christ proclaims Himself the way, the truth, and the life. Others proclaimed a message. Christ proclaims His own Person. It is because Christ is His own message that the dying thief finds in Him all that he needs. His prayer is not, "Master, instruct me," but, "Lord, remember me." What he craves is a relationship to the Person of Christ which shall abide to his endless happiness in a Kingdom never to be destroyed.

And how completely this prayer is answered. For, first, there is no place left for doubt or misgiving, but the promise is made to rest upon the authority of His Godhead: "Verily, I say." It is not general, but definite and particular: "I say unto *thee*." It is not a remote prospect, a vague and distant hope: "*To-day*" it shall be fulfilled.

It is not, finally, the mere sharing in the good things of His Kingdom, but it is a personal union with Himself: "thou shalt be *with Me.*" The authority of God, the power of God, the love of God, are all declared in this brief Word.

As we note, then, these words of authority which fall from the dying lips of Jesus, let us weigh well the difference between merely hearing about the Truth, and being brought, as was the penitent thief, under its power. "The Voice of the Lord is mighty in operation" (Psalm xxix. 4). That Voice, through which creation itself sprang into being, is still active and operative. It lives on in the Sacraments which it has created, and through which, by the power of the Holy Ghost, Jesus works the marvels of His will. It is one thing to hear, as the Jews of old heard through the lips of their prophets, revelations concerning the power of Christ; it is another, and an infinitely greater to be brought into contact with that power as Christ Himself speaks His word of authority. Surely there is but one attitude for us sinners to-day, and that is the attitude in which we place ourselves by the side of the penitent thief,

and make his prayer our own. As we take this position in lowly penitence, who but must long for a word from the Crucified, bringing to the soul the like definite and personal assurance to that which He granted to this penitent at the Cross? O perhaps to someone here there comes to-day, for the first time, the knowledge of this priceless legacy of our Saviour's authoritative word, still living, still operative through the ministry of His Church. What will be the joy of such an one if before the Easter dawn, nay, if "to-day" the word of pardon such as that which gladdened the penitent thief shall be his. And why should not this be? No sins are too great for this absolving word. They were His own lips which said: "Whosoever sins ye remit they are remitted." O blessed word of reconciliation, word of deliverance, word of power! O precious word "I absolve thee," whose efficacy is in the Blood of Jesus Christ! "O great and wonderful Sacrament of pardon! What marvels hast thou wrought, what evils rooted out, what good things planted in their place! What wondrous changes dost thou work! The lost thou recoverest, the

diseased thou healest, the dead thou quickenest, thou restorest all things! O word of pardon, winning back the favor of God, wiping out debts, adorning the mind, treasuring merit, dispensing peace, yielding the increase of glory! Of sinners thou makest saints, entwining their crowns, and placing palms in their hands! O Jesu, Saviour of the perishing, Captain who leadest back the erring, how tender and how mighty Thou art while working these marvels in the most holy laver of Thy Blood!"

THIRD WORD.

“Woman, behold thy son! Behold thy Mother!”
(St. John xix. 26, 27.)

THE ALL-SEEING EYES.

UP to this moment what a succession of sad and sorrowful sights had confronted our Lord. The senses have been called the gateways of the soul, and through this gateway of the eyes there had pressed upon His heart every spectacle of sin that could afflict and weigh down His pure and sinless soul.

As we meditate upon the sad and patient eyes of Jesus, weary with looking upon sin, let us remember that though now humbled and made ashamed for us, they are in truth the eyes of the Lord which are in every place, beholding the evil and the good. St. John, who alone records this

Word from the Cross, was afterwards to behold these eyes as flames of fire; and as he tells us in the Revelation, to fall at His feet as dead.

Yet now they have their sad share in the humiliation and suffering of His Passion. Earlier this morning these eyes which search every heart, and are to try all men at the last, were made to look for the first time upon the actual implements of the Passion. They rested upon the scourge as it hung idle in the hands of a soldier, and studied the cruel ingenuity of which He knew He was to make trial in streams of His Blood. They looked steadily at the Cross, as the actual instrument of the Passion was first brought to His view, all unstained as yet with His Blood, and He weighed in His perfect foreknowledge the suffering it should exact from His sinless Flesh. "Instruments of cruelty are in their hands," and as these tender and loving eyes make acquaintance with them, one by one, He reads in each the ingratitude of His chosen people, and of us who have joined with them in preparing a Cross for our Saviour.

Through the constantly changing scenes of last

night and this morning He has been led from place to place, and as one, and then another of the principal figures in the Passion has passed before Him, His eyes have looked into each face, and have pierced down through every deceit to read the very secrets of the heart. Everywhere He has encountered the enmity and the malice of sin. Before these meek and patient eyes pass in turn the pride and arrogancy of the Chief Priests, the envy and craftiness of the Scribes and Pharisees, the moral cowardice of Pilate, the sensuality of Herod.

And now, as He hangs uplifted what does He behold in that sea of upturned faces? Men are critically reading the title on the Cross, or noting with heartless unconcern the lingering torture of Crucifixion. The words of the Psalm are the voicing of His complaint: "They stand staring and looking upon Me" (Psalm xxii. 17). Pride and hatred, envy and malice, lustful greed, and cruel sensuality are all gathered here. "Many oxen are come about Me, fat bulls of Basan close Me in on every side" (Psalm xxii. 12).

As Noah looked forth from the Ark upon the flood, and gazed afar upon the waste of waters

that had overwhelmed the world in its sin, so our Lord looks down from the Cross upon the angry multitude which gathers up and exhibits before Him every type of wickedness and makes manifest the malice of that world-wide, age-long torrent of sin which He had come to atone. But yet again, as from the waters of the Flood, the dove afterwards brought back to Noah the olive leaf plucked off, the pledge of safety, the promise of peace, so with this third Word, there emerges as it were from the deluge of sin which surges around the Cross, the form of our Lord's Blessed Mother, the promise of a restored world, the earnest of a new heaven and a new earth.

“Now there stood by the Cross of Jesus His Mother, and His Mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas and Mary Magdalene; when Jesus therefore saw His Mother, and the disciple standing by whom He loved, He saith unto His Mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith He to the disciple, Behold thy Mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home” (St. John xix. 25-28).

“When Jesus therefore *saw* His Mother.” O

how gladly we turn from the thought of the sin which the eyes of Jesus here encountered, to their resting for a time in the contemplation of His Blessed Mother! True, there is a sense in which the meeting of the eyes of Jesus and those of Mary meant for them both a keener and deeper pang of suffering, as in that bond of love which bound together the immaculate Mother and her Divine Son, He suffered in her, and she in Him. Yet we listen to the brief narrative which accompanies this Word with a sense of relief and of holy comfort. For here, the suffering however great, is a suffering born of sympathy and love, and the love which begets the suffering remains as its consolation. And how patient have been these eyes which now turn toward her whom He loves as son never before loved mother! He has prayed first for His murderers, then He has pardoned and consoled the penitent, and last of all He searches out His nearest and dearest. And in all it is as ever looking unto His Father, and as fulfilling His will. "I have been left unto Thee ever since I was born: Thou art He that took Me from My mother's womb" (Psalm xxii. 10).

And on Mary's part, how had she waited for this moment, and for the word addressed to her! Is there not a lesson here for those called into special nearness to God, that like the Blessed Virgin and St. John they may value above their own spiritual consolation the work that Jesus does for those in special and urgent need of mercy and forgiveness? How in St. John's simple narrative is it assumed, as a matter of course, that Jesus must first minister to the needs of men, who, as the world would say, had no claim upon Him, before He turns with this assurance of love and His word of consolation to those nearest to Him. "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

We may not fathom the mystery of that communion in which the eyes of Jesus and of His Mother meet, a communion too deep for words. From those earliest years in Nazareth it must have been thus that Mother and Son held communion together, as heart spoke to heart in a depth of spiritual understanding for the utterance of which words would be at once unnecessary and inadequate. How few are the recorded words of

Jesus to His Mother; while of Mary's words after her Magnificat, we have almost none. But from the time that as a little Babe He lay in her arms, and His eyes looked up into hers, what communings were theirs, and what depths of understanding.

It is nothing strange, then, that here also it should be less by spoken words than by His look that our Lord addresses His mother. As interpreted in that look there is no lack of endearment in the term "Woman." It may be that He would spare her the suffering which the use of the more tender word Mother would have involved at such a time, and there seems to be a purpose in our Lord's reserving this term to express her new relation to St. John and through him to His whole Church. Certain it is that the title "Woman" recalls to her mind, as no other word could have done, the glory and dignity of her vocation. At least once before, at the marriage feast in Cana, He had used this term in addressing her, and by using it had pointed forward to this hour when He should no longer say, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" (St. John ii. 4); but, His hour having now

come for the making perfect His Sacrifice, should call upon her to take her part with Him, and to unite her will to His in the oblation He would make. How in this word must she have recalled Cana, and how must the title "Woman" have summoned her to that supreme surrender in which even this holiest and dearest of all earthly ties should be swallowed up in that holier relation still, as she unites her will to His in the Sacrifice He offers for the sins of the world.

And further back still her memory must have gone to that moment when, after losing the joy of her eyes, she had found Him after three days in the Temple. O the gladness of beholding Him, and the love with which His eyes had then met hers after this first separation between them! But now as these same eyes look upon her from the Cross, with what new depth of meaning is borne upon her memory the saying of Jesus when but twelve years old, "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" Yes, this is that business, for which even then He was preparing both Himself and her. How mercifully had His loving Providence led her on, that parting with

Him willingly at the Cross she may find Him on the third day in the Temple of His Risen Body.

And then her memory goes back to the sacred Infancy of her Son and Lord. She remembers how she had had her part to fulfil as in her arms He was carried to the Temple, there to be offered in His Father's House. The suffering of this present hour is only in fulfilment of what she then undertook when so long ago she had given Him back to God. How had this lesson, that what God gives is in order to sacrifice, been impressed upon her from the beginning! When He was but eight days old she had learned it in the shedding of the first drops of His precious Blood. And now, as in the completion of His Sacrifice, He is shedding the last drops of that Blood, she learns at once the unity of His work, and the consistency of that vocation which has bound up her life with His. Simeon's prophecy of the sword that should pierce her own heart also, is remembered with deep inward exultation, as she realizes now its fulfilment in a suffering which binds her indissolubly to her Divine Son.

It is with His eyes, even more than with His

lips that our Lord addresses His beloved Disciple. He does not here call that disciple by name. St. John marks the movement by which the eyes of Jesus turn from His Mother to rest upon him. "Woman, behold thy son," He had said; and then looking into the eyes of His disciple, but without addressing him by name, "Behold thy mother." "I will guide thee with Mine eye." Those who live close to God are directed and ruled wonderfully and secretly by His Holy Spirit. Our Lord has purposes for us which it is His will we should learn without their distinct enunciation by a word of command; but as we grow more and more into the knowledge of His will through the sacramental life. "If it were not so I would not have told you" (St. John xiv. 2). It is St. John himself who tells us, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." "The anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you, but as that same anointing teacheth you all things, and is truth and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you ye shall abide in Him" (I. St. John ii. 20, 27).

And now let us consider what it is that Jesus here accomplishes. He draws the eyes of His Mother and of this disciple to Himself to meet His gaze, and then He bids them turn their eyes upon each other. "Behold thy son: Behold thy mother." He is teaching us that in every tie of kindred, and in every bond of holy friendship we are to see Him. Our loved ones are His gift to us. The loved ones who received and sheltered us when we came helpless into the world, and every pure friendship which has come into our lives since, are alike from Him. And as they came from Him so are they meant to lead back to Him. O how blessed and happy may such ties become if this is remembered, and if we let Him hallow them and consecrate them to Himself as He offers to do. As at Cana He changed the water into wine, so will He, as we ask His blessing on those ties of kindred or friendship which we cherish in His fear and love, change what is weak and unstable into the wine of His grace, purifying, strengthening, and consecrating forever the ties which bind us to each other in Him.

To-day, then, as we behold Him, Mary's Son,

and the Son of God, in the midst of mortal agony, consoling His Blessed Mother and His beloved disciple, let us commend to Him our loved ones. Let our gratitude ascend to Him for every gift of love with which He has enriched our lives. May His Presence and His grace guard us from all selfishness, teach us the beauty of self-sacrifice, and enable us to fulfil every responsibility to which He has annexed the consolations of earthly friendship. And so as we have received these dear ones from Him, may we love them in Him and for Him, and may we with perfect resignation, whenever He may require it, surrender them back to Him.

And then shall we not see in this bond created at the Cross between the Blessed Mother and St. John the beginning and the ideal of the Communion of Saints? In that wider fellowship which binds together in one all the people of God, here is the pattern from which we are to learn. He who looks from the Cross upon His loved ones and bids them look upon each other, is the Center and the Source of the Communion of Saints. Let us not fear to enjoy what He has blessed. Death

does not interrupt this communion, for He who established it has Himself triumphed over death. He would have us remember our blessed departed. He loves to hear the prayers which witness to the enduring after death of the ties which He created, and has promised to bless. And in regard to those holy ones, His blessed saints now glorified and in His Presence, His will is that we should turn our eyes often upon them. Since communion with them honors His victory over death, and since we cannot speak to them without speaking of Him, He would leave us free in this blessed intercourse. As bound to Him, we are bound to each other in the fellowship of Saints. In giving His Blessed Mother to St. John, He gave her to us all, and has charged her to remember us with more than mother's love. For each of us He said, "Woman, behold thy son," and to each of us His eye is turned as He adds, "Behold thy mother."

FOURTH WORD.

“My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?”
(St. Matt. xxvii. 46.)

THE SINLESS SOUL.

THE three sayings of our Lord that have now been considered were spoken at intervals in the earlier moments of the Saviour's Agony. Those which follow must have been uttered almost consecutively at its very close. There would thus be a long period of silence, as far as any recorded word of our Lord is concerned, between these earlier and later utterances, and as we compare these sayings themselves we notice a marked difference in the character and purpose of the two groups into which they fall.

In the earlier words we see our Lord actively ministering to others. His own sufferings are

kept in the background while He intercedes for His murderers, pardons the penitent thief, consoles His Blessed Mother and St. John. These sayings show us the Tree of Life in the fruitage of its actual graces, the medicine of those leaves which are "for the healing of the nations" (Rev. xxii. 2). But in the later words, beginning with this upon which we are now to meditate, our Lord speaks of Himself. His last special offices for others are over. His Blessed Mother, it has been thought, had now been taken by St. John away from the scene of the Passion. Our Lord, as far as we are told, gives no further word of recognition to those about the Cross, but as He retires into the depths of His Passion He invites the world to the contemplation of His suffering. In His remaining words He speaks of the sorrow of His Soul, the suffering of His Body, the consummation of His work, the surrender of His Spirit. Here we are viewing the Cross on its passive side while its Divine Victim appeals to us in words like to those in which the prophet Jeremiah foretold the Passion. "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold and see if there be any sorrow

like unto My sorrow which is done unto Me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted Me in His fierce anger" (Lam. i. 12).

And so, if we keep to the analogy which we have chosen as a guide to our thoughts to-day, we have in our considerations thus far been lingering in the outer courts of the Temple of our Lord's sacred Humanity.

But, as in the temple of the Jews, a veil separated the outer court from the Holy Place into which the Priest alone could enter, so here our Lord retires within the secret solitude of His Soul, and as He passes within the veil of His unknown sufferings leaves us as it were standing without, and unable to follow Him. So Zacharias the Priest went within the veil at the time of the offering of the incense, and the people stood without, waiting for his return. Or as when one we love is borne away from us in the vessel that is to carry him across the seas: the last handclasp is over, the last words are exchanged as the vessel slowly moves from its dock, our eyes are strained to catch one more sight of the loved face as the ship now glides into the stream, and then it passes

on its way, and leaves us with only the treasures of our memory.

Here, then, in this strange cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" our Lord is shrouded as it were from our sight, by a darkness like that which ere this Word was spoken, had come up over all the land, as if nature herself would remind us of the veil of mystery beyond which we may not venture to pass.

It is enough for us to know that our Lord goes behind this veil for us, as our great High Priest to carry to completion the work of His Atonement. He is the great Minister of the Sanctuary who at the beginning of His Office has been looking toward the people, but now turns His Face toward the Altar of His Sacrifice, and lifts up His Hands in silence to God. Thus it is in the Celebration of those Holy Mysteries which perpetuate the memorial of this Sacrifice. We listen first to those portions of the Liturgy which are addressed to the people for their instruction and preparation, and then the Priest begins the solemn Action itself in which is mystically shown forth the Lord's Death, for the pleading of His Sacrifice, and

which accomplished, He again lifts up His voice in an ascription of praise to God. So, in the midst of the supernatural darkness enveloping the Cross, our Lord has long been suffering in silence, accomplishing in the agony of His Soul His all-atoning Sacrifice. Then, as the Sacrifice is finished, He utters this cry to God, and of what has taken place we learn what little we can understand only when all is over.

What then may we, without presumption, seek to gather from this word?

First, let it be said, that these words are not to be taken in a strictly literal sense. In the truest sense it was impossible for God to forsake Him who is ever the Son of God, as the Father is ever the Father. In that perfect union whereby in the mystery of the Holy Trinity the Father and the Son are, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, One Essence, there could not, of course, be a moment's breach. Nor could our Lord's Manhood be separated from His Godhead for the twinkling of an eye. Men in their false systems of religious thought have imported into the doctrine of the Atonement a sort of antagonism between the Di-

vine Persons of the Holy Trinity, as if on one hand our Lord did not share the Father's righteous indignation against sin, and would be less strict than the Father to exact the full penalty due to man's transgression; and as if, on the other hand the Eternal Father who in His infinite love for mankind freely gave His only Begotten Son, could not share that tenderness for man which made it the joy of the Son to seek and to save that which is lost. It were a strange way to approach the doctrine of the Atonement, the *At-one-ment*, to begin by imagining discord in the councils of the Godhead Itself, as if there were disagreement between the Persons of the Blessed Trinity on the subject of man's fall.

Certainly these words do not mean that our Lord was deprived of that which belongs to Him by Nature as the Son of God. They do not mean that either as God or as man He forfeited for an instant His Father's love. When men have gone so far as to say not only that our Lord was literally God-forsaken, but that He was the only human being who ever was God-forsaken, we see the need of holding fast the well-known definitions

of Faith which protect the Catholic Doctrine of God.

As to the meaning, then, of these words, it will help us if we remember that our Lord is quoting them exactly as they stand at the beginning of the Twenty-second Psalm. Not only are the Psalms like the rest of the Holy Scriptures, His own Word, but by His use of them both in the regular course of the Jewish Services, and in His own solitary communings with God, they are interwoven into every scene of His earthly life. While undoubtedly the whole Psalter was thus constantly on His lips, it is evident that there are many expressions in the Psalms which would be inappropriate in the mouth of our Lord, if He spoke of Himself apart from His relation to us. In what sense, for example, could He use the Penitential Psalms? How could He say, "Behold I was shapen in wickedness, and in sin hath my mother conceived me"? (Psalm li. 5).

The answer is, that our Lord made Himself one with us, in order to do penance for our sins; and moreover He was by a Sacramental union so to incorporate us into Himself, that we should be

made one with Him. Thus, taking upon Him the burden of our sin, He speaks as our Mouthpiece. In the words just quoted, He who is Himself sinless, takes upon Him the confession of our defilement from our very birth. So it is in all the expressions of deep penitence of which the Psalms are full, and which are of course inapplicable to our Lord's sinless Humanity. And it is the same here. In this cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" our Lord is *precenting*, as it were, for His whole Church this Twenty-second Psalm. He, the sinless, has identified Himself with the sinful. "He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin" (II. Cor. v. 21). He whose Humanity was bathed constantly in the radiance of the Godhead from which it could not be separated, speaks in behalf of us whom He has made His brethren, and to whom the words of Isaiah apply, "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you that He will not hear" (Isaiah lix. 2).

Ah, no! It is precisely because He is ever One with God, because He never could, in a lit-

eral sense, be forsaken of God, that He was able to make perfect this Atonement for us. While, then, we may not penetrate the mystery of this Word, or fathom the suffering which lies beneath it, we know that one chief part of our Lord's work was to do penance for our sin. Now the first part of penance is to take the measure of sin, to see it in its true light, to lay it bare in all its shameful outrage upon the Father's love. No one of us, no mere man could possibly make this estimate of sin; partly because one effect of our being conceived in sin and shapen in iniquity is to render us blind to the very nature of the malady, and further, because we do not know, and never can fully know, what that love is against which we have sinned. There has been but one Human Heart that could feel the full enormity of man's sin, and adequately suffer for it, and that is the Heart which, while it bore upon the Cross the conscious weight of the sins of the whole world, was not forsaken by the Father, but was pressed close to His Bosom that as it was enfolded in the Father's love, it might measure the ingratitude of the sin by which that love is rejected.

Yes, we must indeed stand without the veil. For who of all flesh may accompany Him as He enters into His own Heart, as He fathoms the depths of His own Soul, and with full knowledge of all the sins which needed, or should need, His Atonement, bears their weight in a Soul which from the moment of its creation was united to the Godhead. "I have trodden the wine-press Alone, and of the people there was none with Me" (Isaiah lxiii. 3).

And yet our sins were there, yours and mine; the sins which eyes have seen, the sins which no eye but God's has witnessed; the sins of thought, the sins of word, the sins of deed, the sins of omission, the sins for which we make such poor and inadequate repentance, all were there. And while He made for them such full and perfect satisfaction, He felt the shame, and the humiliation, and the sorrow which is their due, and which, alas! in our blindness and insensibility we cannot feel.

One part of Repentance is Confession. But Confession implies more than the bare enumeration of our sins, however truthful and exact this

may be. It should be accompanied by a keen sense of shame for the guilt incurred, and by a loving sorrow for having offended God. As a matter of fact, a good Confession usually both quickens our perception of the evil of sin, and increases that genuine sorrow which flows from the love of God. Yet confessions may be made formally and mechanically, with little either of love or of sorrow. There is an anxiety sometimes to spare one's self that sense of shame and that confusion of face which sin has so justly deserved, and which it is the very purpose of Confession to intensify, and there may be the temptation to glide rapidly over matters that call for the deepest penitence, perhaps even putting a better face on their statement than is quite consistent with truth. But even when there is no intentional fault or omission, how poor at best must be our confessions of sin! How little we realize the love that has been outraged, or the cost at which our pardon was bought with the precious Blood of the Son of God! Now it is to supply this lack on our part, that our Lord suffers here an intolerable sense of shame, as He feels the weight of our sins as if they were

His own. He is making our general Confession for us, forgetting nothing, leaving out nothing, slurring over nothing; but fully, and with all the circumstances that aggravated the sin, taking the shame upon Himself.

As we listen then to that heart-breaking cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" let us think of Him as having made with broken and penitent heart for each one of us the full confession of our sins, so many of which we have forgotten or never knew; and since we who were once afar off are now, by the Blood of His Covenant, made nigh to God, pray we that He will never forsake us, or suffer us to be separated from Him.

FIFTH WORD.

“I thirst” (St. John xix. 28).

THE SUFFERING BODY.

IN THE Word last considered we were left, as we saw, standing without the Holy Place, within which our Lord had passed to endure in solitude the unimagined suffering of His sinless Soul. But while we have stood in reverent wonder before that mystery in which His Soul was made an offering for sin, the sacred Body has still hung in silent agony upon the Cross. Unable to penetrate the mystery of the great interior sorrow of the Passion, our eyes rest again upon the sacred Form which, pallid and white, stands out against the clouds of the now retreating darkness. In all that has taken place within the hidden chambers of the Soul, the physical sufferings of the

Passion have not abated. Their very climax is reached in the agony of thirst to which the fever of His Wounds, and the awful weariness of the Cross have reduced Him. The thirst of the Passion follows as of necessity upon the Passion's immeasurable expenditure. Our Lord had spent all that He had. He is shedding now the last drops of His Blood. In the pouring out of His love for us, He thirsts for the requital of that love. "I am poured out like water, all my bones are out of joint. My heart also in the midst of My Body is even like melting wax. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and Thou shalt bring Me into the dust of death" (Psalm xxii. 14, 15).

A prophecy in the Sixty-ninth Psalm had spoken of vinegar being given Him to drink in this hour of His humiliation. As if to invite its fulfilment, Jesus utters these words, "I thirst"; and one of the soldiers made haste, and dipping a sponge in a vessel of sour wine, he raises it upon the stem of hyssop to our Saviour's lips. It is suggestive that this saying of our Lord, like the preceding one which it has quickly followed, is connected with a prophecy of the Psalms. Spoken

thus together after a long period of silent suffering, these two sayings sum up better than other words could, the double agony of Mind and Body which our Lord had to feel. And in both sayings He is applying the measuring rod of the Cross. We have seen Him applying it to the dimensions of man's sin in its outrage against God. In this Word He applies it as the measure of God's love to the sinner. We cannot do better then, than to take this, our Lord's solitary confession of physical suffering, as revealing to us His purpose in the mystery of pain.

The world has always been baffled by the problem of pain. In different ways it has tried to meet it, but never, until our Lord came with the key of His Cross, was there any to unlock this secret, and solve the mystery of suffering.

Some had opposed to pain a proud, unyielding spirit. They had sought by means of a stern philosophy to show themselves superior to what they regarded as the necessity of a blind, remorseless fate. Such could see no purpose in the trials and sorrows of life, but viewing them only as inevitable evils, they sought to steel themselves against

them, relying in this solely upon the pride of their unaided will. If they must needs suffer they would demean themselves as who should say before his tormentors, "Afflict me if you will, but know that you shall never wring from me a recognition of your power." Bravely some have persevered in acting out this difficult part which, when most successfully achieved, leaves the spirit only the harder and less God-like for the struggle. But the human heart cannot for long sustain this role. It must be honest with itself. Sooner or later, and in its own way, it must give expression to its suffering, and seek for sympathy. It can indeed suffer, and suffer in patience. But it cannot suffer alone. Our Lord gave expression to the great need of the heart when in the Psalm, in the dread apprehension of His Passion, He cries: "O go not from Me, for trouble is nigh at hand, and there is none to help Me" (Psalm xxii. 11). He does the same here, when he utters the cry, "I thirst," and invites our sympathy in what He is yet so willing to bear.

But another method of dealing with the problem of pain is the very opposite of that just con-

sidered. Since sorrow is ever dogging the footsteps of the children of men, some have made it the one great end of existence to elude its touch, and by every means possible to cheat it of its purpose. This is that materialism which makes pleasure the end of life, and consults the senses rather than the reason or conscience as its guide to happiness. It makes the demands of the body paramount, while it smothers the nobler aspirations of the soul. And this was the philosophy dominant in the world, when with parched lips our Lord utters from His Cross the cry "I thirst." We may depend upon it, nothing short of the Passion of the Son of God, with its consecration of physical pain, could have wrought the miracle by which, in the space of a few years, millions were to be rescued from shameful degradation of the body, to the self-mastery, and purity and holiness of the religion of Christ.

And once more this cry of physical pain was perhaps necessary to refute an error which while old enough to have disturbed the Church in the early days of her history, has in our own day been revived and taught with the saddest havoc of souls.

There were those in an early age who taught that Christ did not truly suffer; that it was not a body of veritable flesh and blood which hung upon the Cross, but a phantasm which, though it appeared to suffer, in reality knew no pain. In like manner there are those to-day who, while professing the Name of Him who said on the Cross, "I thirst," tell us that there is no such thing as pain. We need not pause at such a time as this to do more than note the contradiction. On Good Friday, at least, few will contend for a Christianity whose cross is a fable.

No, as our Lord had a true Human Soul, so He had also a real Human Body; and as His pure Soul felt the weight of our sin, so His Sacred Body truly suffered, and truly died for our sin. And because He once suffered Who now lives forevermore triumphant over death, pain is not for us Christians the evil the world has so long regarded it. Even were it possible for us by one prayer to have all pain and sorrow taken out of the world, it would be an act of folly to utter that prayer. Sin being what it is, the one great evil, and the world what it is, as it lies dead in sin, pain

is the indispensable antidote of a moral corruption which but for this restraint would have passed all bounds. Pain is necessary to sober us in our pleasures, to teach us detachment, to recall us when forgetful to the true meaning of life. Pain is left in the world as its stern but merciful purifier, and any sufferer whom it summons to bear his part in that which is so necessary, may, if he will, suffer along with Christ, and fulfil a mission at least as glorious as any which makes demand upon active and energetic toil. Whether or not we have ourselves had our part in this vocation of suffering, we are all the time partaking of benefits ministered at the hands of sufferers whose hearts are sorrowing, or whose bodies are in pain. And how many of such blessed ministrants to our life there are! When some stubborn spirit of pride takes possession of the heart, or some baneful stress of passion lays hold upon the senses, how sweet, how wholesome is the rebuke that comes from some bed of sickness, it may be from some little child who folds his tiny hands patiently, as he lies in pain upon his cot, and from his little white pulpit preaches to us

silently, but so eloquently, of the humility and purity of the Cross of Christ. How often has it been the example of some sufferer that has taught us that there is something better and higher in this life than the following of our own way, the seeking of our own pleasure!

But then, besides, the suffering in the world is love's great opportunity, the invitation to unselfishness, the call for heroic self-surrender. Sad indeed would this world be if the dreary spectacle of its selfishness and lust and greed were not often relieved by the moral beauty of self-sacrifice. Yet it is the presence of pain that makes these virtues possible. And how manifold and how beautiful are the ministries which it is ever calling into exercise! How little in comparison should we know of the love of our very dearest but for the unselfish manifestations of sympathy which trouble or pain have called forth, and caused them to lavish upon us. How imperfect would be even the knowledge of a mother's love, did the child's tears never need her sympathy! Out of the sufferings of humanity have sprung up the many noble charities established for their relief, which

are enduring monuments of the sympathy and love which the Cross has brought into the world! To these sufferings we owe the gentle patience of Sisters of Mercy, the tender care which follows armies in battle, the heroic devotion to duty of many a faithful priest, and of many a good physician, and indeed every self-sacrificing act which enriches and ennobles life. How purifying, how uplifting, and how necessary to the welfare of our spiritual life are these examples of self-sacrifice! Ever and again when the world seems settling down into its groove of selfish monotony, there arises even though it be out of some cruel disaster, the deed of heroic self-sacrifice, in which someone unknown by name, who thought he was but doing his duty, has laid down his life for others, and pointed us all again to the beauty of the Cross. For after all there is nothing which so appeals to the heart, or holds it under so mighty a spell, as the beauty of self-sacrifice.

Let us turn then again to the Temple of our Lord's Body as the law of suffering is fulfilled in It. That suffering had been typified by the blood shedding of the countless victims of the

earthly temple. But it was not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin. "Wherefore when He cometh into the world He saith, Sacrifice and offerings thou wouldest not, but a Body hast Thou prepared for Me" (Heb. x. 4, 5). In that Body which is both the Temple of His Ministry, and the material of His Sacrifice, we behold Him as He utters this complaint of physical pain. Since we could not enter with Him into the secret sorrow of His Soul, let us look upon this. Lo! here He speaks plainly, and speaks no proverb. In His sacred Body, racked upon the Cross and tormented with thirst, He speaks a language which all can understand. In nothing could He so commend His love to us, as by what He suffered for our sakes.

Pain was no new thing in the world when He came into the world to redeem it. Men fled from pain or vainly mocked it, but until He came and laid His Hands upon it, none knew how to use it, nor understood why it should be so plentiful on the earth. Far from spurning it, He made choice of it as of inestimable worth in the purpose for which He had come. That purpose was to

declare His Father's love to a fallen world, and to redeem it from its sin. But how shall He make men believe that love? By His miracles? "I have wrought many wonderful works among you, for which of those works do ye stone Me?" By His words? "If I say the truth, why do ye not believe Me?" Ah! there is still one language of love when every other fails, and that is the language which is uttered from the Cross, whether in spoken word, or still more wonderful silence—the language of suffering. We might still have had the treasures of our Lord's teaching, we might still have had the example of His most holy life, but never could we have learned His love for us except as He translated it into the language of pain. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (St. John xv. 13). "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me" (St. John xii. 32). It is the measure of the Cross which demonstrates to us the height and depth, the length and breadth of the love of Christ.

Let us then learn the wisdom of the Cross. Let us not foolishly mock at pain, let us not in

terror and dismay flee from it; but when, by the will of God it comes to us, let us go forth to meet it. Let us dare to embrace it, and make it our friend, for it will be to us a friend in very deed. With it as our companion, let us lift up our eyes to Him who hung upon the Cross, and by uniting our will to His let us sanctify our suffering. By such a proof of our love shall we give drink to Him, who in draining the cup of sorrow for us, said "I thirst."

SIXTH WORD.

“It is finished” (St. John xix. 30).

THE BODY MYSTICAL.

THE two words that remain for our consideration are recorded, the one by St. John, and the other by St. Luke, as having been spoken in the very moment when, bowing His sacred Head, our Lord gave up the Ghost. They must have been uttered in the same breath. Notwithstanding the fact that they were spoken in this moment of our Saviour's deepest humiliation, they are words of triumph and of joy.

Our Lord ever associated joy with the Cross. He went forward to embrace His Cross with the confidence and courage of a Conqueror. When He foretells His coming Passion, and holding up the Cross before the startled vision of his disciples

announces in detail the circumstances of the Crucifixion, He does not fail to couple with this announcement, the promise of the glory which should follow: "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the Prophets concerning the Son of Man shall be accomplished. For He shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated and spitted on: and they shall scourge Him, and put Him to death: and the third day He shall rise again" (St. Luke xviii. 31-34). "All things that are written concerning the Son of Man shall be *accomplished*." It is the same word as that used here when He says "It is finished." And because all is now accomplished, He rejoices as in a work done, a victory achieved. He had spoken before of a Baptism that He should be baptized with, and had looked forward day by day with patient yearning for its fulfilment. "How am I straitened, until it be accomplished!" (St. Luke xii. 50). All through His suffering the glorious issue of His Passion was before Him, and the anticipation of the victory in which it should end sustained Him. Even before He left the upper room where

He had kept the Passover with His disciples, and while Gethsemane and the Praetorium and Calvary were still awaiting Him, He had spoken of His victory as if it were already an accomplished fact. They are His last words of instruction to His disciples before going forth to die: "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (St. John xvi. 33). We shall not rightly learn the lesson of the Cross unless we learn also the confidence of its certain triumph, and hasten to accept it with Him "Who for the joy set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame."

It is not then simply as having reached the end of His suffering, and as having drained to the dregs the cup of His Passion, that our Lord cries, "It is finished." The meaning of this cry is not exhausted when we refer it to the fulfilment of all that Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms spake concerning Him, or that was predicted by the ceremonial types and shadows of the older law. Even the blessed truth that in filling up His sufferings He had paid the full price of our Redemption, making perfect and complete His satisfaction

for the sins of the world, leaves the true import of the cry "It is finished" still unexplained. As we have seen, the word used here is elsewhere translated by "accomplish" or "fulfil." Perhaps the Latin version, "*Consummatum est,*" is a still better equivalent. For it is precisely the consummation of the Divine purpose which is now realized in the moment of death, as distinct from the filling up of the measure, whether of suffering or of work which that purpose involved, that constitutes the deep underlying joy of this Word.

Here the Twenty-second Psalm comes again to our aid, that Psalm to which we have recurred so often in these meditations, and which has been well called the Programme of the Crucifixion. Not only does this Psalm, so sad in its beginning, culminate in a strain of joy, but its last ten verses may be said to afford a commentary upon the Word we are considering.

And what is to be especially noted is, that He who speaks throughout the Psalm, and who in its beginning cries out in the mysterious loneliness of His sorrows, is now no longer Alone. The Solitary Sufferer of the earlier verses is now en-

compassed by His brethren; standing up in the midst of the redeemed, He is the Leader in the praise of the great congregation. All the ends of the world, all kindreds and nations worship with Him. He is the Head of a great Family, the Father of a mighty posterity. "My seed shall serve Him, they shall be counted unto the Lord for a generation. They shall come and the Heaven shall declare His righteousness, unto a people that shall be born, whom the Lord hath made" (Psalm xxii. 31, 32).

"Consummatum est." The joy of our Lord in this cry is the accomplishment at last, and at so great a cost, of that which makes it possible to incorporate men into a mystical union with His own Flesh. The sanctified Manhood in which He dies in expiation for sin, is, because of this expiation, to diffuse itself as a life-giving seed through the mass of humanity. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (St. John xii. 24). It is the exulting of our Lord's natural Body in the increase that shall be His in His Mystical Body. It is the Temple

which enshrined the Godhead, rejoicing in its expansion to embrace all of mankind who come to Him for sanctuary. As He cries, "It is finished" our Lord is thinking of the millions upon millions of the Baptized who shall be united to Him by the new Birth, and made bone of His bone, and flesh of His Flesh. "When Thou shalt make His Soul an Offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His Hand" (Isaiah liii. 10).

The truth which lies at the foundation of this joy, is the converse of that considered under the Fourth Word. There we saw Christ identifying Himself with us, making Himself the Penitent for the sins of the world. Here the meaning is, that through the work consummated on the Cross, we are identified with Him. It is simply a matter of fact that the New Testament makes all our participation in the Merits of Christ to depend upon union with Him through His Mystical Body. So truly are we by Baptism identified with His Body, that St. Paul says of the baptized, "Ye are the Temple of the living God" (II. Cor. xvi. 6). Our inability to explain the mystery must not

deter us from confessing the truth that the Church and the Body of Christ are identical, "Jesus Christ being the chief Corner Stone in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy Temple in the Lord, in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Ephesians ii. 20-22). As members thus of the Body of Christ we died with Him, we were buried with Him, we rose in Him, in heavenly places even now we sit with Him. O that on this day at least, in which the great work was consummated, many might be brought to lay hold upon a truth, which, though it is presented in the New Testament so constantly, and with such a wealth and variety of illustration that it seems to burn in the fervor and insistence of its enunciation, is by thousands overlooked with an open Bible in their hands!

It is Christ Himself who speaks of His Body under the figure of the Temple. His Jewish hearers, though they did not perceive His hidden reference, would have the clearest notion as to the meaning of the term itself. For what to them was the Temple? It was the place where the

Almighty had recorded His Name, the dwelling which He was pleased to make His habitation, the House in which His people should be gathered together, where His Presence and His Power were manifested, and where alone acceptable sacrifice and worship could be offered.

What the Temple foreshadowed under the figurative and preparatory system of the older law, was to be realized in the fulness and perfection of the substance in the Body of Christ.

This Temple He entered when He took our flesh of the substance of the Virgin Mary His Mother, and in it for evermore it pleases Him to dwell. In this Temple the Almighty recorded His Name, when the Name of Jesus was received, a pledge of the work now finished in which He saves us from our sins. But it is more especially of our part in this Temple, as it is the House of God for all nations that our Lord speaks in this cry "It is finished." It is by the work here accomplished that His Mystical Body shall gather into itself of all people. In this Temple of His Body, His Holy Catholic Church, His all-atoning Sacrifice is to live on, and He Himself in that same

Body which hung upon the Cross is to be ever present, our one means of access to the Father, and of true and acceptable worship, as by His Eucharistic Presence He shall make good the word of the Psalm, "In the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee" (Psalm xxii. 22). And yet once more, and above all, in this Temple He Himself is to be made our Food, that so by eating His Flesh and drinking His Blood we may more and more be made partakers of His sacred and life-giving Humanity.

Well may we see in this Word the fulfilment of a prophecy spoken a thousand years before: "Wisdom hath builded her House, she hath hewn out her seven pillars, she hath killed her beasts, she hath mingled her wine, she hath furnished her table" (Proverbs ix. 1, 2).

"Consummatum est." "A certain man made a great supper and bade many, and sent His servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready" (St. Luke xiv. 16, 17). Surely none can meditate as we do to-day upon the Sacrifice of the Death of Christ, and not long to lay hold upon His work of

Atonement, and that by some means so definite and tangible that there can be no doubt of his identification with the sacrifice, and intimate personal union with his Lord. Who that knows the meaning of the work now accomplished but must long to receive worthily the Sacrament of His love. "O sacred Banquet, in which Christ is received, the memory of His Passion renewed, the mind filled with grace, and the pledge of future glory given unto us!" Here we have been engaged in thinking about the Passion. As well as we could we have brought the scene before us and have meditated upon its blessed fruits. But in the Holy Eucharist we are in the actual Presence of Him who through so great suffering consummated His work. And the crowning blessing won for us by His Passion is this, that He has made possible for us a personal union with Himself so real, so intimate, that not His Blessed Mother or St. John, as they stood by His Cross, came so near Him as we can come when by communion we receive Him into ourselves. O then, as we have dwelt already upon the measure of His love for us, let us see in this triumphant Word

which announces the completion of His work, His longing to draw all men unto Himself. Long has He hung with wide extended arms that He may embrace all who come to Him. His work is now done. "All is now ready."

O may we accomplish our part by coöperating with Him in what He has so graciously and so lovingly prepared for us, and may we so gratify the yearning of His sacred Heart, that He may see of the travail of His Soul and be satisfied with it.

SEVENTH WORD.

“Father, into Thy Hands I commend My Spirit.”
(St. Luke xxiii. 46.)

THE SANCTUARY OF THE SPIRIT.

WHEN our Lord, in figurative language said, “Destroy this Temple and in three days I will raise it up,” He was not instituting a merely casual and fanciful analogy. It had been a part of His purpose of old in the minute instructions concerning every detail of the Tabernacle, that it should, in a symbolical way, represent His Humanity. The analogy had existed in fact from the time that the Tabernacle was set up in the wilderness. “See that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed thee in the Mount,” was the command given to Moses. In the Epistle to the Hebrews, reference is made to this in a passage in

which our Lord is expressly called "A Minister of the Sanctuary and of the true Tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man" (viii. 1-5). The analogy was perpetuated in the Temple as the permanent form of the Tabernacle, and it shall live on forever in the Heavenly Jerusalem, concerning which St. John says: "I saw no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the Temple of it" (Rev. xxi. 22). It was therefore a part of the typical and educative purpose which the Temple was to serve that it should in the manner of its construction as well as in the nature of its appointments figuratively represent the Body of Christ. Its threefold divisions of an outer court, the Holy place, and the Holy of Holies, in which last enclosure was the Ark of the Covenant where the cloud of glory overshadowed the Mercy Seat, may have been designed to set before us the complex nature of our Humanity in which we pass from the body which links man to the animal creation, to the innermost shrine of his immortal spirit which allies him to the angels.

While no exact theory as to the constitution of

the inner nature of man can be based upon the use made in Scripture of the words *soul* and *spirit*, which are often employed interchangeably, there is nevertheless to be recognized in Scripture a certain discrimination in its preference of the word *spirit* to indicate the deepest part of our humanity, the point of contact between man and God. The functions of the mind by which it lays hold upon the things of God, and those which it exercises in its relation with the things of sense are governed by laws so distinct, and are exercised in such separate spheres of our being, that they are well symbolized by the two inner enclosures of the Temple, under one roof, yet parted by a veil. St. Paul recognizes the case in which these spiritual faculties are keenly active under the operation of the Holy Ghost, while at the same time the soul is deprived of the distinct self-consciousness which is in the province of the understanding (I. Cor. xiv. 14).

And who does not know in the innermost experiences of his own life the existence of spiritual depths which the soul itself cannot fathom? And which the intellect, while recognizing their pres-

ence, is powerless to explain? Take the example of Conscience. How wonderfully, by laws of its own it works in the depths of our being! What is this voice, so quiet, and yet so insistent, so authoritative in its utterance that we must needs obey it even though we do not understand the reason of its commands?

Or again, have we not all discovered, after certain experiences in our lives, deeps of spiritual joy of which at the time we were only partially conscious? The mind was at the time anxious and perturbed, the soul and its faculties occupied and troubled with the things that press upon the outward life. It was only afterwards that we were made aware how beneath all that ruffled the surface of our being we had been truly and serenely happy in the interior peace of a deep spiritual calm.

Now this may perhaps help us, not indeed to explain, but more intelligently to accept the Mystery implied in a previous Word. When our Lord uttered the cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" He was still tarrying, if we may so speak, outside that second veil of the Tem-

ple of His Humanity, which shut off from Him the conscious joy of the Beatific Vision, the glory of which nevertheless filled the inner Sanctuary of His Man's Nature. Within the solitude of His Soul, He was, for the tasting of His Passion, alike excluded from the sympathy of man, and deprived of the consolation of the Godhead from which in fact His Manhood could not for a moment be separated.

There is, however, this great difference, ever to be borne in mind, between our inner experiences and those of our Lord. We are to a great measure acted upon without our consent, and are not only passive, but often helpless under these experiences. But Christ "as a Son over His own House" (Heb. iii. 6) directs and rules all things in the Temple of His Humanity. Every affection of His Heart, as well as every thought of His Mind, was perfectly under His control. Even in His Passion He was perfectly free, and the Master of all His sufferings whether of Soul or Body. "He was offered because He willed it." He freely surrendered His life. "No man taketh it from Me. I lay it down of Myself" (St. John x. 18).

He who through the whole of His earthly life had, in order to His experience of suffering and humiliation, exercised a miracle of restraint, made necessary by the Personal union of His Manhood with the Godhead, could still say in the climax of His sufferings, "My Soul is always in My Hand" (Psalm cxix. 109). He who regulates every detail of His Passion, overruling the purposes of men, and who Himself directs all the sad ritual of the Cross, is Master also of every experience of His Human Soul.

Now, therefore, when all has been accomplished, He deliberately and with a loud voice, speaks the Word at the utterance of which the veil in yonder temple is rent from top to the bottom. May we not think of Him, as also in this same moment, and by a similar act of His will, rending the veil which for the time had shut off from Him the contemplation of that deep interior peace and joy which were His by right, and while through the parted veil the Beatific Vision, the true Shechinah of the glory of God streams forth and floods with conscious joy every faculty of His Soul, entering as it were the Holy of Holies of His Spirit,

that from this deepest Sanctuary of the Temple of His Humanity He may make the final Oblation of that Humanity to God?

As afterwards, when He was to carry our nature up to heaven, He chose the Mount of Olivet, that from an elevation of this earth He might ascend up to God; so now, He retires as it were to the mountain-top of that nature which He had assumed, to that loftiest region from which it looks off upon God, and which in the case of His sinless Manhood was ever bathed in the sunlight of His Divinity, and there He says: "Father, into Thy Hands I commend My Spirit?"

And O, the sweetness of that surrender as our Lord turns from His accomplished work to meet the embrace of that Eternal Father, the fulfilling of whose will had been the single motive of His life! This is preëminently the moment for us to pause and again call to mind the tenderness of that Bond of Love which unites the Father and the Son. How constant had been our Lord's appeal to it throughout His Ministry! To recur only to the words spoken on the eve of His Passion, how full are they of His dependence upon the Father's

Will as the one great sustaining motive of the Passion! To this He refers every word and every work of His earthly life: "The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of Myself: but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works" (St. John xiv. 10). "That the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment even so I do" (*Ibid.* ver. 31). "I have not spoken of Myself, but the Father which sent Me, He gave Me a commandment what I should say and what I should speak" (*Ibid.* xii. 49). While enduring the contradiction of sinners against Himself it is their malice toward the Father which grieves Him: "He that hateth Me, hateth My Father also" (*Ibid.* xv. 23). Though all should forsake Him in His Passion, this love shall sustain Him: "Ye shall be scattered every man to His own, and shall leave Me Alone; and yet I am not Alone because the Father is with Me" (*Ibid.* xvi. 32). The honor to be procured for His Father's Name is His compensation for all His suffering: "Now is My soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this

hour. Father, glorify Thy Name" (*Ibid.* xii. 27, 28). Even in that sad moment when Judas had gone out after the sop: "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him" (*Ibid.* xiii. 31). The Father's love is the one, and all-satisfying treasure in which He delights, and which He holds out as the reward to those who follow Him: "If ye keep My commandments ye shall abide in My love, even as I keep My Father's commandments and abide in His love" (*Ibid.* xv. 10). "If a man love Me, he will keep My words, and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (*Ibid.* xiv. 23).

The whole of the seventeenth chapter of St. John's Gospel is but a paraphrase of the words, "Father, into Thy Hands I commend My Spirit." Listen to Him as He prays in the upper room with His disciples: "Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son that He also may glorify Thee." "I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own Self with the glory which I had with Thee before the

world was" (ver. 1, 4, 5). Everywhere the words of our Lord are full of His delight in His Father's love, of His obedience to His command, of His zeal for His glory, His hunger and thirst for the accomplishment of His will.

And how sweet are those manifestations of the Father's love for His Only Begotten Son! That love reveals itself as it breaks forth like a stream of sunlight through the riven rain clouds. It answers the cry, "Father, glorify Thy Name" with the response, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again" (St. John xii. 28). As Jesus went up out of the water after His Baptism, and again at the Transfiguration of our Lord in the Mount, the Father's voice was heard: "This is My Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" (St. Matt. iii. 17). "This is My Beloved Son, hear Him" (St. Luke ix. 35).

What wonder, then, that the heart and mind fail as we try to meditate upon the joy of this moment in which the Only Begotten of the Father's Love returns with His accomplished work, and with His parting breath gives up His Spirit to His Father's embrace. The veil of the Temple is

rent. The joy of the Father's Presence from which for our sakes He had for a time hidden His Face is henceforth His forever. And this it is His will to share with us. For us, too, the veil is rent. "When Thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, Thou didst open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers." Henceforth the light of the glory of God fills the whole Temple of the Catholic Church. "This is none other but the House of God, and this is the gate of heaven" (Gen. xxviii. 17). Here at earthly Altars He still exercises His eternal Priesthood, and still pleads His all-sufficient Sacrifice through ministers whom He has appointed to act in His Name. Here He gives as our spiritual Food that same Humanity in which He suffered, and in which He is alive forevermore. Here, through the ministry of His Priests, He is present in the absolving word as often as any sinner turns to Him in penitent confession of sin. Here He takes us up into union with Himself, and with His angels and saints who in Him enjoy the vision of God. Here it is that our souls are strengthened for the fellowship of His sufferings, and our bodies as they bear

their burden of pain are hallowed by His Cross. Here our spirits may drink in the fulness of all that He has to give, and are satisfied with the living water of His Salvation. Here, even the more it may be when our souls are least conscious of their blessing, He is near us, as He was with the disciples on the way to Emmaus, whose eyes were holden that they should not know Him, and whose hearts nevertheless burned within them as He opened to them the Scripture.

And then if we ask for what end in the Temple of His Body all these helps and consolations are ours, surely it is that we may follow the example of His most holy Life. For we, too, as individual members of Christ are temples of the Living God. "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit which are God's" (I. Cor. vi. 19, 20).

Let us then in this most solemn, most blessed hour, renew that dedication by which we were in our Baptism set apart as temples of the living

God. Let us purge those temples from sin, by a worthy repentance, if in aught they have been defiled, and here beneath the shadow of His Cross consecrate them again to His service. Ours it may be, while He continues us in life to render to Him as our grateful homage the labor of our hands, the confession of our lips, the recollection of a life in which His perfect Pattern is ever before the eyes. To Him we may consecrate every sorrow, in His fellowship bear every suffering, by the help of His grace finish the work He has given us to do. And at last, as He Himself has taught us, and relying solely on the merits of His most holy Passion, with our parting breath unite ourselves to His prayer, "Father, into Thy Hands I commend My Spirit."

