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PART. III.
PREPARATION
FOR
HOLY COMMUNION †



REV. E. B. PUSEY D.D.



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TORONTO



Preparation for First Communion

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With Instructions for Holy
Communion,

Gathered from the Writings of

The Reverend

Edward Bouverie Pusey, D.D.,

1800-1882

BY E. H. AND F. H.

With a Preface by the Rev.

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Hon. Canon of Truro.



"Christ is my Food."—S. AMBROSE.



Fifth Thousand.

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PREFACE.

IT is impossible to set down any words, however few, in preface to the passages that follow, without a sense of offensive presumption in a case where presumption is most needless. Who in fact is there that can venture to put forward his forced and unworthy phrases, when the ear is listening for the voice of him who here speaks of that which was to him the spring and centre of all prayer and all praises? And what need is there for any one to add one word to the splendour, and the wealth, and the abundance of the chosen passages, overflowing with the tenderness and the love of all life-long adoration? It will be

surely the wish of all, who care for Dr. Pusey's name, that on the Blessed Eucharist he should be left to speak wholly for himself. So, if some few words here are allowed to intrude themselves, let it be forgiven them, in that they themselves are anxious that their little part should be rapidly played through, and that then they may be wholly forgotten by the reader, who may have used them just as a passage which by its very delay increases the effect of the vision into the glory of which it leads. Let us, then, be detained for the fewest possible minutes in the dark before the door opens, and the light breaks in ; in order that we may shape our minds and desires into some orderly preparation for that great sight which is to follow. And, perhaps, we shall be all the more ready to profit by the high joy to be vouchsafed to us, if we anticipate a little some chief outlines of that which we shall find—if we call to recollection

that which we are to seek and note when we arrive. So I would ask you to keep in view three main characteristics that it is, perhaps, helpful to follow and notice with peculiar emphasis, throughout Dr. Pusey's Eucharistic writings.

There is, first, the wonderful *awe* with which he hallows all his speech. This is so remarkable just because it is awe which familiarity seems to replenish instead of to dissolve or disturb. He is insisting on constant nearness to the Blessed Sacrament, he is surrounding It with incessant attention, with the routine of order and regular service, with accurate rules of preparation, with formal methods of intimacy. He himself is felt to be living, year by year, and day by day, in unflinching and familiar intercourse with Its Grace. It is to him necessary and near as his daily food. It has all the common and unquestioned frequency

of air, and earth, and sky. Yet ever his awe and wonder grow. Nothing ceases of that hushed and thrilling rapture which belongs to strange surprises, to unanticipated discoveries, to sudden initiations. Nay, his reverence, his humiliation, his trembling, his fear, all seem to increase with the increase of familiarity; there is ever in his voice the sound of searching alarm, the sense of the fire about the Mount, into which no unclean thing may enter lest it be consumed. That Altar, near and dear as it is, is ringed round to him with unflagging terrors: his tones shake, his knees bow, his soul quivers, with the same wonderful awe as that with which a young child kneels, for the first time, in the hush of some still sanctuary, and hears the murmuring words of the priest who bends over him to lay, in the child-hands uplifted, the adorable Gift over which the bowing Angels stoop, and gaze, and adore. It is not

surprising to us that Moses, when he looked and saw in sudden amazement the Bush that flamed before him unconsumed, should turn aside, and take his shoes from off his feet, and hasten to bow his head to the ground : but it is most wonderful to us to see that at the end of the years, there should be one, who still, as the Bush burns on continually, can hasten with untarnished freshness of soul to bow his head and worship, as fearfully and as tremblingly as when first he turned aside to see the strange sight. To us, with our shallow emotions and jaded hearts, awe is, itself, almost become strange ; it rarely reaches us : we can only attain it in sudden moments of wonder ; and, with familiarity, it dies out into the light of common day. But here is one for whom the consecration and the glory are no visionary and vanishing flights of startled feeling, but are abiding and inexhaustible presences,

accompanying his steps to the end. It can only be thus when the fountain of the spirit opens out in their lowest depths in response to a call that is no poetic fancy, but an appeal from the living and eternal God. Awe can only abide when deep answers unto deep.

And then, secondly, no one can help feeling the *spirituality* of such Sacramentalism, as we find laid out in page after page of these addresses. We should have thought it impossible for any one who once had read them to indulge in crude contrasts between the carnal form and the inward spirit, or between technical dogmatism and the living faith. Every one can see that the entire belief rests on the robust reality of the actual event, which takes place on this or that Altar, through the mediation of a consecrated formula, used with exact ritualistic definiteness,

over earthly elements that have been duly presented before God, and in the sight of the people, in literal obedience to sanctioned usage. Every one can detect how accurate and watchful and complicated a theology informs every fragment of his language. And, yet, the external and formal fact glows through and through with the warmth of a heartfelt devotion, as a coal filled full with the splendour of flame. The outward form intensifies the heat. It supplies it with scope, and radiation, and vent. It feeds it with fuel. The flame leaps and rejoices, just because the material is given it; it knows a new strength, it glows with a new ardour, as it lays hold of this external matter, and fills it, and infolds it, and inhabits it, and absorbs it. A fire lives on the fuel given: and, to the flame of adoration, sacramental fact is the fuel that feeds it. Never, surely, has the heart of man bent itself to innermost Communion

with the very Life of Jesus, the Master and Lover of souls, in more direct, and evangelical, and unveiled contact than here is made known in every glowing word of love, and joy, and peace, and devotion. And the freedom of this delighted and fervent intercourse is built up by the constitutive reality of its dogmatic accuracy. The refinements of dogma are but the sensitive jealousies of a searching and intimate love: and such love does but prove its genuine liberty, the liberty of perfect knowledge, secure of itself and assured of its aim, when it exhibits its quivering alarm lest the least unworthiness of utterance should darken or confuse its free relations, its unhindered intermingling of life with life, and heart with heart. There, in writings like these, brimming with large outpourings of inexhaustible affection, we can learn how love gains by understanding what it loves, how

thought wins freedom by the distinction and the accuracy wherewith it can speak out its secrets. As the human spirit gains force and action by being given a body, so the ardour of adoration would be cramped and ineffective if it could not clothe itself in fit expression; and just as the spirit's action is more perfect the more elaborate and delicate its nerve organisation, so the power of love reveals more wonderful possibilities in proportion to the delicate exactness of its technical language.

Lastly, we would notice how it is this explicitness of apprehension which causes the third characteristic of Dr. Pusey's Eucharistic Teaching, its marvellous *richness*. Implicit and unalterable faith may be strong, but it cannot be full. But, here, the inner strength of the faith which has been enabled to emerge, and to lay hold of its

objective material, and to develop its distinct expression, exhibits itself in the fulness and the variety with which it can apply itself to the whole round of practical life, or make use of the entire wealth of the imagination and the emotions. Everything seems to become Eucharistic under the Doctor's handling: everywhere the Sacramental blessing reaches. Look at the sun as it shines on all things, how in each it gives a new colour, and wakes a new revelation. It is on the flowers, and they leap into blue, and scarlet, and yellow. It is on the waters, and they shimmer and glisten. It is on the far hills, and they are steeped in the glow of purple and gray. It is the same light, yet for each it is a new differing glory. So, here, as we let our eyes travel through page after page, we are always in face of one thought, the thought of that Most Blessed Presence under the forms of Bread and Wine, yet ever the thought offers novel

variety of guidance, of direction, of illumination: ever it prompts a new motion of the desires, a new effort of the will, a new hope of the affections. It is in writings such as these that we learn something of the unfading efficacy of the Sacramental theology,—the unfailing attraction of the Sacramental life,—why it is that all other forms of adoration and communion, however real, cannot but appear imperfect, partial, inadequate, thin, meagre, shadowy, to those who have once felt this abundance, and have tasted of its treasures, and have sat at its feasts. To them it is known why word should be added to word in the effort to tell how the Eucharist has been to them both Hope, and Refuge, and Peace, and Sweetness, and Tranquillity, and Wisdom, and Portion, and Possession, and Treasure.

All this the Eucharist has been to him whose

words are here offered to us,—his Sustenance, his Comfort, his Nurture, through day after day of those long years that he spent with us: and it is out of the holy fulness of such a lifelong intimacy that he speaks to us the secrets of Eucharistic Communion with God.

H. S. HOLLAND.

CHRIST CHURCH,
OXFORD, 1883.





CONTENTS.

*With References to the Instructions on
Holy Communion.*

	PAGE
Preparation for Holy Communion, I.— <i>Parochial Sermons</i> , Vol. I. Sermon XX. . . .	19
Preparation for Holy Communion, II.— <i>Parochial Sermons</i> , Vol. III. Sermon XV. . .	20
Preparation for Holy Communion, III.— <i>Parochial Sermons</i> , Vol. I. Sermon XX. . . .	21
Preparation for Holy Communion, IV.— <i>Eleven Addresses</i> , No. VI.	22
Preparation for Holy Communion, V.— <i>Parochial Sermons</i> , Vol. I. Sermon XX. . . .	24
Preparation for Holy Communion, VI.— <i>University Sermons</i> , Vol. I. Sermon IV. . . .	25
Holy Communion, I.— <i>Parochial Sermons</i> , Vol. III. Sermon XV. . .	27
Holy Communion, II.— <i>Parochial Sermons</i> , Vol. III. Sermon XIV. . .	29

	PAGE
Holy Communion, III.—	
<i>Parochial Sermons</i> , Vol. III. Sermon XIV. . .	30
Holy Communion, IV.—	
<i>Parochial Sermons</i> , Vol. III. Sermon XV. . .	33
Holy Communion, V.—	
<i>Parochial Sermons</i> , Vol. III. Sermon XIV. . .	35
Holy Communion, VI.—	
<i>Parochial Sermons</i> , Vol. III. Sermon XIV. . .	36
Holy Communion, VII.—	
<i>Parochial Sermons</i> , Vol. I. Sermon XVIII. . .	37
Holy Communion, VIII.—	
<i>Parochial Sermons</i> , Vol. I. Sermon XX. . . .	39
Holy Communion, IX.—	
<i>University Sermons</i> , Vol. III. Sermon IV. . .	40
Holy Communion, X.—	
<i>Parochial Sermons</i> , Vol. I. Sermon XX. . . .	41
Holy Communion, XI.—	
<i>Parochial Sermons</i> , Vol. I. Sermon XX. . . .	42
Holy Communion, XII.—	
<i>Parochial Sermons</i> , Vol. I. Sermon XX. . . .	44
Holy Communion, XIII.—	
<i>Parochial Sermons</i> , Vol. I. Sermon XX. . . .	44
Holy Communion, XIV.—	
<i>Parochial Sermons</i> , Vol. I. Sermon XX. . . .	45
Holy Communion, XV.—	
<i>Parochial Sermons</i> , Vol. I. Sermon XX. . . .	46
Holy Communion, XVI.—	
<i>Parochial Sermons</i> , Vol. I. Sermon XX. . . .	49

CONTENTS.

xxvii

	PAGE
Holy Communion, XVII.—	
<i>University Sermons</i> , Vol. I. Sermon IV. . . .	50
Holy Communion, XVIII.—	
<i>University Sermons</i> , Vol. I. Sermon IV. . . .	51
Holy Communion, XIX.—	
<i>University Sermons</i> , Vol. I. Sermon IV. . . .	52
Holy Communion, XX.—	
<i>University Sermons</i> , Vol. I. Sermon IV. . . .	53
Holy Communion, XXI.—	
<i>University Sermons</i> , Vol. I. Sermon IV. . . .	54
Holy Communion, XXII.—	
<i>University Sermons</i> , Vol. I. Sermon IV. . . .	55
Holy Communion, XXIII.—	
<i>University Sermons</i> , Vol. I. Sermon IV. . . .	55
Holy Communion, XXIV.—	
<i>University Sermons</i> , Vol. I. Sermon IV. . . .	57
Holy Communion, XXV.—	
<i>University Sermons</i> , Vol. I. Sermon IV. . . .	57
Holy Communion, XXVI.—	
<i>University Sermons</i> , Vol. II. Sermon X. . . .	59
Holy Communion, XXVII.—	
<i>University Sermons</i> , Vol. I. Sermon IV. . . .	59
Holy Communion, XXVIII.—	
<i>University Sermons</i> , Vol. I. Sermon IV. . . .	61
Holy Communion, XXIX.—	
<i>University Sermons</i> , Vol. I. Sermon IV. . . .	62
Holy Communion, XXX.—	
<i>University Sermons</i> , Vol. I. Sermon IV. . . .	62

	PAGE
After Holy Communion, I.—	
<i>Parochial Sermons</i> , Vol. I. Sermon XX. . . .	64
After Holy Communion, II.—	
<i>Eleven Addresses</i> , No. VI.	66
After Holy Communion, III.—	
<i>Parochial Sermons</i> , Vol. I. Sermon XX. . . .	68
After Holy Communion, IV.—	
<i>Parochial Sermons</i> , Vol. I. Sermon XX. . . .	68
After Holy Communion, V.—	
<i>Eleven Addresses</i> , No. VI.	69
After Holy Communion, VI.—	
<i>The Real Presence</i> , page 336	69
After Holy Communion, VII.—	
<i>Parochial and Cath. Sermons</i> , Sermon XXIII.	71
After Holy Communion, VIII.—	
<i>University Sermons</i> , Vol. II Sermon XIX. . .	72
After Holy Communion, IX.—	
<i>University Sermons</i> , Vol. I. Sermon IV. . . .	73
After Holy Communion, X.—	
<i>University Sermons</i> , Vol. I. Sermon IV. . . .	74
Increased Communion—	
<i>Parochial Sermons</i> , Vol. I. Sermon XX. . . .	75
Daily Communion—	
<i>University Sermons</i> , Vol. I. Sermon I.	76
Less Frequent Communion, I.—	
<i>Parochial Sermons</i> , Vol. I. Sermon XX. . . .	77
Less Frequent Communion, II.—	
<i>Parochial Sermons</i> , Vol. I. Sermon XX. . . .	77

CONTENTS.

xix

	PAGE
Less Frequent Communion, III.—	
<i>University Sermons</i> , Vol. I. Sermon I.	79
Less Frequent Communion, IV.—	
<i>University Sermons</i> , Vol. I. Sermon I.	79
Less Frequent Communion, V.—	
<i>University Sermons</i> , Vol. I. Sermon I.	80
Less Frequent Communion, VI.—	
<i>University Sermons</i> , Vol. I. Sermon I.	81
Spiritual Communion, I.—	
From MS.	83
Spiritual Communion, II.—	
<i>Parochial Sermons</i> , Vol. I. Sermon XX.	83
Spiritual Communion, III.—	
Preface to <i>Manual for Confessors</i>	85





Preparation and Thoughts

for

First Communion,

applicable also to

Communicants generally.





A Letter of Advice (published by permission) given primarily as a Preparation for First Communion, but useful for Communicants generally.

THE great gift in the Holy Communion is that by eating His Flesh, and drinking His Blood, "He dwelleth in us, and we in Him, He is one with us, and we with Him," but then we must love Him and long to be with Him. If we love Him coldly at other times, we shall be cold then, and receive little, and perhaps hinder ourselves from receiving so much afterwards ; God is ready to give Himself to us, but it is in proportion to

our longings. When a person is once a Communicant, generally speaking, it is a good thing for them to communicate whenever they can, *i.e.* if they are trying to please God, and to serve Him, and not to be distracted by things of this world ; but beginning to communicate is always an anxious thing, lest a person, by not being of a tone of mind sufficiently raised, should not have all the blessing they might have had, had it been delayed until they were more prepared, and by obtaining admission thus early to Holy Communion, they would be obtaining what for them was too great a thing as they then were, which, by deferring It for a time, It might be a greater blessing to them.

You must think what an inconceivably great thing it is, that our Lord, who is God, should come and dwell *in* us : that we should be the Temples of the Holy Ghost ; that He should dwell in us spiritually ; that we should not be what we seem, body only, or even soul, but that Christ should dwell in us, that in us, in some way, God should dwell ; that within these, our poor frail decayed bodies, God should be, Who cannot be bounded by space, nor contained by any thing, nor approached, still that He should be *in* us ; that we should actually have Christ's Body and Blood

in us, have the Holy Spirit within us, as much as we are in this room. For Holy Scripture says, "*dwell* in us," that we should be His dwelling-place, as this room is ours ; as we are actually within it, so He should be within us, and much more, for we are in this room, as not belonging to it, nor it a part of us, but they who are "members of Christ" are part of Christ, as the members are part of the body ; and they are "one with Christ, and Christ with them," His Spirit is joined with their spirit, and theirs penetrated by His, and the very body itself is hallowed ; the very bodies in which He dwells are made "temples of God," sanctified by His Presence, and having immortality again imparted to them, so that though they still seem to decay, and part of them to fall off and turn to corruption, and all shall seem "dust," yet it is "dust" full of life, ready to be raised again and made a glorious body, like His glorious Body, because He dwells in it.

These are very awful thoughts, because they are so very, exceeding, great ; and thence we should bear ourselves, our souls, and bodies in reverence ; take care what we do with them, what thoughts we allow to come into our minds, where He has entered in ; be more watchful that we do not let

thoughts of pride, or self, or anger, or envy, or jealousy, or any other wrong feeling come in, where He has entered, Who is our Lord and our God. Thenceforth we are much more mysterious beings ; we must not be elated by it, nor speak without deep reverence of it ; that were pride : rather, we should become the more abased, as the Centurion said, “ Lord, I am not worthy, that Thou shouldest come under my roof,” or St. Peter said in awe, “ Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.” Not that we should wish Him to depart, for that were death to your soul, but that we should feel utterly abased that He should dwell in us, and confounded at ourselves, that we, in whom He so dwells, do not love Him more, and yet, with cheerful hope, because He is so gracious to us beyond and against our deserts. Yet we become such beings at whom the Blessed Angels may well wonder, that God should indeed come and dwell *in* us. Then also as to sufferings which we may have to undergo, we should seek to be less fretted at them, for it is not fitting that they who have what is highest—their very Lord Himself, God of God—should be fretted by the same little troubles, crosses, discomforts, contradictions, with which they are fretted who have nothing of

these high things. If we realise that we have the Lord of Heaven and earth, Who will be ours, and we His for ever, how should we be fretted by any things which happen to us from His creatures, for the few days that we are here upon this earth?

Since then this Gift is so inconceivably great, what should be *begun* in you before you are admitted to It are :

1. "Putting away childish things," since you are to be admitted to the privileges of a full-grown Christian. Gradually, try to raise your mind more above common things, and to occupy it with higher things, so as not to be so much taken up with commonplace things which you see around you : so that amid things which you see, to raise up your mind more to Him Who is unseen, not be so much filled and taken up with all which passes by you ; that by this means you may be more drawn to God.

2. Patiently suffer little disappointments, little inconveniences. The best way is to try to think of God and of Christ Who suffered for you ; ask Him to give you a patient heart, to sanctify any sorrow He may send in His Love for you, by His Sufferings, and try to be content to be sorrowful until He make you again cheerful. To those who

do this, He often gives a calm in sorrow, which is better than any joy.

And this is another class of habits which should be commenced in you.

1. A greater love for spiritual things.

The Holy Communion ought not, and (as I have said) cannot, stand alone in your spiritual life. As you are in the rest of your spiritual life, such you will be there, and such will it be to you then. As you are capable of, or take pleasure in, spiritual things at other times, so will it be with you then; as you love your Saviour at other times, of such sort will your love for Him be then; as you can raise your thoughts at other times to God, so could you then; as God is habitually present to your mind now, in that degree would be the lasting benefits of the Holy Communion then.

In too many there is but a faint commencement of this spiritual life. They seem to do things mechanically, as a duty, not for the pleasure they find in them. Thus, they read the Psalms and Lessons because they have been taught to do so, and this is right; but sometimes the Psalms are read so fast so as evidently not to give time to dwell upon them. People do not seem to think upon them, or dwell upon any verse, or make

them their own words to God, or listen to Him as speaking to them, or apply their meaning to themselves as one who had pleasure in them or took interest in what he was reading. Then the portion of the Bible which is read is not taken up again, as a book that is loved ; not because there are other duties to do (which may often be the case), but because there is no wish to read it. All this implies a want of realising spiritual things. In fact, it may be the consequence of what a person owns to be wrong in himself, the preferring of other things to the reading of such portions of their Bible as they did read ; for if we prefer other things to GOD'S Word, we cannot expect that He will give us pleasure in reading it, when we do come to it.

2. Then some have little or no pleasure, I fear, in thinking upon God. This is, in part, that they do not like thinking at all. This is very natural. It is an effort, and costs trouble. It is an effort to think on Him Who is unseen, it is an effort to think at all, much more on Him.

The question now is, about privileges which are *not* those of children, but of those full-grown, and how you may be best qualified for them. Your difficulties in thinking upon God, in part may

arise from the evil tempers and sins to which you gave way formerly.

I will give you a simple instance, whereby you may attain a greater pleasure in spiritual things, namely, when you are not dressed in time for Family Prayers, that you should try to use them for yourself, and feel that you have undergone a loss in missing them, and losing so much prayer, and not simply be content, because they are over, to think no more about them. Try to take an extra time for the prayers you have missed.

3. Then do not let your self-examination be done as a task, so as to give you as little trouble as you can help, not with any strong desire of finding out the real state of your soul.

I would give you some rules.

1. Never prefer anything to reading GOD's Word, nor read it quickly because you wish to go to other things. (This would be disrespectful to it and to GOD.) If you feel yourself inclined to read faster than usual, force yourself to go back to what you have so read.

2. Say some little prayer, before you begin reading, (such as the Collect for Second Sunday in Advent), and try to recollect yourself, Whose Book you are taking in hand, that they are GOD'S

words to you, things which the Angels desire to look into, and about your own Eternal life.

3. In reading, read as if you were listening to GOD speaking to your soul: and use the Psalms when they are either prayer or praise, as your own prayer or praise to GOD, not as *reading* the Psalms only.

4. Try to keep GOD in your thoughts through the day, recalling from time to time that you are in His Sight, wishing to receive things, pleasant or painful, as being from Him, to do things for Him. Even in such a little thing as taking medicine, pray when you take it that it may do you good: so as to the fresh air, you should receive it, as GOD's gift refreshing you; when you say grace at your meals, you should try while taking them, to recollect that the food is His gift to you, and to take it from His Hands: and so as to sleep. So when anything happens, which you especially like, try to unite with your first feeling of joy, an act of thanksgiving to GOD for it. On the other hand, take anything unpleasant, as His doing, and so patiently, looking to Him. When you are engaged in your daily duties, try not only to do them well, but so as to please Him, with a view to please Him; in a word, try to put in practice, "I have

set GOD always before me," and then that other part will be fulfilled too, "He is on my right hand, therefore I shall not fall."

5. Lift up your thoughts to GOD at intervals. The Hours will help you to this. You should try to use one first, as best suits; then when you find that you habitually recollect this, another; the prayers need not be long, only try to fix on your mind, what did make that sacred, as the Descent of the Holy Ghost, at 9; the Crucifixion, at 12; His Death, at 3; so as not only to use a prayer then, but to meditate on your LORD and Saviour.

Then, also, the text which you select from your morning Psalms will also be a help, if you use it several times in the day thinking upon GOD, steadfastly for the time you use it. People use too short ejaculations, *i.e.* prayers which are, as it were, darted up to GOD, such of those in the Liturgy, "LORD, have mercy upon us," or if you were under temptation, "O GOD, make speed to save me," or in beginning any duty or work, "LORD help me," only, however short it is, try to lift up your thoughts earnestly to your Blessed Saviour at GOD's Right Hand.

6. Then during the times you are alone, try to meditate for a time upon GOD. Thus, when

you are out of doors, you can generally see the blue sky, and you have heard many things of it connected with GOD :—how our LORD has ascended thither to prepare a place for us ; how GOD's Mercy encompasses all His Works, as the sky does the earth : how holy Angels and the spirits of the just dwell there : how its purity is an emblem of GOD's Holiness, or again, of the brightness of faith.

And so on, as to other things, everything may recall to you the things of GOD ; the dust when driving, how the wicked are driven before the Presence of GOD ; or as it lies, that we must all return to it ; only do not let these be mere matters of amusement, but rather pray that you may not be cast out from that Holy Presence, that when you return to the dust, GOD will have mercy on your soul. So the sea may remind you how GOD stilleth its raging, and our LORD said, "Peace, be still," and how He will say so to us in our troubles, if we pray Him.





Instructions

on

Holy Communion.





“I am the Living Bread which came down from
Heaven.”—S. JOHN VI. 51.



“Without ME ye can do nothing.”
—S. JOHN XV. 5.





“ YET Heaven is raining Angel's Bread
To be our daily Food,
And fresh, as when it first was shed
Springs forth the Saviour's Blood.”

CHRISTIAN YEAR.



BRING to your mind what is unseen, how our
Lord is the Consecrator, and the Holy Ghost
descends, and Choirs of Angels worship.





HE “realises” what Holy Communion is, who meditates upon the greatness of God’s Gift beforehand, prepares his soul for It, prays his LORD to come under his roof, and lives afterwards as knowing whereof he has been a partaker.

“Reality” is in life, not in vivid imagining.

PAROCH. SER. XVI. VOL. II.

IT has been advised, when Communion is weekly, to make the three first days of the week *thanksgiving*; the three last *preparation*; or thanksgiving and preparation may be blended into one. For we ask for His Blessed Presence, not as though we had It not; we thank Him for His Gift, not as though we needed not that It be renewed.

PAROCH. SER. XX. VOL. I.



Preparation for Holy Communion.

I.

FOR due preparation we need not fear that lawful occupation will not leave us time. Daily Communion was long the privilege of all Christians; still longer of our Western Churches. And yet St. Paul's command, "Let a man examine himself," was obeyed then. Be we only in earnest, or long to be so, and "The Lord will provide." He can make our whole life one preparation for His Coming to us, as each day should be for His final Coming. As the light of day is shed around us, and we are conscious of its presence and gladdened by it, and yet our eyes behold only the more distinctly all upon which it falls, so may the Sun of our souls be ever present to them, and we rejoice in His Presence, and yet

see and do our several duties, not only unhindered by our thoughts of God, but more distinctly, and with readier mind and will. Seek we, amid our daily duties or refreshments, to win our thoughts more to Him, to consecrate to Him the several portions of the day and our larger courses of action, and, as we learn how, each several action.

II.

FOR the week of preparation, use and make what time you can. Our fathers used not so long since, (even when daily service had declined,) yet at least to assemble themselves (whosoever wished to be Communicants), in God's house during the week before, there to lament their sins before Him, that so having confessed their sins, they might, on the next Lord's day be more worthy partakers of the Holy Communion. It would be a gladdening earnest of your sincerity (gladdening it might be to yourselves also), if such as anyhow could, would at some inconvenience prepare themselves by coming hither on the Wednesday and Friday in next week. More gladdening still, if, having so begun, such as could would habitually come. And yet what hinders very many, but the listless

irreligious habit of these last days, to regard all their time on the week days as their own? What but the coldness, and lifelessness, and undevotionalness, which forsooth looks forward to join in the endless halleluiahs of eternity, but meantime would think it almost a strange thing to be invited for two hours during the week to worship God in His Temple, which is the image of Heaven? Ye can hardly mean this in earnest, and yet what else means the habitual thinness of the congregations during the week?

III.

FOR more immediate preparation, frequent Communicants, living, as they should, in habitual watchfulness, as they will have a shorter period to review, so having learned more watchful ways, their souls will lie more open to themselves, and they will learn, with less of effort, to exercise more readily a closer search. Their accounts with themselves will be in better order, and so reviewed more easily. Then also win we, if we can, some time for collectedness and retirement, as by earlier rising, or, when we may, by stillness and holier reading on the preceding evening, or in its later hours. Above all, do not neglect preparation or

thanksgiving on any day, because thou canst not use all the prayers thou wouldest. God does not look on the length of the prayers, but on the desire of the heart. He who accepts the "cup of cold water given to a disciple in His Name," from those who have no larger gift to offer, will accept brief prayers darted up, out of the midst even of occupation, to Him.

IV.

HIS glorious Body is in Heaven, where It is to remain "until the restitution of all things." Yet He made Himself present to St. Paul in his way to Damascus, "I am Jesus, Whom thou persecutest." He is not present, in the same mode of existence, in the Heavens and on the Altar. But "by a Divine virtue He raises His Body above the condition of a body and gives it a spiritual mode of existence," as He Himself speaks, when speaking of that great mystery in the words which St. John has recorded; "so that it exists as if it were a spirit, invisible and indivisible;" a likeness of which we see in the soul which exists everywhere in the body and wholly in each part of it. But then the same Body, which is locally at

the Right Hand of God, is supralocally, under a different mode of existence, present with us, really, truly, substantially, though spiritually. And since His Body is there, there must His Soul be also, there also His Divinity. For they are inseparable. And all this for us, all this for each one of us as closely as is possible with Himself. He does not leave Heaven for us ; His Presence there is necessary for us ; yet ere He left earth, He contrived a way, whereby He should be continually present on earth ; present, not, as when on earth, in one single place, but throughout the whole earth, wherever Christians are, for Him to come to, wherever, according to His holy Institution, His Words consecrate the oblations to be His Body and Blood. Truly "it is expedient for us that He should go away," for we could not everywhere have been present with Him in His Bodily Form, but He is everywhere present with us, to be to each one of us what He is to all. When Jesus was on earth, He merited for His Human Soul and Body too. Every moment's suffering and humiliation and obedience was adding to the ineffable glory of His Human Body and Soul. Now He comes to be present, simply for us, to allow Himself to be sacramentally

offered, in order to apply to our wants the Infinite merits of His own Sacrifice on the Cross ; to come to dwell in us, to unite Himself with us, to be our Food, not changed into us, but changing us into Himself ; that “spiritually eating the Flesh of Christ and drinking His Blood, we may dwell in Christ and Christ in us, may be one with Christ and Christ with us.”

v.

HE will make each LORD'S Day an Easter-Day to us, in which our Risen LORD will appear to us, “talk to us by the way,” “open our hearts,” and into our opened hearts pour in His Life, and Presence, and Love. He will anew cleanse the defilements which we bewail ; fill up the scars our sins have left ; repair the decays, which in our forgetfulness or wilfulness we contracted ; heal our infirmities, that in Mercy and Loving-kindness He may crown us. He will make each Lord's Day a herald of that glorious Easter-Morn, when “shadows shall flee away,” and night, and time, and sin, and infirmity, and death shall be no more ; when all who are His, shall for ever meet in His Presence and joy before Him.

VI.

BUT nearness to GOD has an awful aspect. "Our GOD is a consuming fire." Your consciences can best tell you whether your souls are arrayed in the wedding-garment which Christ gives, and which Christ requires in those who would approach to His Heavenly Feast, the wedding-garment of faith and love unfeigned, an upright and holy conversation, cleansed and made pure by the Blood of Christ ; or whether, "grieving the Spirit of GOD, whereby ye were sealed," and "not led by the Spirit of GOD," ye are now (GOD forbid that ye should remain so) "none of His." The Church requires as conditions: repentance, faith, charity, a loving memory of the Passion of our LORD, and a steadfast purpose to lead a new life. This you are to ascertain for yourselves, by examining yourselves. GOD bids you by St. Paul ; He exhorts you by the Church ; "Search and examine your own consciences, and that not lightly and after the manner of dissemblers with GOD, but so that ye may come holy and clean to such a Heavenly Feast." Would that one were not compelled to think that many sought rather to forget themselves, than to examine themselves ; to hide themselves

from themselves ; to put away their sins for a day or two, in order to resume them as before ; as though the wedding-garment which GOD requires might be laid aside as soon as the Feast was over ; or as if this unwilling abstinence of a few days from some besetting sin were the clothing of "the new man, which after GOD is created in righteousness and true holiness."





Holy Communion.

I.

THERE are in the Communion two parts.
1. A Commemoration, or “showing forth of our Lord’s Death until He come.” 2. A Communion, or receiving of Christ in the believer’s soul ; and they who mistake these two have been in danger of destroying both. In the whole action of the Communion, the Priest, and the people with and through him, commemorate or make mention and show forth the Death of our Lord. The Priest offers to God the bread and wine as memorials of the One precious Sacrifice on the Cross, and entreats Him by these emblems of His most precious Death and Passion, to have mercy upon us and the whole Church ; he breaks the bread, and pours out the wine, as he was commanded, as Christ’s Body was broken and His Blood shed upon the Cross. He offers to the Father the Body and Blood of Christ Sacramentally present, as the Great High Priest

evermore pleads by His Glorious Wounds in heaven. The whole assembly joins with the Priest as he does it in the name of all, and presents their faith, their alms, and their oblations before God. But in the actual Communion it is not so. Herein we do nothing but receive; herein is no commemoration, no showing forth His Death, but something far other and higher, a receiving Him. Herein is no action of our own, save that of resignation of our whole selves to His holy will and pleasure, a wish to receive what He will be pleased to impart, which saith, "Amen, so come, Lord Jesus!"

The gifts of God in His Sacraments are so surpassing, and yet all which appears outwardly to the senses is so slight; they are so exceeding spiritual, and must be received and believed spiritually, and man is by nature so inclined to dwell on the things of sense, they must be searched deeply, and man of himself returns for ever to the surface, that it is of the more moment continually to fix our minds upon them, and for Ministers to go over things which seem to be well known. For God gives us not even our knowledge of Him once for all; He teaches us not once for all, in youth for instance; but, that we may the more

entirely depend upon Him, He supplies us according to our use of what He has given us, and our desires: all our lives we are learners. And in truth were this gift of God in His Sacrament better loved, and so better understood, instead of thinking monthly Communions a great thing, people would desire weekly, and they who had weekly, would, as our Church once had, desire daily—their daily Spiritual Bread, as they daily receive that of the body.

II.

THE more unworthy any of us feels himself, yea, though he be more unworthy than others, he is less unworthy because he feels so. God “dwelleth in the lowly and contrite heart.” He came to heal the sick, to cleanse the lepers, to cast out devils, to make the lame to walk, to raise the dead, to bind up the broken-hearted. If we be in earnest with our Confession, He will make each Communion a means to lighten the burthen of our sins; He will bind up our wounds, will unbind the graveclothes of the death of sin wherewith we have anew bound ourselves; He will give us strength to walk; He will cast out Satan, to whom each sin anew enslaves; He will, by His

indwelling Spirit, again “restore to us the help of His salvation, and stablish us with His free Spirit.”

III.

FOR every means of grace we shall have to give account before GOD, for those men which have neglected, as for those they have used ; for the Communion offered on the next LORD'S DAY, whether we partake of it, how we partake of it, what use we make of the gift therein bestowed upon us. I dare not say that there is no danger in approaching unduly this Holy Mystery. There is. GOD hath so willed that with His gifts there should be danger : there is danger in every way but *one*. We are beset by dangers in life and in death ; and there is throughout one only path of safety, the path of GOD'S commandments. It is a strait and narrow path, and we dare not make it broad. There *is* peril, great peril, in profaning these Holy Mysteries that GOD may cut off such an one at once, as He did Uzzah for touching His ark, or the Corinthians. There is a danger to one, who prepares himself to receive them, and then straightway returns to his old habits, and forgets what God has done for his

soul, and all His benefits, lest God should leave him to himself, and, since he will not retain His gifts, for the future not give him the gifts which he set at nought.

There is danger to those who receive It *frequently*, if they slacken their diligence in cleansing themselves, lest the Sacrament become an ordinary thing.

There is a danger in *not receiving* whenever a person by any means can, because it is despising GOD's gift, and provoking Him to withdraw It, and give you over to a cold, unloving, careless temper.

There is a danger in every way of receiving It *unduly* and in *not receiving* It at all; this is starvation and death of the soul; there is a danger in every way but *one*; and that is, keeping your hearts diligently; preparing yourselves when you can, carefully; praying to GOD fervently, to give you that holy frame of mind, which He will accept; receiving His gifts, whenever they are offered to you, humbly and thankfully; and bringing forth fruit enduringly and increasingly. God has set dangers on all sides, that we may not shrink back, but may go onward in the one path, which leadeth unto Him. We might have

shrunk (who would not have shrunk ?) from coming to the all-Holy Mysteries, but that our Saviour saith, "Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood, ye have no life in you." Come then we *must*; and so, though with trembling hearts and faint steps, mistrusting ourselves, but trusting in GOD, we will come. We should mistrust our own weakness, but we should not mistrust GOD's strength. He invites, Who willeth not the sinner's death, Who warneth us that He may not strike, Who correcteth that He may not destroy. He, Who hath appointed us this narrow path, will keep therein those who will be kept. He Who has made this Heavenly Food needful for life, is able to keep us if we commit ourselves to Him. He Who giveth us His Son to dwell in us, how shall He not cleanse us wholly if we will be cleansed? He Who, by giving us that Heavenly Body, keepeth us members of that body whereof He is the Head, how shall He not keep those members of Himself? How should Satan have power over the members of Christ? He will make each Communion a means to enable you to receive the next more devoutly and profitably. I have dwelt upon the awefulness of the Communion, not to deter any from partaking of

It, but that *all* may be more careful *how* they partake of It. None is excluded who excludeth not himself. "Holy things are for the holy," and whoso will not be holy must depart. Men must part with their sins or Christ.

IV.

THE Holy Eucharist is a great gift, greater than our weak, yea, than our highest, thoughts can reach to. But we may not think of it only as a gift, *i.e.*, not as that which if we use, it is a blessing, and if we use it not, we are none the worse for, except that we lose it. Such cannot be the case with any of God's gifts; for whoso despiseth the gifts of God, despiseth Him, and no one can despise Him and go unpunished. Our daily earthly bread is the gift of God, yet such a gift, as if we were to go without it, our bodily life would perish. Even so is it with the life of our souls, "He that hath the Son hath life;" but it follows, "He that hath not the Son hath *not* life." Whoso, in faith, receiveth the Holy Eucharist, with It receiveth Him Who is Life; and whoso receiveth It not, and by reason of his age may receive It, hath not life. Our Lord, Who saith the

one, saith the other also. He saith, "Whoso eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood hath Eternal Life;" and He saith also, "Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood, ye have no life in you." *He* Himself has given this awful seal to both His Sacraments. He said, "Except a man be born of Water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," and so He compelled us to come in by the way which He had appointed, Baptism "of Water and the Spirit." Now that we have been brought into that kingdom, He hath said we cannot remain members of it, cannot have life, unless in His Sacrament we feed on Him. It is not I, it is not a messenger or minister of God who tells you this; it is God Himself, it is Christ Who died for you, Who telleth you, that unless you seek for the life which He gives, in the way in which He has appointed for you, if you seek for health, or strength, or salvation, in any ways of your own, yea, if you seek for Him where He is not to be found, where He has not taught you to seek for Him, you have no life in you; you are already dead, having separated yourselves from Him Who is Life.

V.

HE will increase your longing after that Heavenly Feast, He will make you more and more members of Him of Whom you partake, more fruitful branches of that Vine Whose richness He pours into you, richer in faith, stronger amid temptation, more victorious against Satan and yourselves. He will carry you on "from strength to strength, until you appear before" Him, the GOD of gods, and He remove you from His table here to His glorious Presence in Heaven, from faith to sight, from longing to bliss, from spiritual union to see Him eye to eye, from these broken and occasional refreshments to be for ever with Him your LORD. Only come hither with hearty repentance, with lively faith, with real charity, with thankful remembrance of His Death, with steadfast purpose to amend, and as thou drawest near, and art about to partake of the Heavenly Food, cast thyself more wholly upon GOD.

Pray Him to deepen all that He would have in thee, and to take away all He would not have. Pray Him to increase thy longing, thy sense of need, of thy emptiness and His exceeding

fulness, and He will fill thee, He will give thee all thou needest, He will give thee Himself.

VI.

COME trusting in GOD, that He Who giveth thee His Son will with Him freely give thee all things. Approach as if thou wert coming to the Saviour's side, to drink from It that "Blood which was shed for you and for many for the remission of sins;" and after thou hast received It, beware how thou again profane thyself, whom GOD has so hallowed. "Sin no more, lest a worse thing happen unto thee." Guard diligently that Holy Thing committed to thee. Return home, like the shepherds who had seen the Saviour, Christ the LORD—glorifying and praising GOD for all the things which they had seen and heard; be very jealous over thyself, and every inlet and approach of sin, over everything which had anything to do with any of thy former sins, over any little acts or thoughts of covetousness, or worldliness, or excess, or lightness of mind, or jesting, or thoughtlessness. For it may be that Satan, if he sees thee strengthened thus mightily in the armour of GOD, will not at once assail thee violently, but

will tempt thee to lay aside thine armour piece by piece, until he shall have "made thee naked to thy shame before thine enemies," and slay thee. But as thou art strengthened, walk strongly; "resist the devil, and he will flee from thee;" "draw nigh unto God, and He will draw nigh unto thee." Thou canst not again become what thou wast before; thou must be better or worse. Go on in the strength of that Heavenly Food unto the Mount of God; so shall our Lord's words be fulfilled in thee, "Whoso eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood hath Eternal Life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

VII.

WHEN the disciples listened to JESUS, their hearts burned within them: when, although unknown, they shewed love to Him, and "constrained Him to tarry with them," He made Himself known unto them. Christ is with us now, everywhere, in His poor, sick, naked, hungry, thirsty.

There is yet another and larger teaching of this history, which extends over the whole life, relates to every Communion, to every fervent prayer which any, by GOD's grace, prays, to every melting

of the hard heart, to every drawing of the soul to serve GOD better. It is the great need of *active diligence not to part with Jesus*, when He has once been near us, and visited our souls. On this depend growth in grace, the good Pleasure of GOD, the Love of Christ, holiness, everlasting bliss, salvation. "Jesus made as though He would have gone further. But they constrained Him, saying, Abide with us, for it is toward evening."

And what should we do when, in this fleeting world, nothing, not even Virtue, abideth at one stay? When grace, good feelings, holy thoughts, earnest purposes, good desires, kindled longings after Him, the soul's All, motions of His good Spirit, His Presence in the soul, Heavenly visitations, His gracious calls, stillness of our passions, inward prayer, joy in Him, all seem like gleams from heaven, flashing on the darkness of our souls and ever ready to depart; what is our hope? What should be our hope, when all fleeteth, but in Him Who Alone abideth? What when "nothing continueth at one stay," but in Him Who Alone is our Stay? "And now, LORD! what is my hope? Truly, my hope is even in Thee." "Abide with us, LORD." To this very end does Jesus

make as if He would go further, that we may stay Him, and reverently say to Him, "I will not let Thee go, unless Thou bless me"; or with the Spouse, "I have found Him Whom my soul loveth; I held Him and would not let Him go."

VIII.

HE is teaching us to make Him in all things, our End; to live the hidden life in Him; in all things to behold Him; to count all things loss or gain, as they fix our hearts on Him or divide them with Him; to desire nothing in comparison with Him; nothing, if need be, but Him; to make His Cross our badge, our glory, and our stay; His Wounds, our meat and drink; His Will, our only will; His Passion, our defence; His Death, our life; His Resurrection, the Source of our life, our one endless and unfailing Hope. And with these calls He is vouchsafing to us new strength and life, to carry us, by His indwelling, all-empowering Might, to the end of our being, our hopes, our fears, our sufferings, our disappointments, the faintnesses of our heart, the fadings of earth's brightest joys, even to the Mount of GOD, there not to hear of Him only "with the hearing

of the ear," in "the still small Voice," but, with unveiled face, for ever to behold, for ever to adore, for ever love Himself.

IX.

JESUS comes to the souls and bodies of them who long for Him and prepare the narrow mansions of their hearts for such a Guest, not "as a stranger, a wayfaring man, that turneth aside to tarry for a night." He cometh to abide with them who say to Him, "LORD, abide with me." The special Eucharistic Presence departeth after a time, but only for us, if we will, anew to receive It. Jesus abides in the soul, to dwell therein more, as it allows itself to be enlarged by Him to receive Him. Prepare your souls, and so receive Him Who is your Life; He will dwell in you, and Himself will strengthen you: in darkness, He will enlighten you, for He is Light: in passion, He, the All-Holy, will cool the fever of your blood, or rouse you to take the arms of prayer, at what time the tempter is wont to assault. He, the living Coal, which the Seraph touched not with his hands, will be a living Fire of love within you. Nay, even if unhappily (which GOD forbid!) the soul should

have been surprised by its ever-watchful enemy—sad as this is beyond all sadness—JESUS will not forsake the soul, though it has forsaken Him. Repentance will restore the forfeited grace and the union with GOD and JESUS. Each devout Communion will be fresh life and light and fire of love : each will be fresh power to love Him, and to contain His love, yea, Himself, eternally ; and when the awful hour of dissolution comes, He will not, for His Mercy's sake, “ loose His hold on us, Who has fed us with His living Body, and given us His Atoning Blood to drink, and has commingled Himself with us and us with Him.” “ Flesh and heart will fail ; but He will be the Strength of our heart and our Portion for ever.”

X.

COME we with true, and honest, and humble hearts ; and what in us is lacking, He Who gave us what we have, will supply. Be we in earnest with ourselves, and He, our compassionate Saviour, will have pity upon our infirmities. It is He Who calleth us. Arise we and come to Him. He giveth us our longings, more and more, week by week, to possess Himself, to be made one with

Him ; He giveth us our fears, lest coming unprepared, we miss the blessing we long for, and entail loss on ourselves. By both He is drawing us to Himself, and knitting us more closely to Him, making us such as He can dwell in, and dwelling in those whom He has prepared.

XI.

WE look not only to behold Him, but to receive Him ; not to receive Him only, but that He should dwell in us, our spirit united with His Spirit ; our bodies hallowed by His Presence, His dwelling-place ; we ourselves "members of His Body, of His Flesh, and of His Bones." Well, then, might we shrink back with awe and fear and amazement at ourselves, that we, such as too many of us know ourselves to be, or to have been, should receive Him in the ruined and desolate mansion of our souls. Well might we fear to think of His dwelling there, amid what company ! of thoughts of self, or worldliness, or pride, or vanity, or fretfulness, or all the leprous and defiled brood, entailed by former sin. Well might we fear, but that He will be present, not

as a Judge, but as a Redeemer ; not to condemn, but to save ; not to visit our offences, but to cleanse us from them. He cometh to us, Himself our Physician, to heal ; a Fountain to cleanse ; Light in our blindness ; Riches in our poverty ; a Robe to hide our nakedness and shame ; Himself Forgiveness and Reconciliation and Sanctification and Redemption ; Himself the Salvation our eyes wait for ; Himself undefiled by our pollutions, and (as once when with us in the flesh) cleansing them by His touch ; not partaking of our decay but “restoring our waste places,” that He may dwell there, and by indwelling, restore them.

We need then have no fear, save that we should lose our fear. For where there is fear, there is watchfulness and humble approach and earnest caution ; and where these are, there is GOD’S favour, Who “despiseth not a broken and contrite heart.” And this fear and reverent awe will, if we be watchful, increase with increasing devotion and more frequent Communion. For the more any know GOD, the more must they stand in awe of Him. The nearer and more habitually any approach Him, the more will He be present with them, with His gifts, as well of love as of “holy fear.”

XII.

HOWEVER little any may know of the reality of GOD'S Presence in the House of Prayer, or that our LORD is indeed in the midst of us, more truly and fully present than we ourselves are, or however poor the thoughts of the best must be of the Ineffable Mystery of the true Presence of His Body and Blood in the Holy Eucharist, it must be some ground of awe (which all feel), that this is indeed the House of GOD, that That is the Sacrament of His Body and Blood. If the whole soul becomes, by GOD'S transforming grace, more reverent, this reverence too will deepen with increased Communion and deepening Years. The first awe from without, unless it deepen into habitual reverence, wears off, and leaves the very surface cold and irreverent.

XIII.

OUR safety is not in keeping away from our Redeemer, but in drawing near more lowly, and guarding ourselves more watchfully. *They* incur the risk of offending by not "discerning the LORD'S Body" beforehand, who remit in their diligence in preparing their hearts, examine themselves lightly,

are not careful to know what evil there is in them, or how it is to be healed, or look for no benefit, not on account of their own unworthiness, but as though, if worthy, Heaven were not open to them to partake. *They* risk at the time, who labour not to impress their minds with the awfulness of the service whereat they present themselves; who gather not up their minds with all their power for this one thought, Whom they are to receive, and what for themselves or for others they need, and seek not that their unstayedness should be fixed by Him.

XIV.

THE weekly union with your Lord will become the very centre, as it is the fulness, of your life. Your life will be spent either in thankfulness for the past, or longing for His coming Gift. And since the more we ask, the more He giveth, Who is "always more ready to give than we to pray."

And since the soul longs more earnestly when it is gathered around one object, it is often best to pray for some one grace. Desire this *with your whole heart*. So you will come to Holy Communion, not only with the general hope of receiving grace and strength, but with the strong desire to

be strengthened in this one grace, wherein ye are now weakest. With this prayer, offer, on your part, by His grace, to cut off this or that way of acting, wherein your infirmity shews itself, to do firmly this or that which it is now hard to do. Then examine thyself carefully in the week following, on this point. Persevere in this, make this thy special examination before each Communion, and by the grace of GOD you will gain much, in earnestness of purpose, and growth in grace.

XV.

GROWTH in grace is mostly slow. We seem often, for a time, rather to have come to a fuller knowledge of our own miseries and infirmities than to be conquering them. The Light, which by God's Mercy has streamed in, rather shews the depth of our darkness. The more we strive, the more we feel the weight which is against us. "Can it be?" people often think, "can the Food of Angels, the fire of love, the Coal from the Altar, be for hearts so cold, so lifeless, so feelingless?" Thoughts such as these will naturally arise, when more frequent Communions have been restored. It is right, they should. They are a confession on the part of our fallen, although restored, nature.

that it is an awful thing to draw near to the holiness of Almighty GOD. In some, such fears may be at once overborne by love. An ardent longing for the love of God, or the humble fear of losing any gift of His, may bear the soul beyond all other fear. Such dare approach, because they dare not turn away. They dare not willingly part for a time with that which makes them "one with Christ." And these too are right. We come to the Physician, not because we are whole, but because we are sick; we come to Him, our Riches, because we are "poor and needy"; we come to the Fountain of Light because we are blind; to "the Fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness" because we are defiled.

Still more commonly, there will be both hopes and fears; and people will be drawn both ways. Humility will both draw and withdraw them. Both may, in turns, seem to be presumption: to hold back, if GOD indeed invited us; or to press in, if we are not such as He would bid.

"It is my Maker—dare I stay?
My Saviour—dare I turn away?"

What, then? Are such fears, if overruled, to be wholly disregarded? Have they no office for us?

Not so. All, fear or love, hope and awe, sense of sin and of helplessness, and longing to be other than we are, all should have one issue, to draw us more closely, yet more reverently, to Him, in Whom alone awe and fear can be hushed, helplessness be stayed, sin be blotted out, infirmities healed, He the one Source and Aim of all holiness and hope and love. It is a pious prayer of a good man : "Most Sweet Jesu, Whom Zacchæus received with joy into his house ; and Whom the centurion, out of reverence, did not dare to invite under his roof : have mercy upon me, that I may ever combine the feelings of them both, love and fear, whensoever I receive Thee into my house." It is, then, at once a ground for earnest pausing and entering into ourselves, that any of us has these fears. For the fears are of GOD. It is an awful thing to come into GOD'S Presence. And each nearer approach to His Presence has, and ought to have, awe and reverent fear. His Presence is awful to Cherubim and Seraphim. Filled though they be with His Knowledge and His Love, they still veil their faces as they hover around His Throne, and sing their unceasing hymn to the ever-blessed Trinity, which we here faintly echo, "Holy, Holy, Holy, LORD GOD of Hosts."

The Blessed Angels are not pure in His Sight, and so must stand with awe before Him Who alone is Holy, "how much less man, that is a worm? and the son of man, which is a worm?"

XVI.

FEAR not, lest ye should not be able to persevere. The gift we seek, if we seek it earnestly, will itself bind us fast with the sure cords of love, and uplift our hearts, and knit them unto Him. It is "Life." What then should frequent Communion be, but manifold, multiplied Life? Fear we not that His Bounty is exhaustible, His Fulness cloying, His Love bounded. It was only to faithless hearts that the manna seemed "light bread." We come to Him, "in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," in Whom "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead," Whose "Mercies fail not, but are new every morning." Where should be the limits of His Love, Who is Infinite, or of His Mercy to us, Who, being GOD, for our sakes became as we, that we might be as Himself?

He is "the Bread of Life" to all, as He upholdeth all in life. Yet, as the life of the Archangel

is higher than the life of the worm, although both are upheld in life by Him, so has He, in the stores of His Sacramental Grace, a fulness of Life and Love, an Ineffable Presence, "torrents of pleasure," a soul-subduing, awful nearness, and transporting union, as different from that which He bestows at earlier stages, as the Archangel's life from that of us poor defiled worms of earth.

XVII.

CHRIST dwells in us in a twofold way, Spiritually and Sacramentally. By His Spirit, He makes us the temples of GOD : by His Body and Blood, He is to our bodies also a source of life, incorruption, immortality. "Ye are the temples of the Holy Ghost." As you would reverence the Church of GOD, so, and much more, reverence yourselves as His Temples. As you would reverence the Holy Sepulchre, so and yet more, reverence yourselves, your own bodies, which, our Church says, have been "made clean by His Body, and washed with His most Precious Blood." Reverence, beforehand, your souls and bodies. If ye believe Christ and His Word, ye know that, when ye do come to the Holy Eucharist ye come to the COMMUNION

of the Body and Blood of Christ. Were He Himself visibly present, and ye to come into His Presence, ye would not just before ye come into His Presence defile your imaginations, or whether men know of it or no, first fever your own frames, and then, in a way which Christ forbids and hates, remove that feverishness.

He, the Only-Begotten Son of GOD, for you made Man, giveth Himself to you to dwell in you, and make you one with Him. This He does for you in time, while you are yet in this clay, absent from Him, seeing Him not, save by the eye of faith; touching Him with the hands of the heart, and if ye will, ye, by that inner touch, "taste and see that the LORD is gracious."

XVIII.

PAST sin excludes no penitent sinner from any nearness to Christ. Present weakness or sickness hinders none from coming to the Physician of Life. We come to the Physician, not because we are whole, but because we are sick. But ye must not come to this immediate Presence of Christ, the Church tells you, without "true repentance for past sins, and a steadfast purpose to lead a new life." Ye must not return "from the sky to the

sty." To what end to pretend again and again to desire that the soul should be washed in Christ's Precious Blood, and then ever anew to return to the "wallowing in the mire"? To what end, against GOD'S Word, first to "drink the Cup of the LORD," and then "the Cup of devils"? And what else is it than to drink the Cup of devils, to be giddy with the fumes of passion, to be out of yourselves, to lose control over yourselves, to do in feverish haste what GOD forbids, what defiles yourselves, what ye are forthwith ashamed of, and hate, and would gnash with your teeth that ye had done? And what are ye yourselves, who do these things? What are ye wasting in yourselves? GOD the Word, became Flesh, to redeem you.

XIX.

THE Holy Eucharist has a heavenly sweetness, the foretaste of the eternal, against the destructive sweetness of this world's pleasures. It has sweetness, because Christ is sweet to the soul; it is "healthful grace," because Christ is our health and the Author of grace; it is the "defence of faith," because Christ is "the Author and Finisher of our faith"; it is "the Food of Immortality,

and the hope of the Resurrection, the Pledge of eternal health, and the sovereign Preservative against death," because Christ is all these, and all besides; "our Redemption and Salvation, the Resurrection and the Life."

XX.

HAD the Holy Eucharist been only a figure, there would be nothing whereof It could be a Communion. True, what we see, in that it is broken, is an image of His Body which was slain; and in that it is poured out, is an image of His Blood which was shed. That which is seen is an image of the reality which is unseen. Yet GOD says not by St. Paul it is an image, but it is "the Communion of the Body of Christ." But in order to be a Communion of It, there must be That of which it is the Communion. When we, too, are taught to pray that we "may so eat the Flesh of CHRIST, and drink of His Blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by His Body and our souls washed through His Most Precious Blood," we mean a real, actual, though Sacramental and Spiritual drinking, we do not mean a figurative cleansing by a figurative eating and drinking.

XXI.

FAITH regards not things visible, only or chiefly ; as it regarded not the outward dress of our LORD, save when it touched the hem of His Garment, and virtue went out of Him, and healed those who touched in faith. Yea rather, faith forgets things outward in His unseen Presence. What is precious to the soul is its Redeemer's Presence, and its union with Him. It acknowledges, yet is not anxious about the presence of the visible symbols. It pierces beyond the veil. It sees Him Who is invisible, and receives Him in the ruined mansion of the soul ; and by Him is strengthened ; in Him has peace ; in His Presence has the pledge of forgiveness, and by everlasting union with its LORD and its GOD. Its own as a truth of fact, and as taught in GOD's Word, the presence of the outward symbols. Its joy, the contentment of its longings, its hope, its strength, its stay, its peace, its life, is of the Presence of its LORD.

XXII.

CHRIST redeems us not, to part with us ; He cometh not to us, to part from us ; He cometh

to abide with us, if we will have Him. He will come to us in holiness, righteousness, sanctification, redemption, if we will long for Him—if in faith and charity we will receive Him. He will cleanse your dross, slake your feverishness, chase away your foul thoughts, re-create your decay, drive off Satan, gather you up into Himself. He will strengthen you against temptation, lift you up above those miserable, maddening, seducing pleasures of sense, and give you a foretaste of heavenly sweetness, of blissful calm, of spiritual joy, of transporting love, of unearthly delight, in His own ever-blessed, ever-blessing Presence. Martyrs of old went to their last conflict “fortified,” St. Cyprian says, “with the protection of the Body and Blood of Christ.” By His Body and Blood will Christ prepare *you* for *your* conflict. Satan stands in awe of you.

XXIII.

IT was His last parting act, the anticipation of His Passion, His Testament in His Blood, His Gift to His own in the stead of His own Visible Presence, a new revelation, applying and embodying in act what He had before taught,

“Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood, ye have no life in you.” “Who-so eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood hath everlasting life.” The solemnity of the words is enforced by the almost unvarying uniformity with which they are recorded. God has appointed that four inspired writers should deliver to us the words of Institution; they repeat with an awful oneness, His action, His blessing, His gift, His words. St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. Paul, to whom our LORD revealed it from Heaven, say alike: “He took bread, He blessed, He brake, He gave it. He said, Take, eat, this is My Body.” “He took the cup, He blessed, He gave it to them, He said, This is My Blood of the New Testament.” The very words, “This is My Blood of the New Testament,” are framed upon those whereby the Old Covenant at Mount Sinai was sanctioned through the sprinkling of real blood of a sacrifice, appointed by GOD to shadow out the Atoning Blood which was shed upon the Cross, “And Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the Covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words.” Reverence, for the Word of God requires that we should not tamper

with its apparent meaning, or any preconceived notions of our own.

XXIV.

OUR Blessed LORD, through those words "This is My Body," teaches us that which it concerns us to know, His own precious Gift, the means of union and incorporation with Himself, whereby He hallows us, nourishes our souls to life everlasting, re-forms our nature and conforms it to His own; re-creates us to newness of life; binds and cements us to Himself as Man, washes, beautifies, kindles our minds, strengthens our hearts, is a Source of life within us, joining as to Himself our Life, and giving us the victory over sin and death.

XXV.

WE know not the manner of His Presence, save that it is not according to the natural Presence of our LORD'S Human Flesh, which is at the Right Hand of God; and therefore it is called Sacramental. But it is a Presence without us, not within us only; a Presence by virtue of our LORD'S words, although to us it becomes a Saving Presence, received to our salvation,

through our faith. It is not a Presence simply in the soul of the receiver, as "Christ dwells in our hearts by faith"; or as, in acts of Spiritual, apart from Sacramental Communion, we by our longings, invite Him into our souls. But while the consecrated elements, as we believe (because our LORD and GOD the Holy Ghost in Holy Scripture call them still after consecration by the names of their natural substances, and do not say that they cease to be such,)—while the consecrated elements remain in their natural substances, still, since our LORD says "This is My Body," "This is My Blood," the Church of England believes that "under the form of Bread and Wine," so consecrated, we "receive the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ." And since we receive them, they must be there, in order that we may receive them. We need not then (as the School of Calvin bids men) "ascend into Heaven to bring down Christ from above." For He is truly present, for us truly to receive Him to the Salvation of our souls, if they be prepared by repentance, faith, love, through the cleansing of His Spirit, for His Coming.

XXVI.

“HE offered Himself as a Sacrifice for us, Priest at once, and “the Lamb of GOD which taketh away the sins of the world,” instituting that Sacrament which was to be the memorial of His Death, and whereby we are to shew forth that Death to the Father, and plead Its merits to Him, He set forth that meritorious Death in the self-same words, “This is My Body which is given *for* you.” “This Cup is the New Testament in My Blood, which is shed *for* you,” (as S. Matthew adds) “for the remission of sins,” He sets forth His Body as broken for us; His Blood, as separated from the Body, as shed for us. In this, the highest Act of our devotion, the centre of our spiritual life, He appointed that, with the eye of faith, we should see His Body, as so broken; His Blood as so shed for us.

XXVII.

I WOULD set before you the doctrine of the Holy Eucharist on both sides. And this, both because some looking for too much clearness in their intellectual conceptions of Divine Mysteries, are

tempted to undue speculation in defining the mode of the Sacred Presence of our LORD ; and others, practically, can hardly be thought to believe any real Presence at all ; else they would not approach, as they do, so unrepenting and so careless. It is a temptation, to require too precise theories, to desire to be able to state clearly to the understanding that which is beyond all understanding. And men *can* conceive that the elements after consecration are only what they seem and what they were before, not the vehicle of an Unseen Presence ; or, again, they can imagine that they are nothing but an outward show, and that the Body of Christ *alone* is present ; they can forget either the Unseen Presence or the visible form, but they have difficulty in receiving the thought which the Church of England suggests in her words : “ Of the due receiving of the Blessed Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ *under* the form of bread and wine ; ” that the sacramental bread and wine “ remain still in their very natural substances ; ” and yet that under these poor outward forms, “ His creatures of bread and wine, ” “ the faithful verily and indeed take and receive the Body and Blood of Christ. ” And yet Holy Scripture, taken in its plainest meaning, affirms both that the out-

ward elements remain, and still that there is the Real Presence of the Body of Christ.

XXVIII.

CHRIST hath said, "This is My Body"; He saith not, by what mode. We believe what He, the Truth, saith. Truth cannot lie. How He bringeth it to pass, we may leave to His Omnipotency. It is a law which He hath impressed upon physical nature, that two bodies cannot be in the same place at the same time. And yet we receive, without doubting, that our LORD, in His Spiritual Body, passed, on the morning of the Resurrection, through the sealed tomb. For the Angels rolled away the stone to show that He *was* risen. He passed through the closed doors, so that the disciples thought that "it was a Spirit," as He had passed before, through the doors of the Virgin's womb. We do not stay to inquire in what way the substance of His Body passed through the substance of the closed doors. Enough that GOD has said it. As it passed, it must have been in the same place, penetrating, but not displacing them. Still less need we ask, by what law of nature that Sacramental Presence can be, which

is not after the order of nature, but is above nature.

XXIX.

THE Holy Eucharist is plainly the closest union of man with GOD. Through the Incarnation GOD took our nature, took the Manhood into GOD. But although we had that unspeakable nearness to Himself in that the Co-eternal Son, GOD *of* GOD, GOD *with* GOD, took not the nature of Angels, but took the Manhood into GOD, this was a gift to our whole race. It was a gift which, by its very nature must overflow to us individually ; yet still it required a further act of GOD's condescension fully to apply it to each one of us. GOD the Word became Flesh. Yet hereby He was in His Human Nature one *with* us ; we were not, as yet, made "one with Him."

XXX.

WE could not be united to Him, save by His communicating Himself to us. This He willed to do by indwelling in us through His Spirit ; by making us through the Sacrament of Baptism, members of His Son ; by giving us, through the

Holy Eucharist, not in any carnal way, but really and spiritually, the Flesh and Blood of the Incarnate Son, whereby "He dwelleth in us, and we in Him; He is one with us, and we with Him." Through these, He imparteth to us the Life which He Himself is. This is the comfort of the penitent, the joy of the faithful, the Paradise of the holy, the Heaven of those whose conversation is in Heaven, the purity of those who long to be partakers of His holiness, the strengthening of man's heart, the renewal of the inward man, the fervour of Divine love, spiritual peace, kindled hope, assured faith, burning thankfulness—that our LORD JESUS CHRIST, not in figure, but in reality, although a spiritual reality, does give Himself to us, does come to be in us.





After Holy Communion.

I.

IT is a *real* fear, lest we injure ourselves in our every approach to GOD. We cannot have been more immediately in GOD'S Presence, and be what we were before. Every time we kneel before Him in prayer, in our private devotions, in the service of the week, on the LORD'S Day; every time we enter this holy place, much more on each occasion that we partake of His Body and Blood, we become other than we were before. We rise up different from what we knelt down. As we were there careless or earnest; reverent or irreverent; fixed in heart even amid distraction, or giving ourselves to lukewarmness; penitent or impenitent, we arose with a blessing, or the further from GOD, and the more "nigh unto cursing." We cannot

escape. People only increase their own difficulty by infrequency. The more infrequent people's devotions, the more irreverent are they. For their very infrequency is an irreverence, and deprives them of GOD's Blessing. If we are cleansing our hearts diligently, He will make the mansion of our souls fit for His reception at all times. If men will not part with their sins, they are never fit for His Presence, here or in Heaven. It is not then to keep us back from approaching to GOD, that these fears are placed within us. "We are not come unto the mountain which might be touched, and which burned with fire," and of which GOD charged, "Set bounds about the mount and sanctify it, charge the people lest they break through unto the LORD to gaze, and many of them perish." Our privilege, although on that account the more awful, is that we *must* draw near, *lest* we perish. GOD putteth not these fears into the hearts of any, to keep them away from Him, our true Life ; but that we may so approach Him, that we "may have life, and have it more abundantly," He gives us fear before we approach Him, that approaching Him "in reverence and godly fear," we may be before Him without fear ; since, when we fear, He will say to us, "Fear not."

II.

WHAT is done in His Name, He is the Doer of it. Man, as we know, visibly poureth water on the child or adult, in the Name of the Holy Trinity ; man placeth his hand on the person to be confirmed, or on the penitent, or on the oblations with the words of Consecration, "This is My Body," "This is My Blood" ; and Jesus baptises with the Holy Ghost ; Jesus enlarges His Gift of the Holy Ghost ; Jesus forgiveth the sins of the penitent and washes them away in His own Blood ; Jesus makes the elements of this world His Body and Blood. These are such common everyday doings of His, that, as in the workings of GOD in His visible creation, people forget what His individual love is. He still taketh up the children in His Arms, one by one, and blesseth them. One by one He took us out of our state by nature, and Himself, the Baptiser, made us members of Himself, integral parts of His Mystical Body, so that, without us, that Mystical Body would not be what it is. One by one He fed us anew with His own Body and Blood ; He gives Himself to us, one by one, to take unseen into our hands, before we lay Him up in our breasts.

Our senses report nothing to us, any more than they do the Presence of GOD, in Whom "we live and move and are." We walk about in Almighty GOD, in the Ocean of Almighty Love. He is closer and more inward to us than the air which blows upon us, and sustains our animal life. Yet we discern Him not. It needs but an act of faith that we are in the Ocean of GOD's Being, and we seem to be immersed in It. It is closer to us than those who throng upon us in the crowded streets. We seem almost to feel His pressure. It severs us by His Presence from all besides. We are as motes, playing, moving, joying in the Sun of His love. Yet we perceive it not, except by the eyes of faith. We know that, had we power of vision, we could see Him in this Church, just as the Blessed Angels see Him, as the Seraphim adore Him in the Highest Heavens in all the Majesty of His Glory, in that Beatific Vision, for which we were created. We know it, because He has said, "In Him we live and move and are." But so He has said, "This is My Body," "This is My Blood," and by His saying He effects what He said.

III.

THEY risk after Holy Communion, who think that, when their thanksgiving is finished, and they have been dismissed with the Blessing, their duties are ended, and return to their homes to be the same as before, forgetting, or not carefully cherishing, "what great things GOD hath done for them ;" Who hath come to them ; with Whom, if they were found worthy, they were made one, and He with them ; Whom they bear about them : who watch not over themselves, lest they defile by any taint of sin what GOD has hallowed ; who, having been strengthened, waste the talent they have received and are content to walk as feebly and irresolutely as before ; who, having been with their LORD, seek not to remain with Him, but enter with as much eagerness as before into the distractions of things of sense.

IV.

WE have been brought near : and our only safety is to remain very nigh unto Him, under His very Shadow, yet drawing nigher and nigher to Him. Our only fear should be, lest we "draw nigh unto Him with our lips, while our hearts are far from

Him," lest we be near in bodily presence but afar in spirit ; our bodies in His Courts, our hearts in the world ; our bodies touching the Holy Elements of His Body and Blood, our souls aliens from His Life, His Virtue, and the might of His Sacraments.

v.

IT is a great mystery of His Love, that, being for ever, in His Human Body at the Right Hand of GOD, He should so "delight to be among the sons of men"; that He should invent, so to speak, another mode of existence of His Body and Blood, a spiritual existence, in order to be with us, to be with each one of us, to be so wholly with each one of us, as if He were with none besides. It is a miracle, the most marvellous of miracles ; but a miracle for which we have His Word, Who is the Truth Itself.

vi.

WHY should we think it a strange thing to worship our Redeeming LORD, wherever He says that He is to be found? We do not think that we are localising the Infinite GOD, if we conceive of Him in space, and adore Him *in* the highest

heavens. Yet He comprehendeth the heavens, not they Him, the Infinite. We do not think that we are tying down our LORD'S Divine Nature, if we believe that He, our LORD and GOD, is, as He has promised, specially present where two or three are gathered together in His Name, in our churches, or in the mountains and caves and dens of the earth, in the prison house or the Catacombs. We think it no derogation to Him, the Infinite GOD, that He did not abhor the Virgin's womb, or that He lay in the manger amid the brute cattle, or was bound in swaddling clothes. Believing as we believe, we should, with the Magi, have fallen down and worshipped the speechless Infant, knowing Him to be GOD, the Word. We should have thought His raiment, as Man, no hindrance to our adoring Him. Why then should we think it too strange a thing for His marvellous condescension, that He should now give us "His Blessed Body and Blood under the form of bread and wine"? Or how should His Body which He gives us not be His living, life-giving Body? Or how should His life-giving Body be apart from His Godhead, which makes It life-giving? Or how, since His Godhead is present there, should we not adore? We do not adore the Sacrament,

as, when He was upon the earth, we should not have adored His raiment, even although the touch of it conveyed the hidden virtue from Him, the Source of life and healing. But Himself, where-soever or howsoever He is present, we are bound to adore. Our duty to Him as His creatures, our love to Him as our Redeemer, our hopes in Him as our Deliverer from the wrath to come, constrain us to worship Him, to plead to Him, with our whole heart, and mind, and soul, and strength.

VII.

GOD became Man for love of us ; GOD having become Man, became as it were our Companion ; GOD-Man, having ascended to prepare a place for us, giveth Himself to us for Food. A single Communion is Angel's food ; it might be an Angel's joy for all Eternity. But where are the thanks ? Nay, daily, hourly, 'momentarily, Jesus says, " If a man love Me, he will keep My Commandments, and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode in him." GOD dwell in these houses of clay, in our sin-stained souls ! Yet where are the thanks ?

VIII.

WE do not see GOD, as we hope to see Him in Heaven, we but seldom feel His Presence, and yet GOD, Who filleth all things, Whose Presence space is, really, actually, substantially, dwells in this human soul of ours, which He created for Himself. And yet even of those who believe it, how few, and how seldom, are their thoughts of it! What object of anxiety, what pursuit, what interest, does not more occupy the soul than the thought of the Holy Inmate within it, that is the dwelling-place of the All-Holy Trinity? What is that Sacrament whereby, in the words we so often hear, "we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us, we are one with Christ and Christ with us"? Were this vouchsafed to us once only in our lives, had we to look forward to it as one gift once given, what would men think of It, how prepare for It. But now that we can scarce count our Communion's past, it is thought much, if GOD have His half-hour of thanks, and men go and forget what manner of men they have been. Men think much, if GOD give them some sensible devotion. Who well-nigh habitually thinks that he cannot say one "Our Father," one "GOD be merciful to me a sinner,"

without the Holy Ghost? Yet the Psalmist says, "Blessed be GOD, Who hath not turned away my prayer nor His Mercy from me."

IX.

WHAT must be your value in the sight of GOD, that for you GOD the Father should have given His Only-Begotten Son; for you, Christ, GOD and Man, died! You He would knit as closely to Himself, as the food of the body is united with the body. If such be the earnest, what will be the fulness? If such are the rays of His love, seen through a glass darkly, what when we see "face to face"? If such be the closeness of union when ye are absent from the LORD, what when ye are "present" and "dissolved, and are with Christ"? If this be the gift of His goodness to you in "this body of death," when the "corruptible body presseth down the soul," what when your body too shall be spiritual, conformed to His glorious Body, which is glorious with the Glory of the Father, the Indwelling Godhead, Light Unapproachable?

X.

How can ye pray Him "to Whom all hearts are open," to cleanse your thoughts by the inspiration of His Holy Spirit, and then admit into your souls, the very dwelling-place of GOD, thoughts hateful to GOD, and, when ye come to yourselves, to yourselves also? He has made you, He says, "members" of Himself, "of His Flesh and of His Bones." He comes to dwell in you. Ye will not then utter, with lips which belong to Christ, words of profaneness, or of refined or coarse indecency, which ye would be shocked to utter in your parents' presence. Ye will not use the Word of GOD for display of some poor but profane cleverness. Ye will not corrupt others, nor add to the corruption of those for whom, with you, Christ died. Ye are not your own; ye are joined to Christ; ye will not profane what is not yours, but Christ's.





Increased Communion.

INCREASED Communion do require increased watchfulness, that we “receive not the grace of GOD in vain.” To what end to seek to be strengthened, if we use not the strength given? why come oftener near our LORD, if not to remain nearer to Him? why seek more frequent cleansing, if not to remain more cleansed? why pray Him again and again to come under our roof, if not to entertain Him reverently, to press Him to “abide with us,” to live in and on His Presence, to be with Him wherever we are, love Him with a more whole heart, Who, as He once gave Himself for us, so now often giveth Himself to us. Yet be we not dismayed, as though these things were too great for us. We see not at the time what great things GOD is doing for us. We need not fear that He will not do for us more than we dare ask or think.





Daily Communion.

WE cannot mostly, I suppose, imagine to ourselves, how we could daily thus be in Heaven and in our daily business here below, how sanctify our daily duties, thoughts, refreshment, so that they should be tinged with the hues reflected by our daily Heaven, not that Heavenly Gift be dimmed with our earthliness; how our souls should through the day shine with the glory of that Ineffable Presence to which we had approached to it with earth-dimmed souls. It must ever be so; we cannot know the Gift of God, if we forfeit It, we must cease mostly even to long for what we forego. We lose the very sense to understand It.





Less frequent Communion.

I.

IT may be that in past times of our negligence, He withdrew the Communion from us, and caused them to be infrequent, lest we should injure ourselves. Now He is everywhere calling men to be His, and those who are His, to be more wholly His. He is calling to new degrees of devotedness, devotion, love ; to higher, more self-denying, self-subduing service. He is setting a higher measure of grace before us, not of mere amiable, benevolent, kindly characters, fulfilling with ease or integrity the ordinary duties of life, and promoting works of charity or religion, as occasion offers.

II.

OH, what will that blessed Morn be, when, if "found in Him," we shall not behold Him, as now, afar off, but "face to Face," "in His

Beauty"; when He Who has tended us all our lives long, "called us to His Feet," made us members of His Body; He Who bore our sins upon the Cross, bore so long time with our frailties and wilfulness and sins, interceded for us, fed us with His own Body, washed us with His own Blood, was Himself our hidden Life,—He, our Redeemer, Mediator, Who wept for our sins and gave us tears to weep our own, Who became Man for our salvation, that He might make us gods,—shall appear to us openly, and call to His Side those who would at last be kept by Him and whom He has kept! Oh! how, in the dawn of that ineffable Brightness, shall we rejoice, if, when in this life He called us to a nearer communion with Him, and a more devoted service and stricter trying of our ways, and more exact obedience, we hearkened to His call! And yet that dawn shall be but the opening of an endless bliss, which we then shall not yet know; bliss which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man"; "the joy of our Lord," the joy which our Redeeming Lord and God hath in the Unity of the Eternal Godhead, and into which, the joy of our own Lord, His redeemed shall enter.

III.

HE Who alone can make more frequent Communion a blessing, and Who gave such strength to that one heavenly meal, whereby through forty days and forty nights of pilgrimage, He carried Elijah to His Presence at the Mount of God, can, if we be faithful and keep His Gift which we receive, give such abundant strength to our rarer Communion, that they shall carry us through our forty years of trial unto His own Holy Hill, and the Vision of Himself in bliss. Rather should those who long for It, fear that if It were given them, they might not be fitted for It, or if we have It, that we come short of the fulness of Its blessing, than use inconsiderate eagerness in Its restoration.

IV.

THERE is and ought to be a real consciousness that more frequent Communion should involve a change of life, more collectedness in GOD, more retirement, at times, from society, deeper consciousness of His Presence, more sacredness in our ordinary actions whom He so vouchsafeth to hallow, greater love for His Passion which we

celebrate, and carrying it about in strictness of self-rule and self-discipline, and self-denying love. And these graces, we know too well, come slowly. Better, then, for a time, forego what any would long for, or obtain It, where by GOD'S Bounty and Providence that Gift may be had, than by premature urgency "walk not charitably," or risk injury to a brother's soul.

v.

ASK we It of GOD, so will He teach us how to obtain It of those whom He has made its dispensers to us. They too have their responsibilities, not to bestow it prematurely, though they be involved in the common loss. Let us each suspect ourselves, not others ; the backward their own backwardness, the forward their own eagerness ; each habitually interpret well the other's actions and motives ; they who seek to partake more often of the Heavenly Food, honour the reverence and humility which abstains, and they who think it reverent to abstain, censure not as innovation the return to ancient devotion and love ; restore It, if we may, at such an hour of the day, when to be absent need not cause pain or perplexity, and may

make least distinction ; so while we each think all good of the other, may we all together, strengthened by the Same Bread, washed by the Same Blood, be led, in the Unity of the Spirit, and bond of peace and holiness of life, to that Ineffable Feast, where not, as now, in Mysteries, but face to Face, we shall ever see GOD, and be ever filled with His Goodness and His Love.

VI.

MEANTIME such of us, as long to be penitents, may well feel that we are less than the least of GOD'S mercies ; that we have already far more than we deserve ; (for whereas we deserve Hell, we have the antepast of Heaven ;) that the children's bread is indeed taken and given unto dogs ; that He, Who is undefiled, spotless, separate from sinners, cometh to be a Guest with us sinners ; and therein may we indeed find our comfort and our stay. For where He is, how should there not be forgiveness and life, and peace and joy ? What other hope need we, if we may indeed hope that we thereby dwell in Him, and He in us, He in us, if not by the fulness of His Graces, yet, with such at least as are fitted to our state, cleansing our

iniquities, and healing our infirmities, Himself the forgiveness we long for ; we in Him, in Whom if we be found in that Day, our pardon is for ever sealed, ourselves for ever cleansed, our iniquity forgiven and our sin covered.





Spiritual Communion.

I.

IF there should not be even weekly Communion, more grace, it is said, may be gained by a devout spiritual Communion than by a tepid, actual Communion. We find GOD so manifoldly; GOD never fails us.

Spiritual Communion is a very simple act. It is only to pray our LORD to come by His Spirit into your soul, since you cannot receive Him Sacramentally.

II.

LEARN, at least gradually, "Spiritual Communion" on other days, when thou mayest not receive Him in His Sacrament. All prayer calls

Him into the soul. "When I call upon my GOD," exclaims a Father in reverent awe, "I call Him into myself." "Thou callest upon GOD, when thou callest GOD into thee. Thou invitest Him, in a manner, into the mansion of thy heart." (S. Augustine.) But it is a more solemn act consciously to call our Lord into ourselves. For how can we call Him into a heart which has that within it which must offend His Holy Eyes? Yet we call Him Who cannot be defiled, to enter in and cleanse it. We call Him, on Whom this day we call, that "our sinful bodies may be made clean by His Body, and our souls washed through His most Precious Blood"; to abide and "cleanse more and more from our wickedness" us whom He has so cleansed. So shall thy sense of thy need of His Presence, and thy longing be increased: and thou shalt hunger more for that Righteousness for which thou daily longest. His Presence in thy soul shall become thy "Daily Bread"; and, daily "hungering," thou shalt be daily "filled." He shall "enlarge the narrow mansion of thy soul, that He may enter in." Communions in spirit detain JESUS in the soul which He hath visited, and prepare the soul to long for His fuller Presence.

III.

SPIRITUAL Communion is a blessed truth. It
might be made with every breath we breathe.





“As ye have therefore received Christ JESUS the LORD, so walk ye in HIM :

“Rooted and built up in HIM, and stablished in the Faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with Thanksgiving.”—COL. ii. 6, 7.





The Lord Jesus, the Great Shepherd of the
Sheep, lead thee evermore and feed thee,
till He bring thee to His
Everlasting Kingdom.
Amen.



Thanks be to God
for His unspeakable Gift.



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