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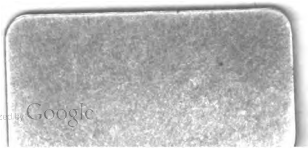


EUCCHARISTIC

DELIGHTS.



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Eucharistic Delights.

A TREATISE

ON THE

Blessed Sacrament of the Altar,

WITH

MEDITATIONS, PREPARATIONS FOR COM-
MUNION, AND THANKSGIVINGS AFTER
RECEPTION.

IN THREE BOOKS.

—
“ My delights were with the sons of men.”—Prov. viii. 31.
—

EDITED BY THE

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PREFACE.

THE following little work is an adaptation of part of a treatise entitled “*Deliciæ Sacræ*,” published at Antwerp in 1655, the portion now submitted to the reader being entitled “*Deliciæ Eucharisticæ quibus animus ante et post Sacram Communionem sese pascet et oblectet.*” Of the author, Marius de Landsheere, little or nothing transpires; but, that he was a Priest, is easily concluded from the pages of the work. The commentaries on the “*Anima Christi*” and on the “*Benedicite omnia opera*” appear for the first time in English; and, it is hoped, may prove useful to many in their preparation for, and thanksgiving after, this Divine Food of the Soul. Many

passages throughout the work breathe the greatest tenderness of spirit, and are the fruits of a mind that was full of devotion. The ordinary Forms for the preparation and thanksgiving of the Priest are inserted from the Missal ; together with a Paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer, from the "Paradise of the Christian Soul."

All Souls, 1874.

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BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

A FEW CONSIDERATIONS ON THE DIGNITY AND EXCELLENCE OF THIS MOST HOLY TABLE.

THAT the mind may clearly dwell in wonder on this Divine Feast, it must hold at first starting this primary truth, which no Catholic may doubt; viz., that the last supper which Christ instituted with His disciples on the night before His death, out of the depths of His most exceeding love for them, is here renewed; that in it the merciful and pitying Lord has made a memorial of His wondrous deeds; that Christ is received in it, and the memory of His Passion renewed; the mind filled with grace, and a pledge given us of future glory.

“This Table,” says S. Chrysostom,* “is the same as that, and hath nothing less, for it is not so, that Christ wrought that, and man this; but He doth this too. This is that upper chamber where they were then, and hence they went forth unto the Mount of Olives.” O Sacred Feast What would be the feeling in your mind, if Christ were again to invite you with His disciples to the same supper, which He then instituted at Jerusalem?

* Hom. xxviii, on S. Matt.

CHAPTER II.

THE GREATNESS OF THE HONOUR IS SET FORTH,
 WHEREWITH GOD TREATS THE HUMAN RACE,
 INVITED TO THESE DIVINE FEASTS.

BESIDES the incomprehensible love with which the Son of God follows us up in this Sacrament, when He brings us as guests to this most delicious, precious, and august feast; the best that God's infinite wisdom, power and goodness, can provide for any one—there is also this singular favour, bestowed on the human race, that it is only us men whom He would have partakers in this divine feast; for to which of the angels said He at any time, "Take, eat, This is My Body?" To which of the angels ever said He, "Take and drink, this is the Chalice of My Blood?"

Form, I pray you, in your mind some appearance of this feast. The venerable chiefs of the heavenly assembly stand round this divine table: their countenances fixed on the ground. The only guests are the eternal Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit, and the human race; the latter buried in sins, weak with infirmity, and often hateful to God by reason of continual perfidy. And the guest sits by that most august Majesty, whose very Sight alone makes the heavenly beings happy. (S. Luke xxii. 7-21.)

O if these illustrious spirits could be touched with emulation, how they would envy this so distinguished a privilege conferred only on the human race!

How Haman swelled with pride when he alone was invited to Queen Esther's feast with the King. How he boasted to his friends, "Esther the queen did let no man come in with the king unto the banquet that she had prepared, but myself; and to-morrow am I invited unto her also with the king." (Esther v. 12). But do you know, Haman who boast so much in this privilege of yours, who and what Queen Esther is? She is the servant of the slave led by the Assyrians into captivity, a daughter sprang from that Jewish race which you despise. (Esther ii. 6.) Do you know besides what this Jewess has had prepared for you in this feast? *Death*. Not only proscription of all your goods, but your death; a gallows for yourself, and for your children?—See now, reader, the difference between this invitation and that of Christ. No slave-girl advanced from slavery to the throne, but the most Holy Trinity, Eternal Fount and Origin of all nobility and majesty, invites us to these divine feasts; and that too alone: with no false or crafty mind either, as Esther did Haman, but with most sincere affection of heart, He again and again repeats,* "Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved:" eat my bread, this divine bread, and drink the wine which I have mixed for you, even my blood and Divinity. Thus He indulges His most tender love and runs to her embrace; the spouse thus witnessing; "His left hand is under my head, and His right hand doth embrace me." Songs of Solomon ii. 6.)

O happy couch, where we lie down in the

* Cant. v. 1, 5.

bosom of the most Holy Trinity! No death or destruction is prepared at these feasts; but each is given "that the guests may have *life*, and that they may have it more abundantly." (S. John x. 10.)

CHAPTER III.

THE MOST SINGULAR LOVE OF CHRIST IS SET FORTH, TOWARDS EACH MORTAL SEPARATELY, IN HOLY COMMUNION.

NOT only is the human race *generally*, here thought worthy of special honour before the rest of the creatures, but in God's wonderful benevolence, even each *individual*. For this is its property—that there is as much imparted to each one singly as to all together, even to all who have been partakers in this most holy Table from the beginning of the Christian dispensation, or will be to the end of the world. Say I will love Thee if an Assuerus be in that most august feast, and all the princes and satraps of the Medes and Persians be invited; and provide for any one of them as often; and send in as many banquets with royal hand, as were in all their feasts collected into one; how singular then would be the expression of love towards that one person. But yet this especial favour is conferred by Christ on you who communicate; for most truly does the Church sing in, "Lauda Sion Salvatorem." . . . "manet tamen Christus totus sub utraque specie."

“Sumit unus, sumunt mille : quautum isti tantum ille.”

O wonderful disclosure of divine love towards each man ! In truth any one, who is thus made equal in invitation with the rest, equals the good fortune of each, if possible, in love and gratitude. In this brief expression Salvian formerly drew up this sentiment ; “ One receives the same as all, whence it is that he who is put on equality with the rest, appears to be under greater obligation.”

CHAPTER IV.

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF THIS MOST DIVINE FOOD.

AS in human bodies, food supplies health and strength, so does spiritual food to the soul. On this subject that wise man Magnes writes to Thrasthenes, “ He who eats this flesh comes to the increase of divine virtues : that he may do and suffer bravely, things which seem to be above human strength. Very rightly argues S. Augustine,* “ If the bread prepared by the angel afforded Elias so much strength, that in the strength of that meat he went a difficult journey of forty days, until he came to Horeb the mount of God : how much more excellent may this most divine Food be believed to be, which is of such surpassing substance and efficacy ? (1 Kings xix. 8.)

* *De Mirabilibus Scriptura, Lib. ii. 19.*

2. This food supplies quickness and vigour ; just as on the contrary, insufficient nourishment makes animals sluggish and thin, an effect which we see in badly-fed cattle in winter time. The Chameleon, says Tertullian,* lives, though but a skin. Stupid, weary, it hardly suspends itself above the ground : because always hungry and unweakened, it feeds on the air, lazily expanding and contracting. Of the Israelites, slow and weary, like this animal, only in running the way of the divine commandments, Osea formerly said ; and showed too the reason of their weakness ; “ Ephraim feeds on wind and followeth after the east wind.” (Hosea xii. 1). How many Christians, like the Chameleon and the Israelites, feed on the winds of vain and empty cares and illusions ? Let these feed on the Divine food ; and hence obtain spiritual vigour and quickness, fit and necessary for exercising the heroic acts of Christian virtue.

Very gently do some bring out allegorically what Isaiah prophesies, when he foresaw what difficult and fierce attacks Christians would have to endure ; (for so is this place interpreted.) The Prophet asks the Messiah, the new king of the future age, to provide provisions for his soldiers. Then, seeing a table placed before him against those who oppress them, he invites us all to see them eat and drink. O thrice happy soldiers of Christ, to whom so exquisite provision is shown ! Soon he changes his note and says,† “ Eat, drink,” “ arise ye princes, take up the shield.” He calls them not soldiers. but “ princes,” for whom is prepared, not a common meal as for

* De pallio cap. 3.

† Is. xxi. 5. Vulg.

soldiers, but feasts worthy of princes. Finally, about the victory which those who have so well feasted and drunk have gained, nothing doubting the triumph, he sings in exultation, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen." [v.g.] So he rightly reasons : but how often it happens otherwise ! As indeed when those who have well fed on this food of the strong, dread the slightest attacks of the enemy ; and are dashed to the ground, even by the least attack of Satan.

3. Besides strength and vigour, it even creates delicacies for the palate of the soul, as is the case with some kinds of food for the body. The eating of this flesh, says S. Cyprian, makes the infused taste of its love cleave to the palate and throat, penetrating and affecting all recesses of mind and body. For "how great is His goodness, and how great is His beauty ! corn shall make the young men cheerful, and new wine the maids." (Zach. ix. 17.)

"His bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties." (Gen. xlix. 20.) Truly Thy substance, Lord Jesus, shows the greatness which Thou hast for Thy sons ; whom Thou feddest with angels' food, and didst send them from heaven bread prepared without labour, able to content every man's delight, and agreeable to every taste." (Wisdom xvi. 20).

In that gentiles and heretics who try this divine feast, seek for carnal and earthly things, they may seem worthy of pardon ; but if Catholics, who have fed so often on these feasts, seek after temporal gifts, they would seem to be inexcusable. For, as Tertullian* says rightly, "he

* De poenit. xi., 5.

who has known both seems to have made a comparison between them, and to have pronounced a solemn judgment that he is the better whom he hath chosen to be again." In this way he would bring singular injury and contempt on the divine feast; greater, in truth, than the ungrateful and wretched Israelites, who preferred the onions and garlick of Egypt to the heavenly manna. (Numbers xi. 5.)

CHAPTER V.

THE BLOOD OF CHRIST, WHICH IS TAKEN IN THIS FEAST, IS THE SPIRITUAL FOOD OF THE SOUL.

SS. AMBROSE and AUGUSTINE and other holy Fathers and Interpreters of Scripture, say that the cluster (Numb. xiii. 23) carried by the spies to the Israelites, as they were on the way from Egypt into Palestine, was plainly a figure of this Sacrament. And, in truth, as S. Ambrose cleverly says, in that branch consisted the delights to be afforded that people; for it was to give them good wine, after hanging in the vineyard by the art of nature and ripening in the sun; and, again, when it yielded its juice, under the pressure of a chain, or of the foot. So Christ, hanging from the Cross, burning with the charity of divine love, overcome by the scourge, the spear, the Cross, and all the bitterness of torments, shed

forth most plentifully His most precious blood, even to the last drop.

Moreover, as the bearers of this branch proceeded in a different manner in carrying it; for those who went before, turning their eyes away from it, fled in a manner from it; but those who followed it looked on it, with their eyes always watching it. So some Christian people look at this delightful Sacramental Branch, cast it behind them, and flee from it as soon as they see it; others always keep it within view, and preserve continually their affection for it. While the latter, then, offer their worship, the former bestow their contempt.

It is very worthy of remark, too, that the other properties and effects of wine are attributed to this spiritual cup by holy Fathers.

And, first, a large draught drives off grief, and brings joyfulness to the mind; for which reason the wise man gives the precept; "Give strong drink to him that is ready to perish, and wine to those that be of heavy hearts. Let him drink and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more." (Prov. xxxi. 6-7). For "wine was created from the beginning to make men joyful." (Ecclus. xxxi. 35). † So the drinking of the Blood of Christ, as tersely and elegantly says Clement of Alexandria*, disperses the clouds of the mind."

2. Just as wine, as S. Chrysostom observes, refreshes the stomach, repairs the failing strength, warms one who is suffering from cold, heals a wound when poured into it, and when used together with antidotes and other medicines, restores former health. So all this and much more

† Vulg.

* Pardazog, ii. 2.

does this spiritual wine, the Blood of Christ, afford the soul.

3. Although all drinking, says S. Gregory of Nyssa*, sets the mind beyond itself, yet the inebriating cup of Christ diverts the mind from lower things to those which are better. To this blessed intoxication we are invited (Cant. v. 1), "Drink, yea drink abundantly, O beloved," and cease from your former harshness of manners, slowness of mind, and ingrained vicious practice. Moreover, as drinking sometimes makes people fail to recognise even old friends, cease caring for gain or loss, and fearing danger and death; so the martyrs, says S. Augustine†, when, on the way to their passion, drunken with this cup, knew not their own. What? he says, so drunken as not to know weeping wife, not children, not parents, nor care for things which they formerly loved in the world; nor fear temporal losses, punishment, or death? They knew them not; they thought not that they were before their eyes. Wonder not; they were drunken. Wherewith were they drunken? Lo they had received a cup wherewith they were drunken.†

4. A deeper draught commonly invites no ordinary sleep. So the spouse (Cant. v. 2) says, "I sleep, but my heart waketh." What is this unusual sleep, asks S. Gregory of Nyssa‡, which has watchfulness as its companion? And he replies, without much difficulty, "It is peculiar to pious minds, when, as in some suspended working of the outer senses, (what takes place in sleep) divine and heavenly matters, and others which do

* Hom. x. in cant.

† On Ps. xxxvi., 8.

‡ On Cant Cantics Hom. x.

not come under those senses, are contemplated by the mind. Nothing placed before their eyes, no dignities, gold, gems, or money, can move one who is asleep. No abuses or threats influence him. But souls who have drunk of this divine chalice, and are in a happy sleep, as if all action of the exterior senses were suspended, are borne along with no desire towards those objects which most mortals supremely admire and love; in no way do they dread things which utterly terrify others. The soul meanwhile watching, thinks over divine and heavenly things which are undiscerned by the bodily eyes; and pursues them with its whole love.

5. This also we frequently see happen, that those who are exhilarated by plentiful drinking are urged to sing; so the mind that has drunk of this wondrous chalice bursts forth into singing the praises of divine goodness. "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess (Ephes. v. 18-19) says the Apostle, "but be filled with the (Holy) Spirit, speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." Whence, says Tertullian, should be inferred how one has made a good communion; "hence it is proved in what degree he has drunken." (Apol. 39.)

Finally, as the more plentifully one drinks wine, the more is one filled with hope and cheerfulness; all fear is driven away, so that one *speaks* and *acts* without trembling. The soul, too, that has well drunk of this spiritual cup dares to say with Holy Job, "Place me near Thee, and the hand of any one may fight against me." Also with the holy poet, "Yea, though I walk

through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me." (Ps. xxiii. 4.) Though an host of men should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war should rise against me, yet will I put my trust in Him." (Ps. xxvii., 3). After drinking this chalice, Christians attack the world, the flesh, the devil, vigorously, like lions breathing flame*, made terrible to the powers of evil.

CHAPTER VI.

CHRIST ENTERS INTO A TREATY WITH US WHEN WE DRINK HIS BLOOD.

IT is related, says Tertullian†, that certain nations have ordained for the making of a treaty, the shedding of blood from their arms and the drinking it the one from the other. These nations wish by this rite to imply; that by this mixture of blood, and this mutual commingling of their bodies, they enter into one; and wish friendship preserved even at the cost of blood.

If, then, the least drop of blood, taken by each party, was able thus to join together barbarous nations in so strict a treaty; cannot the blood of Christ, so much more precious, and

* S. Chrysostom hom. 61 ad pop.

† Apol I. The same custom is found (in Herod i., 74) prevailing among the Medes; and in iv., 70 among the Scythians.—See Tacitus Annals xii., 47.

much more copiously drunk, effect the same end ? Not drawn either was it by a small lancet from the arms, but, by the cruelties of great torments, drained from His whole body to the last drop. How wicked and cursed a treaty breaker is he, who breaks treaties, that have been ratified by so much precious blood !

What if our blood in turn were to be poured back in martyrdom for Christ, and were to be shed from all our veins ; for the sake of Him who so often, and so liberally, pours forth his own for us !

CHAPTER VII.

OF THE PRIEST WHO IS THE MINISTER OF THIS MOST DIVINE FOOD AND SACRIFICE.

THERE is here not only a feast, but the offering of a most holy sacrifice, besides that which was formerly offered on the Cross. For there is one and the same victim offering now the same sacrifice by the ministry of Priests, who offered Himself once on the Cross ; the mode of offering being alone different. On the Cross, that is to say, he was afflicted with blows, pains, and grief ; on the Altar he is offered, veiled under the appearance of bread and wine, without grief or wounds ; in the former case he was sacrificed by the hands of cruel butchers, in the latter he is offered by the hands of pious Priests.

But if you were, then, on Mount Calvary, with what love for Christ would you be filled? what hope would you not cherish of attaining even anything from the eternal Father, when such a victim had been offered for you?

As far as the Priest's work is concerned, you remember that Christ, who is a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedech (Heb. vii., 21) is the first who offered this Sacrifice; but the Priest is His substitute in this great work. O great dignity! He is "the public minister of the Church"* and of the whole human race, God's ambassador, as is written concerning Moses "in the priestly robe which he wore was the whole world"†—(Wisdom xviii. 24.)

The Priest stands in the midst, between God and the human race, says S. Chrysostom‡, bearing blessings from Him to us, and carrying our petitions back to him: propitiating an angry God, and snatching us, the offenders, out of his hands.

From this S. Augustine concludes very well that the Priest ought to be such, that what the people cannot do before God, he may merit for them; as it is written:—"If any of the common people sin . . . the Priest shall make an atonement for his sin that he hath committed. (Levit. iv., 27, 35.)"

A great ecclesiastic and master of the spiritual life, John Avila, hearing from his acquaintance that one, who had recently entered the Priesthood, had died suddenly, asked directly whether he had

* Trid. Session 22, cap. 2, ditto, cap. 6.

† Vulg. See also Exodus 28-6.

‡ Hom 5 in "Vidi Dominum."

at any time offered the Holy Sacrifice, and when they answered, that he had once said Mass, replied, that this was worth recording, "for he will have much to answer for." And in truth it was so : for he would have to render an account of that, which was of all things of the greatest nature which can be done by men, for the glory of the Divine Majesty, and for the public and private salvation of men. He would have to say with what purity of mind and body, with what attention and reverence he had offered to the Eternal Father the Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of His only begotten Son ; with what dignity he had held the Person of the Eternal and Great High Priest Jesus Christ ; what good he had done for the Church, and for the whole world ; and how his ambassador's office for God had been discharged.

But, Christian reader, what an account, pray you, do you think those will have to render before the tribunal of the Great Judge ; who not once only, but every day, offer on the Altar, for the safety of the world, this Great Victim, to the fear of the very angels in heaven !

BOOK II.

PREPARATION FOR HOLY COMMUNION.

INTRODUCTION.

THE NATURE AND DUTY OF THE SACRIFICE CALLED "LATREIA."

THIS is the most noble species of Sacrifice, in that it tends altogether to God's honour. Accordingly, in the old law, holocausts, which were properly sacrifices, called "*latreia*," were altogether consumed by fire, no portion being left for the Priest or the people who offered.

Eusebius* also remarks that the imposition of hands usually made upon the head of a victim offered as a holocaust—(Exod. xix. and Levit. i.)—was a kind of mark of substitution. For both reason and piety dictate that God, from whom we have received life and soul, is most worthy of the highest reverence; and that we should offer to His honour and worship not only the viler souls of beasts, but ourselves also, which is much better;

* De demonstrat. Evangel. i., 10.

And as this was neither expedient nor lawful by the will of God, it seemed good that the lives of beasts should be substituted, and offered in our place; and accepted by the indulgent pity of God, until that Great Victim should succeed, so often promised to the world, who, by offering himself, should pay a plentiful price for the sins of the whole world. As a sign of this substitution of their lives for ours, those who intended sacrificing placed their hands on the victim; and placed it on the altars, taking and laying hold of it by the head, thus offering it, as it were, in place of themselves.

In a similar manner Christian priests, when about to consecrate the sacred Host, on coming to that prayer in the Canon,* “We therefore beseech Thee graciously to accept this offering of our service.” &c., professing that they wish to offer to the Father a sacrifice of praise, by placing their hands on the oblations, signify, by this ceremony, that they substitute these things for themselves.

The nature of this sacrifice consists in this fact, that the offering is made to the Most High God in acknowledgment and profession of the Divine excellence, and of His absolute Lordship, but of our complete subjection and servitude.

* The Canon of the Mass, in the Missal after the Commemoration of the Saints; where the text runs, “Tenens manus expansas super oblata, dicit:” “Hanc igitur oblationem servitutis nostræ sed et cunctæ familiæ tuæ quæsumus Domine, ut placatus accipis: diesque nostros in tuâ pace disponas, atque ab æterna damnatione nos eripi et in electorum Tuorum jubeas grege numerari. (Jungit Manus.) Per Christum Dominum nostrum.—Amen.

The excellence of this sacrifice is wonderfully perfected if we acknowledge our dependence on Almighty God, not in our minds only; but by a deliberate and irrevocable will, entirely submitting all our affairs to His goodwill and disposition, and giving ourselves over altogether to Him in preparation for Mass or Holy Communion.

CHAPTER I.

THE REMOTE DISPOSITION REQUIRED.

THE disposition is the whole life and conversation of a Christian man, that it may answer to the fulness and sanctity of so great mysteries. But if the command were given to the priests of the old law; "They shall be holy unto their God"—(Levit. xxi. 6.)—Priests who offered bread and wine.—"therefore they shall be holy to the Lord their God;" with how great sanctity then must Christian Priests be endowed, who offer to the Eternal Godhead, not common bread and wine, but that "corn of the elect, and wine bringing forth virgins?"

"Every man of your race that approacheth to these things that are consecrated, and which the children of Israel have offered to the Lord, in whom there is uncleanness shall perish before the Lord." (Levit. xxii. 3—Vulg.) How pure, then, should be those hands which are not so much consecrated to the Lord, as touch the Lord Himself and offer Him for sacrifice!

Remember the severe rebuke on the two sons of Aaron (Levit. x.), because they brought "strange fire" for the sacrifice. Uzzah, too, was struck with sudden death by God (2 Sam. vi. 6) because he had, without sufficient reverence, touched the Ark of the Covenant, although he had come with the purest intention, and to offer help and worship; the men of Bethshemesh also were punished with a terrible slaughter of 50,000 men (1 Sam. vi. 18), because without sufficient reverence, they looked into the Ark of God. Woe, therefore, to men of impure eyes, hands, and breasts, coming with "strange fire:" who so touch, not only the wooden Ark, but the Lord Himself!

CHAPTER II.

THE IMMEDIATE DISPOSITION.

1. "LET a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup." (1 Cor. xi 28.) On these words S. Chrysostom* says, "As when food for the body entering a man full of hurtful humours," injuries and destroys rather than affords him help; so much more, if this spiritual food find anyone defiled with malice, does it hurt him; not from any nature or its own, but in consequence of the fault of the receiver. Such men are the companions of Judas, the traitor,

*Hom. 28 in 1 Cor. xi. 28.

into whom Satan entered after the sop. This sentiment of the physicians, too, is of value in this case; "The more impure bodies are when nourished, the more they are hurt."

2. Even venial faults, though they appear to be light, are the causes of great loss, both to those who offer and to those who communicate; though, indeed, they do not hinder the whole effect of the Sacrament, they greatly lessen it. On this S. Gregory most wisely remarks, they are filled first before they sit down to eat, and though actually hungry, think themselves filled. These words can fitly be used both against negligent Priests at the Holy Altar, and against too bold communicants, who eat excessively, and are not filled; because, although they receive the Sacrament with their mouth, they are not filled with its virtue. They do not share, therefore, in the virtue of the Sacrament, because they are already full. For he who does not daily remove from him his faults, though they be the least that he heaps up, has his soul gradually filled up with them, and they deservedly take away from him the fruit of internal fulness. Accordingly, God, was unwilling to send the Children of Israel manna, until all the food of Egypt had been consumed. (Exod. xiv. 4.) And, again, after they came into Palestine, and enjoyed the fruits of that land, the heavenly food failed them. (Joshua v.)

O fruits of the earth! O corn of Egypt, how often do you take away from men the nourishment and taste of that most Divine food! These are fruits of the earth and corn of Egypt—occupations that are too worldly, care of temporal things, love of riches, desire of honour, love of

delicacies, vanities and distractions of thoughts, untamed passions of mind, and unbridled affections.

There happens sometimes, in no few instances, what we see occasionally in children of the great and rich, who, though fed on the richest food, remain affected with sallowness, and the worst possible habit of body; for no other reason than that, led on by depraved taste, they eat coals, earth, or other injurious substances. So, very many, though frequently fed on the most healthful and life-giving Body of Christ, attain to no strength of mind, spiritual vigour, or the other effects of this Sacrament; because they are pleased with the unlawful taste of excessive earthly possessions.

When the greatest masters of the spiritual life, as well as experience itself, teach that sweetness of spirit and the gentlest taste of Holy Communion, are greatly hindered by even the least rancour of mind and bitterness of spirit against anyone: it is *expedient, most plainly*, not only to put aside all, even the least hostility of mind (if perchance you feel yourself moved with bitterness against anyone, towards whom you have entertained hostile feelings), but also to offer an act of love on behalf of your neighbour.

CHAPTER III.

THE KNOWLEDGE OF ONE'S OWN UN-
WORTHINESS.

THOUGH one may seem contrite and conscious to oneself of no fault, yet one acknowledges oneself unworthy of offering so great mysteries, and receiving so great Sacraments.

The Church of God wonders that the Son should have taken human flesh, and not abhorred the womb of a virgin who was undefiled and filled with every kind of virtue. S. John the Baptist, the most holy precursor of Christ, also endowed with singular sanctity and innocence, even from his mother's womb, thought himself all too unworthy to loose His shoe's latchet. Shall not we wretched sinners, conceived and born in sin, and revelling in every kind of vice? How shall we think ourselves worthy, I will not say of touching Christ, but even of containing Him within our very bosom? Behold "the stars are not pure in His sight; how much less man that is a worm, and the son of man, which is a worm." (Job xxv. 5-6.) Very truly says S. Ambrose* that no one can worthily celebrate this most Divine Sacrament, unless God make the offerer worthy. He alone can make one pure who is conceived in sin. "Joseph did not

* See on this subject *S. Ambrose, de Elia et Jejunio*, 82, and the Prayers "pro opportunitate sacerdotis."

find," says S. Thomas of Villenova,* "in his brother Benjamin's sack any gold but what he had placed there himself." Nor wilt Thou find, O good Jesus, in my breast, anything good, unless Thou place it there. Would, Lord, that in the recess of my body, thou wouldst place the sacred cup of Thy grace, and graciously fill it with Thy law, that in whomsoever it was found, he might be Thy slave for ever.

As it properly pertains to fire to mould a body placed in it, and to which it is intended to give shape, so it is the proper work of God to produce dispositions in a soul into which He is about to enter. Rustics never worthily receive a king in their village unless he send on before him his furniture and servants; so, too, the soul will never worthily receive the Divine Majesty, unless God Himself provide it with its due adornment of virtues.

CHAPTER IV.

DEVOTION MUST BE EXCITED.

THOUGH in truth without God one can do nothing, yet he demands that we always labour and prepare ourselves; as, for instance, "Prepare your hearts unto the Lord" (Sam. vii. 3), and, "It is the part of man to prepare the soul." (Prov. xvi. 1.)

* Called "the Almoner," from his excessive charity. He was Bishop of Valence in the year 1545.

But if any king or great prince be about to come to any city under his dominion, what great preparation and expense people are at for his reception. Therefore, O Israel, hasten to meet your Lord, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords; a habitation is to be prepared not for a man, but for God, whom the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot sufficiently contain: how much less, then, the house of your breast? unless with the greatest care and diligence there be prepared a habitation for so great a Majesty, with as much holiness and reverence as possible.

1. Take care, then, lest at any time you sacrifice or communicate out of a dry and insipid custom.

Do you not see with how great readiness infants lay hold of the breast, and with how great and earnest desire they fix their lips to their nipple? Let us too approach with as great joyfulness to this table and to the nipple of this spiritual cup; or, rather, with much greater zeal, as infants at the breast, let us draw out the grace of the Spirit, and let it be our one sorrow not to partake of this food.*

2. It seems superfluous to prescribe acts for developing any particular virtues; although almost all are equally suitable for this purpose. This common saying seems to be of value, "What one savours of, that one nourishes."

3. Often exclaim: "I desire Thee a thousand times, my Jesus, when Thou wilt come."

"What is now my hope! Is it not the Lord?"

"Come, Lord, and delay not; forgive Thy people their sins."

* S. Chrysost. Hom. 83 in Matt. Oxf. Lib. of Fathers.

“If I may but touch the border of His garment I shall be made whole.”

4. Listen to the Heavenly Spouse wishing to enter the chamber of thy heart.

“Open to me, my sister, my love ;”* because to-day I must abide in thy house. “I am come that thou mightest have life, and mightest have it more abundantly.”†

5. The blessed Simon Valentinus, on going forth from his chamber to the Temple for the purpose of sacrifice, thought he was accompanying Christ to Mount Calvary. Do the same, and indulge those affections which thou wouldest have excited, if it had fallen to thy lot to meet Christ laden with the Cross, and borne off to death for thee.

6. To this task, in order to obtain anything from God most effectually, prefix one or more intentions ; ask, for example, for increase of virtues ; pray for some of thy own necessities, or for the general needs of the Catholic Church.

CHAPTEB V.

SOME CONSIDERATIONS PROPOSED FIT FOR
EXCITING AND INCREASING DEVOTION.

CONSIDER who He is who is coming, to whom He comes, and for what purpose. In truth it is Christ ; to be offered to the

* Song of Sol. v. 2. † S. John x. 10.

Eternal Father, and to be joined most intimately to you—a most despicable creature; not to acquire anything, but to confer every good on you.

The Most High King of heaven and earth comes to you—His slave—debtor, who owe 10,000 talents, and most liberally forgives you all the debt. (Matt. xviii. 24-27.)

The Lord of Lords comes, “whose yoke is easy and burden light,” who is about to give the weight of eternal glory in return for the worship of but a moment. He comes to His most vile slave, because he broke more than a thousand bonds of most holy laws, shook off the yoke of a slavery that was our own; He comes to the sworn enemies of the Lord, and makes over to them confidence and indulgence. He comes, too, that he may make me, his fugitive slave, bound in Adam’s chains, an heir of His good things.

The most loving Father comes, that he may take into favour His prodigal son, who has squandered all his goods; to put on him the best robe, and clothe him with the clothing of all heavenly gifts.

The most kind Husband comes that He may take to Himself for ever a spouse, that is, a sinful soul; a bride, but, rather, an adulteress, who has sported with many lovers, “on every high hill and under every green tree.”

With these or other like considerations, which occur everywhere, you will be able to throw off sloth and excite yourself to devotion.

But if time will not permit longer preparation, rouse up at least some sparks of devotion by some ejaculatory prayers and sighs of burning love.

APPENDIX.

ON FOUR METHODS OF OFFERING THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS, WHEREIN CONSISTS TRUE AND SOLID DEVOTION ; AND ON PREPARATION FOR HOLY COMMUNION.

RIGHTLY does the Tridentine Council*, in dealing with the Sacrifice of the Mass, commend its greatness and excellence, because, though but one, it includes the perfection of all ancient sacrifices. For all the kinds of offerings and modes of worshipping and pleasing God are contained in this one offering, as if in an excellent compendium of them all. There is both a propitiatory sacrifice for expiating sins, a thanksgiving for benefits received, a peace-offering for things desired—in fine, a holocaust, entirely for the glory of God.

S. Leo says† 'tis now that the variety of carnal sacrifices has ceased, one offering of the Body and Blood of Christ comprehends all the differences of the sacrifices, for He is the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world.

NOTE.—The following prayers may be also used by the laity, since all who hear Mass or communicate, share in the offering to God.

* Session xxii. 1 cap.—“ Utpote quae bona omnia, per illa significata, velut illorum omnium consummatio et perfectio complectitur.”

† Sermon 8 on our Lord's Passion.—Op. sec. 228.

1. Form for Offering this Sacrifice as Latreia.

THOU art worthy, O Lord our God, to receive praise and glory and blessing, for Thou hast created all things. For what is more just than that creatures should acknowledge their Creator and Supreme Lord, praise, revere, and love Him? Would that some one would give me as many minds, souls, and hearts as there are atoms flitting in the air, as there are drops in the immense sea, or sands on the sea-shore, by which, my God, I could pay Thee this, the common debt of all creatures, and might incessantly know, adore, and praise Thee!

But that this love may not consist merely in vows and desires, I bring to witness this my service and worship, due to Thy Supreme Majesty; and in this way, which Thou hast demanded ever since the beginning of the world, from Thy creatures; by a true and real sacrifice, and by so great a victim, as may satisfy Thy Majesty, the victim, that is, of the Immaculate Lamb, who is with Thee one God, our Lord. The Lamb I therefore offer to Thee for the odour of a sweet smell, with all his acts of external and internal reverence, adoration, and other virtues of infinite merit. And by this oblation of the most august sacrifice I wish openly to testify that I and all things created are in Thy hands, and depend on each and every token of recognition from Thee. Nor, indeed, do I acknowledge only this my dependence and that of all things on Thee: but even willingly and gladly offer my will to Thy divine will, for which sake all things are created; and in all respects I submit myself to Thee, con-

secrating to Thee this my bounden duty and service, with Thy most sacred victim, Thy only begotten Son, who ever did most submissively Thy gracious will, and who ever liveth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

2. *Form for Offering this Sacrifice as a Thanksgiving.*

O MOST bountiful God, if I had as many voices as there are moments in eternity, as many mouths and tongues as the vast firmament of heaven can contain sands, and with all these were to praise Thee, bless Thee, and magnify Thee; if all creatures with me were to possess all this with me, and were to continue for ever praising Thee, it would be too little, and merely nothing towards giving Thee due thanks and praise for Thy infinite munificence, in creating, redeeming, preserving, and calling us to faith and heavenly calling; and for Thy other innumerable gifts, for which an immense recompence^r is due; because from so great a power extended towards so vile creatures, undeserving, rebellious, and often ungrateful; out of Thy infinite love, so infinite a good, that is, a blessed eternity, flows to us.

I am unworthy, Lord, of all Thy mercies and benefits, and I find nothing worth returning, but Thy only begotten Son, a gift and return infinitely dear and precious to Thee. Him, therefore, Eternal Father, I offer to Thee for a Sacrifice of Thanksgiving, for each and all Thy benefits conferred on me, and Thy Church, and especially on

the most Blessed Virgin, my most faithful guardian, and my patrons [N..N..] and also for each and all Thy mercies and gifts ever conferred on the ungrateful and wicked; lest these, Thy benefits, should remain without thanksgiving: through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with Thee and the Holy Ghost be all power and glory, world without end. **Amen.**

3. *Form for Offering this Sacrifice as a Propitiation.*

“**I**F Thou wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss, O Lord, who may abide it?” I confess that my tears and those of all men are not sufficient, though they may equal an immense ocean, to wash away our sins; since their number is almost infinite, dreadful in atrocity and baseness; and by them we greatly anger Thy inviolable Divinity. But if even the least deadly sin, alone, perpetrated in one moment, cannot be expiated by the eternal torments of hell when Thou sharpeneth like a sword Thy wrath, and Thy hand executes judgment against so many vices and evil deeds; where shall we, impious and sinners, be? where shall we stand? Unless with the shield of Thy good will, Thy most loving Son protect us, and unless He utter those most loving words, “Father, forgive?” This, therefore, I, a sinner, with contrite and humble heart hating all, present for an offering of propitiation most sufficient for my faults and for those of the whole world; this, as a suppliant, I offer to Thee, with all His tears, labours, agonies, shame, scourgings, torments, and blood-shedding. Look,

most merciful Father of Mercies, on the face of Thy Christ; and be pleased with this offering, graciously granting us indulgence and peace, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

4. *A short Form for obtaining God's Gifts.*

ALMIGHTY, everlasting God, I offer this most august sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Thy Son to Thy Divine Majesty, as a tribute of honour and love; in memory of the blessed Incarnation, Passion, and Death of Thy Son, in thanksgiving for Thy innumerable benefits conferred on me, and on all creatures; in expiation for my sins and those of the whole world, as a sign of concord, and for the consolation of all the afflicted, the enlightenment of all infidels, and restoration of all the lapsed; rest for all the faithful departed, for increase of joy and glory of all the Saints. Receive, Lord, this my oblation, in union with that love with which He loved us who gave Himself for us, our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son; who with Thee liveth and reigneth in the unity of the Holy Ghost, for ever and ever. Amen.

5. *Prayers before Communion.*

1. *Prayer of S. Ambrose.*

Ad mensam dulcissimi, &c.

O GRACIOUS Lord Jesu Christ, I, a sinner, presuming nothing on my own merits, but trusting entirely on Thy mercy

and goodness, fear and tremble at approaching the table of Thy most pleasant Feast; for my heart and body are defiled with many faults, my mind and tongue not sufficiently guarded. Therefore, O gracious God! O terrible Majesty; I, wretched one, in great strait, run to Thee, the fountain of mercy; to Thee I hasten to be healed; under Thy protection I fly for refuge; and as I cannot stand before Thee as my Judge, I long to have Thee as a Saviour. To Thee, Lord, I show my wounds; to Thee I lay open my shame. I know my sins, great and numerous, for which I am in fear. I hope in Thy mercies, which are without number. Look upon me with the eyes of Thy mercy, O Lord Jesu Christ, Eternal King, God and Man, crucified for man's sake. Hear me, who hope in Thee, and pity me, who am full of miseries and sins, Thou who wilt never cease to be the fountain of mercy. Hail, life-giving victim, who wert offered on the gibbet of the Cross for me and the whole human race. Hail, noble and precious Blood, which didst flow from the wounds of my crucified Lord, Jesus Christ, and didst wash away the sins of the whole world. Remember, O Lord, Thy creature, whom Thou didst redeem with Thy blood. I repent from my sins; I long to amend what I have done amiss. Take away from me, then, most merciful Father, all my iniquities and sins; that, purified both in mind and body, I may be worthy to taste the Holy of Holies; and grant that this holy foretaste of Thy Body and Blood, which I, unworthy one, intend to take, may be the remission of my sins, the perfect cleansing of my faults, the driving

away of all evil thoughts, the renewed of all good desires, the performance of works well pleasing to Thee, the most safe protection of soul and body against all the wiles of my enemies. Amen.

2. *Prayer of S. Thomas Aquinas.*

Omnipotens, Sempiternus Deus.

ALMIGHTY, everlasting God, see I draw near to the Sacrament of Thy only begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ; I come near, as one sick to the Physician of life, unclean to the fountain of mercy, blind to the light of eternal brightness, poor and needy to the Lord of heaven and earth. I beseech Thee of the abundance of Thy great bounty, that Thou wouldest vouchsafe to heal my weakness, to wash my defilements, to enlighten my blindness, to clothe my nakedness; that I may receive the Bread of Angels, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, with so great reverence and humility, so great contrition and devotion, with so great purity and faith, with such purpose and intention, as is expedient for my soul's health. Grant me, I beseech Thee, that I may receive not only the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of the Lord, but the substance also, and the virtue of the Sacrament. O most gracious God, grant me so to receive the Body of Thy only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, which He took of the Virgin Mary, that I may be worthy to be incorporated into His mystical Body, and be numbered among His members. O most loving Father, grant to me that whom I purpose to receive on

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my journey, veiled under these outward forms, I may at length with unveiled face contemplate for ever; even Thy beloved Son, who with Thee liveth and reigneth in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.

* *Paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer, as the best possible Preparation for Holy Communion.*

“ *Our Father.*”

MOST powerful, most wise, most merciful God, who, to show kindness to Thy sons, dost fill them with the most gentle bread from heaven, and dost kindly and wonderfully bring up, nourish, and preserve all that Thou hast created. Lo I, the vilest of Thy sons, now in confidence raise my eyes to Thee who art in Heaven; that Thou wouldest look with the eyes of Thy fatherly kindness on me, poor and wretched, now far from the face of my Father, among the sons of Eve; on my pilgrimage in the valley of tears, an exile and a wanderer upon the earth, and sighing for Thee, my sweetest Father.

1. *Hallowed be Thy Name.*

THIS is the chief prayer and desire of my heart, that all I say, do or think, may tend to the greater glory of Thy Name; and now especially, when I come to the sacred mysteries of the Body and Blood of Thy Son, this

* From the *Paradisus Animæ Christianæ*, Horstii.

one thing I wish, this only I desire, that Thy Supreme majesty, power, goodness, and wisdom may be praised; to whom all honour and glory, eternal praise and thanksgiving are due from every creature; because thou hast so loved us, as to give Thy Only-Begotten Son to us for food, and for the price of our Salvation. And for this, as Thou canst not be sufficiently praised by us, would that Thy Son would Himself magnify Thee! for Thou also hast highly exalted Him, and given Him a name that is above every name.

2. *Thy Kingdom Come.*

THE happiness of Thy Kingdom, and its delights we get some taste of in this Sacrament. For Thou hast given us, as a pledge of future glory the Body and Blood of Thy Son; and so hast made us also by the grace of adoption, Thy heirs and fellow heirs with Christ.

But meanwhile, while we are yet in our pilgrimage in exile away from our Lord, make us so to use this sacred pledge; that the kingdom of Thy grace may prevail more and more every day in us, that at length, the kingdom of Thy glory may reach us.

3. *Thy will be done.*

AND what is Thy will, but our sanctification: especially when we are about to approach the Holy of Holies. Thou wishest also that we eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood, otherwise we have no life in us. But who would presume to do this, conscious of his infirmity, unless Thou so lovingly and worthily,

with Thy Son, wishest and commandest it? For it is one thing indeed to be willing, another to be able. As therefore Thou so wishest, let it be what Thou wishest, and as Thou wishest. For Thou wishest us to be holy as Thou art holy; in truth, the Holy one of Holy Ones, when we here approach Thy Son. But who will make us holy, but Thou? Do what Thou wilt: grant that we touch not holy things, except with holiness and reverence—Wherefore “as in Heaven,” the Saints in abundance with pure heart, and ardent desire eat this living bread, with unveiled face; so also let us “on earth,” with great desire and pure will, eat Him, veiled under these forms, until we also with his elect, enjoy Him in his own presence, and be filled with the fulness of His house.

4. *Give us this Day our Daily Bread.*

“THE eyes of all* wait upon Thee, O Lord, and Thou givest them their meat in due season: Thou openest Thy hand and fillest all things living with plenteousness:” and couldst Thou fail me? For Thou knowest, O Lord, that my soul does not need to be repaired with food less than my body, that it may live. For just as this natural heat, so also the heat of concupiscence, is continually fed. O happy sons, who are so full of food in the house of so great a Father. This bread of the grace and word of God is plentifully broken. This bread of our Sacraments, and especially of the living Bread which comes down from Heaven, who was born in Bethlehem,—the house of bread. Bread of angels, manna of heaven, is set before all men. O pre-

* Ps. cxlv. 15.

cious and noble food ! O great charity and mercy of the eternal Father ! To me who neither sowed nor reaped, nor gathered into barns, the corn of the elect and bread of life is given from Heaven. Thou, Lord, hast sowed Him in all lands ; Thou reapest Him with the scythe of death ; Thou hast stored Him up in the garner of Thy Church, for the nourishment of Thy children.

Grant me then, most gentle Father, to be often worthily refreshed by this Bread : even daily (if not sacramentally, at least spiritually) may I receive Him, because He is of value daily. For without Him I sin and err daily ; rightly also do I receive the remedy daily, because my strength fails. O would that I might be fed with this heavenly Bread and Viaticum in this desert ; that in the strength of that food I might reach Horeb, the mount of God.

5. *And Forgive us our Trespases.*

A LAS, how many and how great are our sins ! In many things we offend all ! Wherefore we, wretched, poor ones, were not to be released, nor are we.

But behold, Lord, with Thee there is mercy, and copious redemption ; with Thy Son, whom in pity, Thou hast given for us. He was just, unpolluted, and altogether innocent : what we owed, He paid ; the sins we committed, He atoned for, and abundantly satisfied Thy justice, giving us the immense treasure of His merits, and the infinite price of His Blood.

This whole price we have then as a deposit, hidden in the priceless casket of the most precious Sacrament. This treasure then I offer to Thee,

O eternal Father, that from it Thou mayest take away as much as thou dost want, for my sins. I have not wherewith to pay; but the merits of Thy Son superabound, and from thence our debts are discharged.

Wherefore, forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. Forgive us, I say, lest perchance, breaking the bond of charity, we treat unworthily the Sacrament of peace and unity, and in vain seek for healing from God, if we men reserve our anger for men. For what communion shall we enjoy in the Body and Blood of the Lord, if we are not joined in the communion of peace and love with our neighbours, the members of the mystical Body?

We must indeed, when we ask to approach the altar, first be reconciled to our brethren, if they have anything against us; and so come and offer our gift. This Thy Son hath taught us to do, and Himself did. For while hanging on the cross, and paying the debts of all men, He forgave His enemies, and prayed in supplication to Thee for them; saying, "Father forgive them." So remit to me also my sins, for which Thy Son offered his merits; for unless these are taken away, if Thou wilt observe, O Lord, our iniquities, who shall abide it?

6. *And lead us not into Temptation.*

O LORD! who hast prepared a table in our presence against all who trouble us, which may strengthen the heart of man against all the temptations of the world, the flesh and the devil; give me, by this heavenly and life-giving food, strength and power that I may not yield to temptation,

but constantly cleave to Thee. I will strive not to be the friend of this world or to be conformed to this age; but by the power of the celestial food to be transformed to Thee, and desire to please Thee alone; and fear to displease Thee. May the earth grow wearisome to me, because here I look upon heaven; and embrace the Lord of the whole world.

May the delights of the flesh in no way move me; to whom is given to feed on the flesh of the Immaculate Lamb and the manna of heaven; in which I find by far the greatest delights, and the sweetness of every taste. But what can the devil do against me when God is with me? If God be with us, who can be against us?

7. *But deliver us from evil.*

Many evils and misfortunes indeed are we subject to in this life. These evils, in truth, conspire together to cast us down and lead us away from Thee; for to be led away from Thee, the Highest God, is the greatest of evils. Who, indeed, will free us from evil but Thou, fount of all good, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast given to be an advocate with Thee, and the author of all salvation and happiness, Who has delivered us from sin and freed us by His Blood from death?

With this Mediator, grant that all things may work together for good in us, as there is no salvation for us in any other. May He, therefore, who is really present with us in this Sacrament, be so everywhere; may He feed us, govern us, preserve, protect, lead us, of His most merciful

will, like the sheep of His pasture. Whatever happen to us, it will not be evil, if it do not separate us from the supreme God. For it is good for men to hold fast by God. For what have I in Heaven, and what have I wished for on earth apart from Thee ?

Preparation for Mass (from the Missal).

To be said according to the opportunity of the Priest.

Antiphon.—Remember not, Lord, our offences nor the offences of our forefathers ; neither take Thou vengeance of our sins.

The Antiphon is doubled in double festivals only, and in Easter-time is added at the end, Alleluia.

The following Psalms are then said :—

Ps. 84.
 „ 85.
 „ 86.
 „ 116, 10.
 „ 130.

Then the Antiphon is repeated.

Remember not, Lord, our offences, nor the offences of our forefathers ; neither take Thou vengeance of our sins.

Afterwards the Priest shall say :—

Lord, have mercy upon us.
 Christ, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Our Father, &c., and lead us not into temptation.

R̄. But deliver us from evil.

Ÿ. I said, Lord have mercy upon me.

R̄. Heal my soul, for I have sinned against Thee.

Ÿ. Turn Thee again, O Lord, at the last.

R̄. And be gracious unto Thy servants.

Ÿ. Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be showed upon us.

R̄. As we do put our trust in Thee.

Ÿ. Let Thy Priests be clothed with righteousness.

R̄. And let Thy Saints sing with joyfulness.

Ÿ. Cleanse Thou me, O Lord, from my secret faults.

R̄. And keep Thy servant from presumptuous sins.

Ÿ. O Lord, hear our prayer.

R̄. And let my cry come unto Thee.

Ÿ. The Lord be with you.

R̄. And with thy spirit.

Let us pray.

Incline Thy merciful ears, most gracious God, to our prayers, and enlighten our hearts by the grace of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may worthily minister at Thy Holy Mysteries, and love Thee with an everlasting love.

Almighty God, unto Whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from Whom no secrets are hid, cleanse the thoughts of our hearts

*ayers to be said according to the opportunity
of the Priest before Celebration and
Communion.*

Prayer of S. Ambrose, Bishop.

Sunday.

GREAT High Priest, and true Priest Jesus Christ, who didst offer Thyself to God the Father a pure and spotless victim upon the Altar of the Cross for us, miserable sinners, and didst give us Thy Flesh to eat and Thy Blood to drink, and didst ordain that mystery in the power of the Holy Spirit, saying "Do this as often as ye shall, do it in remembrance of me." I pray Thee by the same Thy Blood, great price of redemption, I pray Thee by the wonderful and unspeakable love wherewith Thou deignest to love us miserable and unworthy, as to wash us from our sins in Thy Blood. Teach me, O unworthy servant, who Thou hast deigned to place amongst the rest of Thy gifts, to call to the office of the Priesthood for no merits of mine, but only by the calling of Thy mercy; teach me, O Lord, Thee, by Thy Holy Spirit, to treat so great a Mystery with such reverence and honour, and with such devotion and fear, as is right and becoming. Make me, by Thy Grace, always so to adore and understand, to think and firmly hold, and to think of so great a mystery as shall be revealed to Thee, and be for the good of my soul. Thy Good Spirit enter into my heart, and be heard without utterance, and with the sound of words speak all truth. Exceedingly great, indeed, are Thy mysteries, and all things covered

by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, that we perfectly love Thee, and worthily magnify Thy Holy name, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Burn with the fire of Thy Holy Spirit, O Lord, our veins and hearts, that we may serve Thee with a chaste body, and please Thee with a clean heart, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

We beseech Thee, O Lord, that the Comforter, who proceedeth from Thee, may enlighten our minds, and lead us, as Thy Son promised, into all the truth, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

We beseech Thee that the power of the Holy Ghost may be with us, both mercifully to cleanse our hearts, and also to defend us from all adversities, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

God, who didst teach the hearts of Thy faithful people by sending to them the light of Thy Holy Spirit, grant us by the same spirit to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in His holy comfort, through the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour, who liveth and reigneth with Thee, in the unity of the same spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.

Purify our consciences, we beseech Thee, O Lord, by Thy visitation, that our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, when he cometh, may find in us a mansion prepared for Himself, who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.

*Prayers to be said according to the opportunity
of the Priest before Celebration and
Communion.*

Prayer of S. Ambrose, Bishop.

Sunday.

O GREAT High Priest, and true Priest Jesu Christ, who didst offer Thyself to God the Father a pure and spotless victim upon the Altar of the Cross for us, miserable sinners, and didst give us Thy Flesh to eat and Thy Blood to drink, and didst ordain that mystery in the power of the Holy Spirit, saying "Do this as often as ye shall, do it in remembrance of me." I pray Thee by the same Thy Blood, great price of our Salvation, I pray Thee by the wonderful and unspeakable love wherewith Thou deignest so to love us miserable and unworthy, as to wash us from our sins in Thy Blood. Teach me, Thy unworthy servant, who Thou hast deigned, amongst the rest of Thy gifts, to call to the office of the Priesthood for no merits of mine, but only by the calling of Thy mercy; teach me, I pray Thee, by Thy Holy Spirit, to treat so great a Mystery with such reverence and honour, with such devotion and fear, as is right and fitting. Make me, by Thy Grace, always so to believe and understand, to think and firmly hold, to say and to think of so great a mystery as shall please Thee, and be for the good of my soul. May Thy Good Spirit enter into my heart, and there be heard without utterance, and without the sound of words speak all truth. Exceeding deep, indeed, are Thy mysteries, and covered with a

sacred veil. Of Thy great mercy, grant me to celebrate the solemnities of the Mass with a pure heart and pure mind. Free my heart from all foul and unclean, vain and hurtful thoughts. Defend me with the holy and faithful guardianship and mighty protection of the blessed angels, that the enemies of all good may go away in confusion. By the virtue of this so great Mystery and by the hand of Thy holy angel, drive away from me and from all Thy faithful servants the bad spirit of pride and vainglory, of hatred and blasphemy, of impurity and uncleanness, of doubt and distrust. Let them be confounded that persecute us ; let them perish who hasten to destroy us.

Monday.

O GREAT High Priest and true Priest Jesus Christ, the king of virgins, and Who loveth purity and innocence, extinguish in my body, by the heavenly dew of Thy blessing all that nurtures, all that nurtures evil desires, that there may remain in me one even tenour of chastity of mind and body. Mortify in my member the lusts of the flesh and every hurtful emotion, and give me true and lasting chastity, with Thy other gifts which please Thee in truth, that I may be able to offer Thee with pure and chaste body the sacrifice of praise. For with how great contrition of heart and fountain of tears, with how great purity of body and purity of soul is that divine and heavenly sacrifice to be celebrated, where Thy flesh in very truth is eaten, where Thy Blood in truth is drunk, where things lowest are joined with highest, earthy with divine, where is the

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presence of the holy angels, where Thou art in a wonderful and ineffable way both sacrifice and priest. Amen.

Tuesday.

O GREAT High Priest and true Priest, Jesus Christ, Who can worthily celebrate this mystery unless Thou, O God Almighty, make the offerer worthy? I know, O Lord, and know truly and this I confess to Thy loving mercy that I am not worthy to draw near to so great a mystery, by reason of my numberless sins, and infirmities, and omissions. But I know, and truly believe with my heart, and confess with my lips, that Thou canst make me worthy, Who alone canst make that clean which is conceived of unclean seed, and canst make sinners righteous and holy. By this Thy almighty power, I pray Thee, O God, to grant to me a sinner to celebrate this sacrifice with fear and trembling, with purity of heart and fountains of tears, with spiritual gladness and heavenly joy. May my mind feel the sweetness of Thy blessed presence and the guardianship of Thy blessed angels around me. Amen.

Wednesday.

O GREAT High Priest and true Priest Jesus Christ, mindful of Thy venerable Passion, I draw near to Thy altar, sinner though I am, to offer to Thee the sacrifice which Thou hast instituted and commanded to be offered for a remembrance of Thee for our salvation. Receive it, I pray,

most High God, for Thy holy Church, and for Thy people whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy Blood. And since Thou hast wished that I, a sinner, should stand in the midst between Thee and the same, Thy people, though Thou didst not find in me the proof of any good work, do not Thou refuse at least the performance of the office committed to me; and let not, by my unworthiness, the price of their salvation be destroyed, for whose sake Thou hast vouchsafed to be the victim of their salvation and their redemption. Also I bring before Thee, O Lord, if Thou wilt vouchsafe mercifully to behold, the tribulations of Thy people, the perils of nations, the groans of captives, the miseries of orphans, the necessities of strangers, the helplessness of the weak, the hopelessness of the weary, the weakness of the aged, the sighings of the young, the vows of virgins, the lamentations of widows.

Thursday.

O GREAT High Priest, and true Priest, Jesus Christ, Thou hast compassion upon all, O Lord, and hatest nothing which thou hast made. Remember how poor is our substance, for Thou art our Father and our God: be not angry with us for ever, and shut not up Thy mercy from us in displeasure. We humbly present our prayers before Thy face, not trusting in our own righteousness, but in Thy manifold and great mercies. Take away from us our iniquities, and mercifully kindle in us the fire of Thy Holy Spirit. Take away from us our stony heart and give us a heart of flesh which may love Thee and abide in Thee,

follow Thee and enjoy Thee. We pray Thy mercy, O Lord, that Thou wouldest vouchsafe to look upon Thy family with favourable countenance, offering the services of Thy holy name, and, that the prayer of none may be in vain. nor their petitions void, do Thou suggest to us such prayers as Thou mayest delight graciously to hear and answer.

Friday.

WE beseech Thee, O Lord, Holy Father, also for the souls of the faithful departed, that this great Sacrament of purity may be to them safety, healing, joy, and salvation. O Lord, my God, grant them this day a great and abundant feast in Thee, the Living Bread, who came down from Heaven, and givest life to the world; even of Thy holy and Blessed Flesh, the Lamb without spot, that takest away the sins of the world; of Thy Flesh which was taken from the holy and glorious womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and conceived by the Holy Ghost; and of that fountain of mercy which by the soldier's lance flowed from Thy most sacred side; that thence they may be restored and satisfied, refreshed and comforted, and may rejoice in Thy praise and glory. I beseech Thy mercy, O Lord, that there may descend upon this bread to be offered to Thee the fulness of Thy blessing, and the sanctification of Thy Divinity. May there likewise descend, O Lord, that invisible and incomprehensible majesty of Thy Holy Spirit, just as formerly it descended upon the sacrifices of the Fathers, which may make our oblatious Thy

Body and Blood ; and may He teach me, thy unworthy Priest, to treat so great a mystery with purity of heart, and devotion of tears, with reverence and awe, so that Thou mayest receive with grace and kindness the sacrifice at my hands, for the safety of all, both of the living and the dead.

Saturday.

I PRAY Thee also, O Lord, by this most Holy Mystery of Thy Body and Blood, whereby in Thy Church we are daily fed and given to drink, washed and sanctified, and made partakers of Thy Divine Majesty; grant me Thy holy strength, that being filled with them, I may approach Thy Altar with a good conscience, that these heavenly Sacraments may be made to me salvation and life. Thou hast said with Thy holy and blessed mouth: "The bread which I will give is My Flesh, which I will give for the life of the world, I am the living Bread which came down from Heaven. If any man shall eat of this Bread, he shall live for ever." O most sweet Bread heal the palate of my heart, that I may feel the sweetness of Thy love. Heal it of all weakness, that I may feel the sweetness of no love but Thine. O most pure Bread, having all delight and all sweetness, Thou who ever refreshest us and never failest: let my heart feed on Thee and my soul be filled with the sweetness of Thy taste. The angel feeds on Thee plentifully: let the wayfaring man feed on Thee according to his measure, lest he faint by the way, after being refreshed with such a Viaticum. Holy Bread, living Bread, pure Bread, who didst descend from heaven and gavest

life to the world, come into my heart, and cleanse me from my defilement of the flesh and spirit. Enter into my soul, heal and cleanse me within and without. Be Thou the succour and continual safety of my soul and body. Drive from me all the enemies that plot against me; let them depart far from the presence of Thy power, that guarded within and without by Thee, I may attain, by a direct road, to Thy kingdom, where not in mysteries, as at present, but face to face we shall see Thee, when Thou shalt have delivered up the kingdom to God and the Father, and shalt be God in all. For then Thou wilt satisfy me with a wonderful fulness, so that I shall neither hunger nor thirst, for ever.

Who livest and reignest with the same God the Father, and the Holy Spirit, world without end.—
AMEN.

Ad mensam dulcissimi, &c.

Omnipotens sempiterne Deus, &c.

v. page 31 to 33.

BOOK III.

THANKSGIVING AFTER RECEPTION.

Thanksgiving after Mass.

1. THIS time is least of all to be passed leisurely ; since within the interior of thy body, He, to whom all power in heaven and earth has been given, has taken his abode, that thou mightest have life and have it more abundantly. Lay before Christ, therefore, thy necessities and pious desires ; and, to obtain these, ask for strength of mind and grace. Encourage gentle converse with him, whose delights are to be with the sons of men. Lastly, ask ardently for temporal and eternal benefits, for thyself, thy friends, the Church and the whole human race.

2. As to what relates to the preparation for celebrating, or for Holy Communion, we would repeat, that there are no positively prescribed acts of preparation ; but that each person should indulge his own taste : according to this common saying, “ What one savours of, one naturally keeps.”

3. No little time may be consumed in such divine colloquies as the *anima Christi* or *Benedicite*, and in Recollection after Holy Communion. O how many hours we lose with our friends ! how

freely too and with what pleasure! How near to us comes this complaint of our Lord's; my soul suffered loss in them, because their soul was weary of me.

4. Finally, thou must take care, after being partakers in this table, thou act not in a hostile manner against thy Lord by sinning: in order that this most bitter complaint be not made against thee. It is not "an open enemy that had done me this dishonour, for then I could have borne it." Neither was it mine adversary, that did magnify himself against me; for then, peradventure, I would have hid myself from him. But it was ever thou my companion: my guide, and mine own familiar friend, "who didst take sweet meats together with me,"* even these most pleasant meats which contain in themselves all sweetness (Ps. lv. 12—14 v.). What a contempt of the divine table, if, when invited to the feasts of Angels, thou were to prefer the husks of swine; weary of the former, craving after the latter. Let not the words of Isaiah be applicable to thee, "I have nourished and brought up children and they have rebelled against me" (Isaiah i. 2).

If the Philistines exulted so much after the capture of the ark, how much more will the demons exult, when thou hast been overtaken by sin! Thou who hast been made greater than the ark of God, in that thou hast contained within thy heart,—not the manna and two tables—but God himself. "Ye are the temple of God," which, if anyone defiles, God will destroy him. "Therefore glorify and bear God in your body," (1 Cor. vi. 15 & 20.) Vulg.

* Vulgate.

5. Throughout the day renew the memory of the Sacrament which you have received, by the use of this or a similar ejaculatory prayer : "Could I, my Jesus, seek for anything besides Thee or for what is bad, in opposition to Thee? since Thou hast been made my lot and my inheritance for ever, with incomprehensible honour."

CHAPTER I.

Forms of Thanksgiving.

1. *Prayer of S. Thomas Aquinas.*

Gratias tibi ago.

I GIVE Thee thanks, O Lord, Holy Father Almighty, eternal God, who hast vouchsafed, for no merits of mine, but only out of the condescension of Thy mercy to feed me a sinner with the precious Body and Blood of Thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ : and I pray that this holy Communion may not bring upon me punishment, but an intercession for pardon and salvation. Let it be to me an armour of faith, and a shield of good will : a ridance of my vices, extermination of concupiscence and lust, increase of love and patience, of humility and obedience, a firm defence against the wills of all enemies, visible as well as invisible : a perfect quieting of my impulses fleshly as well as spiritual : a firm adherence to Thee the one and true God, and a happy consummation of my end. And I pray Thee that

thou wouldst vouchsafe to bring me, a sinner, to that ineffable feast where Thou with Thy Son and the Holy Ghost, art to thy saints true light, full satiety, eternal joy, consummated pleasure, and perfect felicity, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

2. *Prayer of S. Bonaventura.*

O MOST sweet Lord Jesus, transfix the affections of my very soul, with that most joyous and healthful wound of Thy love, with true, serene, apostolic, and most holy charity, that my soul may ever languish and melt with love and desire for Thee: let it desire Thee and faint for Thee in Thy courts, let it long to be dissolved and to be with Thee. Grant that my soul may hunger for Thee, the Bread of Angels, the Refreshment of holy souls, our Daily Bread, supersubstantial, having all sweetness and savour, and the pleasure of every delight. Thee on whom the angels desire to look, may my heart ever hunger for and feed upon: and may the recesses of my soul be filled with the sweetness of Thy Savour. May it ever thirst for Thee, the fountain of life, the fountain of wisdom and knowledge, the torrent of pleasure, the richness of the house of God. May it ever compass Thee, seek Thee, find Thee, stretch for Thee, come to Thee, meditate upon Thee, speak of Thee, and do all things for the praise and glory of Thy holy name: with humility and discretion, with love and delight, with care and affection, with perseverance even to the end: and be Thou ever my hope, my salvation, my whole confidence, my riches, my delight,

my pleasure, my joy, my quiet and rest, my peace, my sweetness, my sweet Saviour, my food, my refreshment, my refuge, my help, my wisdom, my portion, possession and treasure, in whom my heart and mind may be fixed and firm, and rooted immovably. Amen.

3. *Another Prayer of S. Bonaventura.*

ALMIGHTY, Everlasting God, Lord Jesus Christ, be merciful to my sins, I pray Thee, by this reception of thy Body and Blood. For Thou hast said: "He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh my Blood, remaineth in Me, and I in him." I therefore humbly beseech Thee to create in me a new heart, and renew a right spirit within me; and that Thou wouldest strengthen me with Thy Spirit, and cleanse me from all snares and vices, that I may be found worthy to be a partaker in heavenly joys. Who livest and reigneth for ever and ever. Amen.

*Thanksgiving after Mass: Gratiarum Actio
post Missam.*

ANTIPHON.—"Let us sing the Song of the Three Children, which they sang in the furnace of fire, blessing the Lord.

This Antiphon is doubled on double-Feasts, and in Easter-time there is added at the end, ALLELUIA.

O ALL ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord: praise Him and magnify Him for ever.

O ye Angels of the Lord, bless ye the Lord :
O ye heavens, bless ye the Lord.

O ye waters that be above the firmament, bless ye the Lord : O all ye powers of the Lord, bless ye the Lord.

O ye sun and moon, bless ye the Lord : O ye stars of heaven, bless ye the Lord.

O ye showers and rain, bless ye the Lord : O ye winds of God, bless ye the Lord.

O ye fire and heat, bless ye the Lord : O ye winter and summer, bless ye the Lord.

O ye dews and frosts, bless ye the Lord : O ye frost and cold, bless ye the Lord.

O ye ice and snow, bless ye the Lord : O ye nights and days, bless ye the Lord.

O ye light and darkness, bless ye the Lord : O ye lightnings and clouds, bless ye the Lord.

O let the earth bless the Lord ; yea, let it praise Him and magnify Him for ever.

O ye mountains and hills, bless ye the Lord : O all ye green things upon the earth, bless ye the Lord.

O ye wells, bless ye the Lord : O ye seas and floods, bless ye the Lord.

O ye whales, and all that move in the waters, bless ye the Lord : O all ye fowls of the air, bless ye the Lord.

O all ye beasts and cattle, bless ye the Lord : O ye children of men, bless ye the Lord.

O let Israel bless the Lord : Praise Him and magnify Him for ever.

O ye Priests of the Lord, bless ye the Lord : O ye servants of the Lord, bless ye the Lord.

O ye spirits and souls of the righteous, bless

ye the Lord : O ye holy and humble men of heart, bless ye the Lord.

O Ananias, Azarias, and Misael, bless ye the Lord : praise Him and magnify Him for ever.

Let us bless the Father and the Son, and the Holy Ghost : Let us praise and magnify Him for ever.

Blessed art Thou, O Lord, in the firmament of heaven : worthy to be praised, glorious and exalted above all for ever. Amen.

PSALM CL.

O PRAISE God in His holiness : praise Him in the firmament of His power.

Praise Him in His noble acts : praise Him according to His excellent greatness.

Praise Him in the sound of the trumpet : praise Him upon the lute and harp.

Praise Him in the cymbals and dances : praise Him upon the strings and pipe.

Praise Him upon the well-tuned cymbals : praise Him upon the loud cymbals.

Let everything that hath breath : praise the Lord.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son : and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be : world without end. Amen.

The Antiphon is repeated.

LET us sing the song of the three children, which they sang in the furnace of fire blessing the Lord.

Then the Priest shall say :

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Christ, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Our Father which art in heaven, &c.

℣. And lead us not into temptation.

℞. But deliver us from evil.

℣. All Thy works praise Thee, O Lord.

℞. And Thy Saints give thanks unto Thee.

℣. The saints shall exult in glory.

℞. They shall rejoice in their beds.

℣. Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us.

℞. But unto Thy name give the praise.

℣. O Lord, hear our prayer.

℞. And let our cry come unto Thee.

℣. The Lord be with you.

℞. And with Thy Spirit.

Let us Pray.

O GOD, who to the three children didst sooth the flames of fire ; grant us, we beseech Thee, that the flames of vice may not consume us Thy servants.

Prevent us, O Lord, in all our doings with Thy most gracious favour, and further us with Thy continual Help, that in all our works begun, continued and ended in Thee, we may glorify Thy Holy name, and finally by Thy mercy obtain everlasting life, through Jesus Christ, Our Lord. Amen.

Grant us grace, we beseech Thee, O Lord, to quench the flames of our sins ; as Thou didst grant to blessed Lawrence power to overcome the fires of his torments. Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

THE "ANIMA CHRISTI"

AND

"BENEDICITE OMNIA OPERA."

WITH A COMMENTARY FOR THE USE
OF COMMUNICANTS.

*"Anima Christi ;" or the Prayer, "Soul
of Christ."*

S OUL of Christ, sanctify me.

Body of Christ, save me.

Blood of Christ, inebriate me.

Water from the side of Christ, wash me.

Passion of Christ, strengthen me.

O good Jesus hear me ; within Thy sacred
wounds hide me.

Suffer me not to be separated from Thee.

From the malicious enemy defend me.

In the hour of my death call me,

That with Thy Saints I may praise Thee for
ever and ever. Amen.

Paraphrase of the "Anima Christi."

SEC. I.—"Soul of Christ, sanctify me."

RETIRE from the body, O my soul ; by His
own right, the soul of Christ has taken pos-
session of it ; yield to thy Creator and Lord, and

from without rather, as if through doors or rails, among the crowd of heavenly courtiers, with suppliant knee, adore only Thy guest. Should the fetters of mortal flesh (on no account to be broken off without God's command,) restrain thee, what thou canst not do in act, do in will.

Lay aside every human thought, strip thyself of every wordly affection, cast away self-love; that the wisdom of thy Lord alone may occupy thy mind, the wisdom of His love alone affect thee, and his love alone reign in Thy heart.

“O soul of Christ, sanctify me!” by a living and efficacious faith, by a firm and unshaken hope, by which I may hope for nothing, or pursue nothing but things eternal; by a charity whereby I may love, not only Thee (as Jonathan did David) like my own soul, but above that and all other things: by a charity which neither tribulation, nor poverty, nor persecution, nor the sword, nor death itself may dissolve.

Finally, by every kind of most holy thoughts and affections, sanctify me; that what Thou—the soul of Christ—art in very nature, thou my soul may be by Thy gracious assistance and working, and that I may pay my vows and desires by word. Be Thou the soul of my soul, and life of my life; that, dead to myself, through Thee and for Thee I may live.

SEC. II.—“Body of Christ, save me.”

O MOST loving Jesu, what shall I return unto Thee for the most liberal gift of Thy most sacred Body; in that for my salvation Thou gavest It, not only to be torn in pieces by

most cruel tortures, and to be most cruelly and most ignominiously nailed to the Cross ; but, not content with this excess of most bountiful love, daily and continually offerest this, Thy most sacred Body, a sacrifice for the food of our life, our viaticum in death, and our medicine in immortality.

O hail most holy Body, that suffered so many cruel torments for me ! Hail head, more excellent than the best gold, in which are hidden all treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Would that the graces of divine unguents which flow from Thee would fatten my soul !

Hail, health-giving eyes, so often filled with tears for me ! look kindly on me, a miserable sinner, as Ye looked on Matthew formerly, and the Magdalene, and Peter.

And hail thou tongue, which hast the words of eternal life ! which didst instruct us with heavenly counsels and precepts, and hast a most effectual power of turning minds whither Thou wishest. May Thy voice sound in my ears, and command me to become, by Thy most powerful efficacy, such as Thou desirest.

Hail, most sacred hands, by Whose touch diseases are driven off, the blind are healed, the dead raised ! heal my soul, sick with infinite diseases and weaknesses, dispel its blindness, and recall it, dead with sins, to the life of grace.

Hail, feet of my Lord Jesu, bringing safety wherever Thou enterest, to this my wretched soul, I pray bear spiritual health. Who will give me that I may embrace and kiss the ankles pierced with nails, plentifully streaming with blood ? Hail knees of my Saviour, so often bent to the ground in prayer for my salvation !

And hail thou Breast, shrine of Divinity !
 Hail, hail, most loving heart of my Jesus, altar
 of that holocaust ; on which for my salvation the
 fire of love offered Thee, to unite my Lord to my
 heart ; inflame it with this heavenly fire ! Hail,
 again and again, Body of Christ, and save me.

SEC. III.—“ Blood of Christ, inebriate me.”

O MOST Divine drink, flow largely into my
 soul, and fill it completely ; fill my intellect
 with the spirit of Divine knowledge and wisdom,
 my will with the spirit of fortitude, piety, and
 fear of God. In my heart, flesh, my strength,
 and feelings, by which they can seize on Divine
 things or contribute to them, may Thy infinite
 virtue most plentifully overflow. With this
 spiritual drink may I forget myself, in spiritual
 intoxication, and may I wisely grow tired of the
 world, burning with the love of God ; for His
 sake do and suffer anything ; into dangers and
 wounds, nay, death itself, may I rush without
 fear ; and so, in return for blood of so great
 price poured forth for me, may I shed forth my
 own. (But O how unworthy is the comparison).
 Would that for the future, at least, intoxicated
 with this Divine blood. I might resist unto blood,
 in warfare against sins.

SEC. IV.—“ Water from the side of Christ,
 wash me.”

THOU hast opened for us, O Lord, in Thy
 own breast, a window, through which we
 may most deeply explore the most sincere love of

Thy heart, the depths of Thy infinite mercy ; and, with Thomas, even feel Thee with our hands. I see, Lord, and see clearly, that in truth and in very deed Thou lovest me ; grant that in heart and truth I may love Thee in turn ; and do Thou wash away, with Thy saving waters, all that strange and forbidden love, of which some spots and contagion affect my heart.

SEC. V.—“ Passion of Christ, strengthen me.”

O BLESSED Passion, glorious Passion ! I acknowledge and adore, in thy foolishness, God’s wisdom, in thy shame, God’s glory, in thy weakness, God’s power. For often, my Lord Jesu, Thou wert made despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief ; since Thou hast neither form nor beauty, since Thou art a worm, and no man, shame of men, and outcast of the people ; see, Thou drawest all men unto Thyself ; Thou drawest to Thyself the hearts of men, so resolutely and obstinately revolting from their God ; Thou turnest the implacable anger of God to mercy ; Thou dost fetter the power and strength of the powers of darkness.

O most powerful passion of Jesus, comfort me, and strengthen us against all adversities. Grant also, I pray, that even I who fail in my own strength and glory, in my infirmities, in contumely, in necessities, in persecutions, may be made powerful in adversities.

SEC. VI.—“O good Jesu, hear me, within Thy sacred wounds hide me.”

ONCE, Lord, Thou didst place in a clift of a rock* the leader of Thy people, Moses; when he greatly desired the vision of Thy glory and of all good; and, covering him with Thy right hand, fulfilledst his prayer.

And I, too, through the clift of the rock, viz., of that spiritual rock, which the Apostle taught us was Thyself, by Thy blessed wounds, I say, I aspire to the fruition of good things fitting for my saivation. In the depths of Thy wounds hide me. If I have found this grace in Thy sight, may I be possessed of all other things which I can desire. Here I shall find a place of refreshment, where I may hide myself from the face of the anger of God; here are store-rooms whence I may bring forth treasures of heavenly graces; here are medicines and baths to cure my wounds; here are treasuries for paying my debts; here are sanctuaries and temples for nourishing devotion. And why, I pray, Lord Jesu, dost thou keep these wounds, but that they may be a refuge and consolation for me and other sinners?

Come, therefore, my soul, run quickly to this refuge. See for some time I have been knocking for thee! Of themselves lie open these five portals of mercy and cities of refuge. When thou hast saluted this most holy threshold, with most humble kiss, enter with confidence. What if thou leavest the smaller scars of the hands and feet for less offenders, and thrust thyself, laden

* Exodus xxxiii. 23.

with a much heavier and larger burden of offences, into the more capacious bosom of the sacred side ? I do this, I do this, most benign Jesu. Open wide the bowels of Thy mercy to receive a great sinner. Hide me in Thy tabernacle from the provoking of all men, from the din of useless cares, from the tumult of secular desires. May no one here be troublesome to me ; the world knows me not, nor I the world. Thee only I know, Thy Cross and wounds ; their length, breadth, and depth, I have measured by daily meditation ; that so my life may be hid with Thee in God, with Thee may be, at length made manifest in glory.

SEC. VII.—“Suffer me not to be separated from Thee.”

BUT what is this, Lord ? In this most solid rock and most sacred asylum, amongst these shrines of charity (which cast out fear) I still suffer fear and dread ; lest perchance I should be separated from Thee at last, when imperfect love and inconstant desires join me to Thee. I know in truth that Thou dost not first cast out the guest once admitted to these most friendly conclaves ; but also Thou dost not detain him against his will. How uncertain, however, is my will even to myself ! How I fear lest, by the corruption of its own nature, my will, addicted to secular vanities, should not contain itself within Thy Cross and wounds ! I am the object of the greatest suspicion even to myself. After enduring so many noises and mockings as were cast by the impious Jews against Thee, I must not desert Thy wounds. Even the least mocking of the world

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or of the flesh can draw me out of the most intimate recesses of Thy breast. But, most loving Jesu, I implore Thee, by Thy constancy under the Cross, ; by Thy wounds, by the blood so plentifully shed for me, that Thou permit not. Remember, Lord Jesu, Thy word, most full of sweetness and consolation. "He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, (which I have now eaten and drunk) dwelleth^m in Me, and I in him,"* and shall not taste of eternal death.

SEC. VIII.—"From the malicious enemy defend me."

IN order that I may obtain what I sought, I have need of this benefit, Lord, that Thou snatch[†] my darling from the power of the dog, "save me from the lion's mouth," and restrain the teeth of the infernal monster. Though the feelings and thoughts of my heart might not incline to evil from my youth; though I had been created an angel; yet that most wicked robber would fill me with dread, in that he dragged into ruin a third part of the angels[‡], by concupiscence, and the empty deceits of the world. Therefore, again and again, I implore Thy help and guardianship against so malignant and powerful an enemy. Endow me with power from on high[§] against him, and, with the shield of Thy good will, turn aside every plague; Thou who hast conquered the "strong man armed," and taken away all his armour wherein he trusted (S. Luke xi. 21), openly

* S. John vi. 56.

† Ps. xxii. 20-21. ‡ Apoc. xii. 4 and 9.

‡ S. Luke xxiv. 49.

triumphing in Thyself; grant that I also, a weak member of Thy mystical Body, the Church, may bring back a triumph from him.

SEC. IX.—“In the hour of my death call me.”

BE Thou propitious to me in that last hour, on which eternity depends. Be pleased, I pray Thee, to put an end to my life at no other time, than when, made white with Thy Blood, with all my sins blotted out; and enlightened with the lamp of charity, I may meet Thee, the Spouse of my soul, with arms meeting Thee! Before this, of Thy kindness grant me gifts of great price and value, which yet may be held and lost; in place of that punishment, which, after it has been inflicted, cannot be remitted. When I have obtained this, may I be saved for ever!

O most loving Jesus, who willest all to be saved, in the hour of my death save me. Even now, in consideration of all that is future, into Thy hands I commend my spirit, and give it over irrevocably. This I commend to Thee, in union with that most ardent charity, with which, when dying, Thou didst commend Thy spirit to Thy Father.

Do not Thou, I pray Thee, close the arms of Thy mercy, which were stretched for my salvation on the Cross. O when, most beloved Jesus, shall I be made free from the bonds of the body; and, set free from every mortal contagion, contemplate Thy glorious face! Be it so, Lord Jesus, and soon let it be. “I wish to be dissolved,” “and to be with Thee* were much better for me.”

* Philipp. i. 23.

“Come quickly, Lord Jesus,” quickly may “Thy kingdom come,” when, with Thy Saints, I may praise Thee for ever and ever. Amen.

Benedicite omnia opera.

ANTIPHON.—“Let us sing the song of the Three Children which they sang in the furnace of fire, blessing the Lord.”

O ALL ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord : praise Him and magnify Him for ever.

O ye angels of the Lord, bless ye the Lord :
O ye heavens, bless ye the Lord.

O ye waters that be above the firmament, bless ye the Lord : O all ye powers of the Lord, bless ye the Lord.

O ye sun and moon, bless ye the Lord : O ye stars of heaven bless ye the Lord.

O ye showers and rain, bless ye the Lord : O ye winds of God, bless ye the Lord.

O ye fire and heat, bless ye the Lord : O ye winter and summer, bless ye the Lord.

O ye dews and frosts, bless ye the Lord : O ye frost and cold, bless ye the Lord.

O ye ice and snow, bless ye the Lord : O ye nights and days, bless ye the Lord.

O ye light and darkness, bless ye the Lord : O ye lightnings and clouds, bless ye the Lord.

O let the earth bless the Lord : yea, let it praise Him and magnify Him for ever.

O ye mountains and hills, bless ye the Lord :
O all ye green things upon the earth, bless ye the Lord.

O ye wells, bless ye the Lord : O ye seas and floods, bless ye the Lord.

O ye whales, and all that move in the waters, bless ye the Lord : O all ye fowls of the air, bless ye the Lord.

O all ye beast and cattle, bless ye the Lord : O ye children of men, bless ye the Lord.

O let Israel bless the Lord : praise Him, and magnify Him for ever.

O ye priests of the Lord, bless ye the Lord : O ye servants of the Lord, bless ye the Lord.

O ye spirits and souls of the righteous, bless ye the Lord : O ye holy and humble men of heart, bless ye the Lord.

O Ananias, Azarias, and Misael, bless ye the Lord : praise Him and magnify Him for ever.

Let us bless the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost : let us praise and magnify Him for ever.

Blessed art Thou, O Lord, in the firmament of Heaven : and worthy to be praised, and glorious and magnified for ever.

*Paraphrase of the Hymn of the Three Children,
for the use of Communicants.*

ANTIPHON.—“Let us sing the Song of the Three Children, which they sang in the furnace of fire, blessing the Lord.”

THREE three Hebrew princes, for the sake of God's religion, were cast by Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, into a furnace of fire : “but the angel of the Lord went down with

Azarias and his companions into the furnace, and he drove the flame of the fire out of the furnace, and made the midst of the furnace like the blowing of a wind bringing dew; and the fire touched them not at all, nor troubled them, nor did them any harm." (Dan. iii. 49—51., Vulgate.)

Thou didst descend, Lord Jesus, Angel of the New Testament, King and Creator of all the angels, Thou didst descend into my heart and soul; a very furnace of Babylon, which is set on fire by the hay and straw of lighter faults, as well as by the infernal pitch, naphtha, and fire-darts of greater faults. Oh I am undone, and for ever undone! unless, most gentle Jesus, Thou shake off these flames, which the lust of concupiscence nourishes, the suggestions of the flesh and of the devil inflame: and a pride of more than* forty-nine cubits high, mounts up above me. And why otherwise dost Thou send down Thy majesty, power, and mercy, raging between these fires, from the throne of Thy kingdom? May the flames of hell flee from Thy face, and in place of them, pour into my heart Thy Spirit—Thy Holy One; who may make it like a wind bringing dew, the dew *i. e.* of Thy Grace; which may heal whatever has been consumed in that deadly flame, and preserve me wholly forthwith, from all its burning.

I. *O All ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord.*

COME all ye creatures, whatever ye know of the wisdom, goodness, power, of your Creator, bring it into this His song of praise, as

* Dan. iii. 47. Vulg.

if into a creed. Those who have no voice or reason, I lend mine to: "Praise Him and exalt him above all for ever." When ye glorify the Lord, exalt Him as much as ye can, for even yet will He far exceed: and when ye exalt Him, put forth all your strength and be not weary; for ye can never go far enough." (Ecclus. xliii. 30. A.V.)

2. *O ye Angels of the Lord, bless ye the Lord.*

YE most pure spirits begin the strain; adore, bless and worship with all honour, your King and Lord, whom, the flame, his benignity and humanity has brought into this my little cottage. See one who was formerly made man for me, not made an angel, for my sake, yet in many ways like unto you. Less than even you do bodily obstacles restrain him, distance of place separate, wounds affect, corruption touch, or mire pollute. Just as wherever ye are, ye are as numerous as we, men, so your Lord wholly occupies this whole Sacrament, nor indeed is He any less, in even the least particle of it. Come, praise and exalt His power and wondrous love for us; offer this sacrifice, as often as, under the forms of bread and wine, he multiplies, either after a certain manner, Himself, or certainly His presence. As many as are the parts that the Peripathetics reckon in a quantity, and annex to it surface, lines and points; so often do ye love and praise Him for ever and ever.

3. *O ye heavens, bless ye the Lord.*

AND in truth, who can make your concert silent? "Hear, O ye heavens," "and be astonished!" Your sound is gone forth into every land; tell every where His glory, and preach forth these wonders; because He, who has made everything by His Almighty word, by a few words of propitiation has willed to be the victim of the world, and my food and drink; because He whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, is confined within the narrow cell of my heart, under the poor forms of bread and wine; because He, in short, in whose sight all your beauty is worthless, your glory faded, your purity soiled, does not abhor the miry den of His poor servant.

4. *O ye waters that be above the heavens,
bless ye the Lord.*

THE noise of many waters sounds amidst this canticle. Happy ye waters that are above the firmament; what immense bodies in the heavens, brightened by so many stars, are contained in that most vast expanse! But how much happier am I, whose earthly structure of my body, encompasses their Creator!

Lord Jesus, Lamb to-day slain by me, Thou at the same time governest all things from the midst of Thy heavenly throne; so Lord, bring me at length to these supercelestial waters. Would that meanwhile, the waters of tears would cover this mass of my body, which Thou hast made like an earthly heaven with Thy glorious pre-

sence; tears, whose fountains springing up into eternal life, a humble and contrite heart, under the influence of Thy Spirit, would copiously pour forth.

5. *O all ye powers of the Lord, bless ye the Lord.*

THOU hast given, O Lord, wonderful power and manifold strength to these heavenly bodies, to be diverted towards these lower matters. But how much hast Thou hidden the more illustrious workings of Thy goodness in these elements, whose partaker I have been in these Sacraments! The power of the heavens is extended no further than to the rise and setting, the disposition and the motions of bodies: but the most divine Sacraments produce life for the soul, and make it immortal; and load it with the fulness of all virtues and heavenly goods. Unless indeed their most benign influx be hindered by sins; which oftentimes, my Jesus, divide between me and Thee, more effectually than any wall or rampart; and exclude Thy kindnesses! Oh destroy these hated obstacles, lest my soul be empty of these divine influxes, like a land rest of the benign influence of the sun.

6. *O ye sun and moon, bless ye the Lord;
O ye stars of heaven, bless ye the Lord:
praise and exalt Him above all for ever.*

YOUR sound is gone out into every land; cry out to all tribes, peoples and tongues: If your beauty is so delightful, "let them know how

much the Lord of them is more beautiful." (Wis. xiii. 3., Vulg.) Would that all would estimate by your magnitude and splendour, the immensity and the beauty of your maker.

O Jesu, more splendid than the sun, Thou Sun of the sun, and not sun of the body only, but of souls and spirits, enlighten me. I shall be buried in the thickest darkness of ignorance and injustice; unless Thou enlighten me with Thy countenance, —Thy countenance everywhere radiant, with the splendour of eternal light.

7. *O ye showers and dews, bless ye the Lord.*

GIVE glory to your God: and as many drops as fall, so often praise Him; He is on High, who calls the waters of the sea; and weighs them, and pours them out in measure. The Lord is His name.

O most benign Jesu! my soul is like land without water; all dry, it sighs to Thee; and pants for that voluntary rain of Thy heavenly gifts, which Thou hast set apart for Thy heritage; and of which Thou hast already afforded me no slight pledge in these Sacraments.

8. *O all ye winds of God, bless ye the Lord.*

MOST powerful Jesus, Master of all winds, mayest Thou be praised and blessed in this Thy power! And since it has pleased Thy goodness to descend into the garden of my soul; command that it do eagerly whatever blows away from the quarters of the north, where Lucifer sits, whence all evil displays itself. May the south

wind instead come from Thee ; and the Father's most Holy Spirit, blow through the whole of my garden, and fill it with the fragrance of all virtues.

9. *O ye fire and heat, bless ye the Lord.*
O ye cold and heat, bless ye the Lord.

AS in the elegance of a discourse with verbal antitheses, so in this opposition of things, there shines forth not only the beauty of the universe ; but even, O Lord, Thy inexplicable wisdom and power ; by which Thou layest together in peace, things so differing from one another, for Thine own honour and glory.

O all-wise Lord, even me Thou hast placed contrary to Thee, as cold is to heat. Moreover, with Thy infinite wisdom, does my great foolishness strive, as if from some region ; my badness with Thy goodness. Thou, Lord, art the only one that art. (Exod. iii.) Thou art purely, Thou art simply, Thou art entirely, Thou art self-existent. I am nothing of myself ; and what I have received of Thy goodness and power is a small particle of my being ; mixed with infinite vacuity and nothingness. In existence and in nothing, are sown the first seeds of discord between me and Thee. Who will grant me, that with Thee, as the adversary is so powerful, I may agree, whilst I am in the way ! And that, too, in the same house, in the recesses of my breast, whither Thou hast descended for a sign of peace and friendship, from the Throne of Thy glory. Grant this, Lord, who makest men to be of one mind in a house—(Ps. lxxviii. 6) : by whom the wolf and the lamb feed together, and the leopard lies down with the goat. (Is. xi. 6.)

10. *O ye dews and frosts, bless ye the Lord.
O ye ice and snow, bless ye the Lord.*

MOST truly, Lord, Thy infinite wisdom is said to sport through all the world. For is not this like sport, that the same waters should at one time extend like flocks of wool, in snow ; at another like ashes be poured forth into clouds ; or at least be gathered, like salt, in the frost ? At one time should form into armour of freezing waters ; at another should freeze into hailstones ? And whence is this sport, pray ? Except that Thou sportest with us as a parent with her children. For Thy “delights were to be with the children of men.” (Pro. viii. 31.) And teachest them, as if by a game, out of the contemplation of Thy admirable works, to endure Thy wisdom, and fear Thy power.

11. *O ye nights and days, bless ye the Lord.*

“**D**AY* unto day uttereth speech, and night to night showeth knowledge. The Word, *i.e.*, of Divine knowledge, and the knowledge of the Most High Name, that governs all things with providence and wisdom ; of whose own word alone, this change of days and nights endures constant, for so many ages.

Be Thou blessed, O Lord, in this not unlike change of my soul : whether Thou refresh me with the light of Thy consolation, or shut me up in the darkness of desolation ; until Thou bring me over by Thy ordinance, into that state which is placed beyond every alternation of days and

* Ps. xviii. 2, Vulg.

nights. It wants not sun or moon : because Thy brightness coustantly enlightens it. (Apoc. xxi. 23.)

12. *O ye lightnings and clouds, bless ye the Lord.*

O LIGHTNINGS, why is not my voice resounding as yours also : by which, with you, I may be able to announce, through this universe, the majesty of so great a Power ; and compel the wicked to fear and reverence Him.

Come ye ; “the voice of the Lord is mighty in operation ; the voice of the Lord is a glorious voice.” (Ps. xxix. 4.) Magnify the Lord with me, and for me. But, alas, me ! Lord, I have heard Thy voice, and I was afraid : “Thou didst march through the land in indignation ; Thou didst thresh the heathen in anger.” (Habak iii. 12.) “The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars ; yea, the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon.” “The voice of the Lord divideth the flame of fire ; the voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness.” (Ps. xxix. 7—8.) Why, then have I approached the Lord so nearly in this Sacrament ? With his thundering and lightning hand, he little suits the sinner ; “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.” Or, rather, remain with me, O most powerful Jesus Christ, defender and advocate with the Father. If Thy Father shall sharpen as a sword His lightning ; and His hand shall execute judgment, where shall I be ? unless Thou protect me with the shield of Thy good will, and defend me

with those most gentle words, "Father forgive them."

13. *O let the earth bless the Lord.*

O LET the earth bless the Lord, let it praise and exalt Him above all for ever; He it is who founded thee upon thy own basis. (Ps. ciii. 5*.) No one but He, has laid thy foundations, no one has stretched the line upon thee, no one laid thy foundation-stone. (Job xxxviii. 5—6.) He weighs the whole mass on three fingers. So Great Power "when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy"—(Job xxxviii. 7)—lest Thou shouldest ungratefully be silent. Moreover, whereas the generation of other things comes and goes, Thou yet abide-t for ever—(Eccles. i. 4); for ever, therefore, and for ever, praise the Lord: through men, as a mother through her sons.

14. *O ye mountains and hills, bless ye the Lord.*

YE mountains leap like rams, and ye little hills like young sheep." (Ps. cxiv. 6.) Ye did this formerly in the presence of the Angel, the symbol of the Lord's presence, and who gave the law on Sinai; much more now do ye do this for the presence of your Lord in this Sacrament; and who brings the law into the midst of my heart.

* Vulg.

15. *O all ye things that spring up in the earth,
bless ye the Lord.*

AND we bless Thee too for their use, O immense goodness, who hast pointed out the riches of Thy greatness and power so plainly to the human race; since Thou hast introduced us not into an empty possession of the earth, but hast furnished us also with abundance of everything necessary for life. One tree, by whose fruit we should have been able to obtain eternal life without death, the envy of the devil took away from us. But Thy goodness has made up for this loss, with the fruit of this most divine Sacrament, which those who taste shall live for ever, temporal death being thus no hindrance to us.

16. *O ye wells, bless ye the Lord.*

BY the waters of Babylon, exiles from our country, we sing this song; and could we forget the waters? Come ye rivers, wells, seas, as many drops as ye flow, so often celebrate your Creator's praises. I certainly will forthwith sing with all my strength, the mercies of the Lord for ever; because, by your touch and expiation, all the sins of the human race are blotted out in Baptism.

17. *O ye whales and all that move in the waters,
bless ye the Lord.*

YOU fish even make known—a dumb race in other respects—the vocal praise of your Creator; and not a few things of His wisdom and

power ; you will proclaim it either by the attestation of your number alone, by your variety, by the admirable structure of your bodies, and greatness of your ocean dwelling. O divine artificer who made all these things !

18. *O all ye fowls of the air, bless ye the Lord.*

BLESS the Lord, all ye birds of the air, which the heavenly Father so feeds, that out of so many thousands of birds, one can scarcely find one worn out with hunger ; unless, out of the common store of so great a Father, He shall have given over His power and care to another, less provident and liberal.

But ye, O men, are ye not of more value than they ? (Matt, x. 31.) Are ye not better than many sparrows ? Or out of this His benevolence and munificence, think that, while the birds are compelled to seek diligently a few grains, or to catch frogs or flies ; He feeds you on heavenly food, and the drink of His Blood ; and, in truth, it is for a pledge of that other food, by which even His divinity will satisfy you for ever, in the kingdom of God.

19. *O all ye beasts and cattle, bless ye the Lord.*

WHAT heart so savage or so fierce as that some elements of divine power, wisdom, or goodness are not found in it ? All, then, run together (for there is no difference between clean and unclean) ; run together, and offer to your Creator, of yourselves, the sacrifice of your praise.

20. *O ye sons of men, bless the Lord.*

O YE sons of men, know how exceedingly to magnify the Lord with your voice. He has placed you over the works of His hands, He has placed all things under your feet; "all sheep and oxen, yea, the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air and the fishes of the sea." Moreover, with most divine art, whatever is everywhere scattered throughout the whole visible universe and invisible creation, He has also conferred upon you, as a kind of most ingenious compendium of all His work. But if ye have been created the epitome of divine works, ye sons of men; it is, in truth, most just that ye should be the absolute combination of divine praises; and as He has made you masters over all things, ye should give glory for all creatures to Him, the Benefactor of all.

21. *O let Israel bless the Lord; let them praise Him and exalt Him above all for ever.*

GREAT benefits indeed the divine goodness has heaped on the whole human race; but special ones on Israel, after the spirit, not after the flesh; who are the sons of promise, not of blood, nor of the will of man, but of God Himself, born by Christ; whose is the true adoption of sons, and the covenant, and the giving of the law, and the worship, and fuller promises. (Rom. ix. 4.) He hath not dealt so with any nation; but in truth, those who are increased and adorned with singular benefits by God, may praise and bless Him with especial zeal.

22. *O ye priests of the Lord, bless the Lord.*

ON all creatures is imposed the duty of glorifying their Creator; but on Priests lies a peculiar official obligation, to praise and worship assiduously the Divine majesty. The Royal Psalmist, not content with daily praise of this kind, demands of all who stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God; that even by night they lift up their hands in the sanctuary, and bless the Lord. (Ps. cxxxiv.) When, however, there has been added to the execution of the Priestly office in Christian priests, the inconceivable greatness of the gift, in which the Creator of the universe gives over Himself to them for food, for medicine; truly, Lord God, Thou dost inculcate in us the special obligation of the Priesthood, which we have in common with others, of praising the Divine majesty.

23. *O ye spirits and souls of the just, bless the Lord.*

O ALL ye saints whose bodies sleep under the altar, whose glorious souls exult in heaven, ye do not depart from these sacred mysteries of the creed. Therefore, prostrate before the Throne, ye say with a great voice, "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever." (Apoc. v. 13.) I will cry out with all my strength and earnestness of mind, Amen. And the Lamb, once slain on the Cross, now offered for us on the unbloody altar, I will declare most worthy of this honour.

24. *O Ananias, Azarias, and Misael, bless ye the Lord.*

DO You, O do You, most noble heroes, raise this your sacred song, for ever and ever to your God ; and when you invite all to sing, animate your breasts and voices with that high-sounding strain ; with which, neglecting the favour of Nebuchadnezzar, all fortunes, and honours, and life itself, for divine worship, you returned this most noble answer ; "Be it known to thee, O King, that we will not worship thy gods, nor adore the golden statue which thou hast set up," (Dan. iii. 18 Vulg.) Would that, Lord Jesu, these three Princes of the Hebrews, whose grace and constancy of mind gained so great a victory over the tyrant ; would that Thou wouldst confirm me also by the same ; that whatever idol, whatever splendid or precious thing be offered me by the Prince of this world, in place of Thy sovereign power, I say not for worship but even for possession : with whatever pleasant pipes and harps he invites me, with whatever threats of flames or torments he may force me, may I always speak thus with mind and mouth. I will not do it, nor will I ever do it, prepared rather to die than to admit the evil. I serve God only, before Whose majesty and sacred laws, I place nothing.

25. *Let us bless the Father, and the Son, with the Holy Ghost ; let us praise and exalt Him above all for ever.*

LET us praise with voice, let us bless with work, let us praise, striving with our whole

mind ; but we do nothing unless with our whole strength ; we exalt Thee above all things for ever, Thou great God. But where our prayers and desires are unable to rise, whither we cannot reach in actual deeds ; I wish for as many voices, tongues, and minds, as are atoms in the air, grasses in the fields, leaves on the trees, sands on the shore ; to praise and exalt Thee for ever and ever.

26. *Blessed art Thou, Lord, in the firmament of heaven, and worthy to be praised, and glorious, and exalted above all for ever.*

O MOST gentle Jesus, I have endeavoured in my measure to worship and praise Thy Majesty, which has thought me worthy of Thy Presence. Conscious though I am of my weakness, whatever in heaven and earth, whatever in all the works of Thy hands I could think of or name ; I have called to my aid to help me, and to take part and lot in Thy honour. But how little is this, how rude are my thoughts, how cold my affections, how short is the time ! Mayest Thou be blessed rather in the firmament of heaven ; where the Cherubim shine with the clear knowledge of Thy perfections, where the Seraphim burn with the fervent love ; and all the citizens of that most happy city unceasingly praise Thee day and night, and cease not throughout eternity. Would that I might be admitted at last, where I might recall for ever Thy benefits ; which here too easily fall from my mind. Amen.

THE END.





