

voluptuous irreverence of the Corinthian disciples towards the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of the Lord, it is impossible not to suppose, that, had fasting communions been the true remedy the indignant and earnest apostle would have insisted upon such a rule being at once adopted; instead of which, he positively instructs them to "eat at home," *before* they come to partake of that most Holy Sacrament! Nor, in his second Epistle to them, written in the following autumn, and intended for all the Provincial Churches, is there the least hint of his having made any change in his former instructions on this momentous subject. And though he wintered at Corinth the same year, and wrote from thence his Epistle to the Galatians, neither in that Epistle nor in the Acts of the Apostles is there the slightest hint of any counsel having been given as to the desirability even of receiving the Holy Communion while fasting. And yet in all these Epistles St. Paul treats of various irregularities, and gives several admonitions respecting meats and drinks; so that had he ordered any changes in the time or manner of receiving the Holy Eucharist he must needs have alluded to them; being a matter, too, in which all the Churches of Asia were interested. Hence it is impossible, I think, for the candid mind not to see that the testimony and practice of the great Apostles of the Gentiles are positively in favour of non-fasting Communions.

But further, had this question been of the importance which many people deem it, it is surely impossible not to suppose that an Apostolic Council would have settled it at once, as they did the question of circumcision and of the use of various kinds of meats.

Nor was there any authoritative change during the age immediately succeeding the Apostles as to the hour, or method, in which the Holy Communion should be received. But I go further, and fearlessly state that the Catholic Church has never made any such change to the present day, whatever Provincial Synods may have done: consequently, as neither our Lord, nor his Apostles, nor yet the Catholic Church in any age of her existence, have ever *enjoined* early and fasting communions, it necessarily follows—as is exactly the case, by the way, with the cognate question of Confession—that, however reverent and profitable either the one or the other may frequently be, there is no warrant for impressing them upon the consciences of the faithful as a duty. Indeed, it is in exact accordance with the gentle wisdom and loving consideration of Jesus and his genuine Bride to leave all such questions to the godly decision of individuals as to what is most profitable to themselves.

Take, my dear D., an instance of the far-seeing consideration and wisdom which leaves such things as fasting or non-fasting communions to individual free-