

and give not thine inheritance to reproach !”

Oh ! surely then this is a hallowed, a gracious and blessed season ! Those repeated cries for mercy from between the porch and the altar will penetrate the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth, whose fatherly and willing ear heareth even “the preparation of our heart” (Pe.) and will bring down upon us the choicest benedictions of Heaven.

“Now is the acceptable time, these are the days of salvation.” With what confidence should we not unite our prayers with those of his anointed representatives, and whilst we supplicate for mercy, give thanks to our Holy Lord, Almighty Father and Eternal God who, as his spouse on earth sings “by this bodily fast extinguishes our vices, elevates our understanding and bestows us virtue and its precious rewards !” *

And who so competent to teach us how to pray as this Spouse of Christ, our tender mother ? She has composed for us a daily lenten oblation of prayer and praise. That abridgment and perfection of all prayer which her Divine Founder himself hath taught us, she faithfully employs in the celebration of all her offices. Listen to the words of hope, the accents of sorrow, the sentiments of humility in which she securely points the way to the throne of Grace in the Lenten season

O Almighty and Eternal God who forgavest the Ninivites when they did penance in sackcloth and ashes ; mercifully grant us so to imitate their penance, that we may obtain pardon of our sins !

Grant us, O Lord, to begin our Christian warfare with ho’y fasting ; that being to fight against spiritual wickednes we may be fortified by the succours of abstinence !

Grant, O Lord, that thy faithful may enter on this solemn fast with suitable piety, and thoroughly perform it with secure devotion.

May our fasting be acceptable to thee, and become a remedy to us !

Graciously favour us O Lord, we beseech thee, in the fast we have undertaken ; that what we outwardly observe, we may perform with sincere minds !

Defend, O Lord, thy people, and mercifully cleanse them from all their sins ; for no misfortune can injure them, if no iniquity rule over them !

Give ear, O Lord, to our prayers, and grant that we may with true devotion, observe this solemn fast, which was wholesomely instituted for the cure of our souls and bodies !

O God, who purifiest thy Church by the yearly observance of Lent ; grant that what thy children endeavour to obtain of thee by abstinence, they may accomplish by good works !

We humbly beseech thee, O Lord, that as we retrench from the food of

* Preface for Lent