

near Him who deserves so little!" And who is there among us, searching his own heart to its depths, and looking back on his past life—it may have been, of error; it may have been, of infidelity; it may have been, of crime, even—and finding himself forgiven and at rest, and allowed to mingle with the household of God; who, contemplating all this, and seeing himself *literally* at the feet of his Saviour, speaking to him words of love, talking as though it were to a parent or a friend upon every detail of His benefits; recalling, again and again, the way in which he was called, the manner in which the Good Shepherd took him upon His shoulders and bore him to the true fold: who, feeling in himself all this, will not easily pass an hour in again and again thanking Him with expressions of natural love, for the mercies He has bestowed, even, my brethren, in such phrases as a child would use? Strangers in foreign countries are at times astonished when they hear, at the moment in which the Blessed Sacrament is exposed, or Benediction is given with it, expressions of such familiar love breaking forth from the lips of the peasant and the artisan, that it is impossible to conceive them spoken save concerning one of whose actual and real presence there, there was not a shadow of doubt; and expressions at the same time of such simple, almost infantile love, as prove how this belief is not one merely of the intellect, but one most truly of the heart.

And then, when we have exhausted those considerations that are somewhat selfish, we may surely find abundance else concerning which to entertain ourselves with our most Blessed Saviour. Parents, speak to Him of your children, if they give you pain, if they are forgetful of their duty to God, if you fear that they are running on the paths of vice. This is your hour; this is your place; for you stand before Him who touched the bier, and raised the son of the widow, even from death. Children, are you afflicted at your parents sufferings, seeing that, as old age creeps on, sorrow and tribulation come with it, and pain, and bodily suffering; and do you wish that you could ease them and give them rest? Then pray to Him to smooth their pillow who raised from a fever the mother-in-law of Peter, and who bestowed so many wonderful benefits of cure upon the sick, and gave consolation to all that came nigh to Him in affliction. You who are just and holy, are you grieved at the sight of iniquity and sin, at seeing so many of whom you know, and whom, perhaps, you love, still hardened in vice, and feeling no desire to return to God? Are you dismayed at the spread of wickedness throughout the world, and do you fear the judgments of God may come upon it? Then come here, and pray in the very presence of Him who forgave the penitent thief upon the cross, who was ever familiar with publicans and sinners, and who came to seek and to save what was lost.

This is the way in which all may satisfy their spiritual desires. For love, after all, is not content with silently gazing upon its objects; and they who love their Saviour, though they may indeed, for a long time dwell in secret contemplation on all He has done and suffered for them still will not be so satisfied. They will ask for more. Love is craving, love is garrulous, and love requires to entertain itself with interchange of discourse. Therefore, fear not, my brethren; pour out your supplications here, and be assured that if at any time and any place they will be heard, it will be at that time when you are all collected in silence, each occupied with his own work; but, at the same time, all united together and centred in one common Saviour.

For I need not say, my dear brethren, that this adoration and this contemplation of our Blessed Lord, which so peculiarly makes the worship which we are now engaged in similar to that of saints and angels in heaven, is one which belongs, and can belong, to the Catholic Church *alone*. And I have no hesitation in saying that a thoughtful mind, one that really believes the word of God to be full of truth, to have meaning in every page and in every sentence—one that considers that not a word has been there written which has not to bear practical fruit, might easily be brought to the admission of the whole Catholic system, by following out this thought, that the worship of the Catholic Church, based on the belief of the Real Presence, comes the nearest possible to that worship which John describes as done in heaven. If ours be not the counterpart of that worship, then has it no counterpart on earth. Is it possible any where else to have a multitude of men together, each engaged with his own thoughts, and yet these thoughts be the same in principle and in object? If you speak of religion (you, at least, who belong not to the Catholic Church) what is your understanding of the unity that holds together a congregation, if it be not, that when worship is performed, they can all join in it, that they can answer to a common prayer, that they allow themselves to be led by one minister, and that their thoughts are united through the agency of that voice which guides your service, or which instructs you? But imagine the force of a doctrine and the strength of unity in the Catholic Church, which can make, not hundreds, but thousands of persons, kneel in silence, without interchange of word, without a preacher or a priest to instruct them, or to pray with them, or to lead them in their devotions; and yet, every single heart, believing exactly the same, and paying the same acts of silent homage? It shows that the root of faith is in the heart, that that root is the growth of a common seed, which, having been cast there by the Church in each Catholic soul, and nourished there by the grace of God, brings forth the same plant, bears the same flowers, and yields the same delicious fruit. Thus Catholics are united, and may be united through the whole earth, without a word being spoken, and without a single outward bond or an exterior act to hold them together.

This devotion, then, is so eminently Catholic, that we should cherish it, that we should love it, and should

most perfectly follow it. And it is, as I have said, when the Church, exposing our Blessed Redeemer in this holy Sacrament to our adoration, enables us to indulge perfectly in the suggestion of our own hearts, when she does not limit us by any particular service to the time spent in this worship—that we can truly perform this two-fold inward act of homage, adoration, and contemplation—that adoration which makes us cast ourselves down before God, and acknowledge Him to be our Lord, and that contemplation which follows Him through all the phases of His goodness, only to give greater nourishment to our love.

But, my brethren, it may be said, "Do not we Catholics, admit that the real presence is constantly in our Churches; that the Blessed Eucharist in the tabernacle is an object of constant devotion; and that, therefore, we can satisfy all these feelings without the necessity of such peculiar external pomp, as we accompany this special form of devotion with?"

It is true, my brethren; but is not less true that we require circumstances exterior to us, and which, though in themselves trifling and worthless, assist our thoughts, to make that devotion be to its fullest extent what the Church intends it. Our experience shews it. We see how the faithful flock where the Blessed Redeemer is elevated, if one may thus speak, in royal majesty, to be especially worshipped. And though from time to time they will pass fervent moments in visiting Him when He has retired within the shelter of His tabernacle, and remain perhaps a considerable time in prayer at particular seasons when their hearts prompt them, still it requires a suggestive impulse from the Church, an invitation, a call to the faithful to come and pay a solemn homage, to give additional motives for us to do it. In fact, is it not so with all the world? Do we not hold that a monarch is as worthy of homage and of reverence at one time as another? And yet, are there not stated days and hours appointed when they who wish to shew that homage are invited to go, and do not multitudes then flock who at other times would not do so? And therefore it is that the Church is pleased more especially to claim our devotion for the Blessed Sacrament, in a particular season, and under a particular form.

But this is not the chief reason why there should be this outward display, and why our Blessed Lord should be thus elevated in the presence of all, that men who love Him may come and adore Him. He has been outraged; He has been insulted; He has been blasphemed; He has been sacrilegiously treated for ages on account of the very love which He has shewn us. He has been the object of scorn and of jeers. The belief in it has been treated as superstitious, and we who hold it have been deemed little better than dupes and fools! Fools we gladly are for Christ's sake! Who is there that ever loved Him greatly, that ever openly confessed Him, that ever loved His cross, that has not been considered by the world a fool? Therefore it is a joy and an honor to us Catholics to be considered such now for the simplicity of our faith. But because we are called fools, and because this one belief is spurned, we will proclaim it before the world. Do you believe that we would permit all to come here and witness our manner of worshipping—do you believe that we would lay out our ingenuity and slender means in decorating that altar, and giving it all the splendor of which, under circumstances, it admits, unless we really believed that which we say and profess to believe, that it is not for an imagination of man, it is not for a symbol, it is not for anything unreal, but it is for the true God of Gods Himself that we are thus ready to proclaim our love and our adoration? It is a proof, and it ought to convince any one of the sincerity of our faith, that we thus openly avow it. We could not for anything else than the object of our deepest veneration and affection do so much, or indeed what could not justly be done, except to One having a right to the expression of unbounded homage.

Then, my brethren, this is a declaration of our faith, in the face of a scoffing world, of denying philosophy, of popular clamor, and of national blasphemy. We elevate our Saviour to tell the world that not only we believe Him to be here present upon our altars, but that we consider it the greatest of blessings, the highest of glories, to have Him thus in our possession, and to be able to show Him that we fear not what men say or think of us. We only wish He should know our hearts, and that He should see that we believe in earnest and that our belief leads us to that homage which it should exact.

Is it not right, my brethren, that there should be this solemn and triumphant worship of our Blessed Redeemer? Hast Thou not said, O divine Saviour, "that he who humbly himself shall be exalted?"—And who hath humbled himself like Thee? Who hath abased himself like Thee? Who hath allowed himself to be trampled under foot by the unbeliever and scoffer like Thee? And if we wish to follow out Thy maxim, shall we not exalt Thee, raise Thee up, and worship Thee publicly; and shall we not declare in the face of all that we know Thee, and love Thee?

"Who has taught you," I am asked, and the declarations of the national creed put the question,— "Thus to give to your Saviour this splendid and outward worship? Where is your warrant for raising Him up, and bearing the adorable Sacrament about?" Where is my warrant? Where is the warrant for any act of direct adoration towards our Saviour in the New Testament? Where was there any order issued, or permission given, warranting blind men, when cured, to fall down and worship our Lord?—Who taught the women of Canaan, or the leper, or Peter, to prostrate before Him? Again, I ask you, Who told the disciples, when ordered to prepare a humble beast for His riding into Jerusalem, to turn his entry into a triumphal procession? Who told the disciples to cast their garments in the way, and to carpet the rough path to Jerusalem with their best raiment? Who taught the children of the

Jews to cut down palm branches, and follow Him in a throng around? Who taught the little ones to exclaim, "Hosanna to the Son of David?" Who taught them? Why, He of whom our Blessed Redeemer said, that if the children had not cried out, His Father would have made the very stones of the road call out "Hosanna" to Him. It is God that gives the instincts of religion. It is God who has implanted those of grace as much as of nature in the soul. And if our Blessed Redeemer has been humbled for us, it is our duty, it is an instinctive call of our hearts to exalt Him, to the best of our power, by the most solemn and triumphant act of worship and adoration.

And this day we have borne Him, in the best manner we could, in triumph; not indeed with that majesty and dignity we could have wished, but still we bore Him along, and in that triumph we were joined by the universal Church. There were no palms cut down by the wayside of Jerusalem, but there were palms, invisible indeed, but true, of martyrs who joined in the procession, bearing those palm-branches which the Son of God has given them. There were perhaps, but few flowers scattered in His path, but there were lilies and there were roses borne by those who earned them in their hard contests on earth, and who now follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth, and who followed Him this day. We had no precious garments to throw before Him, but there were the garments of those who have washed them in the blood of the Lamb, and who never leave Him, but cleave to Him, and sing to Him whenever the Church invites them;—the Church on earth inviting the triumphant Church in heaven. In this way, we have had our triumph this day, poor indeed, but at the same time, consoling and gratifying to our hearts. We have done what we could to show our Redeemer that we fear not to express our love of Him. And I doubt not but many, many, have in their hearts entreated Him to forgive the injuries He has received, and to look not down on our iniquities, nor on those of our parents, nor to take revenge for past sacrilege and present unbelief, for our own lukewarmness and irreverence, and for others rejection of Him; but according to the multitude of His mercies to forget and forgive; to look down upon faith and our thoughts work our love, though cold, and to reward them, not so much in ourselves, as in others.

And in this splendor of worship, my brethren, does the Church complete that resemblance which Saint John in so many respects exhibits to us, between the Church on earth, and the Church in heaven. For not only is the Lamb there worshipped, and we likewise worship Him here below, but that Lamb stands in a more intimate relation to the Church than mere worship and adoration can give.

St. John saw the heavenly Jerusalem descending upon earth; and we cannot doubt that under this figure is represented the Church of God. And who or what was she who thus came down as a gift from God? She was the Bride of the Lamb. She came down dressed and decked with glory as befitted the spouse prepared by God for His own beloved Son. She came down "as a bride adorned prepared for her bridegroom." And here we make a claim which none other can advance. For in what consists this espousal between the Lamb and the Church? Why, in that which forms it between the Church in heaven and that same blessed victim of our salvation. It consists in this: we believe (and without this belief there would be no fulfilment of this image,) that the Lamb which was slain, has given His very right hand to His Church, and that that right hand remains for ever fast locked in hers, by a compact as inviolable as that which secures us against the return of the deluge (Isai. lv. 9;) and that it leads her always in the path of truth; that He has endowed her as a true spouse, with all earthly and celestial blessings—that He has made over to her as a dowry whatever it is for her good to possess—that He is, as described to us, not only standing in the midst of this His own city, which is His bride, but that from His sacred feet flows forth the river of life, inexhaustible, and ever refreshing this body espoused to Him in unity and peace, His living Church. For from Him, through His sacramental grace, comes forth the rich abundance of that salvation, which burst forth from His sacred heart upon the cross, and pursues its course unailing through this city of God.

And He is the temple of this wonderful city. It has no other (Apoc. xxi. 22!) It is not merely God in His glory, but it is the Lamb particularly as a sacrifice that forms the groundwork, the focus, the very concentration of all worship in His Church. For what else can be signified by His being the temple of His spouse, except that "through Him, and with Him, and in Him," as the Church daily says in her sublime liturgy, is from her "to God the Father Almighty, in unity of the Holy Ghost, all honor and glory?"

Nor is this all, He is its lamp likewise. There is no light there except the glory of God, and the splendor of the Lamb. "For the glory of God hath enlightened it, and the Lamb is the lamp thereof."—(v. 23.) Distinct again the two. God, as ruling all by His providence, and as bestowing upon the Church through His Son all the wisdom of revealed truths; but the Lamb, as more particularly shedding the bright lustre of His constant teaching upon His Church, and as giving to her that beauty, that brightness, that cheerfulness, that joy which characterise all her worship, all her feelings, all her actions.

And now, if the presence and adoration of our divine Redeemer in the blessed Eucharist, forms the foundation, composes the body, and raises also the very loftiest pinnacle of the spiritual house of God; you will see how all that is spoken of the Lamb, as the bridegroom of the Church, applies to her alone, so that the exclusive recognition by her of this mystical and ineffable union, may be considered as the keystone of all her liturgical, ascetic, and spiritual system. I will not pursue this subject now into its

more recondite and mysterious applications. I will not attempt to shew you how this admirable Sacrament necessarily forms the delight of chaste souls, how it is the very life of cloistered purity; containing Him of whom it is written, "My beloved to me, and I to Him, who feedeth among the lilies"—(Cant. ii, 16.) For this would be beyond our present purpose. But I will content myself with a lower and more homely application of this principle. As, then, the material Church partakes of the privileges of the universal Church which it represents, and as this, in her office of "Dedication," applies to the edifice, while she consecrates, the very imagery that belongs to herself, calls it "the heavenly city of Jerusalem," "the spouse, girt by hosts of angels, endowed with the Father's glory, the most beautiful Queen, wedded to Christ the Prince;" so may we say that in the very church in which we are assembled there is every part of the most wonderful apocalyptic description verified. The Lamb is to-day the very temple of his own temple. The rest of the church looks almost like common ground, when contrasted with the greater splendor of the sanctuary in which He receives our special homage. Towards Him there we turn, as did the faithful Jew towards his temple, whenever and wherever he worshiped the God of Israel: and He is the true lamp of our holy place. The very radiance which enshrines Him, and which fills it all, is calculated to make us feel that from Him dart forth spiritual rays more cheering, more brilliant, more penetrating than those which we behold. And still more is this church to-day the bride of the Lamb, who has come down to take possession of it, who is here as the master of the house, ruling it, and looking beneficently down upon all us His servants, admitting us, as souls joined in love, to partake of that character of bride which belongs to the general Church. And so we can explain literally what to others must be expounded allegorically. Talk not to me of symbolical forms, or of architectural details, as intended to represent some abstract dogma, or to keep up traditions which, except among ourselves, are dead. The Church of God has a higher and better symbol than these. She is the bride of the Lamb, and therefore, with no other motive, for no lower reason, she must be adorned. Seek not excuses for splendor, mystify not a very necessity of the Church's privilege. Spread the walls with the most brilliant colors; let the sanctuary dazzle with gold; let the sacred vessels, and all else that belongs to it, be splendid, and fear not. Say not timidly, "This is all to symbolise virtues, or the feelings of the faithful." No; it is more than this. It is the decking out the bride of the Lamb, because she is His spouse. She must be made beautiful, she must be made rich, for God himself has told us that He sends her down from His hand, gloriously adorned. And although the virtues of those who form the spirit of that bride are the true gems that adorn her, and although the array of their glorious deeds forms a more noble raiment for her than mere visible splendor, still even these are necessary to complete and fulfil, as they do in the Catholic Church, that coincidence between the city which God sends down from heaven, and the very material Church. For in this it is no less true than in the heavenly Church, that the Lamb that was slain is the great object of adoration.

Then, my brethren, let us hail this devotion with fulness of joy. Let us make it the means of improving ourselves in the most essential of virtues, love to God and to our dear Redeemer. Let us make it likewise the means of doing good to others, by obtaining for all the world, in this best opportunity for earnest supplication, blessings and graces which we so fearfully need. Oh let us put no bounds to our devotion towards our adorable Redeemer, humbled, as He is pleased to be in this holy Sacrament. Let us, on the contrary, take occasion from the depths of His humiliation, and from the atrocities of injuries He has received, to exalt and praise Him, and love Him the more. Let us pour out our hearts before Him. Let us dwell inwardly on the multitude and immensity of His benefits. But let us particularly cultivate that inward power of the soul of silently adoring Him, and unspokeably loving Him, addressing Him with the lips of the heart, and not of the mouth. Yet while we thus make Him the object of our inward love, be ready ever to join with the Church when she openly does Him homage, fearless what men may (think or say). Make this adorable Sacrament the darling object of your love here on earth, for it contains your God and Saviour, whose face you long to see in heaven. And endeavor to make it the means likewise of your increased sanctification, for you never can come nearer to your Blessed Lord on earth, nor ever pour your petitions at His blessed feet so closely as He permits you here.

And then the day will come, when from the fleeting city here below, where we worship the Son of God under this amiable disguise, we shall pass as we humbly trust, to the lasting city above, to its blessed inhabitants, and to its unveiled worship. It will seem only as if the place alone were changed. All else will be the same, the same God, the same Saviour, the same angels, the same saints; the same Lamb upon the altar, the same incense, the same cry of praise. And they who have worshipped with us on earth, who have walked in humble procession with us, bearing the Lord of Hosts around His house, will there be the companions of our greater triumph, but of the same adoration. And how shall we then bless the day, when in the fulness of our hearts, we admitted and held unflinchingly to that belief, which more than any other, we shall then see, forms a golden chain between the temple of heaven and that of earth, unites the worship of angels and of men, and puts into the mouth of both the same undying canticle: "The Lamb that was slain is worthy to receive power and divinity, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and benediction, for ever and ever, Amen."