

sorbs every other degree of merit, homage, and adoration, due to the supreme being; indeed; is he not the sacrifice by excellence, alone worthy of bearing that name, alone capable of comprising all its effects? And all this even, is but a small part of the properties which the Fathers and holy Doctors of the Church, have in all ages attributed to the sacrifice of the Mass; but let us take a summary view of these different prerogatives, in order to form some adequate idea of the dignity and importance of this oblation.

IT IS A SACRIFICE OFFERED IN EVERY PLACE.

It is offered in every place, according to the celebrated prophecy of Malachias. "In every place there is offered to my name a clean offering," Malach. 1, 10. Wherever the church of Jesus Christ extends, wherever his name is adored, or his religion and morality practised, an order of ministers, consecrated by the same unction, inheritors of the same power, and invested with the same character, address the same supplications to the Almighty and present the same offering, and pour forth the blood of the same atoning victim.

Nations, however disunited by diversity of climate, or distinguished by variety of laws and characters, are on this point united. They form here below that marvellous concordance which St. John beheld in spirit in the Isle of Patmos, when he saw a mighty multitude which no man could number, speaking the same language, chaunting the same canticle and exclaiming in united voices of loud and triumphant jubilation: holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth! honor, glory and dominion be to him who reigns in the highest heavens, and to the Lamb who was immolated for the salvation of his people!

IT IS A SACRIFICE OFFERED AT ALL TIMES.

It may be said that this sacrifice is offered at each hour of the day, since the diversity of climates, and the varied revolutions of the luminary that enlightens our system, seem to have been determined for no other end than to perpetuate this august oblation; for when we cease in this quarter of the globe to offer the eucharistic victim, other Priests in other lands succeed us in this awful function. Our canticles suffer no interruption; there is no pause from prayer; and the church upon earth, like that triumphant in heaven repeats incessantly, and is forever magnifying the virtue, honor, and power, that belong to our God, and to the victim who sanctifies our altars.

IT IS A SACRIFICE THAT HAS BEEN OFFERED SINCE THE ORIGIN OF CHRISTIANITY.

It is a sacrifice that has been offered ever since the origin of Christianity, that is to say, from the moment that Jesus Christ delivered that consoling precept to his Apostles—"Do this in remembrance of me." St. Luke xxii. 19. We can produce the most unequivocal evidence to show, that since that memorable period, the apostles and their successors have evinced the most constant zeal and fi-

delity to perpetuate this salutary institution. Tradition, obscure, upon some points of ancient discipline, presents with regard to this oblation, a succession of documents, the most luminous, and the best substantiated. We have the testimony of St. Paul, who transmitted to the faithful of Corinth the instructions which he had received from the Lord himself; we have the united testimony of Apostles, Disciples, Pontiffs, and Martyrs; the Doctors of the church have, from age to age, spoken of this as a perpetual sacrifice, an universal oblation, a mystery, which the church shall incessantly renew and perpetuate here in time, till it shall be consummated in eternity.

IT IS A SACRIFICE THAT SHALL ENDURE TO THE END OF AGES.

The Church has power to vary her discipline, in order, to meet the exigencies of particular times and circumstances; she may abolish in one age what would have been piously observed in another, because the dispositions or the necessities of her children have undergone a change; but she is always uniform as to the essentials of the sacrifice; she can never suffer these to be altered; and when she has occasion to add any prayers to the liturgy, she is always careful to preserve most sacredly the dogma of the mystery in its original purity, in order that the faithful of every age may, by such practices as correspond to its ineffable sanctity, unite themselves to an oblation which has their salvation for its object, and the glory of God for its essential end.

IT IS A SACRIFICE OFFERED FOR ALL OUR NECESSITIES.

It is not only a sacrifice offered for all our necessities, but is designed moreover by its very institution to obtain for us every kind of grace. Graces that are spiritual—which consist in contrition of heart, detestation of sin, and love of justice; it is from this source that the Christian derives vigilance, fidelity, and power, to accomplish all the commandments; it is here that he finds consolation under all his afflictions, repose amidst all the tumults of his soul, and counsel in all his perplexities; it is here that he acquires force against temptation, and vigilance against the seductions of flesh and blood. Graces that are temporal—for Jesus Christ disdains not, in this oblation, to present such petitions to his Father as have for their object the blessings of this life, provided they are accompanied by docility, and not the dictates of unthankful avarice. In fine, the universal necessities of the church and her children, the particular wants of our friends, our relations, and our neighbors; of our superiors, our dependants, our equals, and even of our enemies; the consolation, in particular, of those who have preceded us, and who are groaning for a season under the weight of divine justice, together with our own personal necessities, whatever they may be;—all are included in the merits of this oblation, which Jesus Christ makes of himself, and expressed in the prayers that accompany the sacrifice.

IT IS A SACRIFICE DESTINED TO EFFACE ALL OUR SINS.

We have no longer need of the blood of heifers, or of the emissary goat; we no longer ground our justification upon the sprinklings which were made by the high priest; we are not obliged to seek a separate victim to efface each particular stain; we possess in the only victim which is immolated upon our altars, a superabundance of merit, which extends to all the maladies of our souls. The wounds of our pride are healed by the wonderful humility of Jesus Christ; the affected delicacy of our feelings, by the life of seclusion and of penitence to which he condescended to subject himself; our attachment to the goods of this life by that state of deprivation and of universal self-denial which he was pleased to undergo; our sallies of intemperate rage, by the meekness of the Lamb which is led unresisting to our altars; our enmity, hatred, and desires of revenge, by the function which he here continually exercises, of mediator and reconciler; our irreverence and indecency in his temple, by the profound adoration which he here renders to his Father; that crowd of distractions which assails us in the house of prayer, by the supplication which this powerful intercessor never ceases to offer in our regard. It is from the recesses of his tabernacle, more effectually than from any other situation, that he addresses us in these accents of consolation: "Come to me all you that are heavily laden with the weight of your miseries, and I will relieve you."

IT IS A SACRIFICE IN WHICH THE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH MILITANT PARTICIPATE.

It is a sacrifice in which all the members of the Church Militant participate, whatever be their condition in life, whatever be the nature of the duties they fulfil. It is from this inexhaustible source that the minister of the Gospel imbibes the spirit of the priesthood; the warrior, intrepidity in the field; the magistrate the true spirit of the laws; the merchant, uprightness and probity; the artizan, activity and perseverance; the spouse, gentleness and love; the father, vigilance; the child, docility; the virgin, purity and Christian modesty. In all the fierce conflicts which the church maintains against the enemies of her faith and her morality, it is here that she holds in reserve those arms that protect her under their most violent assaults; hence it is that her martyrs derive their fortitude under torments; her confessors, liberty in the profession of their faith; her doctors, light to instruct their flocks, and confound the presumptions of heresy; her penitents, humility and contrition; her faithful children, in every state of life, a spirit of fidelity to accomplish her precepts; hence it is, that the heart and the mind are filled with vivifying grace; that the passions are subdued; the inclinations changed, and the desires of the heart rectified; here, in fine, it is, that Jesus Christ renders himself all to all, and, like the presiding soul, breathes spirit and animation through all the members of his mystical body.