

the Lord requires us also to offer a gift on the altar *frequently, without intermission,*" we have reason to understand him to refer to the *daily communion*. Tertullian speaks of this quite clearly in *De jejun.* c. 14; *De idol.* c. 7, &c. In Cyprian (*Epist.* liv.) we read: "It is the great honour and glory of our episcopal office to have given bread [in the sense of breaking bread] to martyrs, so that we as priests, who *daily celebrate the sacrifices of God*, prepare sacrifices and victims to God." Ambrose also in *Epist. ad Marcell. sor.* speaks of daily offerings (*per singulos dies offerimus*). The same thing is done by many Synods; and in the oldest liturgical writings the *quotidianum sacrificium* [daily sacrifice] is constantly mentioned. And it ever continued the general rule that the Supper might be observed on every day of the week, so that Christian liberty in this respect was never at any time restrained, nor was there a deviation from the order of the ancient church.

But there was no law on this matter, and that a difference in the observance did actually prevail, may be sufficiently proved from the following passage of Augustine. He writes (*Epist.* 118, ad *Januar.* c. 2): *Alii quotidie communicant corpori et sanguini Dominico; alii certis diebus accipiunt; alibi nullus dies intermititur, quo non offeratur; alibi Sabato tantum et Dominico; alibi tantum Dominico. Et si quid aliud hujusmodi animadverti potest, tantum hoc genus rerum liberas habet observationes; nec disciplina ulla est in his melior gnavo prudentique Christiano, quam ut eo modo agat, quo agere viderit ecclesiam ad quamcunque forte devenerit: quod enim neque contra fidem, neque contra bonos mores injungitur, indifferenter est habendum, et pro eorum inter quos vivitur societate servandum est.**

While this passage is of the greatest importance for the purpose of learning the principles of the ancient church, with regard to the liturgical part of religion, it at the same time enables us to discover the different customs with respect to communion seasons. We have no right to consider this as only a peculiarity of the church in Africa or Milan; for Augustine speaks in general, and has an eye also to the usages of the *oriental* church, as appears from this epistle and the 119th. A few more remarks of his in *Epist.* 118. c. 3, deserve to be cited: One man says that the eucharist ought not to be received daily. If you ask him, wherefore? He answers: Because *certain days ought to be selected*, on which men may live more purely and continently, so as to be more worthy to approach so great a sacrament. Another on the contrary says: If indeed the plague of sin and the virulence of disorder be so great, that such remedies must be postponed, the individual ought to be kept back from the altar [communion table] by the authority of the bishop, in order that he may repent, and then be restored by the same authority. For he may be said to partake unworthily, who receives at the time when he ought rather to repent; not he, who absents himself from the communion or attends to it, when he pleases, according to his own judgment. But if the individual's sins are not so great that he should be deemed worthy of excommunication, he ought not to keep away from the *daily medicine of the Lord's body*. One might perhaps

take *every day* of the body and blood of the Lord; others receive them on particular days; in some places *no day is allowed to pass* without communion; in others this happens only on the *Sabbath and Sunday*; in others *only on the Lord's day*. And if any thing else of the kind can be noticed, the whole class admits of freedom in the observance; nor can a diligent and prudent Christian have a better rule in these matters, than that he should act in the same way in which he sees any church acting to which he happens to come; for what is not enjoined contrary to the faith or to good morals, ought to be considered *indifferent*, and to be observed for the sake of the society of those among whom we live.

* Translation of the above passage: Some par-