

FASTING COMMUNION.

To the Editor of the Theological Instructor.

SIR,—I subjoin a translation of the famous passage of S. Aug. bearing on the above subject. It is found in S. Aug. ad Inquisitiones Januarii, Ep. liv. (pp. 126, 127. Benedictine Edition in the Library of the University of Toronto.)

If you will allow me, I will leave the passage without comment at present, and send you some remarks on the subject generally and the value and meaning of this letter of S. Augustine, in particular, in time for your next issue. Let me observe, however, that the authority to which we appeal on this matter, is the custom of the Churches of God; an authority claiming the deferential attention of all good Church of England men.

Januarius had asked what observances were proper for Maundy-Thursday, or in his own words "what ought to be done on the fifth day of the last week of Lent, whether the oblation ought to be made in the morning, and again after supper, on account of the words "likewise after supper," or whether we ought to fast, and make the oblation after supper only, or even to fast and take supper after the oblation as we are used to do."

The Saint refers to the diversity of practice as to this *particular day*, and proceeds as below. We may notice the incidental manner in which the general subject of fasting communion is introduced,

and the completeness of his testimony as to the practice of the whole Church of that and all former ages:—

"It is perfectly clear that when the disciples first received the Body and Blood of the Lord, they did not receive them fasting.

"But surely the Universal Church is not, on that account, to be censured because it is always received by people fasting. For it pleased the Holy Spirit that in honor of so great a Sacrament, the Lord's Body should enter the Christian's mouth before all other food; for therefore that custom is kept up through the whole world. Nor because the Lord gave it after food, ought the brethren to come together for the purpose of receiving that Sacrament after breakfast or dinner, or, as they used to do, whom the Apostles blames and corrects, to mingle those things with their meals. And the reason of this is, that the Saviour, that He might the more emphatically commend the grandeur of this mystery, wished to fix this more deeply in the hearts and memory of His disciples, as being the last thing when He was on the point of separating from them to go to His Passion. And so He did not lay down the order in which It should be afterwards received that He might keep the duty of doing so for the Apostles through whom He was going to arrange the churches. For if He had com-