

the daughter, spouse, and mystic body of a God. "The Jews," says St. Jerome, "were the slaves of God, but we are his adopted children. Manna, termed in Scripture the bread of angels, was quite sufficient for them ; but nothing, save the bread of God, could be suitable nourishment for the church which has been engendered in the blood of Jesus Christ."

Such being the unparalleled dignity and inconceivable grandeur which the church derives from this glorious institution, is she not bound by every title of justice, gratitude, and love, to honor that adorable body, from which, as from a sun, is the emanation of all her splendor ? She has been often reproached by her enemies, for the costly magnificence with which she celebrates every rite that bears any relation to this great mystery. But if she were to act differently ; if, whilst she taught the belief of the real presence of her spouse in the sacrament of his love, she solemnised the tremendous mysteries with a cold and formal indifference ; without life or love, pomp or splendor ; would she not then, indeed, be justly liable to the animadversions of all mankind ? would she not be branded with the most glaring inconsistency in teaching the most sublime of all doctrines, and acting in opposition to her belief ? would she not then be charged with most flagrant hypocrisy, in proposing to her children this great mystery, and in neglecting to ensure for its celebration and worship all suitable magnificence and honour ?

But the faithful spouse of Christ, has not laid herself open to such accusations or reproach. From the earliest ages of Christianity, this mystery has been commemorated by the church on the Thursday before Easter—the me-

morable day of its institution—the day on which our divine Redeemer was betrayed into the hands of sinners. It should be a day of exultation and holy joy, on which we have received so invaluable a gift. But how could we rejoice in so sorrowful a season ? How could we indulge in canticles of spiritual gladness, whilst our dear Saviour is delivered into the hands of his enemies, is afflicted in the garden with the sadness of death, is overpowered by the weight of our sins, and in his excessive grief is bedewing the earth with a perspiration of blood ? During the whole of the Passion-time the church is plunged in the deepest affliction for the sufferings of her Divine Spouse. The cessation of all marks of joy, the colour of her vestments, the desolation of her altars, the mournful tones of her prophecies and psalms, the increased austerities of her children proclaim the depth of her sorrow, and prove how completely she is absorbed in the contemplation of the passion of our Redeemer. Hence the solemnities of Holy Thursday, so far as they relate to the commemoration of the Eucharist, are but as faint glimpses of the sun during a day of universal gloom.

But on this great festival of Corpus Christi, the church displays all her magnificence, and indulges without restraint in all the effusions of her joy. Her faithful children respond with fervent devotion to her loving invitation. Churches, parishes, cities, provinces, and kingdoms, vie with each other in the celebration of this feast. Kings and peasants, civilians and soldiers, the old and the young, unite in honouring the body of their common Redeemer. The feast being celebrated in the most delightful season of the year, when spring is clothed in her rich livery of