

can satiate your famished souls so well as the honied milk which flows so abundantly from her pure breasts!

She has another reason for her sounds of gladness at this mid-lent season :

She wishes to animate, to encourage, to fortify her children. She fears they may be "wearied, fainting in their minds," and she mingles a drop of comfort with the bitter chalice of repentance to commend it to their wavering lips. She relaxes somewhat of her austere mien, and wears a smile of heavenly comfort. She even permits her altars to be decorated, and the vaulted roofs of her Temples to ring once more with the organ's sweet and thrilling sound.

And will she not thus allure her children on in the narrow and thorny path that leads to Heaven? Will she not encourage them "to fight the good fight" and to "finish their course" of salutary penance by persevering to the close of Lent in their holy austerities that they may rise at Easter to a new life?

The Christian is one born to penance. The whole of this mortal pilgrimage is a continued Lent, a season of affliction, a time of penance. It will be succeeded by the true Easter, the real Paschal Feast of the Lamb, the glorious Resurrection with Christ to a newness of life and bliss which will never end. From time to time as we pursue our sorrowful journey through this vale of tears, a ray from above comes to cheer

our path, as in the midst of the austerities of Lent the Church has placed the Sunday of rejoicing which comes upon us like a sudden gleam of sunshine in the gloom of a winter's day, reminding us of the glories of the heavenly spring which approaches.

But what shall we say of those unhappy children of the Church who are still feeding on the husks of swine, who are yet in a strange land, who have hardened their hearts in the day when they heard the voice of the Lord, who have performed no penance, renounced no sins; brought forth no good fruit? . . .

Because the Lord is merciful, they are ungrateful; because he delays to strike, they refuse to repent; they are all wickedness because he is all goodness. Those very attributes of mercy which should win their hearts, they turn into weapons of injury with which they wound their patient Benefactor again!

Oh! they "know not that the benignity of God leadeth them to penance"—that "according to their hard and impenitent hearts, they are treasuring up for themselves wrath against the day of wrath!"

Alas, alas! on that day of wrath it will be "more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrhah than for them."

One half of the "acceptable time" is past; but one half of the "days of salvation" still remains. And what a precious half! and how valuable is not every moment of this season of mercy to them! Let them hasten to the vine