

and they follow to praise him on earth, whom they adore in heaven, and to invite us all to this melodious hymn.—Wherefore, ‘Sing ye to our Lord a new Song’ &c. Because he that is powerful has done wonderful things, and his name is holy. And can anything be more wonderful than the Creator to be a creature? God, an infant; immortal, mortal; Omnipotence, without power; and Immensity, confined to a stable? The supporter of all things, to be carried in the Virgin’s arms; and the Food of all creatures, to be fed with her milk? He, who clothes all things, naked; and he who is highest, made lowest?

The angels sing this new song, a song of salvation and joy, of comfort and gladness, of exultation and praise. *Venite, exultemus Domino*, &c. The first part echoes the song of heaven; ‘All glory and honour to God:’ the second is a subject of joy to men and angels, assuring those of their redemption, and these that now their broken choirs shall be again repaired.

PAX HOMINIBUS BONÆ VOLUNTATIS.

Peace interior, i. e. internal purity; exterior, i. e. fraternal charity; superior, i. e. the glory of heaven; and inferior, and so grace shall govern nature, and sense shall be subject to faithful reason.

The angels, blessed Mary, Joseph, the kings and the shepherds, adore our Saviour with this hymn, and why not we? Their example is good, and we shall do well to imitate it; the peace proclaimed by the angels gives us firm hope of glory.

The priest’s frequent turning towards the people, shows our Saviour’s coming to his apostles, and to St Peter and to the women, when he was under the weight of his cross; inviting all to be mindful, and to assist with their prayers: *Age quod agis*. And behold,

DOMINUS VOBISCUM.

Which may be understood in a demonstrative sense or an optative, or a monitory, showing God inhabits in the midst of his people; “Where two or three are gathered together; *Elece sum vobiscum usque ad*, &c. But in his holy sacrifice, in a particular manner. *Et cum spiritu tuo*. O sweet harmony; all are united in the same desires!

OREMUS.

Turning to the first prayer or Collect, all are invited to pray with him: *Quia vis unita fortior*; and the prayers of many will never be despised; because powerful is the force (of many) united. Here, every one may do well to join his devotion with the priest’s intention, in which he is most likely to partake of the effects of the sacrifice.

The priest stretches forth his hands, and shuts

them again, showing the devotion of his heart. ‘And in thy name, (says the prophet) I will lift up my hands.’

FLECTAMUS GENUA.

“I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” *E. P. S. Levate*, and if you be humble, then run up your hearts; for God will behold your humility, and hear your prayers.—*Judith 9, 16*.

THE COLLECTS.

Are so called, because they are said over, or for, the people collected together; or because, then, all are to collect, and unite themselves in spirit; or, because collected by the church, and accommodated to the time, or occasion, and the like. Here,

The priest extends his hands, i. e. his heart, showing it is open to receive God’s benedictions, in memory of Christ’s being extended on the cross; or of lifting up his hands when he ascended. Joining mouths and hearts together, we answer, *Amen*; God grant, our prayer and yours may be heard, for the universal church.

LECTIO EPISTOLÆ.

The whole Scripture is an epistle sent from God to instruct us; and this select part is to instruct the Catechumens, or for the consolation of the faithful; a message sent from God, the better to dispose us for the Gospel.

The epistle is an instruction; those therefore who understand not Latin, would do well to peruse it, at times, or before, in English.

In Ember-weeks, prophecies are read from the Old Testament, and epistles from the New; showing that priests, ordained at that time, ought to understand both laws.

For which mercy of instruction, it is answered by all, *Deo Gratias*, i. e. “Thanks be to God” for sending his prophets and apostles, to instruct us in the way of salvation. “If we would be heard in our prayers, let us hear our lord in the epistle;” let us heartily say, *Deo gratias*, for our vocation; beg perseverance and progress from virtue to virtue, which is intimated in the

GRADUAL;

Verses taken out of the Psalms, as it were in answer to the Epistle; for, the Gradual has commonly correspondence with the epistle; if this be joyful, so is that, &c., signifying, that we, in works, ought to answer what we have heard, going up by degrees,—*gradatim*,—from the doctrine of the prophets and apostles, to that of Christ. The verses are as steps, and are two, because of two precepts “count the whole law and the prophets.”

Increasing “in grace and wisdom,” † according to our Saviour’s example, “before God and man,” we are to proceed. *Quid ergo stamus hic tota die otiosi?* “Why therefore stand we here, the whole day, idle?” Alleluiah is the joy of the Church for what the Gradual represents: this song of the angels reminding us, that the observance of Christ’s law will bring us to joy and beatitude.

The *Tract* reminds us of the sorrow, penance, and misery of our present exile, the tears of the Church, &c. *John 16, 20, &c.*

THE TRACT

Signifies the desires of a devout soul, sighing after eternal joys: *Heu mihi quia incolatus meus* &c. “Wo is me, that my sojourning,” &c. *Pe.*