

CONFIRMATION.—Part III.

(From *Qu'Appelle Messenger*.)

HOLY COMMUNION (CON.)

ii. But the Holy Communion is not only a *Great Act of Worship*, it is also a GREAT MEANS OF GRACE—A SACRAMENT. Like its type—the Pass-over—it is a *Feast on a Sacrifice*.

Union with Christ is necessary for our Pardon and our Life, i.e. spiritual life.

Christ said—

"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

"I am the Bread of Life." "As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, even so He that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me." S. John vi. 35, 57.

"Abide in Me, and I in you." "Without [more correctly, "Apart from," "Severed from"] Me ye can do nothing." S. John xv. 4, 5.

This union, so necessary for our salvation, is assured to us, and is effected, maintained, and strengthened by *Sacraments*, or duly appointed visible Ordinances, thro' and by which inward and spiritual grace is given to the soul.

It is first effected, as we have before seen, in *Holy Baptism*, for

"By one Spirit we are all baptized into one Body," i.e. Christ's Body.

It is afterwards maintained and strengthened in us by participation of the Sacrament of the Holy Communion, for

"The cup of blessing which we bless is it not the communion [i.e. the participation] of the Blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" 1 Cor. x. 16.

Christ had said—

"The bread that I will give is my flesh, which will give for the life of the world," "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink His Blood, ye have no life in you. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my Blood dwelleth in Me and I in him." S. John vi. 51, 53, 56.

And afterwards with unmistakable allusion to those mysterious words, the night before His Death, when at the last Paschal Supper, having taken bread, and blessed it, He said "THIS IS MY BODY," and

He took a cup of wine and blessed it and said, "THIS IS MY BLOOD of the new testament which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins." He thus shewed that the eating of His flesh of which He had spoken was to be "*Sacramental*," i.e., in a "heavenly and spiritual manner," through the means of "outward and visible" instruments, signs, or pledges.

It is a *great mystery*. But so are many of the commonest things by which we are surrounded on earth. Our very natural life, Who knows what it really is, whence it comes, how it is sustained? So must it be with any union with Christ, however it may be effected. And Christ's words, concerning this blessed Sacrament, are addressed to our faith; the Gift offered in the Sacrament, by those words, is for the comfort and help of our souls, not as a test of our understanding.

While, then, in accordance with the teaching of the plain words of Scripture, of all the early and best Fathers and teachers, in the Catholic

Church we must refuse, on the one hand, to give to our Lord's words a mere *figurative meaning*, that is practically to explain them away, and on the other hand, with the Roman Church, to assert that the substance "of the Bread and Wine after Consecration ceases to exist, being changed into the 'substance' of the Body and Blood of Christ," we believe that "the Body and Blood of Christ are verily and indeed (really and truly)," according to His most gracious words "taken and received by the Faithful in the Lord's Supper"—(*Catechism*)—only after "a heavenly and spiritual manner" (Art. xxviii.), that is a manner that transcends our understanding and is not to be recognized by our senses.

We accept Christ's words literally, but do not care curiously to enquire *how* He fulfils them.

Some words attributed to Queen Elizabeth, very accurately describe the attitude of the belief of our Church, in accordance with true Catholic teaching, as opposed to Romanism on the one hand, and ultra Protestantism on the other.

"Christ is the Word that spake it,
He took the Bread and brake it,
And what that Word doth make it,
That I believe and take it."

That great Divine, Richard Hooker, has well and beautifully said, "What these elements are in themselves it skilleth not, it is enough that to me which take them they are the Body and Blood of Christ, His promise in witness here of sufficeth, His word He knoweth which way to accomplish; why should any cogitation possess the mind of any communicant but this, 'O my God Thou art true, O my soul thou art happy.'" All are invited to that Holy Feast. It is necessary for our salvation that we should go, for

1. It is a command of Christ that we must obey.
2. It is the Memorial of the Sacrifice that we must plead.
3. It is the Means of maintaining and strengthening the Union with Christ without which the soul can have no life.

But though *all must come* and though it is a sin wilfully to refuse so loving an invitation, none should presume to come to so holy a feast without proper preparation of soul—without having first put on the marriage garment required of guests. "*Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup.*" (1 Cor. xi. 28).

N.B. We must remember that when S. Paul speaks in the passage from which these words are taken, of the danger of partaking "unworthily," the word translated "*damnation*" in our version should be "*judgment*"; while to partake "unworthily" is a very different thing from being "unworthy" to partake, as we all are. The Corinthians, whom he was warning, had treated the Holy Mysteries as a common meal, and had even terribly profaned it. He warns them that such irreverence must bring upon them temporal visitations or judgments. "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep."

But while it is necessary to avoid a misunderstanding of this passage which our translation has unfortunately done much to encourage, and which has, it is to be feared, kept many away in fear who ought not to have kept away, we must carefully maintain that an earnest preparation is necessary, and that the more thorough and

earnest the preparation is, the more benefit will the soul receive from partaking in that Holy Sacrament. The requirements of the soul for receiving the Sacrament in a worthy manner, are,

1. *Repentance* (2 Cor. vii. 10)—whether we repent as truly of our former sins, steadfastly purposing to lead a new life.

Remember, however, that what you *do*, or are *willing and desiring to do*, is the test of true repentance rather than what you *feel*.

This part of needful preparation is provided for in the Service itself by the rehearsal of the Ten Commandments, by the *Kyrie*, and by the Confession and Absolution.

2. *Faith* (Eph. iii. 17)—"a lively faith in God's mercies thro' Christ with a thankful remembrance of His death."

Provided for in the Service by the rehearsal of the Creed.

3. *Charity, or Love* (Rom. xiii. 10)—"in charity with all men."

Provided for in the Service by the Intercessory Prayers and the Offertory.

Before going to the Holy Communion, a certain time (the length needed will probably depend on the frequency with which you are in the habit of going to the Altar of the Lord) should be set apart for careful, earnest, prayerful preparation. *Never omit this.*

Make a habit of self-examination, and then it will become easy.

Fix regular Sundays for your Communion—every Sunday, according to the primitive practice and the intention of our Church, *if possible*, but once a month at the *very least*.

"Receive it as often as you can, that the old Serpent, seeing the Blood of the true Paschal Lamb upon your lips, may tremble to approach you.—*Bishop Wilson*."

If when you go there you go with longing heart to be made one with Jesus, you cannot go too often. The oftener ye go the more will He upon Whom you there feed deepen your penitence, strengthen your faith, increase your love, and inflame your devotion for Him. Without that desire it is useless to go at all.

When you leave the church, remember how precious is the Gift you have received. Guard it carefully, lest Satan tempt you to defile the dwelling place of so great a Guest. He knows that if he can he may more easily tempt you afterwards to despair. Fear not, however. Ask God for the grace of perseverance.

Long for the day of your next Communion, and beyond that for that glorious time when you shall be bidden to sit down at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb in the Sanctuary of Heaven, there to be for ever with Him after Whom thy soul longeth.

"Come, Love! come, Lord! and that long day,
For which I languish, come I pray:
When this faint soul those eyes shall see,
And drink the unsealed source of Thee;
When glory's sun faith's shade shall chase,
Then for Thy veil give me Thy face."

—From "*The Devout Communicant*."

"THE TITLE "REVEREND."

The controversy among Dissenters as to the question of calling their ministers "*Reverend*" does not appear to slacken. As a contribution to it, a correspondent, writing to the *Christian*