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SERMON BY HIS EMINENCE THE CARDINAL ARCHBISHOP OF WESTMINSTER.

Delivered in St. Mary's Church, Moorfields, on the Evening of Sunday, Jan. 23rd, 1853.

SUBJECT—DEVOTION TO THE HOLY EUCHARIST.
(From the Catholic Standard.)

"We will go into His tabernacle; we will adore in the place where His feet stood."—Ps. cxxxi., 7.

The frequent enjoyment of a blessing, my brethren, does not always increase our thankfulness and our esteem for it; but, on the contrary, is too often the source of familiarity and even of contempt.—Who would have believed that, when God rained His manna upon Israel in the desert, after the very name which they had bestowed upon this unknown gift expressed astonishment, it would in a few days have been pronounced an unsavoury and even a loathsome food? Who would have imagined, knowing what our Blessed Redeemer had instituted in the most Blessed Eucharist, that in the course of a few years, the Church of Corinth should have turned that feast of love into a scene of riotous confusion?—Thus, my brethren, even this greatest, this noblest, this richest gift of God, of which the manna was the symbol, the feast of the Church of Corinth, the enjoyment may become, from even its very tenderness and familiarity, a source to us of danger, by our forgetting in the very excesses of the divine goodness, the noble and exalted character of the blessing.

It is this feeling, my brethren, which has suggested the course of sermons which I commence this evening, preparatory to the observance of a devotion which I have been consoled in finding has been so acceptable to the faithful of this city—that public and triumphant worship of our Blessed Redeemer in the adorable sacrament of the Eucharist, which occupies our Church during the coming season of Lent, and in which we have been accustomed in past years to find so much profit and so much edification.

But it is not the fear indeed so much that from the frequent repetition of this peculiar devotion, there should arise any coldness or indifference to it, that I have thought it right to address you concerning it; but it is rather because in proportion as God bestows upon us His blessings, our acceptance of them should be more grateful, our devotion to Him more fervent; and I would wish that this year, if possible, there should be an increase of that piety and that fervor which, in past years, have given me such joy. I intend, therefore, to place before you the motives which Catholics, believing, as they do, in the real presence of our Lord in the Sacrament of the Altar, have for feelings towards it sincere devotion and fervent piety. I wish one by one to develop before you a few, perhaps only the most striking, of those grounds upon which this devotion is based; not controversially, not as giving you the grounds of our faith; but assuming that you believe with me what our Church teaches, to show you how upon the groundwork of that faith should be built the most solid, but, at the same time, the most tender devotion towards this most adorable institution.

The first of these motives, that which will occupy us this evening, I put before you in the simple words of my text,—words which every Catholic may pronounce as familiarly as could the Jew of old, but with a meaning far more noble and far more appropriate. We, in the midst of the approaching penitential season in which the Church mortifies our bodies, but feeds more luxuriously our souls, will say day by day with the royal psalmist, "We will go into His tabernacle; we will worship in the place where His feet stood."

These words, my brethren, had no doubt a clear, a definite, and a familiar signification to the Jew.—He had a tabernacle in the days when these words were spoken by the royal psalmist. The temple was not yet built. But that tabernacle was but the forerunner of that temple. And even when that nobler and more solid structure had taken the place of that transitory dwelling-place of God among His people, the Jew loved still to speak of it under that name which brought to his mind all the wonderful dealings of God with His people in the desert, and that familiarity of His dwelling with them in tents, as though He were their chieftain, their captain, their ruler in that campaign or pilgrimage through the wilderness of Arabia—and the Jew would therefore say, "We will go into His tabernacle; into the chosen dwelling of God." God, he believed, was there. God dwelt in that holy place, and He was pleased from time to time to make known that His abode was there, and that His glory filled that house, and that with His glory, there dwelt likewise His power, and His goodness, and all His wonderful attributes. At times He loved to manifest this glory. Clouds shrouded the whole tabernacle. A brighter and a more resplendent phenomenon filled the temple; and at its dedication, the priests themselves could not stand within the pre-

cinets of that holy place, because, as we are told, "the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord."—I Kings, 8, 11. It was as a cloud of brightness, a tabernacle of light in which God was pleased to enshrine Himself, so brilliant and so dazzling that it brooked not the gaze or presence of man, and the priests hid their faces, and adored with the multitude from without, leaving to God alone the possession of His own house. But ordinarily, this divine glory retreated, as it were, within the precincts of the inner sanctuary, and there remained calm and unnoticed, but, at the same time, truly believed in by the faithful Jew. And hence, when he entered into the temple, or even into its outward precincts, he felt that he was within the presence of God—that God was there in some peculiar way, and from time to time manifested, or would manifest, if occasion required it, that peculiar in-dwelling in the place He had chosen.

Such was the meaning, then, to the mind of the Jew of those first words, "We will go into His tabernacle; we will enter where His glory dwells, where His presence is, and there we will worship." And the Jew came in the hour of his sorrow and distress, and sought there comfort; and he came in the day of his joy and of his triumph, and he sang forth praises, and he believed that that unseen God, who sat between the cherubim, sent forth thence His approving smile upon him, and either darted a ray of consolation into his soul, or accepted with kind condescension the accents of his thanksgiving.

Then, what did the Jew understand by those further words of my text, "We will adore in the place where His feet have stood." Not in the temple alone, not merely in the tabernacle where He may be said to have habitually resided, not only there was there a place of worship and adoration, but there were other favored spots where God had been pleased to manifest Himself; where he had stood though but for a passing moment. That contact of His presence at once stamped holiness and sacredness upon the spot,—a holiness which never again could be effaced,—a sanctity which the ravages of armies and the profanation of men could never cancel. The Jew well understood this. He remembered when he recited these words how under the oak of Mamre there had stood three men before Abraham, and he at once knew that the three represented to him but one Lord whom he had to address, and he fell upon the ground and adored. Gen. xviii., 2.—He adored the ground, the spot on which their feet had stood. He remembered how Isaac had a divine vision in Bersabee, and immediately erected there an altar of sacrifice, and made it a place of adoration (Gen. xxvi., 25.) He remembered how Jacob likewise, when wearied with his journey, laid himself to sleep in Bethel. He had a wonderful vision of God. He beheld a mysterious ladder reaching to heaven above, and stretching to the earth, and forming a path on which angels journeyed to and fro; and when he awoke, he exclaimed, "Indeed the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not."—Gen. xxviii., 16; and he consecrated his stone pillow, pouring upon it oil, and making it by a vow to be a sacred place for ever, for God's feet had there stood. Moses, too, when he saw the wonderful vision of the burning bush, and was admonished by a mysterious voice that this was a holy place, and that the Lord dwelt there in that fire, and was speaking to him, fell on his face in the deepest adoration, and on that spot he would not even tread, according to the divine command, except unshod.—Ex. iii., 6. And so again when Gideon received a divine vision we are told that he likewise erected an altar to make a place of adoration.—Judg. vi., 24. And when Manue and his wife were similarly visited, they likewise offered sacrifice, and when the angel disappeared suddenly in its smoke, they fell flat upon the ground, and the one said to the other, "We shall certainly die, for we have seen God."—Judg. xiii., 22. In this way would the Jew understand, how there were places which the presence of God, once only appearing there, had consecrated; and from that moment forward, the consecration was indelible. And Mamre, and Bersabee, and Bethel, and Moreb, and Sinai, and many other places so became sacred spots to the Jew; and even to the present time are many of them still preserved as places of pilgrimage, to those who venerate the ancient traditions of the faith.

And now, my brethren, having thus seen how the pious Jew would understand the words of my text, it becomes our duty likewise to apply them, and to see in what way the Church of God can put it into the power of her children to appropriate that self-same psalm, those very words, "We will go into His tabernacle; we will worship in the place where His feet stood."

What was the in-dwelling of God in that His tabernacle or temple upon earth? In what way was He there? How was the Jew impressed with it?—Not certainly in any definite form, not even in any

symbolical shape. He did not show Himself as an angel, or in a vision, such as appeared to prophets afterwards. Centuries almost passed, and none of those extraordinary manifestations of the glory of God were seen; and yet the Jew believed He was there in a manner distinct from that in which he recognised His presence through the entire universe.—He knew that, from a free appointment of His own, there were certain graces bestowed on that spot which could not be sought with such certainty elsewhere. The priest, he knew, came before the sanctuary to ask counsel of God in the great crises of his nation, and he looked upon the mysterious breast-plate which he bore, and a brilliant light, either external or only communicated to his mind, made known to him what was the will of God. The priest, negligent of his duty, came to light the lamps of the sanctuary with profane fire, and the lightning comes forth, and strikes him dead. The poor woman in distress comes, like Anna, and kneels there muttering her prayers, and she is asking for what appears to be beyond the power of nature—she, the barren one, is asking for a son. A son is there given her, and that son one of the greatest of prophets.

Then, in what did His presence consist? It was in the greater concentration there of the attributes of God,—of those attributes which rule the entire world. It was a greater intensity, if one may so speak, of His wisdom vouchsafed to the priest, of His justice displayed towards offenders, of His graciousness manifested to the suppliant. It was not, then, that God was there in a different form of existence, or in any other mode of being, from that in which He was to be met elsewhere; but that He was thus pleased to make more manifest in that spot the exercise of His wonderful attributes. We may compare it in some way to that subtle fluid which is diffused through the whole of the atmosphere, but which may be concentrated in greater intensity in the cloud from which it comes forth in vivid flashes, not varying in quality, but differing only in accumulation and in activity from that which pervades, at all times, every part of the atmosphere that surrounds us. Or we may compare it, if we please, to the vital action of that soul which is within us, and which is yet diffused through the whole of us, giving most perfect life and sensitiveness to the smallest fibre of the least nerve in the remotest extremity of our system; but yet which we feel has a concentrated action in the heart and in the brain, and there seems to exercise as in centres that same power of life which otherwise is diffused and everywhere active. In like manner, then, the presence of God in His temple was nothing more than the presence of God through the universe manifesting itself by a more intense exercise of its wonderful powers, of its attributes in that place which God had chosen, and upon which His holy name was to be called.

And what was the presence which hallowed those spots around which patriarchs adored, and which they left marked by their rude altars, that posterity might follow them in their traditions of worship? Read the passages to which I have referred, and you will find that now it is "the Lord," now it is "the angel of the Lord" that is spoken of. In the self-same text it is said "the angel," and it is "the Lord" who has been speaking, and it is "God" who has been seen. In a word, it was God manifested by a mere symbolical presence. He sent His angel clothed in the outward form of humanity to speak to His people, to whom He gave the law, the legislation, the ministry of angels; and yet so very noble, so very terrible, even, is this presence of those representatives of God on earth, that in virtue of the honor due to Him whose message they bore, they were invested with His name and His attributes, and the spot upon which they had trod was considered consecrated by Him. Such was the presence of God in the Old Law, in these two forms in which it is described to us in the word of God.

And now, my brethren, it is easy for us to pass forward to that new and better dispensation whereunto we belong. You are aware, you believe that whatever was done by the Almighty for His chosen people in the Old Testament was but a figure, a type, the realization of which was to be found in the New Law. That temple, which is spoken of with absolute contempt, almost, by the writers of the New Law, as being a mere shadow, a temple made of hands, and to be destroyed, and easily built up—do you believe that that temple possessed in it a presence of God manifested in such wonderful ways, and that in the temple of the New Law there is not, at least, as great a presence as there was there? You will answer—"Who can doubt it?" And we believe, therefore, whatever may be our peculiar opinions as to the mode of this divine presence, that in every place of worship in which the faithful congregate, there is God in a manner singular and distinct from that ordinary presence which we find everywhere and

which we everywhere may adore. You believe so, my brethren. You believe that in the Old Law this presence of God was evidenced by occasional demonstrations of its existence. You believe that it was so honored, and so dreaded, by every believer, that no man durst enter within the precincts of the sanctuary but the high priest, and that but rarely. Do you believe that in that temple God manifested His glory by the cloud which filled it, and yet have no evidence, no proof, no sign of it whatever, nay, can give no manner definitely in which you believe God to be there? I ask you, my brethren, to look at those numerous and noble edifices intended and yet preserved for worship, which, for four, or five, or six—at least for three or four—days of the week are closed, and not a worshipper enters in; and for two or three hundred years this has been the case. Is God dwelling there during those days of silence and neglect? Is there a presence within those walls more intense of the divine majesty than there is without them? And do you feel that no sooner do you cross their threshold than you must show signs of reverence, and whisper to those that are with you, whether it be the antiquarian who has come to examine any vestiges of antiquity remaining in the building, or the artist who has travelled to admire its beautiful proportions, or the friend who has accompanied you to pass a few minutes in the contemplation of a novelty, to be silent, for God is there: it is His house; it is His dwelling; it is His tabernacle among men? Do you do so; and can you look back to what God prescribed of old, how He would have a seven-fold lamp burning ever; how He would have morning and evening sacrifice; how He would have the shewbread prepared; how He would have all clean and bright, because He was there; and this was the way in which His people should recognise His presence; and He would have the faithful coming with peace-offerings, and with purifications day by day, and hour by hour; and can you reconcile the belief that God is in those deserted temples, better, and with a higher and diviner presence, if possible, than He was with His now cast off-people, the Jews, and yet say it is compatible with that belief to leave them cold and deserted, without a prayer or a worshipper? Then, if not, do you believe it is only when people gather together that God comes down; and why not if that meeting took place elsewhere? Why does not that apply to the chamber or the street, or any other place where men may thus meet for prayer? If this be so, then you exclude the idea that in the Christian Church there is a nobler and a better presence of the Lord of Hosts than there was in that temple in which He manifested Himself by a magnificent cloud of glory; that temple in which, from time to time, He showed that there resided His wisdom, His goodness, and His justice.

It cannot be, my brethren, it cannot be. And I ask at once, in what a greater, nobler, better possession of the temple of the new law consists, which is not in any way manifested, which does not lead to any habitual and hourly adoration? But, my brethren, we are not left in the dark by God's own word as to what has to constitute the real glory of the Christian temple. After years had passed away, after the temple had been destroyed, the believing Jews, now no longer what they were in the reign of Solomon, raised a second temple; and they who had almost in their infancy witnessed the magnificent structure of that great monarch, wept at the sight of the insignificant building which was taking its place. But with the pious Jew, it was not that there were wanting the magnificent columns, and the plates of gold, and the rich hangings of purple; it was not that there came no longer the hundreds of Levites with their silver trumpets, and squadrons of priests in their magnificent array; it was not that no more the joy of the solemnities of Zion was, and that multitudes of the people flocked no longer to the holy place; it was not the loss of this outward magnificence that went to the heart of the Jew, but he knew that the presence of God, manifested and visibly attested by that mercysent on which He so long sat, was departed from His temple: it was no longer there. And the Jew to this day deplores the loss of that peculiar in-dwelling of God in his temple, which he describes by a particular word in his language, as the real, the great loss of his nation; and the synagogue, in which there is nothing more than the word of God, the roll of parchment kept in a tabernacle stands in the same relation to the glory of the ancient temple of which God had possession, as do those Christian temples which I have described. It was this the Jew felt to be the great loss of his temple—the departure from it of the presence, the loss of the glory, of God.

And yet it was at this moment that God Himself spoke to console His people, and to assure them that they had suffered no such loss. "The desired of all nations" speaks in sublime language, in God's name, the prophet Aggeus, "the desired of all nations shall