

For many weeks previously, they had been receiving regular instructions from the Clergy, and their confessions having terminated on Saturday, Quinquagesima Sunday was appointed as the happy day when those children were to receive for the first time, that adorable Body and Blood which nourish the soul unto life everlasting. On Sunday morning then, they assisted at the Bishop's Mass, at the close of which, after an appropriate exhortation they approached the altar of God, that God "who rejoiceth their youth," and upwards of two hundred of them received from the hands of the Bishop, the Bread of Life. We have seldom witnessed a more affecting scene. When all was over, the children were conducted to the Vestry, and there, before the altar, concluded their fervent thanksgiving. In the course of the day a number of books, medals, pictures and beads were distributed amongst them, and at Vespers they were again assembled before the altar of the Cathedral. At the end of the service, the Bishop addressed at some length those who were to receive the sacrament of Confirmation, and ninety seven were then signed and "sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise."

The following is a description of Communion from that Prince of Christian Painters, Chateaubriand, in the 7th chap. I Book of his *Beauties of Christianity* :—

The Holy Communion presents to us characters still more sublime, and it is adorned at the same time, with a thousand attractions. It is in his tender age and at the spring-time of the year, that the youthful Christian is here united to his Creator.—After the believers have wept the death of the Redeemer of the World, after they have commemorated the darkness which covered the face of the earth, the bells ring cheerfully, and the domes of the Churches re-echo with songs of joy, with the hallelujahs of the ancient fathers. Tender virgins clothed in white, youths bedecked with foliage, proceed along a path strewn with the first flowers of the year, and advance towards the temple chaunting new hymns, and followed by their overjoyed parents. Speedily Christ descends upon the Altar for those delicate souls. The Bread of Angels is laid on the truthful tongue, whose purity no falsehood has yet sullied, whilst the priest drinks in pure wine the atoning Blood of the Lamb. Deep devotion fills all hearts at this solemnity, in which God perpetuates the memory of the sacrifice of his beloved Son by the most peaceful emblems. With the immeasurable heights of these mysteries are

blended the recollections of the most pleasing scenes. Nature seems to revive with her Creator, and the angel of spring opens for her the doors of the tomb, like the spirit of light, who rolled away the stone from the glorious sepulchre. The age of the tender communicants and that of the infant year mingle their youth, their harmonies and their innocence. The bread and the wine announce the produce of the fields approaching to maturity, and present pictures of agriculture. The Holy Spirit descends into the souls of these young believers, to bring forth his chosen fruits, as he descends at this season into the bosom of the earth, to make it produce its flowers and its treasures.

Supposing even that the Holy Communion were a puerile ceremony, those persons must be extremely blind who cannot perceive that a solemnity which must be preceded by a confession of sins, is, from its nature, highly favorable to morality. It is so to such a degree, that, were a man to partake worthily but once a month of the Sacrament of the Eucharist, that man must of necessity be one of the most virtuous upon earth. Transfer this reasoning from the individual to Society in general, from one person to a whole nation, and you will find that the Holy Communion constitutes a complete system of legislation.

"Here then are people," says Voltaire, an authority which will not be suspected, "who partake of the Communion amid an august ceremony, by the light of a hundred tapers, after solemn music which has enchanted their senses, at the foot of an altar resplendent with gold. The imagination is subdued and the soul powerfully affected. We scarcely breathe; we forget all earthly considerations; we are united with God. Who durst, who could, after this, be guilty of a single crime, or only conceive the idea of one! It would, indeed be impossible to devise a mystery capable of keeping men more effectually within the bounds of virtue."

The Eucharist originated in the last supper which Christ partook with his disciples; and we appeal to painters for the beauty of the picture, in which he is represented pronouncing the words, *This is my Body*. Four astonishing things, but one less divine than the other, are here embraced.

First, In the *material* bread and wine we behold the consecration of the food of man, which comes from God and which we receive with his bounty. Were there nothing more in the Communion than this offering of the productions of the earth to him who dispenses them, that alone would qualify it to be compared with the most excellent religious customs of Greece.

Secondly, The Eucharist reminds us of the Passover of the Israelites, which carries us back to the