

our minds lost in its contemplation. We must be content to receive as the only—and shall we not be wise to add; the sufficient?—explanation of its origin, the inspired declaration of Holy Scripture that the Creator 'breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul' (Gen. ii. 7). The life thus bestowed was given, as its vehicle of intermission, the blood, which courses through the whole framework of the body, whether of man or beast, and to mark the sacred character of life, even that of the lower animals, which were given to be meat for man, it was commanded to abstain from using the blood—'But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat'; while with regard to man, the same Divine Creator decreed that 'Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.' (Gen. ix. 6) Thus we see that by the prohibition of the use of blood as food, man was taught to regard life in the lower animals as a sacred gift of God, not to be wantonly taken away; but if their flesh was required for the sustenance of human life, the blood which contained the life was to be poured on the earth as an offering to God who gave it.

In pursuing our inquiry relative to this matter, we find that the use of blood was to have a peculiarly sacred significance, and such significance as was apparently derived from its being the repository of life.

It was on the occasion of the deliverance of the Israelites from the Egyptian bondage, that we have the first intimation of the use of blood as a sacred memorial before God. When the insulted Majesty of Heaven would no longer bear with the obstinacy of Pharaoh, who had hardened his heart against the signs, and wonders, and sore judgments, which called on him to acknowledge the supremacy of Jehovah, and God had determined to inflict on him and on his people the fearful calamity of the death of every first born of Egypt, 'from the first-born of Pharaoh that sitteth upon the throne, even unto the first born of the maid-servant that is behind the mill'—then it was that the Israelites were commanded to take a lamb without blemish (showing no signs of impurity in the blood), and having killed it in the evening, to 'take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door-post of the houses wherein they shall eat it, and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you.' The Israelites obeyed the command, and their first born escaped the visitation which fell on every family of the Egyptians; there was a great cry in Egypt for there was not a house where there was not one dead." (Exodus xii. 30. The solemn protection thus rendered by the sprinkled blood, must have given it a consecrated character in the minds of the Israelites, even before the Divine command given to Moses, to offer the blood of slain beasts at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, or to pour it out upon the earth as water.

No declaration can be more emphatic than that which asserts the presence of the life of animals in the blood. 'The life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your soul.' (Lev. xvii. 11). Our everyday experience and observation enables us to verify the assertion that the life is in the blood. A man may be deprived of one limb after another, but the life is intact, unless by the too great loss of blood, or by its becoming gangrenous, the action of the heart is impeded and ultimately ceases. The light of revelation given us in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, enables us to discern that which was probably a profound mystery to the children of Israel, namely, how the blood should make an atonement for the soul. We know that the blood of bulls and of goats could not take away sin, but we see in the poured out and sprinkled blood of the Jewish sacrifices, a life-giving type to the true worshipper of Him Whose blood, and therewith His mortal life, would be offered as an all-sufficient sacrifice for

the sins of the whole world. On this all important subject the Epistle to the Hebrews affords us all the teaching that a humble inquirer would desire. The pious Jew, in making his sin offering, would acknowledge his sin, and the justice of its penalty, and the need of an atonement by a sacrifice of life, with possibly a dim perception of the typical character of Abraham's offering of his son Isaac, and its fulfilment when the Messiah should appear. Our blessed Lord by His Incarnation became a son of Adam, an inheritor with the human brotherhood of the sinfulness of man; and by the shedding of His blood on the Cross of Calvary He poured on the ground the blood of the mortal flesh, and in instituting a Sacramental Blood communicates His Divine life to His faithful people.

The heart is both a reservoir and a fountain of the blood, and offers us an apt illustration of the workings of spiritual life. Having received into itself the blood, which by passage through the various parts of the body has become impure and tainted, the heart, by a wonderful mechanism which only a Divine Creator could originate and keep in action, again discharges it; to pass into a purifying receptacle, where by contact with the pure breath of Heaven it is restored to a healthy condition, and is capable of reinvigorating the animal frame. Even so the regenerated child of God, passing through the many trials and temptations of this wicked world, may have his spiritual life more or less deteriorated, and incapable of healthy action, until by supplicating and receiving the purifying breath of the Holy Spirit as conveyed in the Blessed Communion of Christ's body and blood, he is strengthened and refreshed for the conflict with the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Seeing then that the heart is the organ by which the life-sustaining blood is circulated through the whole body, it is not to be wondered at that this part of the human frame should be spoken of in Holy Scripture as the seat of the affections and passions. The Lord of Life taught that 'Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witnesses, and blasphemies' (St. Matt. xv. 19); and on the other hand we are required to love God with all our hearts, to purify our hearts, to keep our hearts with all diligence, for 'out of them are the issues of life' (Prov. iv. 23). If the heart be right in the sight of God, the head and the members of the body cannot go far astray; the intellectual faculties will be kept in subjection, and their powers diverted from the mere attainment of knowledge, to the wisdom of applying it in the highest services of mankind, the advancement of truth and righteousness, and the acknowledgment of the goodness, the power, the majesty, and the illimitable sovereignty of the great Creator.

In concluding these brief remarks, the writer would call attention to the appropriateness and deep significance of the institution of Bread and Wine, as representative of Christ's Body and Blood in the solemn celebration of the Holy Communion. This is concisely explained in the Church Catechism, which teaches that the benefits whereof we are partakers thereby are 'The strengthening and refreshing of our souls by the Body and Blood of Christ, as our bodies are by the Bread and Wine.' The spiritual life of Christ is communicated to the soul of man by the spiritual receiving of His Blood, and thus we become 'one with Christ and Christ with us'; and they who thoughtlessly or scornfully turn away from His invitation may be reminded that it was Christ Himself Who declared 'Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood, ye have no life in you' (John vi. 53). and here a solemn question arises, namely, whether the withholding of the cup from the laity be not a practical subversion of Holy Communion, and an abrogation of the Sacrament, by the denial of that part of it which is more especially emblematic of the life which

Christ intended to convey. This is a very serious matter for the consideration of those who think and speak lightly of our differences with the Roman Church, and of those who would persuade us that the doctrinal difficulties may be bridged over.—J. F. in *Family Churchman*.

### READING IN CHURCH.

Good reading in Church is only too rare. A passage of Scripture read impressively arrests necessarily the attention of every hearer. A correspondent, 'Arthur M.,' is, we hope, giving too dark a view of matters, but his testimony has too much truth in it. He says:

'What can be thought of that clergyman's sense of the solemnity who recites the collects in a breath; who has said three fourths of his versicle by the time the congregation has concluded its response; who so mumbles the more solemn portions of the service as to be inaudible to the congregation; and who monotones the Lessons of the day at so rapid a pace as to convey no idea of what he is saying to his hearers? Yet these are common acts, and can be witnessed in a multitude of churches.

'We have a right to expect the evidence of reverence and decency in the offering up of public prayer, and such intelligent reading of the Scripture as will enable even the less educated to enter into the spirit of the narrative. Too frequently, indeed, even the matter is lost—so indistinct, rapid, and affected is the style of the reader.

'Yet it was even so in George Herbert's day. For what says 'Isaak' Walton in his life of the saintly rector of Bemerton?

'And to this I must add that if he (George Herbert) were at any time too zealous in his sermons, it was in reproving the indecencies of the people's behaviour in the time of divine service, and of those ministers that huddled up the Church prayers without a visible reverence and affection—namely, such as seemed to say the Lord's Prayer or Collect in a breath; but for himself his custom was to stop betwixt every Collect and give the people time to consider what they had prayed, and to force their desires affectionately to God before he engaged them into new petitions.'

'With regard to the reading of the Lessons, I might quote Hooker:

'I hope we may presume that a rare thing it is not in the Church of God, even for that very word which is read to be both presently (i.e., at the time) their joy and afterward their study that hear it' (Of. Ps. cxix. 16).

'Where, one may ask, is the 'joy' at such reading as is too commonly heard? where the impressiveness which would influence to after study? George Herbert—I think it was—in his praying and preaching used to pause for a brief moment before uttering the name of the Almighty.—*The News, London*.

An Ely correspondent of the *Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette* says he noticed the other day the letters 'R.I.P.' on a Protestant Dissenter's tombstone in Cambridgeshire, and asks, 'What will Irish Protestants think of that? Very few tombstones of Dissenters in this country are without either a cross or an I.H.S. Eight months ago I noticed a large stone cross on a Dissenting chapel in Ryepon. It is the commonest thing in the world for Dissenters to have the symbol of our holy redemption on their chapels.'

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