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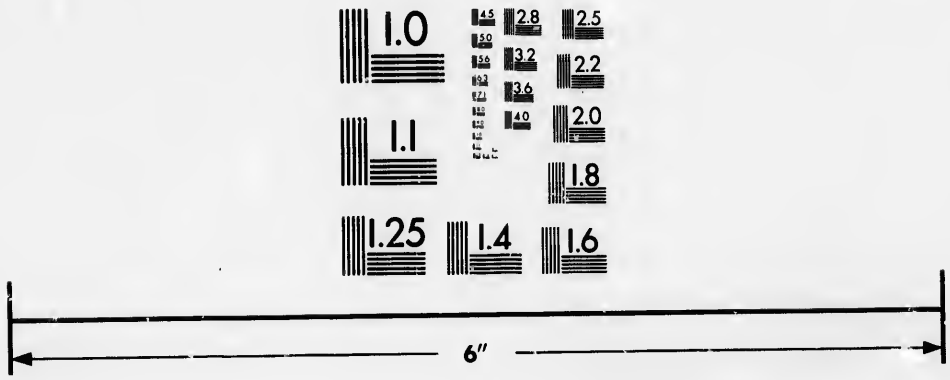

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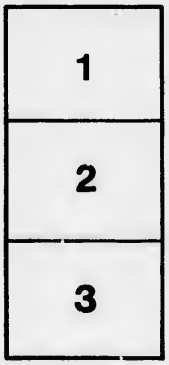

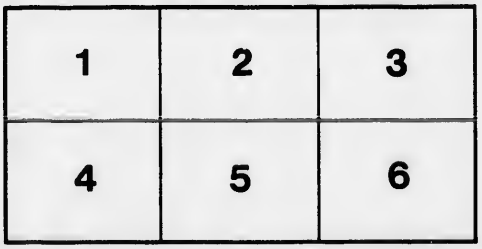

AN

EXPLANATION

OF THE

PRAYERS AND CEREMONIES

OF THE HOLY

Sacrifice of the Mass:

IN A

SERIES OF FAMILIAR DISCOURSES,

ADDRESSED

TO A CONGREGATION.

ALSO, THE

LITANY OF THE HOLY MASS.

BELFAST:
PRINTED FOR THE CATHOLIC BOOK SOCIETY,
By HUGH CLARK, 13, Pottinger's-Entry.

1829.

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PREFACE.

The following little Treatise was first composed by the Author for the benefit of his own Congregation, and to satisfy a duty which he owed to them. Ever since he has been charged with the care of souls, he has observed, with grief, that many derived not that advantage from the sacred mysteries which he thought they might. To remedy this evil, and to furnish poor uneducated people with a plain and simple explanation of the Mass, were the motives which first induced him to compose these instructions, because he found nothing exactly like them in the English language. The plan he has followed is to give only one simple explanation, and that to the most literal that could be found. It is in vain to present many interpretations to uneducated persons, and leave the selection to them. Such a plan may bewilder the understanding, or perhaps excite passing sentiments of admiration, but will leave nothing impressed on the recollection. Having no great taste for fanciful devotions, which he would rather repress than encourage at any time, he has endeavoured to avoid all far-fetched and allegorical explanations, and to adhere as close as he possibly could to the literal meaning, which the Church had in view when she composed the Liturgy. There is no room for error in following her, and there is sufficient to supply the most rational and solid devotion. If there be any one of such a taste as not to relish the literal meaning, which the Church had in composing these prayers, the Author may pity their want of judgment, but he has no intention of flattering it by supplying them with any thing less solid or less edifying.

The entreaty of a few friends, who have read the manuscript, has prevailed upon him to present it to the public in a printed form, in hopes it may do some little good among other Congregations. To instruct the young and the poor is the only ambition of the Author in

the present undertaking. Those who want further instruction and edification may find it abundantly in the works of M. Cochin, which have been translated into English. To this work is the Author indebted for many, perhaps, of his most beautiful ideas, which he has taken the liberty to adopt whenever it suited his purpose, without servilely copying any where. The only merit he claims is that of presenting the reader, in a small compass, a satisfactory explanation of every part of the Mass, which he has collected from whatever source he could. Some, perhaps guided by partiality, have assured him that he has accomplished what he undertook, at least in a tolerable degree. If he shall excite in any, greater respect or veneration during the celebration of these most awful mysteries, his labours will have been most abundantly repaid.

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MANY, even of those who have distinguished themselves by their hostility to the "religion of our fathers," have admitted that that religion and its rites were venerable. Many of those who have been forward in villifying its principles, or in misrepresenting its tenets, have, in the midst of their bigotted bitterness, been compelled to acknowledge that its ceremonies were splendid and impressive. We have seen revilers of this stamp bowing during the celebration of the Mass, and owning that in the forms before them there was something indescribably awful—something in the objects around them that proclaimed the presence of divinity—something that was calculated to awaken the inattentive, to animate the lukewarm, and to shed even over the spirit of the irreligious a feeling of sacred reverence, leading to penitence and piety. These have been the admissions of the crowd, who had not "faith in them,"—these have been the confessions of men who merely gazed upon externals—of men who looked not beyond the surface. They knew not that the ceremonies which they witnessed were so many high and holy symbols, pourtraying to the eyes of the faithful the progress, the precepts, the struggles, and the sufferings of him who was offered for the transgressions of the world. They knew not that *these* constituted the parts and the aggregate of a sacrifice, enjoined from the beginning of a sacrifice, that is, to the true children of Christianity, a mark of remembrance, and an instrument of propitiation. It is the Catholic,

and he only, who beholds these sacred forms in their true light; it is he alone who joins rightly in these holy ceremonies, and derives a spiritual advantage from their daily celebration. How necessary is it then that he be thoroughly acquainted with their meaning, with their general tendency, and with each and all of the wonderful incidents which they represent. All, at least all those who are capable of reading, should endeavour to acquire this most interesting and most salutary information. Ignorance in such a case amounts to a crime.—Let those, then, who wish to avoid the reproach, open the present little volume; it comes before them in an unassuming shape, but it contains matter to make men "wise unto salvation." The authorities referred to, and the works from which it has been compiled, are of the very first character: the names of Cochin and of Glover are sufficiently known; they are pronounced with respect by every theological student in Europe. To these the publisher is principally indebted for the materials made use of on this occasion

ON SACRIFICE.

"In every place is offered to my name a clean oblation."—*Malachi* i. 11.

The Mass, in whatever light we consider it, is the most solemn act of religion. It is the most acceptable offering we ever made to God—the most adorable sacrifice, in which Christ himself is both priest and victim—our daily homage, by which we adore the Almighty—the indispensable rite, without which we cannot sanctify the Sunday. It is the centre upon which the whole economy of religion turns, towards which almost every other part has some tendency, or from which they mostly derive their meaning. This being the case, it becomes the duty of every Christian to understand it well—to be acquainted with its nature, and to be instructed in its august ceremonies. Yet how few are there who possess this knowledge? How many, who regularly attend at it without ever entering into the spirit, nay, without even properly joining in the external ceremonies? How many are present at Mass with so much indifference as clearly to shew, that they either do not understand these awful, or do not value these most beneficial mysteries? It is with reason, therefore, that the Council of Trent commands all the pastors of congregations frequently to explain these important subjects to the faithful, that they at least may not be answerable for any want of respect and devotion, which the people may be guilty of in attending at Mass. In order, therefore, to discharge myself of this important part of my duty, I intend from this day forward, on each Sunday afternoon, to explain to you some part of the Mass, till we have finished the whole. And I beg your most serious, most earnest attention to these short instructions; which if you will give me, I flatter myself that you may all of you derive considerable advantage from them; even the most ignorant be able to hear Mass with greater profit than he has hitherto done.

You know that to adore God is the first duty of man. No sooner were we created than the called for homage became due. You know, likewise, that the most perfect way of expressing this homage is by a sacrifice. A sacrifice is an act of supreme

worship, due only to Almighty God. There are many external expressions of worship; we bow the head at the holy name of Jesus; we bend the knee in act of adoration; but these are actions we make use of also on other occasions. We bow the head, or bend the knee, to shew our respect to some exalted creatures. But a sacrifice is incommunicable. We offer it to no being, either spiritual or corporeal, except to God, who created all things. It is supposed that the Almighty himself revealed to man this method of adoration; for wherever man exists, we find it every where prevalent. No nation, however barbarous,—no religion, however false or idolatrous, but what had their sacrifices. From the foundation of the world, no age nor nation ever pretended to adore God without a sacrifice, until the Protestants, who were the first sect among Christians who deprived the Almighty of this right, and themselves of this most admirable institution. What a loss they have sustained by it the nakedness of their ritual shews you. It is a religion without spirit or divinity. What advantage you derive from this adorable sacrifice I hope your own experience tells you, and this explanation will make still more evident. The first history of man represents Abel offering to God the fruits of the earth—and Cain making the same acknowledgments from the produce of his flocks—and the Almighty testifying his gratification at the sacrifices of the former, because of the good dispositions with which they were accompanied, while he rejected the latter, because he did not offer them with a pure heart. Now, what more proper than such a sacrifice as this? If the fruits and the flocks of the field be the gift of God, what can be more grateful in the creature, than to offer them up to him, acknowledging that all are his, and by his bounty are we permitted to use them?

In the Law, which God himself appointed as the religion of the Jews, he multiplied the number of their sacrifices, and increased the external splendour of their offering. The most perfect of them consisted in immolating a living animal, and consuming it whole upon the altar. This also is a most striking representation, signifying that our lives, like that of the animal, which is slain, belong to God, and ought to be offered up to him. It is accompanied also with his fervent prayer, that if we have forfeited our lives by sin, God would transfer the sin from us to the victim, and remit our forfeit in consequence of the contrition and self-devotion with which we offer the sacrifice. This was the nature and meaning of the ancient sacrifices. In our prayers we frequently use expressions which allude to them, as when we beg that our virtuues or prayers

may ascend before God, as the smoke or odour of a sweet smelling sacrifice, &c. These were all institutions of a temporary nature; they were to last for a time, but to give way to a more perfect one that was to succeed them, in the same manner as the imperfect light of the stars and moon retires and disappears when the blaze of the sun is lighted up. They were emblems, figures, and representations of that undefiled oblation which Christians were to possess. From this, indeed, they derived all their merit, and to this, of course, they must yield when it appeared. They were good in themselves, because appointed by God; and though imperfect, they were proportioned to the state of man at that time, and to the degree of knowledge which he then possessed. They served to prepare him for the better things which should be revealed in the new dispensation. Of this the Jews themselves were well aware. Many of the prophets had foretold their abolition, and that God would be no longer pleased with the blood of goats or oxen, when Christ should say—Behold I come in their place. The prophet Daniel had foretold that the daily sacrifices should fail; and Malachi had gone further, and said, that a clean oblation should be substituted in their place, every where from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, for the name of the Lord was to be great among the Gentiles then, as it had been before among the Jews.

From these reflections, dear Christians, you will conclude that a sacrifice is the most perfect method of adoring God with which man is acquainted; that it was appointed by God; that no religion, either natural or revealed, ever existed without it, and therefore that the Christian dispensation, the most perfect of all, is not devoid of this part of religion. I shall not now attempt any further to prove that it is so, except by observing that the very name of Priest and altar are unmeaning, empty sounds in a church where there is no sacrifice. As my object now is to instruct those who believe, let me once more entreat you to give all your attention, and study well this sublime act of your religion, that by duly celebrating it here, you may be found worthy to enjoy your God eternally hereafter.—*Amen.*

ON THE EXCELLENCY OF THE MASS.

"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."—*Matt.* xvii. 5.

The holy Fathers when speaking of the Mass have exhausted language, and even the imagination, to find terms of respect to apply to it. Nothing can exceed the encomiums which they pronounce upon this subject; and with reason, for it has at all times formed the chief object of devotion upon which a Christian exercises his thoughts. Wishing to convey to your minds some idea of the dignity of this sacrifice, I cannot better do it than by stating at once what it is. It is the unbloody sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ, offered up to the Eternal Father, under the appearance of bread and wine. Now see what the Mass is. It is a sacrifice, the victim of which is no other than Jesus Christ, who in every Mass renews the sacrifice which he once offered on the cross, that is, he continues to offer up that same body and blood, that was immolated and shed upon the cross. In the first instance, the sacrifice was made by the actual shedding of blood; in the second, the blood is not spilled again, but only represented as shed, by being consecrated under a different form, and offered separate from the body; but in both cases the victim is really the same, and the manner of offering only is different. I thould also add, that the High Priest who offers it is still the same; viz. Jesus Christ himself. For you ought to know, that when we say Mass we do not speak in our own name. Even in the sacred words of consecration, we do not say, this is Christ's body, but we say, "This is my body," because whatever we speak or act, we do it all in his name. Our own existence is in a manner lost in his. He is the voice, we are the echo—he is the priest, we are the representatives. The Mass therefore derives all its utility, all its value, all its excellency from the circumstance of Jesus Christ being present upon our altars. Here the Eternal Father might say, "there is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Here is the adorable victim, to which the whole world contains nothing equal, or to be compared; and even heaven itself contains nothing greater or more holy. Here is

a sacrifice then worthy of God himself, and the only one that could be worthy of him, because in this manner alone could it be a perfect homage, or contain an infinite victim. Can we, then, be surprised that the Almighty should always look down with complacency upon this immaculate host? He beholds here his own Son praying for pardon for us, offering himself a victim for our transgressions, and supplicating every blessing for us. He beholds all this, and could we in like manner penetrate through that veil of the sanctuary, which hides those things from our sight, we too should behold the Son of the Eternal laid upon our altars. We should see him surrounded by innumerable angels, veiling their faces and postrate in silent adoration. As soon as the words of consecration are pronounced, we should behold, says St. John Chrysostom, the heavens open, and the Lord of Glory descend in majesty upon our altars.—We should see blessed spirits, with ambitious diligence, vieing with each other to pay him the same respect here as they do in heaven.

Christians, with what sentiments ought you to reflect upon these awful truths, if you believe them steadfastly? Can you for a moment consider that your Lord and your Judge is actually present, and appear at Mass with thoughtless and dissipated minds? Can you possibly behave with levity or irreverence in the presence of God and all his holy angels? Can you suffer frivolous or worldly thoughts to occupy your minds, which at that time ought to be totally annihilated, sacrificed, and devoted to the great object which is before you? Can you behold Jesus praying for you, and yourselves not pray? Can you behold him offering a sacrifice of thanksgiving for the blessings you have received from God, and you at the same time not feel any sentiments of gratitude? Can you, in fine, see him bearing the weight of your transgressions, offering his own blood for their expiation, and you be present without joining in sentiments of regret, or making the sacrifice of a contrite heart? Explain to me, beloved brethren, these contradictions, if you can. I cannot understand them any other way than by supposing, that you neither think nor believe in what I have been describing. The Catholic who can be guilty of irreverence during the celebration of the sacred mysteries, is, in my eyes, worse than a heathen or an infidel. If an unbeliever were to be present at our service, he might not perhaps understand it, but if he were a religious man, he would at least respect what bears such appearance of sanctity and gravity. Yet how long shall the church be doomed to regret

that her own children can appear at her services, without any feeling of reverence or devotion? O that such persons would separate themselves from our assemblies. Almighty God would dispense with such attendance, and if he had fewer worshippers, they would at least be more worthy of him.

It is not possible to add any thing more to what I have said, which can enhance the dignity of our sacred rites. When I have said that Christ is the victim, to add another word would be to diminish the effect. But if it were possible for a moment to forget the circumstance, still I say that the Mass considered as a prayer, is the most affecting, and most devout compilation that was ever made by man. In what other place should we find collected in so small a compass such vehement acts of sorrow—such profound humiliations—such lively sentiments of gratitude—such expressive acts of thanksgiving—such fervent prayers of supplication—such admirable tributes of adoration to the great Creator of heaven and earth? Where else should we find such beautiful allusions to all the great mysteries of religion, such powerful means of strengthening our faith, animating our hopes, and filling our breasts with the love of God?

This, then, being the excellency of the divine Liturgy, how well did the church command that no Christian should suffer the Lord's day to pass without being present at so holy a rite? O let us henceforth renew our attention, let us lament that we have hitherto been present with such unbecoming dispositions. How many of us say with holy Jacob, "Truly the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not." Let us not be guilty of such disrespect again. O my God, do thou pierce our hearts with an awful reverence of thy sacred mysteries, because in adoring them we only adore thee our sovereign Lord, and only God.—*Amen.*

ON THE FRUITS OF THE MASS.

"He that spared not even his own Son—how hath he not also with him given us all things?"—*Romans* viii. 32.

From what I said last on the excellency of the Mass, you will be prepared to suppose that the fruits of it are also very great. Nothing can indeed exceed the blessings we might derive from this holy sacrifice, if we made the best use of it. It

is an oblation in which God delights, and in consideration of which he is prepared to grant us any thing. Let us descend to particulars.

It is a most abundant source of grace and blessings. This is the fountain of our Saviour, from which all ought to draw water. The sinner should come and draw hence a sorrow of heart, detestation of sin, and love of virtue. It is hence the good man must derive vigilance under temptation, fidelity to the divine grace, and power to fulfil the commandments. It is here the afflicted and broken heart finds consolation in its troubles; here the distressed soul takes refuge under its calamities, seeks light in its darkness, counsel in its doubts, and tranquillity in the storms which so frequently agitate the human mind. Are you desirous of leading a virtuous life? Offer up the Mass, that your desires may be accomplished. Have you friends or relations that are following a bad course of life?—Come to the altar, and upon its steps pray for their conversion. Have you children upon whom you could wish the blessings of heaven to descend in all their plenitude? Forget them not in the holy time of sacrifice. Does the Almighty scourge you with sickness, or other calamities? Approach to the altar that you may know whether it is his will to remove them, or give you patience to bear them. Are you deliberating about your state of life, or engaged in any other great undertaking? Offer up the great sacrifice of the Mass, that whatever you do may be for the greater glory of God, and your salvation. In all your necessities, whether spiritual or temporal, fly to the altar, that you may obtain thence all seasonable help. For the Almighty is pleased that you should on this occasion ask him even for temporal blessings, provided you seek them from a good motive, and with perfect resignation to his will. But do not insult him by being a great deal more eager for temporal things than the choicest spiritual gifts, which he reserves for his favourites.

I should exhaust your patience were I to describe all the streams which are perpetually flowing from this fountain of graces. Nor would it indeed be in my power to enumerate all. Suffice it to say, that hence must the priest derive that sanctity which ought to adorn his character, and the people that spirit of religion which is equally necessary for them. Here will every state of life find the means of obtaining their peculiar virtues —the merchant honesty, the labourer diligence, the parent watchfulness over those children for whose souls he will have to answer, the child respect and obedience to those whom God has placed over him, the old gravity and good example, the

young purity, modesty, and sobriety. Here, in fine, let all learn to subdue their passions, correct their inclinations, and adorn their souls with every virtue that is well-pleasing to God.

It is a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, and the only equivalent return we can make to the Almighty for those innumerable blessings he every day bestows upon us. Who then that expects a continuance of God's favours, would not have recourse to such means for thanking him for what is past?

It is a sacrifice which was principally instituted to remit and destroy sin. For this purpose was the sacrifice first offered on the cross; for the same it is still continued to be offered upon the altar. You know, of course, that no mortal sin can be remitted without the virtue of contrition and the sacrament of penance. But do not on that account undervalue the efficacy of the Mass for the same purpose, though it produces its effect in a different way. The infinite merits of our Saviour, which by the Mass are applied to our souls, will of themselves induce the Almighty to remit venial sins. And with regard to mortal ones, it acts thus: It renders the Almighty propitious, by presenting to him his own Son, who died for the very purpose of destroying sin, and is now by a perpetual sacrifice constantly interceding for the same purpose. This appeases his anger, which our sins had provoked, and makes him merciful; in consequence of which he grants us the virtues of compunction and contrition. He inspires us with a horror of sin; he opens our eyes to the fatal consequences of it; he furnishes us with tears of repentance and purposes of reform. In a word, by virtue of this holy sacrifice he confers all these graces, and by them directs us to the right channel through which we may obtain the remission of our greatest sins, and final reconciliation with him. O let us then frequently have recourse to this salutary victim, let us in it frequently offer to the Eternal Father, Christ's virtues for our vices—his humility for our pride—his fervour for our carelessness in prayer—and his great sufferings for our impatience and want of self-denial.

I must not omit, in the last place, that the benefit of this sacrifice extends also to the souls of the faithful departed. The infinite merit of it fills every part of the church with its influence; heaven with glory, the earth with virtue, and even this part of hell with comfort and refreshment. It has always been the custom of the church to pray with affectionate earnestness for her suffering children. Every one knows the pleasure it gave St. Monica on her death-bed, to think she had a son a priest, who would make daily remembrance of her soul at the holy altar.—

For there is no doubt, adds that same son of hers, St. Austin, that, in consequence of these prayers, God treats these suffering souls with greater lenity than their sins deserve. O what a pleasing thought, how full of consolation, to think we can carry peace to the afflicted souls of our departed friends, administer the drop of water to quench their parching thirst, and shorten the time of their confinement to those excruciating flames. Who is not affected even to tears, when he repeats these beautiful words in Masses for the dead :—" Deliver, O Lord Jesus Christ, King of Glory! the souls of the faithful departed, from the pains of hell and from the deep pit—deliver them from the lion's mouth, lest hell swallow them up, and they fall into darkness—we offer thee, O Lord, a sacrifice of praise and prayer, do thou accept them in behalf of the souls we this day commemorate, &c. Such, dear Christians, are, in short, the effects of this glorious sacrifice.—May the Almighty grant you an understanding to comprehend them well, and not suffer them to be lost upon you.—*Amen.*

MOTIVES FOR HEARING MASS.

"With desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with you."—*Luke* xxii. 15.

If, dear Christians, you reflected seriously on the great advantages to be derived from the Mass, you would not want any other motives to induce you to hear it daily if possible. You have heard that it was our Saviour's most earnest wish to celebrate the first Mass with his disciples: it is still the same ardent wish of Jesus to celebrate the same with us now. And why so? Because every time this sacred action is performed we renew the memory of his passion, we offer supreme worship to God, we promote the glory of the Most High, and the joy of his holy spirits, we advance our own sanctification, and loose the chains of captive souls. Who can reflect for one moment on the privilege by which man is allowed to co-operate with God in producing these effects, and not be filled with a most eager desire to assist as often as possible at these most valuable mysteries? Who will not be filled with shame and indignation against himself when he sees there is no vanity, no company, upon which he cannot any time bestow half an hour, yet never can possibly spare the same time to produce all these great effects? Oh! the ingratitude, the perversion of thoughtless man! What shall the Almighty do for you to make you think of him?

Can he love you more? Can he give you more than he has done? No, says St. Austin; though omnipotent, he cannot give any thing greater—though full of wisdom, he could think of any thing more valuable—though most rich, he had no greater treasure to bestow upon you than what he has given you in the sacrifice of our altar. How ungrateful then must we be to set so little value upon it? How thoughtless, when we have daily opportunities of hearing it, to keep ourselves away, and never come near it?

You will not be surprised therefore, that on all Sundays and festivals of obligation, the church should have commanded all her children to hear Mass under the most severe penalties. The reason is, because you cannot by any other possible means or prayers, offer to God an equal degree of worship; you cannot offer any thing else with which he is equally pleased, or upon which he has promised to look down at all with complacency. You may pray at home, but what are your prayers compared with those which Jesus offers up in the Mass? You may offer up the sacrifice of a contrite heart, but where can you find a heart so pure, a sacrifice so spotless, as that which Jesus offers upon our altar? Excuse not yourselves upon trivial grounds from hearing Mass on these days. You know not the slight you offer to God, the injury you do to your own souls by such neglect. Nothing but most urgent necessities will excuse such neglect from the guilt of a grievous sin. I would, however, willingly flatter myself that there are not many, except decided reprobates, who do not attend Mass with sincere piety, and profound reverence, at least on the Lord's day. But with that I am not satisfied, neither ought you to be so. What? will you see your Saviour every day renew the mystery of his passion, and be elevated again on the mystic cross, and you pass by the sacred mount without either bending the knee in adoration, or turning your head to look upon him? Will you behold the blood which was shed to cleanse the world from stain, daily flowing again from his sacred wounds, and you not wish to bathe your souls in the purifying stream? If so, then do not complain that the Almighty should treat you with similar neglect; do not complain that he bestows his choicest gifts on others, and passes you by unnoticed. Do not complain if you see the dews of heaven descend upon every little field around you, which therefore smile with beauty and verdure, whilst your's remains barren, and parched, and thirsty,—an ungrateful soil, upon which no virtues ever bloom. Do not complain; you made the choice, and you receive accordingly.

Hence you will always observe the Mass soon produces its effects in the lives of those who regularly attend at it. You will not see them defiled by any of those vices which are a disgrace to human nature; or, if they be penitents, you will see them, like Magdalen, prostrate at the feet of their Saviour, and their eyes streaming with tears for their past misfortunes. You will see them returning from the daily sacrifice, breathing flames, as St. Chrysostom expresses it; that is, all on fire with the divine love which they have caught from the fire of the altar. How should it be otherwise? Can they sit daily at the foot of the cross without learning some of its lessons? Can they receive Jesus daily in spirit, without partaking of his nature? Can they see his example daily exhibited and not imitate it in their own actions? No; it is impossible that so much virtue should be lost upon them. For this reason I believe that a devout attendance at Mass has protected many a soul from vices which they would otherwise have possessed. I believe it has guarded many a one from sudden death and other calamities, which God has suffered to fall on others. I believe it has conferred a blessing on many a family—given peace and unanimity, where discord would otherwise have reigned; and made parents happy in the conduct of children, whose hearts would otherwise have been broken by their disobedient and disorderly behaviour. It has thus prevented the commission of many sins, and sown the seeds of virtues, where they would not otherwise have been found. St. Ambrose says upon this subject, "Christ is all things to us.—If you are unwell, he is a physician—if you be in a burning fever, he is a fountain—if you are loaded with iniquity, he is righteousness—if you want help, he is strength—if you want food, he is meat—if you be in darkness, he is light—if you be in danger of death, he is life—if you desire heaven, he is the way that leads to it." While these were the sentiments of people with regard to the Mass, you must conclude, that they held it in the highest possible estimation, as their safeguard in every situation; and they considered it as a great misfortune if they suffered a day to pass without being present at it. St. Raymond had so high an estimation of the advantages of it, and found so great a pleasure in saying Mass, that if ever he had been prevented from making the daily sacrifice, his soul used to be overpowered with sorrow, his cheerfulness left him, and he never found comfort in any thing else during the rest of that day.

O! that we, dear Christians, had some of this spirit of the Saints still among us! Has devotion forsaken the earth alto-

gether, that we leave Jesus at present such a stranger upon our altars? Are our necessities less numerous or less urgent than their's were? No; but it is true that our weaknesses are greater, and we less sensible of them. We take less pains to acquire strength. If there were a day on which we were not exposed to sin,—a time in which we are not surrounded by enemies;—if we had no virtues to acquire, no homage to pay, we might be excused from hearing Mass. But, if, on the other hand, we are pressed by all these motives, let us not be so thankless to the Almighty, so thoughtless of ourselves, as to neglect the only means we have of performing all these duties. No time is so lost as that in which we might hear Mass, and do not. *Amen.*

THE BEGINNING OF MASS.

"I WILL go to the Altar of God."—*Psalm* xlii. 4.

THE Priest, when he goes to say Mass, first clothes himself in the sacred garments of his office. These he always wears when he performs any public service. They have each of them particular significations, and are emblems of particular virtues; but altogether they serve to hide the littleness of man; to make him forget himself while clothed in the robes of a superior character, and to gain the respect of the people, who no longer consider, on that occasion, what he is as a man, but lose sight of the individual, which is lost in the character of Jesus Christ, which he represents. For let a Priest be either edifying or not, —let him be amiable or otherwise in his private character, that should be all forgotten at the moment. He is then a priest of the Most High, even if an unworthy one; he is a representative of Jesus Christ, who has said to his ministers, He that despises you despises me: for it is to God, not to the ministers, that is referred all the honour you pay to them.

Thus vested, he goes to the altar, and pauses a moment before he begins. This he does, as well to recollect his thoughts, as to specify the intention for which he offers up the Mass,—whether it be for any individual living or dead, for the whole church, for himself, or for the necessities of the congregation present. The Mass is always offered up on a Sunday for the benefit of the flock committed to his charge. Then, as if unworthy to perform so great a function, he descends again from the altar, and, at the bottom of the steps, begins the Mass by

saying the 42d Psalm, which encourages him, notwithstanding his unworthiness, not to be dejected or troubled, to put his confidence in God, and approach to the altar with a cheerful heart, because the Almighty who is our salvation, will make glad all those who confess to him. Then bowing down his head in a posture of humility, he confesses to the Almighty God, and to all the saints, that he has sinned most grievously, and that in every way, both by thoughts, words, and deeds, and through his own most grievous fault. This being the case, he begs all the saints of heaven, whom he has called as the witnesses of his sins, to be also the intercessors of his pardon, and to pray to the Lord our God for him. The people also, represented by those who serve the Mass, repeat the same confession after the priest, acknowledging that they are altogether an assembly of sinners, who have come to implore the divine mercy, because they stand in need of it. Certainly nothing can be more affecting than this humble acknowledgement in the beginning of Mass. Oh, how acceptable, how propitiating would it be if we entered into the true spirit of compunction and sorrow, which it is the intention of the church to inspire by these words? It is now we should consider ourselves in the situation of the poor publican—retired at a distance from the altar, with eyes cast down, as if unworthy to look up to heaven—striking our breasts in testimony of a broken heart, weeping over our sins, which have rendered us unworthy of any of the divine favours. If we repeated the Confiteor with such sentiments, and presented ourselves at the foot of the altar in these dispositions, instead of saying it as we frequently do, from mere habit, without feeling any thing at all, we might go to the celebration of the Mass with becoming confidence, and, like the poor publican, descend from the temple justified. Compunction and humility are the two most necessary virtues by which we can approach to God. You may learn the importance of them by the great care which the church takes to renew these sentiments over and over again, as we proceed with the Mass. Let us endeavour to cultivate them in our breasts, and we may confidently hope that the Almighty will give us pardon, absolution, and remission of all our sins, and bring us to everlasting life. The devotion about which you ought to be occupied while the Priest remains at the foot of the altar, is chiefly in exciting sorrow for those sins which render you unworthy to be present at the sacrifice, and earnestly beseeching the Almighty to remove this cause of your unworthiness. How easy would it be for the simplest

people, who can neither read nor say these prayers by heart, to remember this, and join in these sentiments at the time?

The Priest now ascends the altar, and as he goes up the steps, having his own sins, as well as those of the people, still present to his mind, says this excellent prayer: "Take away from us, O Lord, our iniquities, that we may enter with pure minds into the Holy of Holies!" The altar on which such a victim is offered, is with reason called the Holy of Holies; and purity of mind is the most requisite disposition for making us worthy to enter in. Woe to that man who shall encompass the altar of the Lord, and be present at the sacrifice without feeling either regret for his sins, or a desire to be freed from them. How insensible must that heart be, which remains unmoved while such lively expressions of compunction are used by the Priest as well as the people? For, as if he never could do too much to obtain the divine mercy, when he has ascended the altar, he bows down again in the posture of humiliation and kisses it, still begging that God would grant him the forgiveness of his sins, through the merit of all his saints, but particularly of those whose relics may be present there. These two last prayers he says in silence to himself, but while he is thus occupied, the sighs of the faithful are not interrupted; they continue to be filled with those feelings of regret which they had conceived at the foot of the altar. I may call this part of the Mass which I have now explained to you, the first preparation.

You see that every word of it is calculated for the same purpose of removing our iniquities, which, alone can make us worthy of being present in the Holy of Holies. What must we then think of those, who, by coming too late, lose all the advantages of these most fervent prayers—or of those who are present in body, but in mind are as absent as if they were not there—who never attend to the meaning of these beautiful ceremonies, and never think of what the Priest is doing, or of what they ought to be saying. It is no wonder that those who make so bad a beginning, should continue to the end in the same careless way, and of course derive no profit from this holy sacrifice. May the Almighty, dear Christians, grant you may never more neglect such excellent prayers as these are.—*Amen.*

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THE KYRIE ELEISON AND GLORIA.

"Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me."—*Matt.* xv. 22.

When the Priest first goes to the book on the altar, he reads the Introit, which is generally a verse taken from some of the Psalms. It is different in every Mass, and generally applicable to some circumstances of the festival which is celebrated. Immediately follows the Kyrie Eleison, or Lord have mercy on us, addressed three times to God the Father, three to God the Son, and three to God the Holy Ghost.

The practice of calling to God for help or mercy is so natural to man, that we frequently do it without even thinking of it. Let us be placed in any distress or sudden danger, we immediately lift up our hands, our eyes, and our voice to heaven, for succour and relief. Hence this natural exclamation of man is with great reason adopted into our public prayers. Feeling at this important moment all the weight of our infirmities and miseries, we cry to God for mercy. We repeat it so frequently, in order to shew the earnest desire we have of relief. In this we imitate the poor Canaanean woman of the gospel, who cried "Jesus son of David, have mercy on me;" and when the disciples rebuked her, and bid her hold her peace; she cried out the louder, "Son of David, have mercy on me." This she repeated till our Saviour noticed her, and granted her request on account of her perseverance. Let us with the same earnestness repeat this fervent supplication, and we shall not fail to obtain our request.

There is no one who may not apply this short but expressive prayer to himself. We call three times to God the Father, as our Creator, as our Protector, as our Parent. As his creatures, and the work of his hands, he knows our miseries and the infirmity of our nature. We also feel the heavy yoke that galls our necks; we sink under our heavy load of sin, and cry to him for mercy. When his providence exerts itself in our favour, we abuse even his goodness; he is a father to us, but we are rebellious and obstinate children; frequently do we revolt against him, and have therefore great occasion to say, O Lord have mercy on us.

We call upon the Son, in the second place, for mercy As it is now the time of sacrifice, we look up to him as our

High Priest, who being spotless and undefiled, has no occasion to offer for his own sins, but may apply the merit of the whole sacrifice for the remission of ours. We look upon him as our victim of infinite value, more than enough to atone for the sins of the whole world. We look upon him as our brother; and as he has not disdained to take upon himself human nature for our sakes, we raise our voices with confidence, and are sure he will have mercy on us.

Lastly, we call upon the Holy Ghost as the author of grace, the inspirer of prayer, the sanctifier of our souls. Now, as we frequently offend him by contradicting his grace; as we are slothful in prayer, and filled with devotion; as we are in every respect short of that sanctity which it is his province and his wish to give us, we repeat with increased vehemence, O Lord have mercy upon us. Many other applications might be made of these same words, but, for the sake of shortness, I mention only this one, leaving it to each one's devotion to suggest others to himself. One thing, I hope, will remain impressed upon your minds,—when you hear these words in future, which is, that we are then praying to each person of the Blessed Trinity, with all the fervour of our souls, that he would have mercy on us; and every one who does not join in the same spirit, must not expect to partake of the blessings we are then soliciting.

This being finished, the Priest, without moving from his place, begins the Gloria in Excelsis. It is called the hymn of the angels, because the first words of it were sung by the angels at our Saviour's birth. It is, indeed, a hymn worthy of angels, which they might sing among those eternal canticles they are incessantly pouring forth to the Lord of Glory. Among all the forms of praise and adoration by which we attempt to express our homage to God, I think this one of the finest specimens that ever was composed by man. We can never read it with reflection without being filled with a great sense of the majesty of God, and the homage due to him from all his creatures. What can be more simple, yet more profound, than these beautiful words: "We praise thee, we bless thee, we glorify thee, we thank thee for thy own great glory, O Lord God, the King of Heaven, the Father Almighty." In these words we offer him the highest tribute which the mind of man is capable of; we proclaim him to be worthy of praise, of blessing, of thanksgiving for his own sake alone, as the Almighty King of heaven and earth, independently of the favours conferred upon us, the most unworthy of his creatures. We

thank him for his own great glory, and for having manifested that glory to us. Then, calling to mind the three persons that subsist in the god-head, we renew our adorations again, and proclaim, "Thou only art holy,—thou only art Lord,—thou only art Most High, O Jesus Christ, with the Holy Ghost in the glory of God the Father." Between these two parts, which form the beginning and end of the hymn, there are a few words of supplication, in which we call upon the Lamb of God to have mercy on us, and hear our prayer. But these are short, and we soon return again to acts of praise, in repeating which we are so occupied with the greatness of God whom we are exalting, that we forget for a moment our own wants; or if the mention of our Saviour's name brings them to our mind, the greatness of his attributes expels them again, and lets us finish our hymn as we begun it, by proclaiming the united glory of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

I do not know, dear Christians, with what feelings you have hitherto repeated this hymn, nor what impression this explanation has made upon you, but, for my part, I must say, that if the Deity condescends to allow such insignificant creatures as ourselves to pronounce his praises—if he ever hears the feeble voice of man, it must be when he uses such accents as these, so worthy of the God whom they celebrate. Let us then in future make our hearts and minds correspond to the noble words of our voice, and repeat this hymn with all the devotion the angels felt when they first sung it. Let us say it with as much respect as if these angels themselves were present, and repeating it with us.

You have observed that this is a canticle of joy and gladness, therefore, when the church is in mourning, in Lent, in Advent, and in Masses for the dead, she forbids us to make use of this hymn even in the time of Mass, because our minds should be wholly occupied with affections of grief, melancholy, or sorrow, for our Saviour's passion, for our own sins, or the sufferings of the souls for whom we are praying. See how considerate the church is to make all our sentiments correspond to the object before us. Do you, dear Christians, enter into the same spirit, and you will derive an unspeakable comfort from celebrating these holy mysteries in such a manner.—*Amen.*

THE EPISTLE AND GOSPEL.

"God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets; last of all, in these days, hath spoken to us by his Son."—*Heb.* i. 1 and 2.

The Gloria being ended, the Priest kissing the altar, and turning towards the people with extended arms, salutes them in these words, "Dominus vobiscum," the Lord be with you. The people answer by extending the same earnest wish to him, saying, "And with thy spirit." These words are borrowed from the address which the angel Gabriel made to the blessed Virgin, when he announced to her that she was chosen to be the Mother of God. The Lord, he then said, is with thee. Perhaps, dear Christians, you have hitherto thought little of this short prayer which the Priest frequently repeats during the Mass; but though few in words, in meaning it is most abundant. What better blessing can he wish for you, than that the Lord should be always with you? If you have him, with him you possess all things—without him every other thing is of no avail. Whenever, therefore, you hear the Priest pronounce these words, call to mind the vast importance of their meaning. He prays that the Lord may be with you, that he may accompany you wherever you go, may be present with you in every place, may protect you in every danger, may guide you by his watchful providence into every good. That he may be with you in the midst of temptations, to enable you to overcome them—in your doubts and difficulties, to enlighten you,—in your prosperity to make you, use it well; in your adversity, to soften down its severity, and strengthen you with patience. That he may be with you in your houses, in your families, in all your labours and undertakings, directing them all to his greater glory, and your advantage. In fine, that he may be with you by his grace, and influence all your thoughts, and words, and actions—and that you may also be with him, walking always in his presence, having your minds perpetually fixed on him, frequently renewing your intention, by which you offer to him all you do or suffer. See what an extensive meaning these few words possess. You may also understand them as applying immediately to the object before you, thus, may the Lord be with you during the time of Mass; may he be always in

your mind, and keep you recollected; may he fill you with the spirit of prayer, that you may go through the sacrifice in a manner worthy of him. In which ever way you understand them they are highly important, and worthy of your attention. If you reflect on them at all, you must admire their meaning; and I hope that henceforward you will never hear them pronounced but you will at the same time be filled with the most fervent desires of all these blessings, they signify that you may at least partake of some, if not of all of them.

The Priest then immediately turns to the book, and reads the prayer of the day. On great festivals there is only one prayer, which has always some reference to the solemnity we are celebrating. Thus, at Easter we allude to the resurrection of our Saviour, at Christmas to his nativity; in Masses for the dead we mention the souls we pray for; on the feasts of Saints, that we may imitate the particular virtues for which they were each distinguished. In Lent and penitential times there are other prayers besides that of the day, still bearing some allusion to the circumstances of the time. They are generally addressed to God the Father, and always ended by these words, "Through our Lord Jesus Christ, who, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, liveth and reigneth world without end." By this we mention of the Blessed Trinity, we acknowledge that it is from God one and indivisible that we expect to receive whatever we pray for. By the mention of our Saviour, we own that it is through his merits alone that we hope to be heard. We comply also with his own instructions when he says, whatever you ask the Father in my name he will grant you. And again, no one can come to the Father but through me. At the end of the prayer the people all answer, Amen, which signifies, so be it; as much as if they were to say, God grant what the Priest has prayed for. We unite our wishes with his, we pray for the same thing, may it be granted us,—may it be so.

After the prayer, the Epistle is immediately read. It takes its name from being in general from the Epistle of St. Paul, or the other Apostles. Sometimes, but not so frequently, it is a lesson from the Prophets, or some other part of the Old Testament. For those who can read, the best occupation of this time is to read, with great attention and respect, the Epistle as you have it translated in your English Missals; to meditate deeply, and take great notice of the important truths which it teaches you, and to make resolutions to reduce them to practice in your conduct. Those who cannot read, may still cherish within themselves this same spirit of docility; may pray that the Al-

mighty would open their minds and understandings, to comprehend and keep his holy will, which is made manifest to us in these inspired writings. For the benefit of these latter, the Epistles and Gospels are generally read aloud to the public after Mass, that they may not lose the benefit of the instructions they contain. At the end, we say, Deo Gratias, or thanks be to God, for his great goodness in having furnished us with these instructions,—in having inspired his Apostle to write them for our satisfaction.

Between the Epistle and Gospel, is read the Gradual and Tract. These consist of short expressions of praise, extracted chiefly from the Psalms. In great solemnities, and particularly at Easter, we make great use of the Alleluia, which is a Hebrew word, that signifies, Praise the Lord. In Lent and penitential times, instead of these expressions of joy, we change them into strains of the deepest regret and compunction.

These being concluded, the book is removed to the other side of the altar, when all the people rise up, to shew, by the posture of standing, their eagerness to hear, and readiness to follow the call of our Saviour, which is going to be communicated to them in the Gospel. The Priest also, as he passes from one side of the altar to the other, bows down in the middle, and reflecting how unworthy he is to utter with his own mouth the inspired words of Christ, he begs that the Almighty would purify his heart and lips, as he once did those of the Prophet Isaiah with a burning coal, and enabled him worthily to announce the sacred scriptures to the people. In naming the Evangelist from which the Gospel is taken, for it is always taken from one of the four Evangelists, and never out of any other part of the Scripture, he signs the Cross upon his forehead, his mouth, and his breast. This use of the Cross is familiar to us: by it we are reminded of the great blessings conferred upon us by our Saviour's passion, which are unfolded in the sacred volume we are thus reading. We sign it on our foreheads to show that we are not ashamed of Christ's doctrine —on our mouths to show our readiness to proclaim it to others, and on our breasts to show that we entertain a sincere affection for it in our own hearts, where we shall often feel the comfort of meditating and reflecting upon it. See how every ceremony that accompanies each part of the Mass is beautiful, and calculated to stir up in your minds sentiments of attention, docility, and respect. May you always be filled with these sentiments when you hear the Gospel read, and you will have reason to say with the church, at the end of it, "Praise be to thee, O Christ, for having favoured us with so great a blessing." *Amen.*

ON THE CREED.

"He that cometh to God must believe."—*Heb.* xi. 6.

Faith, dear Christians, is a supernatural virtue, absolutely necessary for salvation. Without faith, says St. Paul, it is impossible to please God. He that does not believe, says our Saviour, shall be condemned. It consists in submitting our mind and reason to every truth revealed by God, and consequently, to every truth taught by his Church—for it is only from the testimony of the Church that we can possibly know what we are to believe. That Church bears witness from age to age, what doctrines our Saviour taught. She is invested, by our divine Redeemer, with a special authority to teach his doctrines; and preserved by a special assistance of the Holy Ghost, from ever teaching wrong. To reject her faith, is to oppose the veracity of the Almighty.

God having created us, both body and soul, demands that we adore him by both parts. He requires that we shall humble our understandings to his, by believing in him; our wills to him, by loving him, and placing all our affections on him; and our bodies by external homage, as well as by regulating all our actions by his commandments. To refuse any one of these homages is to deprive our Creator of one of his rights. Now if we do not believe, we refuse him the homage of our mind—if we do not love, we refuse him the homage of our heart—if we do not keep his commandments, we refuse him the homage of our body and its actions. If this reasoning be correct, then it will follow, that a breach of faith is equally and in the same manner a sin, as a breach of any of the other commandments. From the same it will follow, that there can be but one faith, any more than one God. Hence you will easily see, that to be without that faith, if it proceed from ignorance, is a great misfortune—if it be wilful, is a great crime. It is likewise evident, to possess that faith is one of the greatest blessings the Almighty can confer upon us. It is the beginning by which we learn to know him, and derive from him the other virtues which must conduct us to heaven. I thought it necessary to make these few observations about the nature of faith, because we seem at present to be actually come into those days wherein our Saviour says, scarcely any faith shall be found upon earth.

For if it be not in the Catholic Church, where shall we find even the appearance of that sublime virtue which I have described?

To preserve and cultivate this faith, is one of the chief duties of the ministers of religion. The Apostles for this reason composed the Creed which bears their name, and which we are taught to repeat in our daily prayers. For we justly consider it as agreeable to Almighty God, to testify, by the repetition of these words, our willingness to believe what he has been graciously pleased to reveal. Now, as I said before, that the Mass was to be the most complete homage we could offer to God,—nothing can be more proper, than that in some part of it should be introduced a profession of our faith. This is done immediately after the Gospel. (It is omitted on some days, particularly in Masses for the dead.)

The Creed, which we now repeat at Mass, is called the Nicene, because it was made at the general council of Nice. It is the same in substance as the Apostles' Creed, but contains many things at greater length, and more fully explained than the latter has them. Those who cannot read this, should, during the time, repeat the Apostles' Creed; slowly and considerately attending to the meaning of every word, yielding a cordial assent to every article; and at the end they should say,—"All this I believe most firmly: do thou, O Lord, increase my faith." We repeat the Creed standing. All postures of the body are, in themselves, indifferent to the Almighty, and all changes of them are only acceptable to him inasmuch as they express the dispositions of the mind. Thus, kneeling is by mankind considered a posture of more profound humility and greater respect than either sitting or standing. When we, therefore, come to that part of the Creed, which, alluding to our Saviour, says, "*and he was made man*," we all kneel down, then immediately rise up again, and finish the Creed standing, as we begun it. The motive of this is evident: the blessings we have received from our Saviour's being made man, are so great, that the very naming of the circumstance brings them all to our mind, and fills us with such strong sentiments of gratitude, respect, and love, that we cannot help bowing our knee, to express those feelings of our heart; and when performed in these dispositions must be acceptable to God. When God brought his only begotten Son into the world, he said, "Let all the angels adore him." Heb. i. 6. Much more ought we to do it, for whose sake he was made man.

With the Creed we finish all the prayers and instructions

which compose the first part of the Mass; after which we enter more immediately upon the object of the sacrifice. But, before I explain that, let me again call to your minds the dispositions which should accompany your faith. In order to be profitable, it must be firm; not doubting, nor hesitating, because it cannot have a stronger foundation than the veracity of God, upon which articles of faith all depend: it must be universal, extending to every article, because they are each equally the word of God; it must be full of respect for all its objects, for there is no part of our religion which does not require from us respectful veneration; there is no article of faith, in which we ought not to take a great interest, either as leading to some practical lesson, furnishing us with some motive of confidence, or filling us with some sublime idea of the nature of God. In fine, our faith ought to be lively, manifesting itself in all our actions.—For unless our lives be better than those who have no faith, our condemnation will undoubtedly be greater. Let us never separate the faith of our mind from the practice of our conduct. Let us cherish the precious gift with which God has favoured us, in our affections by always aspiring after him, who is the great object of it; in our words by always speaking respectfully of religion, and every thing that regards it; in our conduct by avoiding all those whose conversation tends to diminish our respect for that faith, which ought to be the chief ornament and honour of our lives; for the just man lives by faith. In fine, let us be guided totally by the precepts of that faith, which was given us to be our chief consolation here, and the most effectual means of conducting us to uninterrupted bliss hereafter, when faith shall be swallowed up in reality.—*Amen.*

ON THE OFFERTORY.

"In a contrite heart and humble spirit let us be accepted."—*Dan.* iii. 39.

We are now come to that part of the Mass, which rises greatly in importance above all that I have hitherto explained. I therefore beg of you to renew all your attention to the instructions that are yet to come. In former times, as soon as the Creed was finished, all who had not been baptized, or were under a course of penance, or had not yet been admitted to communion, were ordered to leave the church; for the

remaining part of the Mass was considered too holy to allow any such persons to be present at it. The Church has now changed her discipline, and she allows even the greatest of sinners to remain during the whole of the sacred rites. She does this out of compassion, hoping that the sight of her august mysteries may convert those hardened sinners who withstand every thing else. What is the use, dear Christians, which you make of this condescension? Do you consider it a great privilege to be allowed to be present at it? Or do you not rather continue here, without thinking at all about it, or even knowing that this is a more important part of the Mass than what is gone before? Oh! how would the Church, in former days, have wept to see her children so ignorant, or so regardless of what ought to interest them so much! But let us proceed with our explanation.

After uncovering the chalice, and removing it from the centre of the altar, the Priest takes the unconsecrated bread, which we call the Host, placed upon the pattern, and lifting it up to heaven with his eyes also raised thither, offers it to Almighty God, and says this prayer, than which nothing can certainly be more beautiful: "Receive, O Holy Father and Eternal God, this unspotted Host, which I, thy unworthy servant, offer to thee, my true and living God, for my own innumerable sins, offences and negligences, as well as for all here present; as also for all faithful Christians, both living and dead, that it may avail both me and them unto life everlasting."—*Amen.*

I have repeated the whole of this prayer, that no part of it may be lost upon you. What an interesting subject ought this to be to you, to see the Priest, with hands lifted up to heaven, offering the victim for you as well as himself; deploring his sins in a contrite heart, lest they should hinder the effect of his sacrifice; then praying that all the faithful, whether living or dead, may be benefited by it. Surely there is no one either so ignorant or so inattentive, but, seeing this, he must be struck by it; his devotion must be roused, and he will offer himself to God, together with this sacrifice. He will weep over his offences, that he may find acceptance, and be admitted to share the fruits of this spotless victim.

The Priest then pours the wine which is to be consecrated, into the chalice, and at the same time, mixes a small quantity of water with the wine. This is an ancient ceremony, and is done to represent the blood and water which flowed from our Saviour's side, when he was pierced with the lance upon the cross. The chalice is then offered up to the true and living God, in the same manner as the bread had been before. On

this occasion, being about to bless these offerings, he bows down his head in a spirit of humility, then lifts up his hands to heaven, whence every blessing must come, and makes the sign of the Cross upon them, and says, "Come, thou sanctifier, and bless this sacrifice, which is prepared for thy holy name." See, dear Christians, how solemn is this entrance upon the sacrifice; how calculated to impress you with sentiments of awe, respect, and veneration, if you entered into the spirit of what is then going forward. I have said before, that an offering was an essential part of sacrifice; but it is not this offering which forms the essence of the Mass. For you will recollect that it is as yet nothing but bread and wine, and therefore is only of value from what it soon will be, when changed by the words of consecration. Let not this consideration lessen your devotion to this important part of the Mass. For you may and ought, even now, to enter into the true dispositions of a sacrifice. You may anticipate what will presently take place, and offer to the Eternal Father his own beloved Son, who will soon descend from heaven upon our altars, and occupy the place of the bread and wine, which will then become empty symbols and forms, without their substance. You may consider the figures as already present, because the victim by which it is represented, is actually there. The offering which you make to the Almighty, must, therefore, be acceptable to him, because it is his only Son, upon whom he always looks down with complacency—it is the victim of infinite value—the Host without a spot or blemish—the Sacrifice which has supplanted every other that had been offered to God, and from which all the others derive all the efficacy which they ever possessed—the true ransom of sin—the Lamb that was slain from the beginning of the world—it is the Holocaust which is perpetually burning upon the altar of God, and is never consumed. I should never have finished, were I to recite all the titles of dignity by which this offering is distinguished. Let me conclude by observing, that it is the only offering, which, in a proper manner is worthy of God, for if he condescends to hear our prayers, or look down upon any offering of virtue or charity which we may make to him, it is chiefly because he is pleased to attribute some merit to them, which is derived from that fountain of merit, the sacrafice of our Saviour upon the cross.

See, then, and consider most attentively, what an important offering you are making to God at this happy moment. Does it become you to be present at such a ceremony with tepidity, with thoughtlessness ,with distracted or indevout minds? Can

you expect to derive any benefit from attending in such a care less manner? O! no. The Almighty will indeed accept of the victim for its own sake, because it is always well pleasing to him—and he will give his blessings likewise, but not to you who attend with dissipated minds—you are unworthy of them. You will return home empty—ah, perhaps not empty, but loaded with fresh guilt by a criminal attendance at Mass—whilst the happy few, (and, O my God, thou alone knowest how many, but I fear, only few) will return abounding in the blessings which all might derive from the sacred rites.

Strive then, dear Christians, to enter into what I called the dispositions of a sacrifice. When you see the Priest offering up the bread and wine, remember that it represents your Saviour offered up upon the cross. Now, why was that sacrifice first offered, and why is it daily repeated? It was to atone for your sins. Unite then, yourselves to your Saviour—excite in your breast that grief for sin, which your Saviour felt for you when he expired upon the cross. For without such a feeling you can have no part in the sacrifice. Offer to God yourself, together with your Saviour—sacrifice your passions, your pride, your anger, your lust, and every thing else which is the cause of sin. Do this and you will indeed make him a most acceptable offering—you will enter into the true dispositions of a sacrifice—and participate in the blessings, which it is calculated to confer upon you. *Amen.*

THE LAVABO AND ORATE FRATRES.

"I WILL wash my hands among the innocent, and encompass thy altar, O Lord."—*Psalm* xxv. 6.

AMONG the ceremonies which the Almighty himself prescribed as accompanying the sacrifices which were offered to him in the Jewish law, there were many ablutions. External purity, neatness and decorum, even of the body, are preparations, without which we ought never to approach the altar of God. If we think it a mark of respect to our friends, to adorn ourselves with modesty when we go into their company, certainly we ought not to be deficient in shewing the same regard to decency or appearance in the presence of Almighty God. An orderly and decent exterior is very often the sign of a well-regulated interior, and a mind in confusion is sure to shew itself by

similar actions. In imitation, therefore, of these ablutions that were used in the old law, the Priest now retires to one side of the altar, and there washes his fingers. In the meanwhile, he recites the 25th Psalm, beginning at the 6th verse, with these words,—"I will wash my hands among the innocent, and encompass thy altar, O Lord." To wash the hands is very often used in scripture as an emblem of innocence. Thus Pilate washed his hands to declare himself innocent of our Saviour's blood. It is with great propriety, therefore, the Church has adopted into her service a ceremony so expressive of that innocence and purity with which we ought to approach to the sacrifice. For it is the interior purity of mind and soul—it is a conscience pure from the defilement of sin, which the God, in whose sight the heavens themselves are not pure—requires not only from the minister who stands at his altar, but from all others who encompass it at the time. Oh, how ought we to humble in performing this august ceremony, knowing that we can never acquire that degree of purity which we ought to have, and that after all our endeavours we must stand in need of the divine indulgence. In the mean time, we cannot but admire the pains which the church takes to excite in us the necessary dispositions for obtaining this purity, and the prayers and ceremonies by which she constantly reminds us of it. And here I must make an observation, which, may perhaps have escaped your notice. In this ceremony the Priest only washes the tips of his fingers, and not his whole hands—to signify that the purity with which he ought to approach the altar should be not only from larger or mortal sins, but even from the most trivial offences, or affections to sin, which are properly enough represented by the extremities of the fingers. The devotion, therefore, with which you ought to accompany this part of the Mass is evident—an ardent desire to be free from sin, which alone can defile the soul, and a sincere and earnest contrition, which must obtain you this purity. Imitate the earnestness of St. Peter, who, when our Lord would wash his feet, exclaimed, Wash me, O Lord—not only my feet, but my head, that I may be pure all over.

This prayer being finished, the Priest returns to the middle of the altar, and bowing down his head, continues to pray a short time in silence. This prayer is addressed to the holy Trinity—that the Almighty would vouchsafe to accept the offering the Priest has just made in memory of our blessed Saviour's passion, and his glorious resurrection, through the intercession of the blessed Virgin, and all the Saints—that it may

be available to their honour, as well as to our salvation; and that they may intercede for us in heaven, whose memory we celebrate upon earth.

Having thus begged the powerful intercession of the saints, he kisses the altar, turns round to the people, and solicits their prayers, too, saying, Orate Fratres. This is the last time that the Priest turns to the people, till the sacrifice is accomplished, and the communion received. The reason of this evidently is, because he is now entering upon the solemn part of the Mass, which concludes both the consecration and communion, and therefore requires his utmost attention, which must not henceforward be distracted by turning away from the object. Besides, you have probably observed, that during the presence of the blessed sacrament upon the altar, as at benediction, the Priest never turns his back upon it, lest by such a posture he should seem to forget him, or be thought to offer even an unintentional irreverence to him, upon whom all our senses and powers of body and soul ought to be entirely fixed. When, therefore, you see the Priest turn to you for the last time, at the Orate Fratres, you may consider him as taking his leave of you, and entering as the High Priest formerly did, into the holy of holies. Consider him as oppressed by the knowledge of his unworthiness—seeking the assistance of your prayers, to support him in the holy function he is going to perform. Hitherto he has prayed as one of yourselves, standing in the midst of you, speaking all aloud, that you might join with him. With you, and for you, he has made the confession of his sins—giving praise to God at the Gloria—read the Epistle and Gospel for your instruction—joined in one common profession of faith at the Creed—but now he separates himself from the people. Like Moses, he leaves them at the bottom of the mount, whilst he ascends to the top to converse with God alone. Called to the performance of a ministry so much exalted above human nature, yet feeling that he still carries about him all the infirmities of humanity, what can he do otherwise than turn to you, and with eyes cast down, and in a low and suppliant voice say, pray brethren, that my sacrifice, which is also yours, may be acceptable to God the Father Almighty. This, dear Christians, is a most interesting part of the Mass. How many does the Priest see among the faithful by whom he is surrounded, whose greater innocence, whose greater purity, whose greater fervour of prayer might ascend up to the Almighty God—might supply his defects, and make his sacrifice acceptable. If, therefore, you have compassion for the defects from which no

human nature was ever exempt—if you have charity—if you have brotherly love, you will at that time all unite, and pray most fervently for him who is your brother, your priest and your minister ; who is then occupied in a ministry that regards yourselves as much as him. Yes, you will pray and answer his address most cordially, in these words: "May the Lord receive our sacrifice from thy hands, for the praise and honour of his own name, likewise for our benefit, and that of the whole church." When the Priest and the people are thus united in mutual prayer for each other—well may they expect that our Saviour will fulfil his promise, and be in the midst of them, to grant their petitions.

What follows is called the Secret: it is one or more prayers, which always correspond to the Collect, they are the same in number, and always have reference to the same subject, that is, commemorate the same solemnity, or beg the intercession of the same saint as was mentioned in the Collect. These are always said in silence, whence, perhaps, comes the name by which they are distinguished The same observations apply to them as to the prayers, which I explained before, in a former instruction. *Amen.*

ON THE PREFACE.

"And the Seraphim cried one to another, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts."—*Isaiah*, vi. 3.

The Preface is so called from its being a preparation, or prayer immediately preceding the Canon, or more sacred part of the Mass. As we advance in the Mass, the dignity and importance of the subject increases at every step. We are now come to that sublime and most affecting form of adoration, in which, we invite the holy angels of heaven to join with us, and beg the supreme Lord of heaven and earth to permit our humble voices to ascend from this lowly earth, and mix with theirs in proclaiming his eternal praise. You will not therefore be surprised, that before begins this prayer, the Priest should address the people in an audible voice: "Lift up your hearts," and the people answer: "We have them lifted up to the Lord." If there be a time, when our minds so bent down to this earth, can raise themselves from all its grovelling concerns, and aspire

to heaven—it is surely at the time of prayer and in the hour of Sacrifice—it is surely when we are told to ascend, and join the heavenly choirs in singing the praises of our great Creator. Yet how often have we addressed to you these words from this holy altar, without your having paid any attention to them? How often have we invited you to raise your hearts to God, before we began this sublime act of adoration, and you, by that air of dissipation which is manifest in your exterior, have shown that your hearts have been fixed upon any thing except the one great object, which ought at that time to absorb every thought? How often have you belied the words of the clerk who answers in your name, we have them fixed on the Lord? The Priest, however, trusting to your fidelity, says, "Let us then give thanks to Almighty God for it." And you, acknowledging the propriety of it, answer again, "It is proper and just that we ought to do so. It is proper on account of the manifold blessings we receive from Him, and it is also just, for thanksgiving is the smallest return we can in justice make to God for all his favours.

The Priest then, repeating the same sentiments with the people, continues: "It is indeed meet and just;" to which he also adds another motive of our own interest, "It is right and available to salvation, that we should always, and in all places give thanks to thee, O Holy Lord, Almighty Father, Eternal God." Yes, we owe him thanksgiving as our sovereign Lord, who is full of sanctity; as our Father, who is all powerful, and willing to assist us his children, and as our adorable God, who exists for ever and ever. But, however just it is that we should praise him, our homage will be unacceptable, unless offered "through Jesus Christ our Lord." It it is through Him, whom St. Paul calls the mediator of angels, as well as of men, that "the angels praise thy majesty, the dominations adore it, the powers tremble before it, the heavens and the heavenly virtues, and the blessed seraphim do jointly celebrate it with mutual exultation." It is possible, dear Christians, when you hear such a description as this, how the blessed spirits are occupied in heaven in proclaiming the majesty of God; is it possible that you should not most ardently long to fly from the captivity of this earth, and join them in the holy exercise? It is this exercise which constitutes the bliss of heaven, which forms all their happiness now, and is meant to form all ours in the next life. Let us then begin at present, what we hope to continue through all eternity; and as in soul we resemble the nature of angels, let us, in that part, at least, though our bodies be still attached to

this earth, unite even now with them in proclaiming the glory of God. In the foregoing sentence you will have observed that there are different orders of angels mentioned, some more perfect than others, rising one above another by different gradations. I cannot help making one remark arising out of this circumstance, because it is not a very obvious, though, I think, very just one. Have you never taken notice, in repeating this beautiful Preface, that the more perfect the order of angels mentioned was, and the nearer they approached to God, the more humble and profound is the term by which they express their homage? Thus, it is said, that the Angels, whom we suppose to be the least perfect order of blessed Spirits, only *praise* his Majesty—the Dominations *adore* it—but the Powers, who are still more sublime creatures, even *tremble* before it. What a just representation is this of the dread majesty of God, before which, the more we understand his nature, the more prostrate and self-abased every creature must fall. Knowing that the praises of these angelic spirits are well pleasing to the Deity, but not daring to trust to our own, we conclude by beseeching the Almighty to permit us to join our humble voices with theirs, saying, "Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Sabaoth, the heavens and the earth are full of thy glory." These beautiful words are the Canticle, by which the blessed spirits express their adoration. We are assured of this by St. John, who was admitted to see some of the mysteries of the heavenly Jerusalem, and explains this in the Apocalypse, from which this passage is taken. O with what reverence and awe ought we to repeat these words, which we have borrowed from the Canticle of Angels! The Priest, in the meantime, joins his hands before his breast, and bows down his head, in imitationof the Seraphim, who, as the beloved disciple also assures us, veil their faces with their wings, and fall down in prostrate adoration, when they proclaim their God thrice holy.

At this time is also rung a little bell. The first intention of this probably was, in large churches, where many could neither see nor hear the Priest, to give notice to all the people, that the Priest was then reciting the Holy Canticle. There is nothing, perhaps, more insignificant in itself than the tinkling of a little bell, yet nothing more impressive than a bell rung at such a time, and accompanied with such awful reflections. May the sound of it, henceforward, when it strikes your ears, make an impression upon your hearts—warn you to collect your wandering thoughts—banish dissipation, and fix your mind entirely on God. It is usual, also, for the people, at this part

of the Mass, to bow down their heads, and strike their breasts. These are very proper and very expressive actions. By the former, you place yourselves in a posture of adoration, and by the latter you express a vehement sorrow, that you are so unworthy to mingle your praises with those of angels; and your confusion in such a state, before the supreme majesty of God, who, nevertheless, out of his infinite mercy, is pleased with your homage, such as it is.

Let me conclude this instruction by reminding you, that while we proclaim God most holy, it is our duty as much as possible, to imitate his sanctity; for by that means only can we ever merit to be admitted to join the heavenly choirs in singing this Canticle of praise, in God's eternal kingdom.—*Amen.*

THE CANON.

"Then shalt thou accept the sacrifice of justice, oblations, and whole burnt-offerings."—*Psalm* 50.

The parts of the Mass which I have hitherto explained, have varied, been lengthened, or shortened; in fine, have been changed at different times and places. Though most holy prayers and exercises as you have seen, yet they form no essential part of the Sacrifice, being only immediate preparations for it. We cannot say the same of the part I am now going to explain; for we are now come into the very *action* of the Sacrifice, as this prayer is sometimes called. At other times it is called the Canon, which word signifies a Rule; because these particular prayers have always been more fixed, regulated, and determined by rule, than what have gone before. They are very ancient, and though, perhaps, not particularly inspired, may very well be supposed to have been formed by the Church in her earliest state, under the general guidance of the Almighty.—For they are models of the most solid devotion, containing the most sublime ideas, expressed in the fewest and most simple words. These prayers are always said in complete silence by the Priest, because, being about to offer the adorable Sacrifice, he turns his thoughts to the Almighty alone, forgets all other objects, and neither turns to the people, nor invites them any more to unite with him in fervour. He has retired, as it were,

into the inward sanctuary, to converse with God alone, where he continues in silent worship until the Pater noster. Nor is it necessary that the people should hear every prayer he now says. It is sufficient for them to know, that he is now performing the most sublime part of his office; that he is offering sacrifice, without being acquainted with the exact terms in which he does it. If any one can enter into the meaning of these prayers, and repeat them with the Priest, it will be a great help to devotion. For those who cannot do this, an attention to these short instructions may be useful.

The Priest, lifting up his hands to heaven, and by that posture expressing whither the heart ought to be raised; then joining them, and bowing down his head in humble supplication, begins this prayer: "We humbly beseech thee, therefore, and pray, O most clement Father, that, through our Lord Jesus Christ, thy Son, thou wouldst accept and bless these gifts, these presents, these holy and unspotted sacrifices, which we offer to thee." If we consider the clemency of that Father only, whom we are addressing, or the value of that victim which is going to be offered, we cannot doubt but the Almighty would gladly accept it; but, if we consider our own unworthiness, we cannot too earnestly solicit his acceptance, and beg his blessing upon what we are going to offer. We call them gifts and presents, meaning the bread and wine, which are the gifts of the Almighty, conferred on man for his nourishment and support of life, and which we in return present to him in sacrifice. We call them, also, holy and unspotted sacrifices. For though they are yet only mere bread and wine, we anticipate what they are destined presently to become. When God has conferred his blessing on them, and by his omnipotent word changed them into the body and blood of his divine Son, they will at once become most holy and unspotted sacrifices. At the same time, the Priest makes the sign of the cross over the sacred elements, once as he pronounces each of these three words, to remind us, from the very beginning, that all the value of this sacrifice is derived entirely from that of the Cross. We then pray that the merits of this sacrifice may be applied to the holy Catholic Church, which we beg of God to direct, govern, and unite, throughout the whole world; to our Chief Pastor the Pope; to the Bishop of our diocese, to our temporal rulers—to all orthodox believers, and professors of the Catholic and Apostolic faith. See how extensive are the blessings we apply for, through this powerful sacrifice. First, for the whole Catholic Church, which is the most beautiful work of God; that he would grant her peace,

take her under his protection, inspire his own wisdom into her counsels, make her members partake of his sanctity, and preserve them all in that unity and harmony which forms the most interesting feature of her beauty. For this purpose, we pray for the chief Pastor of the Church, upon whose wisdom and good example the good government of the whole so much depends; for the same reason, our own particular Bishop has great claims upon our prayers, that he may administer well those charges with which he is entrusted for our benefit; and for the same reason, let me also add, that every congregation ought at this moment to pray for their own pastor, upon whose ministry they so much depend for the blessings of religion. We also pray for our temporal princes, if they be Catholics, that God would fill them with his own spirit, in edifying and defending his Church—and, if they be not, that he would convert their hearts, and make them value his eternal truths before all worldly greatness. In fine, we pray for all mankind, but particularly those whom God has united with us in the profession of the same holy faith. For though we ought to love and esteem every human creature, without exception, we both may and ought to have a particular regard for one another, because we are all fed at the same spiritual table, and all brought up together in the same household of faith.

To this general prayer for the whole church, we immediately add the particular one for our friends, called the Memento of the living, because at present we name only our living friends, another part of the Mass having been appropriated for the remembrance of the dead. To pray for one another is a general duty of all Christians. To some this duty is doubly urgent from motives of gratitude. Whenever any favour, spiritual or temporal, has been conferred, there arises an obligation of making a grateful return, by praying for our benefactors, especially if it be out of our power to make them any other recompence.—This is an interesting moment—an exercise of the most tender and affectionate nature, when, in the ardour of devotion, we commend to the divine protection the names of all those who are most dear to us. It is here the Priest first names those for whom he offers up the Mass, then all others for whom he is bound to pray by particular motives of justice or gratitude;—for his benefactors, for his spiritual children whose difficulties, temptations, or spiritual wants are particularly known to him. It is here we all pray for our relations; children for their parents; and all who receive temporal advantages from the bounty or charity of others, pray for those upon whose generosity they

subsist. And here let me remark, that the grateful prayer of a poor man is a rich and abundant recompence for such blessings. It is particularly pleasing to the Almighty, and happy is that man who is fortunate enough to enjoy it.

On this occasion, the Church has adopted the prayer of the good thief upon the cross. "Remember me," he said, "when thou comest to thy kingdom." So we now pray, Remember, O Lord, thy servants, men and women, whose faith is best known to thee; for whom we offer this sacrifice, or who offer it themselves to thee, the true and living God, for present safety, and the future salvation of their souls, &c. How interesting is such a prayer as this! What heart will not be moved to repeat it with feeling and with earnestness?—*Amen.*

ON THE COMMUNICANTES, &c.

"I will save it for my own sake, and for the sake of David my servant."—4 *Kings*, xix. 34.

THE Communion of Saints, by which the Church on earth is united to that in heaven, so as to form only one body, separated indeed at present by time and place, but designed for a perfect union in eternity, is one of the articles of our Creed, which exalts the dignity of man, fills him with hope, and cheers him up in the difficult passages of life. An article therefore, of so much consequence, is with great propriety introduced into the prayers of that sacrifice which forms the subject of their adoration as well as ours. Having finished our prayer for all the members of the church living on earth, we naturally lift up our minds to those members of the same church, who having completed the time of their probation, are now enjoying their reward in heaven. Having done what we can, by our own prayers, for the welfare of all the church on earth, we are anxious to secure their prayers also for the same purpose. This is the prayer we then say, "Communicating with, and venerating the memory of, the glorious and ever blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, of the twelve Apostles, of the Martyrs, and all thy saints, by whose merits and prayers grant we may be armed with the help of thy protection, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord." In these words you will observe three distinct objects; first, communicating with, that is, joining with

asserting our privilege and honour, as members equally with the Saints, of the true Church, of which Christ is the head. With them, therefore, we join in the common homage; we both offer to the Creator of all.—2dly, we venerate their memories.—St. Austin says, upon this subject, "It is a great honour to be named in the presence of our Lord, whilst we celebrate his death in this dreadful sacrifice." At this offering, each Saint has his peculiar commemoration: we honour the blessed martyrs, princes of our faith, conquerors of the world, and intercessors for it. We cherish their memories, also, that, having such examples before our eyes, we may be encouraged to imitate their virtues. 3dly, we beg their prayers: if the Jews, in the Old Testament, used frequently to pray that the Almighty would remember them, or turn away his anger from them, on account of Abraham, Isaac, David, &c. how much more may we remind him of the merits of his saints who have lived under the law of grace.? With what reason do we name her first, the most glorious Virgin, who is dearer to him than ever either Abraham or Isaac was! With what reason do we not name those blessed Apostles, whom he has as greatly exalted in heaven as his friends, because they laid down their lives for his faith! In this we imitate the Royal Psalmist, (cxlix) or the three children in the furnace, who, because they were incapable themselves of sufficiently proclaiming the boundless praises of God, invited all creatures, both in heaven and on earth, to join with them, and bless his holy name. For this same motive, we also call upon all the Saints, to attend at this awful moment of sacrifice which is at hand. We are told in the Apocalypse, that his Saints follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.

The Priest then holding his hands extended over the chalice, continues this devout prayer: "We beseech thee, O Lord, that having been pacified, thou wouldst accept this oblation of our service, and dispose our days in thy peace; and command us to be delivered from eternal damnation, and numbered among the flock of thy elect." Hitherto the Priest has recited the Canon with his hands lifted up to heaven; he now joins them, and spreads them over the bread and wine. This ceremony is borrowed from the Old Law. The Almighty commanded Aaron to put his hand on the head of the victim he was going to offer, and it should be acceptable. By it, is expressed the act of devoting or consecrating the animal to the purpose of a victim; praying that God would transfer our iniquities from us to the head of that victim, and accept its immolation in place of that death which we own ourselves

justly to have merited for our sins. In the same manner, we confidently ask the Almighty Father to look down upon his only Son, who is in the state of an expiring victim; and for his sake, and for his sufferings, transfer our sins away from us. In this prayer we call it an oblation of our service, because it is a service, a duty, an obligation to offer sacrifice to him. And we solicit three great favours, which, indeed, include every other which the heart of man can desire. First, that he would dispose our days in his peace; that he would let us pass our days in peace and harmony with one another; and above all, give us that interior peace of mind which arises from a good conscience, which he alone can give. Secondly, that he would deliver us from eternal damnation; and, as a prelude to that, that he would preserve us from mortal sin, which can alone expose us to damnation. Finally, that he would number us among the flock of his elect. This would form the completion of all our happiness, the object which we strive to obtain by all our prayers and exertions in the service of God. Happy are those blessed souls who shall live in such a manner now, that, when the true flock of Christ shall come to be separated from the goats, they shall find their place among the former on the right hand. We then continue this prayer, as connected with the one I have last explained: "Which oblation, we beseech thee, O Lord, vouchsafe to bless, approve, ratify, and accept, that it may be made for us the body and blood of thy beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ." This is the last prayer the Priest says before the consecration; and the nearer we approach to that moment, the more interesting our words become. This last prayer deserves that every word should be well considered. The words seem to have been chosen, with some additions, from the 12th chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans. We first pray that this oblation may be blessed, that is, that it may be raised from the mere elements of bread and wine, and, by the divine benediction, changed into a more noble substance, which is capable of conferring a blessing upon us; that it may be approved, not rejected, as all the sacrifices of old were, on account of their inefficacy, of which the Almighty said, "I have no pleasure in them;" and that he who offers it, as well as those for whom it is offered, may also be approved of; that it may be ratified, that is, accomplished, and made a pure and spotless offering; and that we also being approved of, may be fixed among the number of the

elect; that it may be reasonable, as St. Austin explains it, differing from all the sacrifices of beasts, which are irration-creatures, or, according to St. Paul's expression, a reasonable service, or a service every way conformable to reason; that it may be acceptable—acceptable it must be, when it becomes the body and blood of his well-beloved Son. May we, therefore, by his means, and covered with his merits, equally become acceptable in the divine presence. In fine, that we may include all these former expressions in one word, we say, may it be made for us the body and blood of thy beloved Son. See, dear Christian, [illegible] a most excellent and sublime prayer this is. Have y[illegible]ver sufficiently meditated on this before? And having said these words, full of hope and confidence, we immediately pronounce the words of consecration, which I must defer the explanation of till my next instruction.—*Amen.*

THE CONSECRATION OF THE HOST.

"Do this in remembrance of me."—*Luke* xxii. 19.

It has always been inculcated by the ancient Fathers, that the Church, in all her religious worship, has nothing to present to us, that can any way be compared with the wonderful presence of Christ in the blessed Sacrifice. Every office has some relation to it—every ceremony, almost, is a distant preparation towards celebrating or receiving it well. It is the principal object to which all the thoughts and desires of a true Christian here below are directed; it is the reward of his labours—the comfort of his exile—the nourishment of his piety—his support in his pilgrimage—his strength in dangers and afflictions—his only hope when he descends into the grave, because the surest pledge of a glorious resurrection and a happy immortality. It contains, also, the history of the greatest benefit ever conferred on man, that, upon which all his hopes are founded by representing our divine Redeemer dying for the salvation of the world. The bloody immolation was made upon the Cross; this oblation is renewed upon our altars, and will continue, to the end of time, the only sacrifice of the new law which has superseded every other in the old law, and can alone henceforward be acceptable to the Supreme Being.—

These are the terms by which we attempt to describe the value of this august victim. I have repeated them here in order to excite your attention to the words of consecration, by which the bread and wine are actually changed, and, in place of them, the body, blood, soul, and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, are really present upon our altars. In order to effect this wonderful change, the Priest, speaking of our blessed Saviour, says, "Who, the day before he suffered, took bread into his holy and venerable hands, and having lifted up his eyes to heaven, blessed it, broke it; and giving thanks to his Eternal Father, gave it to his disciples, saying, THIS IS MY BODY." These last are the words of Christ, spoken in his own person; they are the words of consecration, which, as soon as pronounced by the Priest, make the body of Christ really present. The previous ones are the history of what our Saviour did at the last supper, in the institution of this sacrifice. They are repeated here with great propriety, and are well calculated to fill us with becoming devotion, at the approaching presence of our Lord. The time is mentioned, the day before he suffered, when his mind and heart were overflowing with the tenderest feelings for his disciples, whom he was going to leave—the very last time he was to see them collected together in this world—the very night he was to be betrayed, and led bound to the sacrifice—he took bread into his holy and venerable hands—well may they be called holy and venerable hands, which not only are holy in themselves, but confer holiness and sanctity upon every thing else they touch. But what does he take into his hands? It is bread—the simple and most common element of bread; thus choosing the humblest things in nature, to work upon them his most stupendous miracles: and yet it is not without reason that bread is made choice of. That is the essential requisite and support of our natural life; and is, therefore, an excellent representation of those graces that are conferred in this sacrament, which are the food and support of the soul, without which it could not live. "Unless you eat this body and drink this blood, you shall not live for ever." Having lifted up his eyes to heaven—This is a circumstance our Saviour is recorded frequently to have done in prayer, and before he wrought any great miracle. Whilst we, poor sinners, are on all occasions forced to cast down our eyes and heads, whenever we think of our great unworthiness, we may admire the sanctity of that pure Being who alone has a right to lift up his eyes to heaven, his own native country; nor is even constrained to bow down that head upon which the guilt of sin never rested. Giving thanks to the

Eternal Father, for his infinite goodness, in having sent Him, his beloved Son, to man, and given him the power to institute for us so sublime a mystery, he blessed the bread, that is, he prayed that the divine benediction might descend upon it, and upon all those who were to partake of it—might consecrate it, and change it into the new substance which it was about to become; He then broke it, and gave it to each of his disciples, saying, Take and eat of this, for this is my body. I shall not, on the present occasion, make use of any arguments to prove that these words are to be understood literally, or that what Christ said did actually take place. Controversy would be misplaced, on an occasion where our minds ought to be occupied with nothing but the thoughts of adoration. Besides, I am now speaking to believers, who will all unanimously exclaim with St. Cyril, "What, when Christ says it is so, will any one be bold enough to say it is not so? Shall we even presume to doubt, when he so solemnly declares that this is his body!"

The moment, therefore, the Priest has pronounced these words, he kneels down to adore his divine Redeemer, whom he at that moment holds in his hands, concealed under the humble appearance of bread. He then elevates, that is, lifts up the sacred Host in both hands, that the people may also see and adore; he then lays it upon the altar, and kneels again, and bows his head in a second act of adoration. During this ceremony, the server tinkles a little bell, to give notice to such as may be at too great a distance to see, as well to rouse the attention of such as may be indolent or inattentive. In the meantime, the people also bow down their heads, being already upon their knees,—strike their breasts, and either occupy their silent thoughts in most fervent acts of adoration, or those who are less able to form their own prayers, recite the forms which have been composed to assist them, and thus ends the first part of the Elevation, namely, that of the Host.

It is remarkable that this act of worship, which is the most solemn of the whole Mass, is performed in silence. The Church has prescribed no words at all, by which the Priest is to express his adoration. The reason is, because each individual can on so interesting a moment form the acts which suit himself best—or rather, because the most perfect way of all is to adore in perfect silence, when every power of the body and soul are absorbed and lost in the contemplation of the God, who is present. You cannot, dear Christians, be at a loss to know how you are to occupy yourselves at this time. In some of your prayer books, you have written forms of prayer for this

occasion; in others they are omitted, that the mind may be at greater liberty to indulge its own musings. Choose then, what you find by experience is most conducive to devotion. The wise men, says St. Chrysotom, came a long journey to adore this body with fear and trembling. Let us who are citizens of heaven, imitate these barbarians. For seeing only the stable and the manger, without having seen any of those great things which we have witnessed, they still came and adored with the greatest reverence. You see that same body, not in a manger, but upon the altar, not carried in his mother's arms, but elevated in the Priest's hands, and the Holy Ghost poured most abundantly on the sacrifice.—Let us therefore be roused, and tremble, and bring with us more devotion to the Altar, than these eastern kings did to the manger, where they adored their new born Saviour.—*Amen.*

ON THE ELEVATION OF THE CHALICE.

"This is the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you."—*Exod.* xxiv. 8.

As soon as the Elevation of the Host is finished, the Priest proceeds to the consecration of the Chalice, which is effected by almost the same words, and accompanied by the same ceremonies as I explained in my last instruction, and may, therefore, not be so much dwelt upon in this. These are the words: "In like manner, after he had supped, taking also this excellent chalice into his holy and venerable hands, giving thanks, he blessed it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take and drink ye all of this.' This historical account of what our Saviour did at his last supper, requires no further explanation. The Priest then pronounces, as before, the words of consecration, whilst he holds the chalice in his hands, and bows down his head out of respect. "For this is the chalice of my blood, of the new and eternal testament, a mystery of faith which shall be shed for you and for many unto the remission of sins." By virtue of these words, the wine is changed into the blood of Christ. It is called the blood of the New Testament. These are our Saviour's own words, and, in order to understand them, we must recollect that the word testament means a covenant,

an agreement, and in this place it means the establishment of a religion, by which the Almighty agrees, on his part, to give eternal life to those who comply with the conditions he establishes. Thus we speak of the Old Testament, or covenant, which God made with the Jews, and the New Testament, which he made with Christians. The former passed away—this is to be an *eternal* one. St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, proves that their's was to last only for a time, and to be succeeded by a better ministry and a more noble covenant. Now, according to law, all things are cleansed with blood, that is, by sacrifice; and without blood there is no remission of sins. It is with great reason, therefore, that the blood of Christ, which was shed upon the Cross for the remission of sin, should be called the eternal sacrifice, or the blood of the New Testament.—It is also styled a Mystery of Faith. Whence these two words were taken, or by whom they were inserted in the Liturgy, does not appear. They are not the words of Christ, nor do they occur in any of the Evangelists, as if our Saviour had used them at his last supper. Nevertheless, he may have used them, and it is even probable that he did. One thing is certain, that these words are most ancient, and found in all the liturgies;—whence it cannot be attributed to any but the Apostles, who, most likely, inserted nothing in this form but what they heard from our Saviour's mouth. The meaning is evident; for this sacrifice is indeed a mystery, the greatest of all mysteries; for never is our faith so much exercised, nor our reason so much required to submit itself and all our senses to the obedience of faith, as in this mystery. The Apostles, therefore, with great reason, style this pre-eminence, the Mystery of Faith. Immediately after these words follows the Elevation of the Chalice, in the same manner, and for the same reasons, as the Elevation of the Host.

It may, perhaps, occur to some one here to ask, why is this sacrifice offered under the separate forms of bread and wine?—Since faith teaches us that each single form contains within itself both the body and blood, soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, whole and entire, what need of both? Are we not told, that when we receive under either kind, we receive both body and blood? These questions are useful, because the answer to them will afford you useful instruction, and explain to you the difference between a sacrament and the sacrifice.—In the former, our object is to receive Christ into our breasts and unite him to our souls. If, therefore, we receive one kind, we accomplish this object as effectually as if we received both.

We cannot receive more under both, than we do in each separately. In a sacrifice it is quite different. What is a sacrifice, but to exhibit a victim slain? Now, if we did not consecrate the two species separately, we should not have in the Mass any representation of Christ being slain for us. But, by doing so, we have a most accurate representation of a sacrifice, the body of Christ by itself, and the blood represented as much separated from the body as it was when it actually flowed from his sacred side upon the cross. Hence will you see there is no contradiction, no impropriety in communicating under one kind in the sacrament, and yet being under the absolute necessity of retaining both in the sacrifice. Hence you will always see the accomplishment of that prophecy, that Christ was a Priest according to the order of Melchisedec. For as the latter offered up bread and wine, as his sacrifice to the Most High God, so Christ fulfilled these figures, by offering up his own body and blood, under the same appearances of bread and wine.

The Priest concludes the Elevation by repeating these words of our Saviour—"Do this in remembrance of me." From these words we derive our authority, and claim, as Priests of the new and eternal covenant, our right to enter into the Holy of Holies, and officiate at the altar of our Lord, who commands us to do so. St Cyprian explains these words in this manner:

"If Jesus Christ, our High Priest, did first offer himself a sacrifice to his Father, and command the same to be done in remembrance of him, surely the Priest, who holds the place of Christ, imitates what Christ did, and offers in the church a true and complete sacrifice to God." The same words, dear Christians, you may consider as containing most excellent instruction addressed to yourselves. Do this in remembrance of your Saviour. As often as you are present at this holy sacrifice, be mindful of your Saviour—remember his great goodness, which induced him to leave you, in this sacrifice, such a pledge of his infinite love; renew the memory of his cruel death and passion, which alone gives merit to this sacrifice, and to which you are indebted for the remission of sins, or the hopes of salvation.—When, therefore, you see the Priest elevating the sacred symbols, call all these things to your memory; think that you are actually present at the renewal of your Saviour's passion, or that you see him elevated upon the cross, as he was upon Mount Calvary—think that you see the water and blood issuing from his side, as when it was pierced by the cruel lance.—Let the memory of all these things excite in you a most tender and affectionate devotion—express this by the strongest

sentiments of gratitude, love, and affection. Say in these, or similar words which will occur to you—"Hail, O most precious blood! flowing from the side of my Lord! Wash away the foul stains of my life past—purify me more and more; cleanse, sanctify, and preserve my soul, which thou hast redeemed by this precious blood, and prepare me by it, for the enjoyment of thy blessed company in eternal bliss."—*Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE ELEVATION.

"The blood of Christ, who offered himself unspotted unto God, cleanses our conscience from dead works."—*Heb.* ix. 14.

All the prayers which precede the Elevation are preparations for the sacrifice; all that follow it must be explained as applications of its virtues to our wants. In every sacrifice there must be an offering. We have already had in the Mass an offertory, in which we presented to the Almighty the simple elements of bread and wine, to receive his blessing. That blessing having now been received, and the consecration effected, we have an offering worthy of himself, which we present to the Divine Majesty in these words—"Wherefore, we thy servants and thy holy people, being mindful of the blessed passion, as well as of the resurrection from the dead, and the glorious ascension into heaven of our Lord Jesus Christ, offer to thy most excellent Majesty of thy own gifts, conferred upon us, a pure host, a holy host, an unspotted host, the holy bread of eternal life, and the chalice of everlasting salvation." This prayer, you will observe, is in exact conformity with our Saviour's command, when he bade us to do it in commemoration of him. We, therefore, are mindful of his passion, his resurrection, and ascension into heaven. Having our hearts filled with gratitude, arising out of the memory of these three great mysteries, we style ourselves the servants of Almighty God, and a holy people. By the former title of servants, we are reminded of our humble and dependant state; by the latter, we call to mind our dignity, by which Christ has chosen us for himself, to become a royal priesthood and a sanctified flock. By both we learn, that the Priest and people form but one body, and are united in heart and mind for one great object, namely, offering to the Divine Majesty a pure, holy, and spotless victim. In the same spirit of humility, we acknowledge at the same time

that even what we do offer are his own gifts, conferred upon us. Having nothing of our own worthy his acceptance, it was necessary that he should provide for us even the sacrifice we offer to himself. It is with propriety called the bread of eternal life, and the cup of everlasting salvation, because our Saviour has promised, that he who eats this bread shall live for ever. The same blessing is, of course, annexed to the worthy participation of the chalice. In repeating these words, the Priest makes frequent signs of the cross over the host and chalice, not to bless them, as formerly, because they are already consecrated, and, so far from wanting a blessing, they are capable of conferring a blessing upon every thing else. But the object of them is, to remind us of the passion of our Saviour, which was effected on the cross, and which ought never to be out of our minds, during the whole of the Mass. If you will bear this explanation in mind, it will not be necessary that I should refer any more to the sign of the cross, which occurs so frequently in the different parts of the Mass. Let us here, once for all, recollect, that as all the virtue of this sacrifice, and of every sacrament, springs from the cross, so every sign of it reminds us of the origin of all our blessings. "The daily meditations of a Christian," says St. Bernard, "ought to be the constant remembrance of our Lord's passion."

In continuation of this prayer, the Priest then proceeds:—"Upon which, we beseech thee, Omnipotent God, to look down with a propitious and serene countenance, and accept them as thou wast pleased to accept the offerings of thy righteous servant Abel, the sacrifice of our father Abraham, and that which thy High Priest Melchisedec offered to thee, a holy sacrifice, and a spotless victim." These most beautiful and expressive words require no explanation. I shall only observe,—that when we beseech the Almighty to look down upon our offering with a propitious countenance, the prayer is referred entirely to ourselves—that he would look down upon us with a mild countenance. The victim, itself, we know, he always beholds us with complacency, but our offering it may not be so acceptable to him. To remove this obstacle is the object of this prayer; and we beg that he would extend that kindness to us, which he formerly did to his servants in the old law, and accept from our hands a more noble gift than ever they had to offer. We call their's, indeed, a holy sacrifice and a spotless victim, and so they were, if they be considered figures of that victim which alone contains the plenitude of sanctity within himself. The mention of these three Patriarchs is also intro-

duced with the greatest propriety, to remind us of the dispositions which rendered their offerings acceptable. Abel offered the first fruits of his flock, and he is called the Just, on account of his upright intentions; he is called the Child, for his simplicity and innocence. Abraham was the father of the faithful, and will ever be celebrated for his great faith, when, in obedience to the command of God, he prepared to slay his only son, and still, as St. Paul expresses it, hoped against all hope, that he should be the father of a great nation. Melchisedec is the holy Priest of the Most High, and always considered as the most perfect representative of Christ, because he blessed bread and wine, whence the latter did not disdain to have his Priesthood called "according to the order of Melchisedec." In calling, therefore, to our minds, these three great characters at so sacred a time, let us cherish their virtues, and strive to adopt into our lives some share of their excellencies. Let us bring with us to the sacrifice, the purity of intention which made Abel upright, the innocence and simplicity of the child, which made his sacrifice agreeable. Let us bring with us the strong faith of Abraham, which was staggered by no impossibilities; his obedience, which surpassed credibility; and his resolution, which spared not his only son. With Melchisedec, let us bring that sanctity which consists in the possession of every virtue, in particular, that of charity and *peace*, *(Salem)* in the train of which the other virtues generally follow. With Abel, let us serve God from our infancy, and offer him the first fruits of our affections, our desires, and our works. With Abraham, let us sacrifice every tie, every affection, every thing most dear to us, friendship, relations, children, rather than disobey one commandment of God; however difficult the precept, let us immediately set to work in complying with it. With Melchisedec, let us offer up the true bread and wine, which can impart to our souls everlasting life. And if we have not these virtues within ourselves, let us beg of the Almighty Father to look down upon the face of his Christ, who possesses all the perfections of Abel, Abraham, and Melchisedec, in a super-eminent degree; who has made himself a Priest and a Victim, in order to propitiate his eternal Father, and impart all these blessings to us, the practice of which will conduct us to everlasting life. May our Divine Redeemer, through his sacred passion and death, grant us these blessings.—*Amen.*

TE SUPPLICES EXORAMUS.

"The prayers of the Saints ascend from the hand of the Angel before God."—*Apoc.* viii. 4.

The prayer which I have reserved for this day's instruction, though short, is one of the most important in the Mass. It is full of elevated ideas, and contains mysteries which it will be difficult to explain. The attitude of the Priest is also changed when he comes to this part. Hitherto he has recited all the prayers of the Canon in an erect posture, with his hands lifted up to heaven. But at these words he joins his hands before his breast, and bows down to the lowest degree that the altar will admit. In this posture of prostrate humility, he recites the prayers, till, towards the conclusion, he kisses the altar, and resumes his former upright posture. These august ceremonies alone might seem to shew you the extreme importance of this prayer. The words of it correspond to the ceremonies, and are these—"We most humbly beseech thee, Almighty God, command these things to be carried, by the hand of thy holy Angel, to thy altar on high, into the presence of thy divine Majesty; that as many as partaking of this altar, shall receive the most sacred body and blood of thy Son—may be filled with all heavenly grace and blessings." The most natural, and most simple meaning of these words, would appear to be this—Overpowered with a sense of our unworthiness, we beg, with the greatest humility, and, at the same time, earnestness, that the Almighty would command his holy angels to come to our assistance, attend at our sacrifice, and carry our prayers which are offered up at this altar, and present them upon the high altar of heaven. This last is, of course, a figurative expression, the meaning of which cannot be mistaken. Not that there is any real altar in heaven, but that the holy angels would carry our offerings and present them to the Divine Majesty. How beautiful and sublime are these ideas! What a field of meditation does it lay open to the mind of a pious Christian! How encouraging to the infirmity of poor man, to think that he has these good angels for his friends—that the Almighty commands these invisible spirits to assist us at the awful time of sacrifice, and collect our inanimate prayers, that they may not be lost! In confirmation of this meaning we may refer to many passa-

ges of scripture. In the passage out of the Apocalypse, which I have prefixed to this instruction, St. John says that a golden censer was put into the angel's hand, and he offered up much incense, which were the prayers of the saints. From these words, stripped of their figurative dress, it is evident, that the occupation of some of the angels is to present the prayers of the faithful to God. Of this we have frequent instances mentioned in the Old Testament. When Abraham, in compliance with the severe command, had raised the weapon to slay his son, the angel interposed, and stopped his hand. An angel instructed Gideon to offer sacrifice, and ascended to heaven with the flame thereof. (Judges, ch. vi. and xiii.) An angel advised the father of Sampson to offer sacrifice, and remained with him till the Holocaust was completed. When the good old Zecharias was ministering in the temple, according to his turn, and was offering incense upon the altar, there appeared an angel to him, to assure him that his prayer was heard. If, then, the ministry of angels be so evident in the old law, shall we hesitate to believe them equally present at the immolation of the Lamb, which they follow, wheresoever he be? If they appear visibly to these Patriarchs, as related in the scriptures, shall we find any difficulty in believing many of the Saints, who say they have seen, immediately after the words of consecration, legions of angels descend to adore their Lord, who is present on our altars?—Shall it not, at least, have the effect of animating our fervour, and redoubling our devotion, to know that we are still surrounded by them, though invisible, and are most certainly praying in their company.

These reflections might be a sufficient explanation of the foregoing words, if there were not another difficulty, which I do not like to pass unnoticed, because to dwell upon it will furnish you with more pious sentiments upon this subject. You have, no doubt, observed, that I have explained the words as applied to all or many angels; and yet, in the Missal the singular number is used, as referring only to one—*by the hand of thy holy angel.* What angel then is here meant? Is it any particular one? In answer to this question, I shall mention the opinions of some of the Fathers, and let each one choose that which suits his devotion best, for they are all good. There are some who think that one particular angel is always deputed by Almighty God, to assist the Priest whenever he says Mass, and that this is the angel alluded to; while others are of opinion that it means the Priest's own angel guardian, whose office of watching over him can never be exercised with greater profit than at

such a time. There is, indeed, a great deal of probability in this interpretation, and it is nearly allied to another, which believes, that in the same manner as every kingdom is supposed to have its guardian angel as a protector, so every congregation is favoured with the same assistance, to guard their interests. And this is the holy angel who carries the prayers of the whole congregation to the throne of God. Finally, there are many who think it refers to St. Michael, who is always considered as a general patron, leader, or guardian, that presides over the whole Christian Church. St. Jerome gives this last interpretation, and uses these express words, "Michael the archangel presides over the prayers and oblations of the faithful.

I must also add, that there are some who think the honour of presenting our sacrifice, even upon the altar of God, too great for the ministry of angels; and therefore, that when the church makes use of this expression, *thy angels*, she means Jesus Christ himself. Nor is there any impropriety whatever in understanding it this way. We know that "Angel of great counsel" is one of the titles belonging to our blessed Saviour. We know that he is both Priest and Victim, offering himself for our ransom; we know that, now he is ascended into heaven, he is perpetually interceding for us in the character of man.—That he, therefore, in his human nature, should be represented as offering this sacrifice upon the high altar of heaven, and thus interceding for us, is an idea of great comfort and consolation, to think we have such a mediator in heaven. Thus, dear Christians, you observe that, whichever way it be explained, it is a prayer of the most beautiful meaning, and most important signification. And what is it that we ask by the hand of the holy angel? That all who, either in sincere desire or reality, partake of this altar, may be filled with every grace and blessing of heaven. What can the heart of man desire more, than every blessing which God can give? Let me then intreat you to be present at this sacrifice; and repeat this prayer in so fervent a manner, that you may be worthy to partake of these graces both now and for ever.—*Amen.*

MEMENTO OF THE DEAD.

"HAVE pity on me, have pity on me, you, at least, my friends, for the hand of the Lord hath touched me."—*Job* xix. 21.

FROM the very beginning of the Church, it was always the custom to pray for the dead. It is a pious and most affection-

ate practice. St. Austin says, "It is not to be doubted that the souls of the dead are relieved by the piety of their living friends, when the sacrifice of our Mediator is offered, or alms are made in the church for them. There are some who live so well as not to want these sacrifices; and there are others so bad that they profit them nothing. Whatever the living do for the latter, it avails them nothing. It is only, therefore, for the middle sort between these two, that prayer is profitable. And for these it has the effect that God treats them with more mercy than their sins would otherwise deserve." In compliance with this doctrine, the Church never says a Mass but she remembers her departed friends and members in these words—"Be mindful, O Lord, of thy servants, men and women, who are gone before us in the sign of faith, and have rested in the sleep of peace." These words are very pretty. We beg of God to remember in his kindness all who are dead, which is beautifully expressed by the words, "who are gone before us." Whither are they gone? Not into everlasting darkness; they are not lost—nor yet into their eternal rest; they are not innocent. But they are reserved in God's holy keeping, who will chastise them in due measure, according to their defects. They are gone before us—then we shall follow after them; we are separated only for a while, and then we shall want that help which they now ask from us. Observe, also, we pray for those only who have kept the sign of faith, and died in the sleep of peace; that is, who being baptized, have died in the true faith, and in the peace of God, that is, in a state of grace. We, therefore, exclude from our prayers all who evidently die in a state of mortal sin; such, for instance, who, having an opportunity, refuse to receive the rites of the Church, and die out of her communion. We think it useless to pray for such. Who would offer up a mass for Judas? As for those who die out of the faith of the Catholic Church, there is no law to exclude our charity towards them. We may pray for them *privately*, especially if they have led a good life, and there be ground to hope that their error was not wilful. Still the Church forbids their names to be mentioned in the public Mass, to shew her detestation of the guilt of heresy and disobedience. Having said these words, the Priest, joining his hands before his breast, prays a few moments for them, and mentions any names of persons for whom he particularly wishes to pray, or offer up the Mass; then extends his hands again, and concludes his prayer in these words—"To these, O Lord, and to all that rest in Christ, grant, we beseech thee, a place of refreshment, light,

and peace." Thus we also beautifully express the petitions we make in their behalf. That the Almighty would grant them a place of refreshment, for they are yet in pain and suffering—a place of light, and rescue them from the darkness in which they are involved; and a place of peace where they shall have no more trouble, no more pain or sorrow, but be perfectly and eternally happy in the enjoyment of God.

If any motives be wanting to induce us to say this prayer with great earnestness, let us for a moment recollect for whom it is offered. It is for all the faithful departed. Our charity ought to be universal, and extended to all, without exception. They are all united to us by being members of the same church. They have received the same baptism, (been members of the same church) professed the same faith, received the same sacraments, and frequently, when present at this sacrifice, have they repeated this same prayer for those who have gone before them. Among them we shall find many still more closely united to us forefathers, parents, brothers, or children, who, reversing the order of nature, have entered into another world, before those who brought them into this. We shall find our pastors, who in our infancy, taught us to adore God, and first instructed our simplicity in the knowledge of his truths, or, in our manhood, guarded us from the danger of sin, directed us in the path of virtue, and interested themselves much in the care of our souls. Shall we think of their labours for our sakes, and not endeavour to repay it by being mindful of them at the commemoration of the dead, and begging God to treat mercifully those faults, which, perhaps, we may have been the occasion of their committing? Among these we shall find, also, friends and companions, who once were familiar with us, and joined us in all the occupations of life, but now are taken away before us—who, perhaps, in their day, have scandalised us in their frailty, yet still retained a true love of God, and have edified us again by the sincerity of their repentances. Many a time have they given us good advice, and often has their virtue made us blush for ourselves, and wish to imitate their example. From many have we received help, succour, and kind assistance in all our wants and necessities, and now, in their day of distress, they claim your help in return. "Have pity on us!" they cry out, "have pity on us, you, at least, our friends, for the hand of the Lord is heavy upon us." What Christian, when he reflects upon these interesting subjects, does not immediately feel his heart burn within him? All his tender sensibilities are awakened—and if he be a man, he will exclaim, Good God! shall I forget

those who were once so dear to me? Shall I not fly to their assistance? Shall I not help them where I can? O merciful and pious Jesus! grant them eternal rest, and let perpetual light shine upon them.

We are told, that to give a cup of cold water only to a disciple, shall not lose its reward. Shall, then, that charity which takes relief to the afflicted souls in purgatory, and carries them the cup of water which will quench the thirst of those flames in which they are tormented, shall such charity pass unrewarded? Most assuredly it will not. One reward of this charity undoubtedly will be, that Almighty God will raise up friends to pray for us after our death, in proportion as we have prayed for others. Another reward will be, the gratitude of those souls themselves who have been delivered by our means. Is it possible that they should not feel greatly interested in the welfare of those by whose prayers the day of their deliverance has been hastened, and the time of their suffering shortened? If gratitude be a virtue which prevails in heaven, as it undoubtedly does in the most perfect degree, they will repay most abundantly, by their intercession, whatever kindness you shall have conferred upon them by your prayers. So that to pray for them is an eminent act of charity to yourself likewise. O! how beautiful is this connection of all the members of the Church, by which we help and assist one another, and all for this purpose of being eternally united together at last. May we each be diligent in contributing our share towards this end.—*Amen.*

NOBIS QUOQUE PECCATORIBUS.

"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."—1 Ep. *John* i. 8.

HAVING finished our prayer for the dead, who, though sinners, are yet eternally fixed in the grace of God, which they can never lose—we again turn our thoughts upon ourselves, who are sinners of a very different description; not knowing whether we possess the favour of God, and if we do, uncertain whether we shall persevere to the end in that favour. At this part the Priest elevates his voice a little, that he may be the better heard in this humble acknowledgement, and striking his breast in imitation of the publican, he says, "To us sinners, also, thy servants, trusting in the multitude of thy mercies, vouchsafe to grant some part and fellowship with thy holy apostles

and martyrs—and with all thy saints, into whose company we beseech thee to admit us, not in consideration of our merit, but of thy own gratuitous pardon, through Jesus Christ our Lord." This prayer is most beautiful. We begin with the humble acknowledgement of our sins. The Priest does not separate his cause from that of the people, but equally with them pronounces himself a sinner, In this he is very different from the proud Pharisee, who thanked God that he was not like the rest of mankind, neither unjust, nor an extortioner, nor an adulterer. Though this mention of our just title of sinners be calculated to deject us; we are not on that account too much cast down. We still presume to call ourselves the servants of God—unprofitable servants indeed—but wishing to be better, and hoping daily to improve, till added to all his numerous mercies, the Lord shall have conferred that greatest of all eternal happiness.

Shall we hesitate to pronounce with confidence that consoling title, "servants of God," when we reflect on the noble destiny to which he has called us? By nature we are sinners; by grace we are called to be not only the servants, but even the children of God, heirs of heaven, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ and all his saints. However low the consideration of our own demerits may have sunk us, these reflections immediately elevate our spirits, and make us aspire to the realms above. Thither we immediately raise our minds and send forth the most ardent wishes that the Almighty would grant us some part and fellowship with those holy apostles and martyrs who are already reigning there—that he would admit us into their blessed company—to which great honour we have no pretensions of our own merit—but must rely for it entirely on the great bounty of Him who, when he bestows eternal glory, only crowns in us his own works. Thus do you observe, how nicely in this prayer are blended the workings of fear and hope—how confidence and dejection may be united, that neither shall predominate, but both form that perfect christian humility which sees nothing in itself but infirmity—derives nothing from itself, attributes nothing to itself, but gives the merit and the glory of all to God. If you be disposed to meditate upon this prayer, the most abundant motives of virtue will suggest themselves, when you think of the elevated dignity to which you are called. If you be destined to keep high company in this world, do you not endeavour to cultivate yourselves accordingly, that you may not appear with any thing in your manners or behaviour unbecoming the rank you aspire to? But what are all the distinctions of high and low in this life, compared to the society of the saints in

heaven, and the enjoyment of the company of God himself? Let then your constant employment be to cultivate yourselves for this dignified company. Banish from you every degrading action, every unbecoming sentiment, every thought which would render you unfit to appear in that society, into which none will ever be admitted but such as possess true honour, which, in the sight of God, is never separated from true virtue. St Austin pursuing this subject in his thoughts, breaks out into the following exclamation: "O, happy pleasure and pleasant happiness, to see the saints and to be with them; to mix among the angels, to behold the Patriarchs, to converse with the apostles, to meet again our parents, friends, or children! These are glorious things—but it is more glorious yet to see and enjoy the face of God."

In continuation of this prayer, the Priest having mentioned Jesus Christ, immediately proceeds: "By whom, O Lord, thou dost always create, sanctify, quicken, and bless, and grant to us all these good things. By him and with him, and in him, to thee, O God, the Father Almighty, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, world without end, for ever and ever, Amen." In the first part of these words, are enumerated some of the divine perfections of our Redeemer, first as a Creator, for all things were made by him, and without him nothing was made: secondly, he sanctifies—Christ, says St. Paul, is made our sanctification and redemption. He quickens or gives life, as in Adam we were all dead, so in Christ we are all made alive again, for he is the way and the life, without which no man can come to the Father—he blesses, because all blessings come to us through Christ. "In him," says St Paul, "hath God blessed us with all spiritual benedictions." And if it was formerly said, all nations were blessed in Abraham, how much more are they so in Christ? Well, is it therefore added in the last place, "it is he that gives us all these good things?" These are all general titles of Jesus Christ, due to him for the many good things he has done for us, which are all renewed and made profitable to us in this sacrifice. But these words are equally applicable to the sacrifice itself. It is Christ who creates, blesses, gives life to, sanctifies, and grants to us this very sacrifice, which we are through his bounty enabled to offer to the eternal Father. For this reason therefore we proclaim him in union with the Father and the Holy Ghost, to be worthy of all honour and glory. Nay, it is only *by him*, that is, by his means, we are enabled to give the blessed Trinity any honour or glory; it is *with him*—for what have we to offer to God,

except him? If we made a sacrifice of all we possess, of our very selves, it would be of no value, except united with Jesus Christ, and the sacrifice which he made of himself.—In fine, it is *in him* because *in him* alone are concentrated all the merits which make our offerings agreeable to God. In Christ, that is, in his virtue and name, we presume to offer honour and glory to God, being sure that they will be acceptable when offered in that holy name. Let us, then, dear Christians, frequently repeat with great affection this short act of praise. Let us frequently exclaim, to the father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory given, through Jesus Christ, for ever and ever.—*Amen.* Let us not confine the repetition of this devout act merely to the time of the Mass, but let us frequently in the day have it in our minds, and dwell upon it in our thoughts. Thus shall we, as much as depends upon us, be conferring on God the honour which belongs to him, and be preparing ourselves for performing worthily that same tribute, which we hope will be our everlasting occupation in heaven. Happy those souls who shall so bless and praise Almighty God in this life, as to be found worthy to receive his praise and blessing in the eternal life which is to succeed, when we have walked over this short vale of tears.—*Amen.*

THE PATER NOSTER.

"Teach us how to pray."—*Luke* xi. 1.

The prayers last explained finish the Canon, and the Priest now, for the first time, breaks the silence which he has observed since the Preface, by saying "Oremus," "Let us pray."—You may, perhaps, have observed, that the Priest begins every other part of the Mass by this invitation to the people to join with him in prayer, but neither in the beginning, nor in any other part of the Canon, does he make use of it. The reason is, because at that time, as I have observed to you before, he is supposed to have entered into the Holy of Holies, and to be engaged in earnest prayer *alone*, separated, as it were, for a time, from the people; but now returning again to them, his first words are "Let us pray;" and still continuing, with a loud voice, that all may hear and join with him, he says, "Being instructed, by thy saving commands, and following thy divine directions, we presume to say, 'Our Father, who art in heaven,

&c.'" These words are a kind of preface to the Pater Noster as if we had said, "Before we repeat that excellent prayer, O Lord, which thou hast taught us, we must acknowledge our unworthiness; nor should we ever dare to call thee by so familiar a name as Father, had we not been encouraged so to do by thy commands. In doing so we only follow thy directions. In the Mass, which contains every perfect form of adoration, the Lord's Prayer was sure to be introduced in some part. It is put here as the first prayer towards a preparation for communion, to which we are now nearly approaching. It is repeated aloud, that all may join. And as every body knows this short but most comprehensive prayer, no one can be excused if he has not both attention and devotion during its recital. It is not necessary that I should in this place explain to you the meaning of each petition, because it is familiar to you from your childhood, and they are so short, so simple, and so distinct, that the most ignorant cannot mistake their literal meaning, and the most learned may always find fresh subject of meditation in every word. The only danger is, lest too great a familiarity with this holy prayer should make you pass over it too hastily, without sufficient attention to its meaning. There is one petition which is particularly applicable to the present occasion.—I have told you we are already preparing for the Communion. When, therefore, you say, "Give us this day our daily bread," it cannot fail to strike you forcibly that it refers to the bread of angels, which is then upon the altar, which ought to be the daily spiritual food, support, and nourishment of Christians—the true bread of life, which descends from heaven, which is quite as necessary for the support of our souls in a spiritual life, as our daily bread is for the nourishment of our bodies. The last petition is, "Deliver us from evil," which is a request of so much importance, that the Priest dwells upon that alone, and immediately continues it in silence in these words: "Deliver us, O Lord, from all evils, past present, and to come; and, through the intercession of the blessed Virgin, and all thy Saints, mercifully grant us peace in our days, that, assisted by the help of thy mercy, we may be free from all sin, and secure from all trouble, through Jesus Christ our Lord." I do not know that I can add any explanation to a prayer which is so plain as to need none. The Almighty will not be displeased that we renew more earnestly in these words, our wish to be delivered from evil. But what are these evils? Past, present, and to come. The past can mean nothing but sins which are yet unatoned for, or the punishments due to them; for all kind of

sufferings that are past, are no longer evils now. The present evils are the dangers to which we are still subject—the difficulties against which we are still struggling in our way to heaven. These are principally our traiterous passions, which make dreadful havoc in our breasts, and involve us in frequent hostility with Almighty God. The future evils are all those trials and dangers we have yet to go through, before we arrive securely at the kingdom of God; but, above all, mortal sin, and those eternal future evils which are the punishment of mortal sin, where the rigour of God's severity will never admit of mitigation, change, or end. How just, then, considering the dangers in which we are involved, and the evils that still threaten us, to offer up incessant prayers to be delivered from them all. If we be at all sensible of the nature of these evils, we shall not want devotion in repeating this prayer—"May all the saints," we also add, "who have escaped these evils, use the kind office of intercession, to procure us the same blessing." Grant us, also, peace in our days—peace with Almighty God, by not going to war with him or breaking any of his ordinances—peace with every neighbour, which is produced by that heavenly charity which wishes another as well as ourselves—and peace within our own breasts, having nothing within us to reproach our minds or disturb our rest. May we be free from sin, for sin alone is the disturber of our repose; and the Lord has declared there never can be any peace for a sinner. May we, in fine, pass our days secure from all disturbance—secure from those agitations which are perpetually rising up in a distracted conscience—agitations of alarm and excessive fear, which are but too natural, when we look upon our sins and infirmities—disturbances from abroad, which are caused by the troubles and wars of nations—disturbances at home, when families are divided, and those who ought to be each other's support, are armed against themselves. May we pass the few days of our mortal pilgrimage secure from all these troubles, fears, and alarms.

In conclusion of this beautiful prayer, the Priest kneels down to adore the blessed sacrament; then taking the consecrated host, and holding it over the chalice, he divides it into two parts. In this ceremony he imitates our blessed Saviour, who broke the bread after he had blessed it, before he gave it to his disciples. There is no one here present, I presume, who does not know that the body of our Lord is not broken by this ceremony. It is only the external accidents that are affected. His body remains whole and entire under every, even the minutest division. During this ceremony he says, "May the peace of

our Lord be with you;" to which the people answer, "And with thy spirit." He then makes the sign of the cross three times over the chalice, with a small part of the host, which he has broken off from one division of the host; which being done, he puts it into the consecrated wine, saying, "May this mixture and consecration of the body and blood of Christ be effectual to eternal life to us who receive it." This union of the two species signifies, that though represented under two forms, they are but one and the same substance, each containing equally the body and blood of Christ. The words repeated at the time call our attention again to the Communion, which is now at hand; that our minds may be in such a state of preparation, that we may be worthy to partake of that sacred body and blood, the fruit of which is to give eternal life to all who approach in these dispositions. Let us, therefore, now renew our attention to this important subject.—*Amen.*

THE AGNUS DEI.

"Behold the Lamb of God!"—*John* i. 29.

This is the exclamation of John the Baptist, when he pointed out our Saviour to the unbelieving Jews. The Church, acknowledging the justness of this title, has adopted it into her service, and we repeat three times, "O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us!" On the third repetition, instead of the last words, we say, "Grant us thy peace." The frequent repetition of the same words in prayer is perfectly natural, and an effect of fervour. It shews the ardent desires of the soul to obtain her petitions. The title of Lamb of God, applied here to our Saviour, is one by which he chose to be distinguished in the prophets, and which he adopted when used by the Baptist. As a lamb is one of the most innocent things in the world, it is a most excellent emblem of that mildness and sweetness of temper which distinguished the Son of Man. "He was led to slaughter," says the prophet Isaiah, "like a lamb that openeth not his mouth." Perhaps, also, there is in these words a particular allusion to the sacrifice of a lamb, which was made in the old law every morning and night, and is, therefore, adopted with great propriety in the Mass, which is the perpetual and daily sacrifice of Chris-

tians. Our Saviour is also represented in the Apocalypse as the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world. All this makes the emblem quite familiar to us, and we repeat the words with a great deal more interest, when we call upon our Saviour in the very character of a sacrifice, to have mercy on us, because he has been immolated for us. We also strike our breasts three times in testimony of our compunction, except in Masses for the dead, when this is omitted, and instead of "Have mercy on us," we say, after each invocation, "Grant them rest." This is reasonable. For as we are not then praying for ourselves, we have no occasion to strike our breast. We forget for a while our own miseries, being so much occupied with the sufferings of our fellow-creatures in another world, and so much in earnest in our prayer to obtain their release. For ourselves, we beg that God would give us peace—for them we pray that he would grant them eternal rest.

In continuation of the last request, that God would grant us peace, the Priest, with his hands joined on the altar, and his head bowed down, says this fervent prayer, which is also omitted in Masses for the dead, because it has no reference to them: "O Lord Jesus Christ, who hast said to thy apostles, 'My peace I leave you, my peace I give you,' look not upon my sins, but upon the faith of thy church, and grant her that peace and unity which is agreeable to thy will."—In these words we remind our blessed Redeemer of his own promises, in consideration of which, we ask without hesitation, what he is most anxious to grant. Frequently had he prayed that his disciples might all be of one mind, and had told them, that the world should know them by that sign, if they loved one another. At his ascension, he told them that he then gave them his peace. It is for an extension of the same blessing to us that we now pray! but fearing our sins should make void his promises, we beg him to turn away his face from them. And if in any part of his church he sees any faith, or merit, or virtue, to behold it with complacency, and suffer our individual demerits and unworthiness to be lost, or unnoticed among the general good works which are any where to be found throughout the whole church. As it is the will of God that we should have this peace, so ought it also to be our will and our endeavour likewise to obtain it; or we do not say this prayer with proper dispositions. Let each one reflect on this; how can they ask God to grant them peace of mind, which they do all they can to destroy by their own wilful sin?

How can they ask for peace among their neighbours, or in their own families, when they will not correct their own vile tempers, which are for ever disturbing the peace and harmony of society; when they will not lay aside their groundless antipathies, unjust animosities, and unchristian enmities? How shall they ask of God to unite his church in peace, who are perpetually making divisions in congregations, by setting one man against another, and one part of the flock at variance with the other, so that they cannot even meet peaceably in the temple of concord? Let such persons as these never pray for that peace of which they are the greatest enemies. Be assured that none but peaceable characters in this life will ever make fit subjects for enjoying the harmony of heaven. O that we could all of us exclaim with sincerity, in the words of St. Bernard, "Oh, sweet heavenly peace! I love thee, I covet thee above all things; there is nothing else I long so much to have as thee, the greatest treasure of my soul."

These earnest supplications for peace are an excellent preparation for communion, in which we receive the sacrament of love and peace. But now, as the Priest is actually going to receive, he directs his attention and prayers to the object more immediately before him, and proceeds, in the same bending posture, with these words: "O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, deliver me by this thy holy body and blood, from all my iniquities, and from all evils; make me always adhere to thy commands, and never permit me to be separated from thee." The object of this prayer is too clear to require any explanation. It contains three most excellent requests: first, to be freed from all iniquities, because innocence is the first and most essential disposition for communion. Secondly, that having obtained that innocence, we may never lose it, but remain steadfast in fulfilling all the commands of God. And thirdly, that when we once shall have had the happiness of being united to Christ, we may never more be separated from him. May I, in this world, always live to thee, be guided by thy Spirit, and in the next, not doomed to that greatest punishment of thy enemies, which consists in an eternal separation from thee.

In the same spirit, and with a mind most anxiously bent upon what he is going to do, the Priest again addresses himself to our Lord Jesus Christ, and says—"Grant that the participation of thy body and blood, which I, though unworthy, presume to receive, may not turn to my judgment and condemnation, but by thy mercy be a safeguard and remedy both to soul and body." If we consider the immense distance between

God and us, we may well pronounce ourselves unworthy, and call it presumption when we dare to receive him. Yet we are encouraged to do so by his command, who bid all those who are weak and heavily laden to come to him, that they might be refreshed. He will not condemn us for what he has himself commanded us to do. We are encouraged by our very necessities, which were all well known to him when he commanded us to come to him. This is the treasure that is to supply our wants; the safeguard that is to protect us against all dangers, the remedy that must cure all the diseases of our soul. It is, in fine, the seed of immortality, which is to preserve both body and soul, in that blessed, everlasting, and unchangeable state.—*Amen.*

DOMINE NON SUM DIGNUS.

"LORD, I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof." &c.—*Mat.* viii. 8.

THE preceding prayers being ended, the Priest kneels down in the act of adoration, and taking the sacred host into his hands, he says, "I will take the heavenly bread, and call upon the name of our Lord." It is here called the heavenly bread, in allusion to the manna of the Israelites, which was a figure of this sacrament, in the same manner as our Saviour also says—"Moses gave you bread from heaven, but my Father will give you the true bread, which comes down from heaven." Being then about to receive so great a blessing, and to perform so sacred an action as receiving the body of our Saviour, what can we do better than call upon the name of the Lord? Yes, call upon his name for help, succour, and assistance, to enable us to perform it well. Now, as humility is one of the most necessary conditions for a worthy communion, whilst he still holds the sacred host in one hand, looking upon it with affection, mingled with dread, he strikes his breast with the other hand, and says, "O Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof, say but the word, and my soul shall be healed." This is repeated three times, and at each repetition tinkles the little bell, to excite the attention of all to this important part of the Mass, which exceeds every other part except the Consecration. I must also remark here, that the ringing of this bell may serve as a signal for such of the laity as communicate, to approach

the sacred table. For if, as soon as these words are finished, they will rise from their places in the chapel, and proceed to the altar, they will have time to arrange and place themselves in decent order, and recollect themselves a moment before the Priest comes to communicate them. Let us now return to the meaning of the words, which, you will recollect, are the same as the centurion made use of, when our Saviour said he would come and cure his servant: "No, Lord," he replied, "I am not worthy of so great an honour as that; speak, and it will be enough—he will be cured." With great propriety, and with singular beauty, has the Church adapted these words to the present subject. Our Lord says, he will enter into our breasts, and we, in astonishment at so much condescension, immediately exclaim—What! enter into our breasts, these lowly roofs of clay, all unadorned and unprovided as they are? No, Lord, they are not fit abodes for thee; we are not worthy. If thou couldst so far condescend as to take up thy abode in a stable, or under the roof of thy Virgin Mother, there thou hadst innocence, virtue, and purity, to induce thee to enter. What is there in me, but sin, guilt, and defilement, to render me still more unworthy? But if, O Lord, thou must still come, be thou first my physician, heal my soul of its infirmities, speak the word, and it will be done. Without thy word, unless thou command, how shall I dare present myself at thy table? Shall I dare to come after having defiled all over the white robe of innocence, with which I was clothed at Baptism? Shall I present myself at the feast, and not have on the nuptial garment of virtue? And, if during my whole life, I have accumulated so much guilt, what have I done to expiate it? Where are my tears, my repentance, my sorrow? If none of these appear, then am I still bowed down under the weight of all my former transgressions, and I must indeed, acknowledge myself unworthy. Instead of inviting thee under my roof, I will say with Peter, "Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man;" or rather, "*Do not*, O Lord, depart from me, nor forsake me, tho' I am a sinful man, but make me not sinful in order that thou mayest enter under my roof."

To this triple confession of his unworthiness, he adds this short prayer, "May the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, preserve my soul to everlasting life. *Amen*." Then making the sign of the cross, he immediately receives the sacred Host into his breast, and with his hands joined before him, stands for a little while in deep but silent meditation upon what he has done. This short interval he employs in thanksgiving, admi-

ration, or praise. He does not, however, delay long, lest he should keep the people waiting upon his private devotion as well as not to separate by any long interval of time the perfection of the Communion, one species of which still remains to be received. Uncovering, therefore, the chalice, he kneels to adore the consecrated wine also; and while he collects any fragments of the Host which may have been scattered, that they may not be left unconsumed, he entertains himself with these pious extracts from the Psalms: "What return shall I make to the Lord for all he has given to me? I will take the chalice of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will call upon the Lord in praise, and I shall be free from my enemies." Then taking the chalice into his hands, and making the sign of the cross with it, as he had formerly done with the Host, he says, "May the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve my soul to everlasting life:" and immediately receives the consecrated wine. It is at this moment, as soon as he has perfected his own communion, that he distributes the blessed sacrament to the laity, if there be any prepared to receive it. And thus are finished all the essential parts of the Mass—the object of our prayer is attained—the Victim has disappeared from our altar—the sacrifice is accomplished. The wine and water which are subsequently taken into the chalice, are merely for the purpose of consuming more perfectly any remains of the consecrated wine, and are therefore called purifications.

As I mean in my next instruction to call your attention again to some important remarks I have to make upon the Communion, I shall for the present only beg you to observe, that the Communion was absolutely necessary to represent a perfect sacrifice. We have had the oblation and consecration, which correspond to the offering and immolating of the victim.—But in the Holocaust, which was the most perfect of all sacrifices, besides the victim being slain or immolated, it was also totally consumed upon the altar. Therefore it was necessary in this perfect sacrifice of the new law, which includes every perfection of former sacrifices, that there should be a similar consummation, which is no where found but in the Communion. It is this act, therefore, which completes the sacrifice, makes it perfect in all its parts, and leaves nothing more to be desired. You will likewise see the reason why, from the Elevation to the Communion, you ought not to sit or stand. Kneeling being the most respectful, in that posture you ought to remain the whole time our Lord is present upon the altar. Though

the Almighty will be adored in spirit and truth, and looks chiefly to the mind—yet will he not be pleased when the body which is also the work of his hands, is not made to bow down and render its homage in conjunction with the mind, to Him who is equally the Creator of both.

ON THE COMMUNION.

"Unless you eat of the flesh of the Son of man, and drink of his blood, you shall not have life in you."—*St. John* vi. 54.

In my last I explained to you the ceremonies of the Communion, at present I must dwell a little on the dispositions with which you ought to accompany the Priest in this part of the Mass. Entering upon this subject, I cannot but express a most feeling and deep regret to see the insensibility of most Christians at this time towards the Holy Communion. Our blessed Redeemer assures us it is the necessary bread of life, without which we cannot exist; but we never care to receive this bread as if we knew we could do as well without it. O sweet Saviour of our souls, what excuse shall we make to thee, for loathing this heavenly food which thou hast provided for us? for absenting ourselves from the table thou hast spread out for us? Base and degenerate souls as we are, we no longer set a value upon, nor aspire after the treasure of which thou hast made us a present. What excuse shall we make to ourselves for neglecting to draw water from such a perennial fountain of graces? Shall we suffer our souls to perish in the very midst of the abundance of his house? Shall we permit our hearts to be frozen for want of approaching to the fire which he has enkindled! The Council of Trent, wishing to revive that frequent Communion, which has fallen into so much disuse among the laity, does not indeed command you, but entreats you to be moved by the consideration, that it is the most excellent act you can perform—it is a preservative against mortal sin—it is a remedy for venial ones—it is a seed of immortality, preserving your souls to eternal life. It is the wish of this Council, that, as in former times, so now, a Priest might never have occasion to say Mass without having, at least, some of his flock prepared to join with him in the Communion. It used to be so formerly—but now, alas! our altars

are deserted—the people no longer hunger after this spiritual food, and scarce think it any part of their office to join with the Priest in partaking of this heavenly banquet. Well, my dear friends, if I cannot persuade you actually to partake of the daily victim which we offer, let me be heard, when I beg you not to turn altogether empty away from this table. You may still derive advantage when you do not actually partake. This is to be done by a spiritual Communion, which I will explain to you, in hopes that those who cannot be prevailed upon to gain the greater advantage, will not be so foolish as to throw away the lesser, which is still in their power. The Spiritual Communion of which I am speaking, consists in a most ardent desire to be united spiritually to our divine Redeemer, since circumstances prohibit for a while a real union. It includes, as one of the necessary dispositions, a sincere wish to receive the blessed sacrament actually. Now this will serve to explain to you the acts of devotion which are required for a spiritual communion. The most perfect are exactly the same, as would be necessary for a real communion. As you would not approach the blessed sacrament in a state of sin, in the same manner you can derive no benefit from a spiritual communion, as long as your mind and affections are fixed on sin. To wish to be united to the God of purity in that state, is to insult him, and provoke his indignation, rather than to deserve his blessing. First, remove the cause of enmity which exists between God and you, before you beg his choicest gifts, which are reserved as favours to be conferred on his friends only. This is to be done by a sincere repentance, and an active resolution to take the earliest opportunity of expelling from your breasts those impure spirits, which render your soul an unfit abode for him. Hence sinners who will not take the pains to correct their vices, not even to be sorry for them, may not desire to be united to Christ, even by a spiritual Communion. To approach the altar with a heart infected by the corruption of sin, or a mind filled with impure affections, is to commit a sacrilege and a spiritual profanation of all that is holy. To do this, would be bringing upon yourself as much guilt, as the contrary would be productive of merit and advantage. See then of how much importance it is to conceive a most sincere desire to be freed from sin. For though our blessed Saviour invites all who are heavy laden to come to him, no one can derive benefit from approaching, who does not, in the first place, desire to be eased of his burden.

Do not, however, suppose that because this is the most necessary, that therefore it is the only preparation for a spiritual Communion. The absence of vice or sin is only a negative quality. The soul that aspires to a union with its Saviour, ought likewise to be adorned with every virtue. Hence your occupation during this part of the Mass, should be in forming acts of the different virtues. Acts of faith by which you bow down every proud thought of opposition, and believe the positive declaration of God, rather than the remonstrances of a weak and blind reason. Our senses are then most sure when they depend upon the evidence of revealed truth. Acts of hope, by which we are encouraged under every difficulty, and dwell with unspeakable delight on the promises, which Christ has annexed to a worthy participation of himself. Acts of love, by which the soul longs to be united to the source of every blessing, which when once received, will so fill us with the plenty of his house, as to leave us no future wants. "What can I desire in heaven besides thee, or what have I on earth except thee, the God of my heart, and my all?" Nor must you forget among the rest, to make sincere acts of humility, because God, who rejects the proud, always looks down upon the humble with complacency. The slightest reflection on the majesty of the Divine Victim which lies immolated before you will fill you with a great sense of your unworthiness. Then present yourself before your Saviour in the dispositions of the poor Cananean woman—and if your numerous infirmities give you no hopes of being admitted as a guest at this holy table, still importune for the favour. If they seem to reproach you for presuming on so great a favour, or seem to whisper in your ears that the sacred bread must not be cast to dogs, still perserve in your request, and acknowledging the justness of the comparison, say, Yea, Lord, but even the little whelps pick up the crumbs which fall from the table. Such humility will surely be crowned with success. If, dear Christians, you will take the pains to make a spiritual communion in this manner, I will assure you it will be attended with the happiest effects. It will greatly nourish piety, keep alive the flame of virtue, give an air of sanctity to every affection, encrease the gifts of grace, and by habituating you to a constant union with God at present—prepare you for an eternal union with him in eternity.—*Amen.*

CONCLUSION OF THE MASS.

"And Aaron, stretching forth his hand to the people, blessed them; and the sacrifice being finished, he came down."—*Levit.* ix. 22, 23.

The prayers which are said after the Communion are very few and short. I shall include the explanation of them all, to the end of the Mass, in this one instruction. The Priest, having finished his communion, retires to the Epistle side of the altar, and reads from the Missal one single verse, generally from the Psalms—frequently it is some allusion to the festival which is that day celebrated. The whole of this part of the Mass is considered as an act of thanksgiving, due to the Almighty after the offering of the sacrifice. He, therefore, again salutes the people with "Dominus vobiscum," as if he were to say, You have now gone through the different parts of the Mass with me —you have communicated, either in reality, or in spirit, of the victim which I have been offering; I, therefore, wish that the Lord may always remain in you, and take up his abode in your souls, by a permanent residence, according to his promise, "He that eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, abideth in me, and I in him." The prayers are then said, which in number and subject are the same as I have formerly explained to you in the Collects and the Secret. There is only this difference, that in these latter prayers, whatever be the subject of them, there is always mention made of the blessed sacrament we have received. The following is an example, and will serve to shew you the nature of these prayers, which are different every day, —"Help us, O Lord our God, and for ever protect those whom thou hast refreshed with thy sacred mysteries, through Jesus Christ our Lord." And no wonder that the mind, filled with the actual presence of her Saviour, should always turn to him, and mention him in every prayer she offers up. This is natural, and hence it is that these prayers, though short, are all of them so extremely beautiful. These being finished, the Priest again salutes the people, and says, "Ite missa est,"—"Go, the Mass is finished;" to which, answer is made, "Thanks be to God." This again is the true spirit of gratitude; for eternal and infinite thanks are due to Almighty God every time he confers upon us the happiness of having been present at so wholesome

a sacrifice. Thanks be to God for having left us this victim—thanks be to God for having given me the opportunity of assisting at the immolation, of which blessing so many other Christians, infinitely more worthy than myself, are almost perpetually deprived.

The Priest now turns to the altar, and thinking what a great action he has presumed to perform, bows down his head, and says, in a spirit of humility, this last prayer of the Mass, which is extremely suitable to the occasion: "May the obedience of my service be pleasing to thee, O blessed Trinity; and may the sacrifice which I, though unworthy, have offered in the sight of thy Divine Majesty, be acceptable to thee, and through thy mercy be a propitiation for me, and for all those for whom I have offered it, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Though these words require no explanation, I cannot but beg of you to take notice of the very first words, "the obedience of my service:" it is as much as if he had said, the service I have been performing is so great, that I never should have presumed to do it, had it not been in obedience to the commands of my Saviour, who has chosen such an unworthy creature as myself to perform so great a service to him. May his goodness supersede my unworthiness, and grant a blessing to me, and to all for whom the sacrifice has been offered.

The only ceremony that now remains to be explained, is the blessing with which he dismisses the people, and concludes the Mass. In doing this, let me remind you that the blessing of a venerable old man, of a parent, of a Priest, of any one remarkable for sanctity, has always, from the beginning of the world, been asked and received with gratitude by the religious part of mankind. And with great reason, for who is there who is so devoid of religious sentiment as not to be desirous of the prayers and good wishes of a virtuous man? Even the blessings of a bad man are much more desirable than his curses. No child in a well regulated family ever retires to rest without a father's blessing. No parent would choose to leave this world without conferring his blessing in his dying words upon all his offspring.—These are the dictates of nature, and are valued and respected alike by the good and the bad. In conformity with these principles, we find that Abraham, returning in triumph over his enemies, was glad to receive the blessing of the High Priest Melchisedec. The manner in which Jacob blessed the children of Joseph is affecting and edifying: Joseph taking his two children, placed them before his father, and bowed down with his face to the ground; Jacob, stretching forth his hands, put

his right hand upon Ephraim's head, and his left upon Manasseh's, and blessed these two sons of Joseph, saying, "The God in whose sight my fathers walked, the God who hath fed me from my youth until this day, the angel who delivereth me from all evils, bless these boys, and let my name be called upon them." In like manner, Aaron, the High Priest of the Jews, when he had finished the sacrifice, stretched forth his hands and blessed the children of Israel, a ceremony so conformable to nature, so much practised in the old law, has with reason been adopted in the Christian ritual. At no time could it be exercised with so much dignity and propriety as at the conclusion of the august sacrifice of the new law. Let me also inform you, that when a Priest is ordained, one of the powers he receives, is to bless both persons and things. Nor must you suppose that you may undervalue the blessing of any Priest on account of his character; alas! if we had nothing to confer upon you in our blessing but what comes from ourselves, I should not entreat you to set so great a value upon it. But in this, as in all our other public functions, we are but the instruments, the channels through which the blessings flow. Without arrogating any merit to ourselves where none is due, we acknowledge ourselves but the representatives of Christ. In his name, by his authority, and from his resources, we confer his blessing upon you. You, therefore, value it accordingly as coming from him. To this I shall not need to add one word more, to fill you with the utmost respect for this sublime and exalted conclusion of the Mass. When, therefore, you are come to this part, bow down your heads that you may receive the proffered blessing in a spirit of humility. The Priest, in the meantime, lifting up his hands to heaven, joins them; then turning to the people, makes the sign of the cross over them, and pronounces these words—"May the Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost bless you,—Amen." With these words the Mass finishes; for the Gospel of St. John, which we are now accustomed to read after it, formed originally no part of the Mass, and therefore requires no explanation here. May the Almighty grant us his blessing upon these instructions which I have undertaken and accomplished merely for your sakes.—*Amen.*

ON THE LAST GOSPEL.

"This is the disciple who wrote these things, and we know that his testimony is true."—*John xxi. 24.*

I have said that this gospel formerly made no part of the Mass; and it is true, for we do not find it mentioned in any of the ancient rituals as commanded to be said. Some think it formerly was a private prayer or exercise which the Priest used to repeat to himself returning from the altar; to conclude the sacrifice by a repetition of the two great mysteries,—the Divinity and Incarnation of Jesus Christ, our great High Priest; and that afterwards it began to be read aloud, in order that the people also might be excited to join in the recollection of them.

Perhaps you are acquainted that, when two divine Offices or Masses fall upon one day, only one can be said; and yet that the other may not altogether be overlooked, its prayers are said at the Collects, and its gospel also recited after the "Ite Missa est." This is a very ancient practice which we still observe. And perhaps a desire of establishing uniformity in the Mass, caused the Church to command, that when there did not occur a double Gospel, this from St. John might be taken and repeated every day.

Whatever was the origin, it is now the universal practice, and is founded on the best of reasons. We know that the faithful have at all times had a most particular respect for the Gospel of St. John, as the sublimest of all the Gospels, and for this introductory chapter, in particular, as containing the most exalted description we any where find of the eternal nature of God the Son, who is here denominated *the Word*, and his being made flesh for us. St. Augustine, writing upon this subject, says:—"The Apostle St. John is with reason compared to the eagle, for he raises his discourse to a much higher pitch than the other evangelists; and in doing so he wishes to raise our hearts also after him. The other three evangelists, walking, as it were, with the Lord as man upon this earth, have said little about his divinity. But he, as if disdaining to walk upon the earth, speaks with the voice of thunder in the very first words of his discourse; and raising himself not only above this earth, but

above the firmament and the heavens, nay, above every host of angels, and every order of invisible powers, comes at once before *Him by whom all things were made*, saying, "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God." The rest of his gospel is upon a level with this sublime exordium, for he has spoken of the Lord's divinity like no other man. Here he announced what he had imbibed before. For it is not related without reason that this beloved disciple, at the last supper, leaned his head upon the breast of his Lord. From this breast, therefore, did he imbibe in secret what he afterwards proclaimed to the public; that all nations might learn not only the incarnation, passion, and resurrection of the Son of God, but also what was before the incarnation, namely, the Only begotten of the Father—the Word of the Father, co-eternal with him who begot him, equal to him by whom he was sent. See then with what sublimity he ought to write, who is compared to the eagle! And nevertheless, we poor worms, creeping upon this earth, we who have scarcely any weight even among men, dare to treat of and expound these things, and expect we can comprehend them, when we think of them, or be comprehended when we presume to speak of them."

After listening to this beautiful comment of St. Augustine, you will not be surprised to hear the same holy father relate, that even a Pagan philosopher was so struck with admiration of this chapter of the evangelist, that he said it ought to be written up in every church in letters of gold. This idea is beautiful and correct, but the Church has still improved much upon it; for instead of writing it on tables of stone, or in letters of gold, she has commanded it to be repeated every day, in order that it may be engraven on the hearts of the faithful, and be more present to our inmost thoughts than the most brilliant letters could represent it to our eyes.

The respect which the faithful have had for this gospel, has been carried so far, that in some places, and at some times, it has been read over children immediately after they are baptized, and vestiges of this practice are still found among persons, whom, we fear, are not well instructed on this subject. Many a thing which is good itself, is abused by the superstition of the ignorant, who are apt to attribute effects to particular practices, which religion does not warrant. Let then, not any one be so foolish as to think that the Baptism is not perfect without it, nor so superstitious as to imagine that there is a particular charm or hidden virtue in it. It is like any other part of scripture, inspired by the Divine Spirit; it is one of the sub-

limest passages even of the inspired writings; it contains a most excellent act of faith, in the divinity and humanity of Jesus Christ; and if repeated with devotion and respect, must be pleasing to Almighty God, and may obtain a blessing, like any other devout prayer, for those who repeat it, or to those for whom it is repeated. I have thought it necessary to say so much on this subject for the benefit of those, whom we very often meet with, who have not correct ideas upon this practice.

This gospel requires little explanation further. Our blessed Saviour is styled the Word of God, and again, 'the Light which is to enlighten every man that cometh into this world. He came into the world, and the world knew him not—he came unto his own, and his own received him not." All this is easily understood by any person who reflects a moment on the life of Christ. The world would not know him for the Son of God; they every where persecuted, contradicted, and opposed him; so that scarcely even a few disciples believed in him after his crucifixion. He came into his own family, as it were, the chosen people, and these very Jews were the persons who disowned him, —exclaimed he was not their king—he should not reign over them, and put him to death. But those who did receive him and his doctrine, were to be made the children of God, not by a natural birth of flesh and blood, but by a spiritual regeneration, proceeding from the pure will and bounty of God, by which he has made us his adopted children. At these words, "And he was made flesh," we kneel down to adore him who condescended to become man, and conceal his glory under the vile form of a slave for our sakes; and immediately rising up again, we finish the gospel, and reply, "Thanks be to God," for this the source of all our blessings.

Thus you observe, dear Christians, how conformable every action and ceremony is to the interior sentiments we ought to feel in reciting this excellent gospel, which may be considered, in some respects, as a short summary of our faith, pointing out the source of grace in this life, which is to conduct us to future glory in the next. O that we may also make such use of these graces as to obtain that glory.—*Amen.*

BEST MANNER OF HEARING MASS.

"When he stretched forth his hand, and offered of the blood of the grape, all the people fell down upon their faces to adore the Lord their God, and to pray to the Almighty God."—*Eccles.* i. 16—19.

I have now, dear Christians, by the blessing of Almighty God, explained to you all the different ceremonies and prayers of the Mass.—Here I might rest from my labours, but I cannot persuade myself to finish these instructions, without once more entreating you to profit by them. For this purpose, I have set before your eyes, in the above text, the example of the Jewish people. When they saw the sacrifice offered, the libations poured out, or the smoke of the incense ascend to heaven, they prostrated themselves, and adored Almighty God. Let me entreat you to imitate their example, and not to be like too many Christians, who will be present during the whole of the sacrifice without one thought of adoration ever entering their minds.—Be not you, my friends, of the number of these criminal men. To prevent so great a profanation was the chief motive which induced me to compose these instructions for your benefit. For the same purpose I will now add some short remarks on the best manner of hearing Mass.

It is an undoubted truth, that he who attends most to the great object of the Mass, namely, a sacrifice—he who unites himself to the intentions of our High Priest, Jesus Christ, and his Church—he who conforms his devotions as near as possible to the ritual, hears Mass in the best manner. But how is this to be done? There are several ways of which I shall speak.

The first, and, in my humble opinion, undoubtedly the best, is to join the Priest in saying exactly the same prayers as he says. The Church has permitted the sacred ritual to be translated, and the laity have their missals as well as the clergy.—By perusing them, you not only enter into the spirit and meaning of the sacrifice, but even accompany every part with the words which the voice of the whole Church has delared to be the best suited for the purpose. But while I give this method of hearing Mass my decided preference, I must make exceptions, and allow that it is not well adapted to the capacities of children, or persons not well instructed. These prayers are, in many instances, so profound and sublime, and they contain

so many allusions to the Old Testament, that their meaning cannot be comprehended but by persons who have considerable information on these subjects. I speak now from experience. Many is the time that, in my younger days, I have read over the ordinary of the Mass before I knew what it meant.—I found no devotion in it, because I did not understand it; a Missal to a child is a sealed up fountain, from which he can draw no streams of devotion.

To this description of persons I would recommend, to say the prayers which you find in your Manuals, under the title of devotions for Mass. These are set forms of words, which some pious persons have composed, as most proper to excite in us and express the sentiments and acts of devotion we ought to feel at each part of the Mass. It is true that by this method we do not preserve such exact conformity with the Priest:—And yet in what is it deficient? Only in words; for the substance, the intention, the spirit, the devotion, is every where the same as the Priest expresses, at corresponding parts. You profess your belief at the creed as well as he does; you adore at the Elevation with him; you desire to participate of the sacred mysteries at the Communion as well as he; and the only difference is, that these desires are expressed in language more adapted to common understandings, and therefore more proper for the persons to whom I recommend this plan of hearing Mass.

But what shall I say to those persons who cannot read, and are, therefore, incapable of availing themselves of this advantage? Oh! they are very much to be pitied, but must I, on that account, say they cannot hear Mass in a proper manner? By no means. I know that the Almighty God values the simplicity of the heart a great deal more than all the knowledge of the wisest head. And I also know that the Holy Ghost frequently inspires such Christians with sentiments of devotion, which the better informed never experience. Yet, for all that, there are too many whose ignorance is guilt, and who never hear Mass as they ought. I must inform these, that no excuse will ever be admitted, if they do not know the essential parts of Mass. They must know when the Elevation is, and what is the meaning of it; they must know when the Communion is, and what the Priest is doing at that time. If they know that at the former the bread and wine is changed into the body and blood of Christ; and they see all the people bowing down to adore their Saviour, who is then present upon the altar—the very sight of this will naturally fill them with similar thoughts. And if they cannot express them, they will still feel

adoration, praise, gratitude, and astonishment at the goodness of their God, who offers himself upon our altars for their sakes. If they know that at the Communion the Priest is receiving the body and blood of Christ, which they ought in like manner to receive for the nourishment of their own souls, they cannot but feel the utmost gratitude to the great God, who has condescended to enrich their poverty with such a treasure. They will break out into acts of thanksgiving. Blessed be the name of God, who has done such great things for us! They will regret that unworthiness of their's which prevents them from partaking there and then of the table which is spread before them. If those who cannot read shall accompany the different parts of Mass with occasional sentiments like these, who will dare to say that they have not heard Mass well? I dare not say so. The rest of the time they may fill up by repeating such prayers as they know by heart, particularly—the Lord's Prayer, Hail Mary, Acts of faith, hope, charity, &c. A poor man, hearing Mass in this manner, will derive more advantage from it than the most enlightened, who have more information, but less devotion.

I have only further to observe, those who employ the time of Mass in private devotions, however good in themselves, misuse their time; whatever does not belong to the Mass, is misapplied at this time. The least we can say of such persons is, that they betray a great want of judgment, in withdrawing their attention from the most important of all objects, to bestow it on one comparatively trifling. I have now, dear Christians, delivered to you all I had to say upon the Mass. It only remains that both you and I should beg the blessing of God upon my exertions. If I have taught one soul to entertain a higher opinion of this adorable sacrifice, or to be present at it with better dispositions than before, may I beg of that person, whoever he be, whenever he comes to Mass, not to forget him by whose ministry he was taught to entertain such ideas. How abundantly shall I be rewarded for all my labours, if I obtain but the prayers of one good soul: my soul desires nothing better in this world.—*Amen.*

CEREMONIES OF HIGH MASS.

"I HAVE loved the beauty of thy house, O Lord, and the place where thy glory dwells."—*Psa.* xxv. 8.

IT is in the nature of man to dedicate all his powers, faculties, and possessions, to any object which he vehemently loves. Religion, which acts more powerfully than any thing else on the human heart, prompts us to shew our love to God by every method which lies in our power. The internal affections of the soul are first engaged, and soon discover themselves by external actions. The warm feelings of the soul summon every thing else within their reach, to aid them in proclaiming the praises of our Great Creator. This has been the effect produced on religious men in every age and every country. Hence the resources of art have been exhausted to adorn the temple of God, from the time when David and Solomon first set the example, till the present day. Hence music has been employed to increase the general effect; and the solemn pomp of ceremonies instituted, to make the greater impression, and raise our minds to God. We love to shew our joy in the occurrences of this world by illuminations—our festivity by light airs of music—our sorrow by mourning—our honour and respect by processions, and so of the rest. Shall these affections of the soul then only have no corresponding external expressions, when they are directed towards God? Oh no! It is natural to make use of them, and never are they better employed than in the service of religion. The ignorant and the profane may scoff, but the wise and educated will allow the justness of the following observations, which come from the pen of a sensible Protestant: "Every person who has attended the celebration of High Mass at any considerable ecclesiastical establishment, *must have felt* how much the splendour and magnificence of the Roman Catholic worship tends to exalt the spirit of devotion, and inspire the soul with rapture and enthusiasm. Not only the impressive melody of the vocal and instrumental music, and the imposing solemnity of the ceremonies, but the pomp and brilliancy of the sacerdotal garments, and the rich and costly decorations of the altar, raise the character of religion, and give it an air of dignity and majesty unknown to any of the reformed churches."*

* Pain Knight on Taste, 363. Second Edition.

These are the dictates of an enlightened and unprejudiced mind. In conformity with these first principles of our nature, the Catholic Church has instituted a great many sublime ceremonies. Of these ceremonies, such as are universally adopted in the liturgy, and approved of by the Church, are all in the very best taste, and well calculated to produce the effects they were intended for. We will briefly allude to some of them.

On great solemnities or solemn occasions, when a Bishop says Mass, he is accompanied by one out of each holy order, namely, by a Priest, a Deacon, and a Sub-deacon. Besides these, several of the minor are in attendance to perform their respective duties: some to carry the incense, the candles, the cruets of wine and water, &c. These numerous attendants, in imitation of the ancient Levites, who served the altar, add much to the solemnity of this awful sacrifice, and is an excellent representation of that eternal worship which is continually paid in heaven to God, as described in the Apocalypse. "And I heard the voice of many angels sound about the throne, saying, with a loud voice, the Lamb that was slain is worthy to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and benediction." These, when the service is to begin, proceed from the vestry in procession to the altar, and each takes his place assigned to him, according to the office he has to fulfil. The different garments with which each is invested increasing in splendour each step as the order is higher, clothe the frailties of human nature, and represent the different virtues with which the priesthood should be adorned; as it is said in the Psalm, "Thy Priests shall put on justice." For this reason, each vestment, as it is put on, is accompanied with a corresponding prayer for some virtue.

It is the part of the Priest only, or Bishop, in all Masses to offer sacrifice; the rest, therefore, are only solemn ministers to assist and attend on the Priest. The Deacon approaches nearest to the Priest, and it is his duty to prepare for the sacrifice, to offer the Priest the bread and wine, to cover and uncover the chalice, and, in fine, to perform every other little office which regards the sacrifice. The Sub-deacon comes next, and performs the next most important offices. He receives the cruets from the Acolythes, supplies the wine to the Deacon, and pours the water into the chalice. After the Offertory, his presence being no longer necessary at the altar, he takes the Paten, which is not then wanted, and covering it with the end of the veil which he wears, retires to the bottom of the steps, where he remains till the Pater Noster, except occasionally going up to

join the Priest in prayer, as at the Sanctus, &c. The reason the Sub-deacon wears the veil, is, to cover the chalice when he takes it to the Altar, and the Paten which he holds. The inferior orders supply the other requisites of public worship, the Incense, the Tapers, the Book, the Mitre, the Crozier, &c. Thus every part is kept in beautiful order, and all goes on with regularity. It is the privilege also of the Sub-deacon to read the Epistle to the people; wherefore you will observe, at that part of the Mass, he takes the Missal, and having the Priest's blessing, he turns towards the congregation, and reads aloud or sings the Epistle. It is in like manner the privilege of the Deacon to read the Gospel, and this is done with still greater solemnity. Taking the Missal, he lays it upon the altar, whilst he kneels down and prays that the Almighty would cleanse his heart, and enable him to announce his heavenly truths worthily. Having obtained the Priest's blessing, he gives the book to the Sub-deacon, who holds it whilst he sings the Gospel. In the meantime, two Servers bear their lighted tapers, one on each side the Sub-deacon. This is done to honour the Gospel, which is reckoned the most important part of the inspired writings, being always taken from the Evangelists, and to represent the divine light, which was communicated to the world by the contents of the sacred volume. When the Gospel is finished, the book is conveyed to the Priest, who kisses it as a token of respect, and a pledge of the affection he bears in his breast towards the holy truths therein contained.

During the Elevation, all the ministers kneel in profound adoration, and either themselves hold burning tapers, or others are introduced bearing lighted torches. This is done to honour our divine High Priest and Victim, who then, for the first time, becomes really present, and requires from us additional marks of honour, respect, and adoration. If the angels, who always see his face, fall down to adore him, what can we do sufficient to express our astonishment and gratitude when he comes to visit us upon our altars? If the wise men of the east, recognizing their God in the helplessness of an infant, offered him their choicest treasures, not any of which he wanted, in acknowledgement of his divine presence, and as tokens of their interior sentiments, what can we ever do sufficient to testify our respect for his condescending to become present upon our altars in the state of a sacrifice—an immolated victim? You see then what are the intentions of these impressive ceremonies. It is to excite in your minds more lively impressions of respect, adoration, and gratitude. If they do not produce this effect, they are lost

upon you, and become as a dead letter, without spirit or meaning.

After the Communion, the Sub-deacon wipes the Chalice, arranges the corporal, paten, &c. and conveys them covered with a veil from the altar to the Credence Table on the side. And soon after, the Deacon, turning to the people, and singing aloud the Ite Missa est, announces to them that the sacrifice is over, and that they may depart. After the blessing and last Gospel, all the retinue depart from the altar in procession, as they came, and return to the vestry for the purpose of unvesting, and spending some time in acts of thanksgiving and prayer.—*Amen.*

CEREMONIES OF HIGH MASS.

"Praise ye the Lord with timbrel and choir, praise him with strings and organs."—Psalm cl. 3.

Very early in the history of man, do we find that music was consecrated to the service of God. And when religion assumed a more regular form in the Jewish temple, one particular part of the Levites' office was to have a well arranged choir, in which were every kind of musical instruments. David wrote the songs which they chaunted, and which supply so much of our devotion at the present time. The inspired poet received from heaven those sublime sentiments of praise, which he has expressed in the psalms, which the Levites sung, being arranged round the altar at the time of sacrifice. Taught by this example, the Church also uses music in her solemn services. Experience shews us, that it is capable of making great impression on the feelings of most men, and raising them to a more than ordinary pitch of devotion. These derive great helps from it—it raises the soul to heaven, inspires sublimer feelings, and helps human infirmity to support itself longer in contemplation. These are the purposes for which sacred music ought to be adopted and approved of; but we cannot sufficiently condemn every kind of music which has a contrary tendency. Whatever tends to distract or fix the attention on any thing but the great object of all worship has a bad effect, and therefore, ought to be submitted to correction.

There are some on whom the finest strains have no influence, and who from custom or predilection would prefer a low to a high Mass. Nor are they to be blamed for their choice—devotion loves solitude and quietness, and happy are they who, without any external helps, can always command it! We would therefore advise persons of this taste, to spend the intervals which are occupied by singing the Gloria and Credo, in private prayer, or in devout reading, especially when these are very long, as it sometimes happens. This may the more easily be done, as the people sit during both these times. Then if they cannot join with the rest in enjoying the sacred psalmody, they may make to God an agreeable offering of some other devotion—nor will their time be thus ill-spent.

The use of incense, also, is borrowed from the practice of almost every nation, in religious worship. Even Pagans burnt perfumes in presence of their idols. In the Levitical law, there was, by the command of God himself, an altar of incense, as well as a perpetual fire to burn before the ark. And St. John in the Apocalypse represents the angels of heaven as occupied in offering up incense in golden censers before the throne of the Eternal; which, he also tells us, are the prayers of the saints. Indeed it is a most beautiful and expressive ceremony. The circling clouds of smoke which ascend to the vaulted roofs of the temple, are an admirable representation of the aspiring thoughts which should arise from our hearts to heaven. The sweet odour of the perfume most aptly teaches us how agreeable to God is fervent prayer. These allusions are certainly beautiful, and will teach us henceforward to repeat with greater feeling these words of the Psalmist: "May my prayer, O Lord, ascend like incense into thy sight." For these reasons, that Church uses incense in many of her offices, but in none more than in solemn sacrifice. Twice during the Mass does the Priest offer this perfume; first at his going up to the altar, and again at the offertory. The Server also enters and continues to offer the incense during the Elevation. We offer this incense as a mark of honour to any creature towards which we have religious respect, as well as to God himself. In this it is not like sacrifice, which can be offered to the Deity only. We incense the altar out of respect to it, because it is soon to hold the precious Victim—we incense the bread and wine on account of their being destined to the honour of becoming our Victim—we incense the Priest and ministers as representatives of Jesus Christ, and for the honour which is due to them as ministers of

religion—we incense the relics on the altar, because we honour the saints to whom they formerly belonged—we incense the whole people, because they are the mystical body of Christ, of which we hope each individual is a living member. The incense is blessed by the Priest before it is used, by the sign of the cross, with these or similar words: "Mayest thou be blessed by Him in whose honour thou art going to be burned."—And during the use of it, he continually prays, as in the following instance: "May this incense which thou hast blessed ascend to thee, O Lord, and may thy mercy descend upon us." Thus, you observe, nothing can be more beautiful than the prayers and sentiments with which the Church accompanies these ceremonies, or ornaments, as I may call them, of her solemn service. O that every Christian would enter into the spirit of them, and find in them that help to devotion which they are intended to be!

It is not necessary that I should enter into any explanation of the Tapers which we light up during the sacrifice, and of which we multiply the number on greater festivals—nor of the Lamp which we keep always burning before the blessed sacrament, which is kept in our chapels. Perpetual adoration is due to our blessed Saviour in the most holy sacrifice and sacrament, and, as we are incapable of that, we substitute inanimate creatures, particularly a flame, as an excellent emblem of devotion In the same spirit the Royal Psalmist calls upon the sun, moon and stars, and many other inanimate creatures, to proclaim the praises of our God. St. Jerome replies to some who, in his his time, objected to the use of lights, in these words: "The Apostles also did murmur that Magdalene's ointment was thrown away, but the voice of our Lord rebuked them, though Christ did not want the ointment; nevertheless the woman did it out of honour to Christ, and the devotion of her mind was received. Thus, when the gospel is read, tapers are lighted—not to expel darkness, but to demonstrate our joy. Under the figure of corporeal light is represented that light of which we read in the 118th Psalm: "Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my paths."

Thus is a satisfactory reason given for every ceremony which is ever made use of in our public worship. Of them all, in general, I must observe, that they are calculated to inspire us with reverence for the sacred mysteries. They are outward signs of the interior dispositions with which we ought to be animated, and means of exciting them within us. Let us then look upon them

with the eye of faith—let us practice or behold them with the utmost sentiments of humility and reverence. Let us never forget that they are but the means and helps of acquiring the true dispositions of devotion. For as the Psalmist justly observes of the soul, under the title of the daughter of Zion, "All her beauty is from within." Not external pomp of worship, but the interior virtues of the soul—faith, hope, love, devotion, compunction, adoration, gratitude, praise—These are the beauties which should adorn every daughter of Sion. Let it be our endeavour to acquire these by every act of religion, and thus render ourselves pleasing to our Creator. This is the only object of our existence—the only thing that will profit us for eternity, when every thing else has passed away. May the Almighty grant us this happiness.—*Amen.*

THE

LITANY OF THE HOLY MASS

P. LORD have mercy on us.
C. *Lord have mercy on us.*
P. Christ have mercy on us. C. *Christ*, &c.
P. Lord have mercy on us. C. *Lord*, &c.
P. Christ hear us. C. *Christ graciously hear us.*
O God the Father, Creator of the world, *Have mercy on us.*
O God the Son, Redeemer of mankind,
O God the Holy Ghost, perfecter of the elect,
O adorable Trinity, Three Persons in one God,
Jesus, who being from all eternity in the form of God, didst, at thy incarnation, take upon thee the form of a servant, and become like unto man. *Phil.* ii. 7.
Jesus, who for our sakes didst become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. *Phil.* ii. 8.
Jesus, who ascending to thy Father wouldst not leave us orphans, but wouldst still continue with us under the sacramental veils. *John* xiv. 18.
Jesus, the Tree of Life, of which whosoever eateth shall live for ever. *Gen.* ii. 22.
Jesus, the Paschal Lamb, by whose blood we are saved from the sword of the destroying angel. *Exod.* xii. 13.
Jesus, the bread from heaven, containing in thyself all sweetness. *Wisd.* xvi. 20.
Jesus, the Priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedec. *Psal.* cix.
Jesus, who having offered up this sacrifice on Mount Calvary, by the effusion of thy blood, continuest to offer up the same in an unbloody manner upon our altars till the end of the world.

Have mercy on us.

P. Have mercy on us, O Jesus. C. *And pardon our sins.*
P. Have mercy on us, O Jesus. C. *And hear our prayers.*

From opposing the uncertain testimony of our senses to the infallible truth of thy word, *O Jesus deliver us.*

From a loathing of this heavenly manna, and from receiving it to our own condemnation,
From slighting this adorable sacrifice, and from assisting at it with irreverence and distraction,
Through thy irresistable power, which changes the course of nature as thou pleasest,
Through thy infinite goodness, for which no miracles are too great to testify thy love for us,
Through all the mysteries of thy life and passion, and especially through the sacrifice of thyself on the cross,

O Jesus deliver us.

We sinners, *Beseech thee to hear us.*

That thou, O Eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, wouldst accept of this *Holocaust* of himself which he here offers thee, in testimony of thy being the master of life and death, the Lord of us and all things,
That thou wouldst accept of this *Eucharistic* sacrifice, in thanksgiving for thy creating, preserving, and sanctifying us; for making us members of thy holy Catholic Church, and for every other favour thou hast bestowed upon us,
That thou wouldst receive it in commemoration of the Incarnation, Birth, *(Manifestation, Transfiguration, Passion)* life and death, as also of the Resurrection and Ascension of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of his institution of this adorable sacrament and sacrifice,
That thou wouldst receive it in thanksgiving for thy graces and glory conferred on the B. V. Mary, *(whose conception, birth, annunciation, assumption, festival)* we celebrate this day, and on all the holy angels and saints in heaven, *(particularly of the holy Apostle, Martyr, Confessor, Virgin, Widow, St. N. whose festival we celebrate this day)*,
That thou wouldst accept of this *propitiatory* sacrifice as a sin offering, to atone for our many grievous sins, and our abuse of thy divine graces, and to avert thy heavy judgments, which we have thereby provoked,
That thou wouldst accept of it in reparation for all the sacrileges, blasphemies, and other sins, committed throughout the world, and especially for those perpetrated against these adorable mysteries,

We beseech thee to hear us.

That thou wouldst receive it in satisfaction for the sufferings due to thy justice by the faithful departed, especially our deceased parents, relations, and benefactors, *and more especially for N. N. lately deceased, whose anniversary we this day commemorate)* that they may be released from their torments, and admitted to the blissful sight of thee,

That through this *Impetratory* sacrifice thou wouldst protect and exalt the holy Catholic Church; enlighten the hearts of infidels, heretics, and schismatics, and reclaim all sinners, especially of this congregation, from the ways of death in which they are walking,

That through it thou wouldst pour down thy special graces on the Catholics of this land; so that leading lives worthy of their faith, they may be a light to direct others into the road that leads to thee,

That by means of it thou wouldst fill us with thy blessings for soul and body, enabling us to repress the vices we are most subject to, and to acquire the virtues we stand most in need of,

That thou wouldst impart the efficacy of this most acceptable oblation, accordingly as they stand in need of it, to our relations, benefactors, friends and enemies; to our supreme Pastor (Pius) to our Bishop, (William) and all his clergy, to his Majesty King (George), the royal family, and the nation in general,

We beseech thee to hear us.

Son of God,

O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, *Spare us, O Lord.*

O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, *Hear us, O Lord.*

O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, *Have mercy on us.*

Lord have mercy on us. *Christ have mercy on us.* Lord have mercy on us. Our Father, &c.

LET US PRAY.

O MOST wise and bountiful Lord, who, in this great sacrifice of the New Law, hast accumulated thy former mercies, and hast caused it to answer the ends of all the ancient sacrifices,

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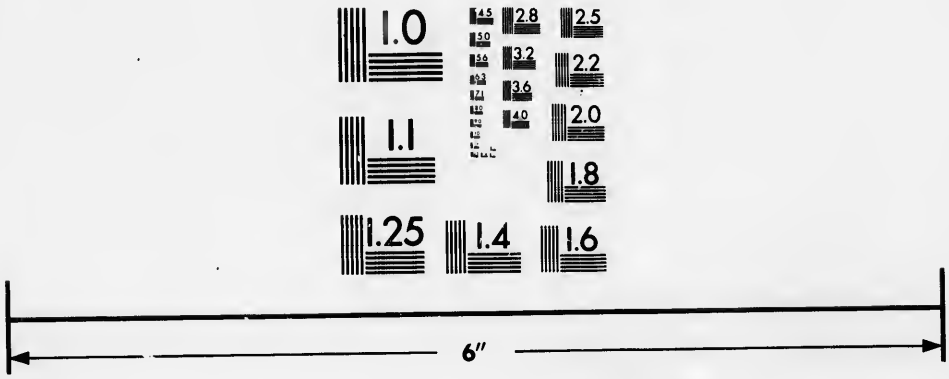

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graciously hear the manifold petitions which, through the same, we now present to thee. Look not upon us, O Lord, but upon the Divine Victim that is presented to thee, even thy beloved Son, in whom thou art always well pleased, and for his sake grant us whatever we ask of thee, who, with the same Son and the Holy Ghost, livest and reignest, One God, world without end.—*Amen.*

THE END.

CONTENTS.

ERRATA.

Page 3,	line 10,	for	'to' read *too.*
5,	16,		'eremonies,' read *ceremonies,*
7,	2,		'offering we ever,' read *offering ever.*
8,	38,		'with his,' read *with this.*
10,	16,		'wa,' read *was.*
11,	1,		'sacrifice then worthy,' read *sacrifice worthy.*
11,	12,		'postrate,' read *prostrate.*
17,	3,		'could think,' read *could not think,*
25,	23,		'by this we mention,' read *by this mention.*
30,	16,		'pattern,' read *paten.*
33,	34,		'obtain you,' read *obtain for you.*
34,	10,		'concludes,' read *includes.*
35,	34,		'before begins,' read *before he begins.*
44,	2,		'irration,' read *irrational.*
72,	31,		'perserve,' read *persevere.*

orthy.

ion.