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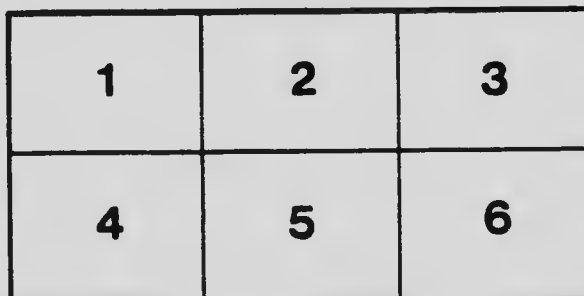
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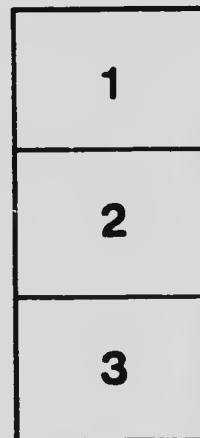
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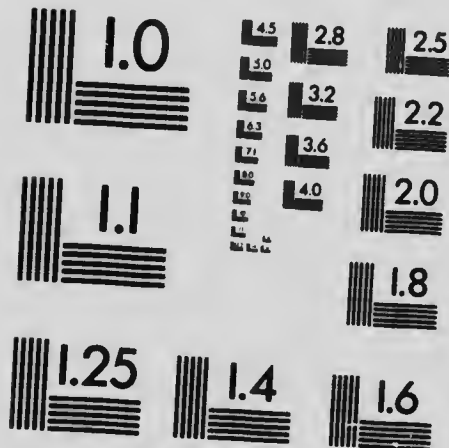
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THE DEATH OF STEPHEN

and other Sermons

by

SUTHERLAND MACKLEM

Assistant Curate of St. Thomas', Toronto

and one time

Assistant Priest of

St. Cuthbert's. Earl's Court. London, England.



ERRATA

- Page 18, line 14, read, the Lord Jesus.
- " 19, " 12, for Spirit, read spirit.
- " 29, " 15, read, search the Scriptures.
- " 29, " 23, read, the deaf hear.
- " 35, " 25, read, "As my.
- " 45, " 1, read, as S. Paul tells us.
- " 68, " 23, read, the tongues of angels.
- " 71, " 2, no comma after "disposed."
- " 72, " 11, read, affectionate disposition.
- " 99, " 24, read, conviction that the soldiers.
- " 104, " 30, "power" in italics.
- " 111, " 19, read, did He weigh.

For Private Circulation

June, 1916.

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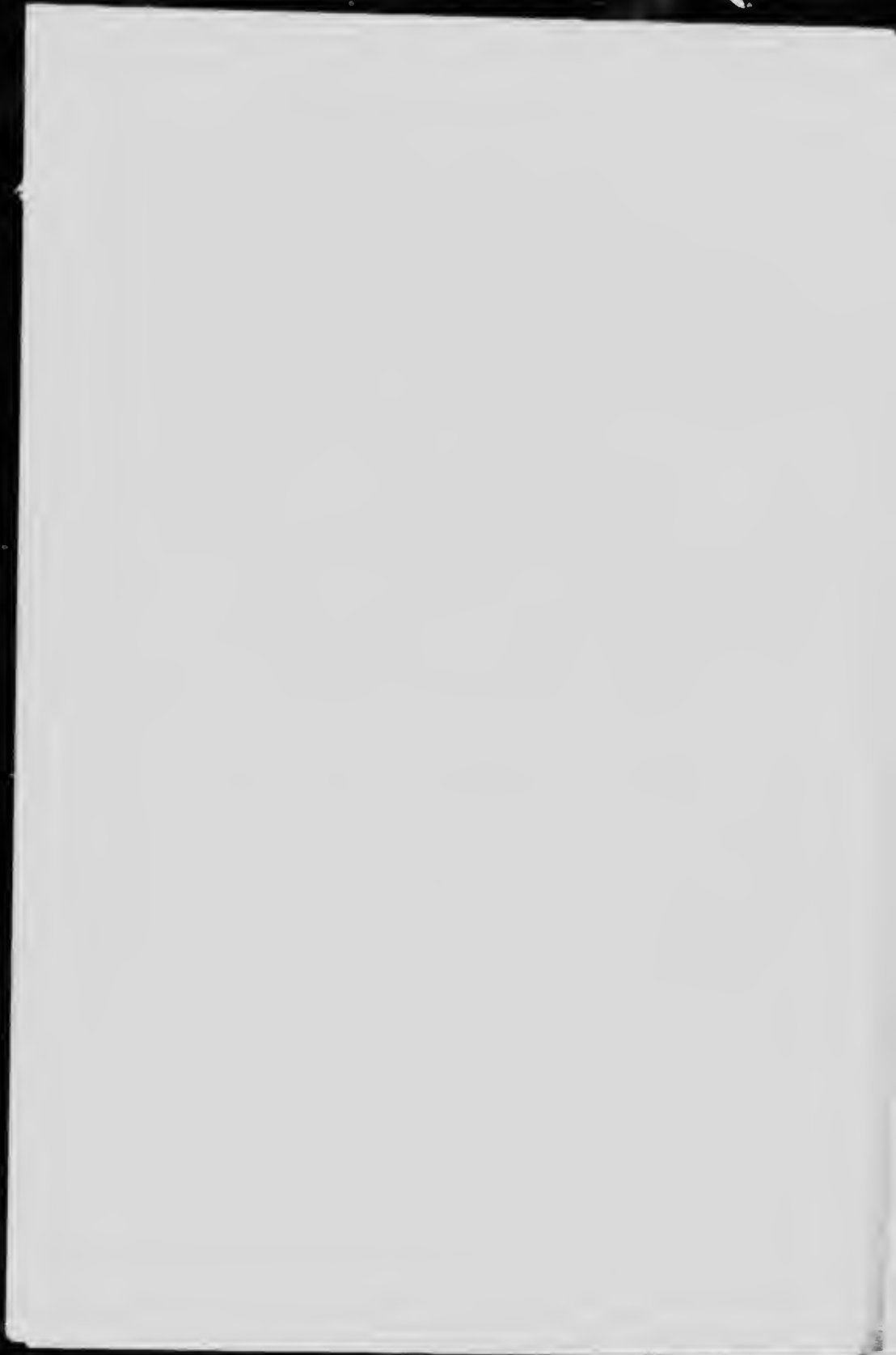
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THE DEATH OF STEPHEN.

TEXT: Psalm CXVI: 15.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His Saints."

What a sudden and seemingly inappropriate, transition from the joy and gladness of Christmas Day to the sadness and sorrow of a Martyr's Day.

What a contrast! Life yesterday—Death to-day! Why has the Church brought these two events into such close proximity? Just at a time when everyone is rejoicing at the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ we are drawn aside to contemplate the death of Stephen.

Well, we may be sure that for this there is a good reason.

The explanation of this strange juxtaposition of events of such different character has its roots lying deep down in that word of the Psalmist: "Right dear in the sight of the Lord is the death of His Saints."

God doesn't look upon death in the same way that we do. We look upon it in its relation to this life; God looks upon it in its bearing upon the light and joy of Paradise.

The death of the righteous marks the beginning of a brighter and a purer life.

The Church, from the earliest days, has been wont —(with her language of strong, realizing faith)—to speak of the day of a saint's death as his "dies natalis," i.e. his birthday. She has, then, no intention of introducing a note of sadness when she brings the death of Stephen so near to the birth of our Lord.

Christmas Day and Saint Stephen's Day are both natal days.

The bringing of these days into so close union reminds us that He who was born yesterday was manifested in the flesh to destroy the work of Satan; to conquer death, to burst its bars; to pluck out its sting; to transform it from the mere terminal of earthly existence, and the punishment for sin, into the gate of life, the portal to everlasting felicity.

He came to open the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

Stephen's birth into the world above began to have its fruition to-day—to-day, when the Lord Jesus received his spirit.

Yesterday Christianity was born into the world with the birth of Jesus Christ, and, to-day, Stephen, by his martyrdom, proclaims to the world that Christianity is not only the force which is to triumph, but is also the power which is to enable men to suffer, to endure, and to die.

S. Augustine, dwelling on the significance of this festival occurring on the day after our Lord's nativity, says: "The birthday of the Lord, when He

put on the clothing of our flesh; that of Stephen when he laid that clothing aside; the birthday of the Lord when He was made like unto us; that of Stephen when he was brought most near unto Christ."

When our blessed Lord tells us, as in to-day's Gospel, that all the righteous blood shed from Abel to Zacharias, i.e., from the beginning of the world to the time when He was speaking, would be required of that generation which crucified Him, He speaks as if, in some mysterious way, the blood of the martyrs was mingled with His own infinitely more precious Blood, even with the Blood of the one only true and sufficient sacrifice.

S. John, in his vision of the 1000 years' reign of Christ, saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the Word of God.

Now, seeing that S. Stephen was the first Christian who sealed his faith in Christ with his blood; seeing that he is the first of the Christian army of martyrs, one may expect to find, in the account of his death, some tokens of that special favour which is ever accorded to martyrs; and our expectations are not misplaced.

I want you to notice how far S. Stephen had gone (before his faith was put to the final test) in being conformed to the image of Christ; in being built up to the measure of the fulness of the stature of Christ. I want you to see how very like his divine Master he really was.

He was one of seven deacons chosen for work in the Church more fitted for deacons than for priests,

so that the Apostles might devote themselves more exclusively to the exercise of functions peculiar to their office, viz.: (as we are distinctly told) to the celebration of the Holy Eucharist and the ministry of the word.

The ministry of the word would refer to the administration of the sacraments, and to public as well as private exhortation.

It is interesting to note this early reference to the distinction between deacons and the clergy in higher orders; and also to note that Stephen's ordination to the diaconate was made by the laying on of the Apostles' hands.

Among these seven deacons Stephen was a giant. He is described as being "full of faith and power; and he wrought wonders and miracles among the people." (VI. 8). Whence this power? What is the explanation? The explanation, my brethren, is this: he was full of the Holy Ghost.

The Holy Spirit had descended in the form of a dove upon his divine Master when He went forth from Jordan's waters of baptism, and it was after that that He wrought His first miracle in Cana of Galilee.

So Stephen, being likewise filled with the Holy Ghost, wrought wonders and miracles among the people. As a consequence, a great company of the priests became obedient unto the faith, i.e. he began to convert the Jews, and this seems to have alarmed certain members of the Synagogue, for we are told

that they arose, and got into controversy with Stephen, and they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake. (VI. 10.)

If Stephen disputed with the Jews in the Synagogue, so, too, had Jesus, only a few years before, and, at the age of 12 years, disputed with the doctors in the temple, "And they marvelled at His understanding and answers."

Because they couldn't resist Stephen, because the wisdom with which he spake rendered his disputations far too powerful for them, they were filled with anger and hatred. Just the same thing that happened when our blessed Lord taught of things pertaining to the kingdom of heaven: the scribes and Pharisees and the rulers of the people were moved to fury against Him.

So they stirred up, against Stephen, the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and haled him to the Council. There they set up false witnesses, men who were paid to swear to lies about his character. They said: "This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law"; that they had heard him say that Jesus of Nazareth would destroy the place and change the customs of Moses. There was perhaps some truth in this part of the charge, though Stephen probably didn't put it quite in that way. He doubtless had in mind what our Lord had said: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

Now, as Stephen stood before his accusers, all they who sat in the Council looked steadfastly upon

him, and saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.

When Pilate looked on Jesus and beheld His calm and composure, and the gentleness of His demeanour, when he said, "Ecce Homo," "Behold the Man," he knew Him to be innocent. So, too the Council which sat in mock judgment in Stephen knew perfectly well that the charges of blasphemy were false, and that the man, with the face of an angel, was incapable of speaking against Moses and against God.

Some of us at least (I hope many of us) have met with persons possessing something of this guilelessness which was developed to so high a degree of excellence in the case of Stephen. We have met men, or women, whose whole personality glows with the Holy Spirit of God; who seem to live in God, and God in them. How attractive they are even to the ordinary average Christian; and how repulsive they seem to those who neglect and despise God and love the pleasures of sin!

If we have the good fortune to spend a few hours in the company of these saintly people, to imbibe something of the fragrance of the inner life which seems to burst forth and impregnate the very atmosphere of their presence, we come away with a sense of restful comfort, and with a secret longing that we too might become possessed of that peace of God which passeth all understanding; we are better for having been in their company.

Such is the influence shed abroad by those fair jewels of Christ's crown we meet with once or twice

in a lifetime.

We can be like them; at least we can become something like them. We can do in our measure what they do of their abundance. In little ways, if not in great, we can let our friends see that we are ruled by one leading principle, apprehension of a Personal God; of One to whom we are personally attached; that in Him we have not only our Lord and Master but our dearest friend, who sticketh closer than a brother.

That we are so filled with gratitude towards Him that nothing can be too hard to do or to suffer in order to bring happiness to His lovable heart, and to show how sincerely we desire to repay Him, in some way or another, all the tender love and long-suffering mercy, with which He has followed us through thick and thin, even when we were treating Him cruelly, and repelling, pushing aside His gentleness towards us, and His persuasive yearning to become possessed of our souls.

Instead of being shy about it, as people are apt to be, let us glory in it. We know that the world is against Him, and that's why we're shy—we're afraid of the world.

No, my brethren, let us bring presents unto Him whom we ought to reverence. (Ps. 76: 11.)

We can guard our tongue; we can put a door on our lips; we can restrain our temper; we can yield our own wishes; we can show disgust at unseemly language; we can moderate our pleasures; we can pour oil on troubled waters.

And now we pass on to look briefly at that long seventh chapter of the Acts which has to do with the defence of Stephen and his ultimate death.

You will remember that he traces the history of God's chosen people, Israel, from the call of Abraham down through the sojourn in Egypt; the meeting of Jacob with his lost son, Joseph; the birth and the mission of Moses; the crossing of the Red Sea; the worship of the golden calf; the threat of God to carry them away into captivity in Babylon; the tabernacle of witness; and finally the building of the Temple by Solomon.

And here we pause to look a little more closely.

Stephen says: "But Solomon built him an house."

Up to this point he had been listened to patiently, uninterruptedly; but now he has a message to deliver such as our Lord Himself delivered in the 23rd chapter of S. Matthew, denouncing, over and over again, the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees, and characterizing Jerusalem as "Thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent to thee."

"Solomon built him an house. Howbeit the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build Me? saith the Lord, or what is the place of My rest? Hath not My hand made all these things?"

"Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have

not your fathers persecuted? And they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it." (VII: 47-53.)

You see how he charges home upon his hearers the same spirit of criminal resistance to the Holy Ghost as their fathers had shown. You see how exactly he follows the example of our Saviour. Stephen uses strong language; so did Christ to the scribes and Pharisees.

Up to this point they had heard him patiently; but at this point, when their wickedness is held up in its nakedness before their eyes, they are cut to the heart, and they gnash on him with their teeth. They cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city and stoned him.

Jesus was made to walk out of the city to a place called Golgotha, where they crucified Him.

Isn't it wonderful, these points of resemblance? But we must note one more point even yet more wonderful. I refer to those two remarkable sayings of the dying martyr, which bring his generous heart and holy soul more into harmony than anything else with the yearning heart and compassionate love of the dying Redeemer.

The first word of Jesus, presumably uttered while the cross of suffering was lying upon the ground, and the instruments of torture were being driven through those sacred hands which had rested in

blessing upon the heads of children, and had so recently held the blessed Sacrament of His own Body and Blood, and through those sacred feet which had carried Him about for 30 years doing good,—His first word, you remember, was this: "Father, forgive them for they know not **what they do**"; and His last word: "Father, into **Thy** hands I commend my spirit."

Stephen, from amid the pains of martyrdom, breathes out the very prayers of his Saviour in the agony of His passion. "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," and a few moments later: "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."

This intercession for his murderers is the first of its kind recorded in history. Since then many a martyr has made his last words at the stake, words of pitying intercession for his persecutors.

You know where Stephen, and other martyrs, learned to do this. It was from One who has said: "Come, and learn of Me."

The prayer of Jesus was the divine original of Stephen's prayer. Christ learned it **nowhere**; it sprang from His own human heart and His divine Personality. He gave us a pattern of something so sublime that no pattern of it had ever been as much as thought of before. All honour to blessed Stephen in that he was the first to manifest how deeply he had drawn from the fountain of Love itself, so that his soul was impregnated with that greatest of all Christian virtues, Charity. **Both** Stephen's prayers are addressed to Jesus Christ with the same confi-

dence as was Christ's Himself when he commended His soul to God the Father.

Stephen knew and believed, as fully as the beloved disciple, S. John, what Christ had said about His own Oneness with the Father. "I and My Father are One," "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father, but, in that I humbled Myself and took upon Me the form of a servant, My Father is greater than I." "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me."

So when they stoned Stephen **calling upon God**, he addressed God in these words: "Lord Jessu, receive my spirit."

This, however, is the earliest recorded instance of worship addressed directly to our Lord Jesus Christ, and this worship has been maintained throughout the ages by the Church, ever since, and throughout the ages of eternity it will never cease, for the worship of the Lamb is now the employment of the higher intelligences above, and will be the occupation of the Church Triumphant hereafter in heaven.

As blessed Stephen called upon Jesus in the hour of death, so, after his example, does the Church in to-day's Collect address her prayers to the second Person of the adorable Trinity.

For many years the only prescribed form of public worship was the Holy Eucharist, both on account of its intrinsic merit as well as because it is the act of worship commanded by our Lord Himself; and, although it has long ceased to be the only act of public prayer and worship, it has always maintained an

unique position in the services of the Church.

It alone is of obligation upon all Christians, at least on the Lord's Day—Sunday—the weekly commemoration of His Resurrection.

The Church addresses nearly all her prayers to the blessed Trinity in the Person of God the Father, because the Holy Eucharist (the greatest act of public worship) is a sacrificial presentation to God the Father of the sacrifice of Christ completed on the Cross of Calvary.

This, then and nothing else, accounts for the infrequency of prayers in public worship addressed to God the Son.

There are, of course, to be found elsewhere than in the Collects, frequent invocations of our blessed Lord, as "O Christ, hear us," "Christ, have mercy upon us," "O Lamb of God that takest away the sin of the world."

"When Thou tookest upon Thee to deliver man: Thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb."

"When Thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death Thou didst open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers."

"Thou sittest at the right hand of God: in the Glory of the Father."

"We believe that Thou shalt come: to be our Judge."

"We therefore pray Thee, help Thy servants, whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious Blood."

And by these invocations, and by these prayers,

the Church delights in her dogmatic assertion of the Divinity and Godhead of Jesus Christ.

We do homage to His Personality, and we do homage to His Unity with the Father, and the Holy Ghost.

There can be no more dogmatic assertions than those of the Creed. The Creed is dogma. And in the Creed we assert our belief in Him who sitteth on the right hand of the Father.

Now Stephen, you will observe, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and he said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God." (Acts VII.: 55, 56.)

Mark you this: Stephen saw Jesus **standing**—not **sitting**. Why this difference?

I think if we look into the narrative we can find a reason for it. When, in the Creed, we mention Him who sitteth at God's right hand, we are also naming Him who shall come again with clouds to judge both the quick and the dead.

When the High Priest Caiaphas accused our Lord, saying, "Tell us whether Thou be the Christ, the Son of God," Jesus answered: "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." (Matt. XXVI.: 64.)

It is **in judgment** that Jesus sits on the right hand of the Father.

He warns Caiaphas, and all who heard Him, of the

solemn judgment of the last day when, not as the Advocate with the Father, but as the King and Adjudicator, He will sit upon His throne judging the twelve tribes of Israel, types of the races of mankind.

It is significant, then, that to Stephen He does not present this avenging aspect.

For him He has nothing but tender compassion, divine sympathy. To Stephen is vouchsafed the consolation, while his bones are being crushed out, of seeing Jesus, leaving, as it were, His throne of judgment, rising to greet His first Christian martyr; moving forward with exceeding love and care for him, and standing up to help, support, and nerve him to go on enduring his awful torture, with continued patience, even unto the end; to help him in death, and then to receive his soul into His everlasting arms.

Precious indeed, in the sight of Jesus, is this death of His saint, and right dear in the sight of the Lord is every soul, for He shed His precious Blood for every soul; and to every soul who shall patiently continue to suffer for the truth's sake will He stretch out His everlasting arms, and fold that soul to His bosom.

My dear brethren, if we cherish the hope of everlasting life with any confidence, we must resign ourselves to the certainty of the fact that we can only pass to glory through suffering, we can only enter into God's Presence in heaven by the way of the Cross.

Our sufferings may not be of a corporal nature. It may be that God, in His mercy, will spare us the suffering of pain. But it is impossible to pass through life here without being called upon to suffer for the testimony of God's truth; for that testimony which the faithful must bear in the face of an antagonistic world; and for that testimony which the Holy Spirit bears in the consciences of all men, warning them in the midst of temptations, and rebuking them in the act of sin, calling upon them to repent and to return into the way of salvation.

The proneness to evil which resides in your fallen nature; the habit of sin which, by your frequent lapses from grace, you have acquired, must and will make it hard for you to love God as you ought to, and to serve Him as you would.

Resign yourselves, then, to do and to suffer whatsoever God would have you perform and endure. And may that prayer which you say at every Eucharist well up from the depths of your heart and soul "Give us grace so to follow the good example of Thy servants departed this life in Thy faith and fear, that with them we may be partakers of Thy heavenly kingdom."

THE CONTINUOUS STRUGGLE.

TEXT: Philippians III: 13, 14.

"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting these things which are behind, and reaching forth unto these things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus."

When the Apostle Paul wrote these words he was a prisoner in Rome. He had already laboured very abundantly, for it was about 27 years since his conversion. Let us consider for a moment how obedient to the heavenly vision this holy Apostle had continued to be ever since he cried out to his blessed Master, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" How obedient this Apostle had ever been, who now, in the greatest humility, exclaims: "I count not myself to have apprehended. . . . I reach forth to those things which are before. I press towards the mark. . . . Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after. . . . If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead."

O, what a lesson to us self-satisfied Christians! What had not this man already done for Christ? He had belonged to the most rigorous sect of the Pharisees, and had imbibed all their attachment to their traditions, and their fierce and ill-directed zeal.

He was, however, free from that hypocrisy which

our blessed Lord so bitterly denounced, and which barred the minds of the greater number of them to the reception of the truth. He was a man of strong character and high moral principle, and it was in the blind persuasion that he was doing God service that he persecuted the infant Church with relentless fury.

He is able, therefore, to say, with a clear conscience, "I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief." (I. Tim. 1: 13.)

You will remember how he said that God had marked him out from birth, or, to use his own expression, "He separated me from my mother's womb."

God endowed him with a strong and resolute character, but He did not compel him, any more than He does any other man, and it was not until he bowed in submission to the Divine call of Jesus, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" that that strong character of his was turned away from the course he was so strenuously, but so ignorantly, pursuing, and made to see, by the light of God's truth, that Jesus was the only Master worth serving. God took what was in Saul and diverted it from the perilous and erroneous enterprise it was engaged in; threw a flood of light across his spiritual pathway; opened his eyes to the fearful import of persecuting the followers of Jesus Christ, and made him see that the essence of sin's poison was a fighting against God. By offering himself as a sacrifice to the Divine Will, he enabled God to achieve in him the most marvellous

conversion of which we have any record. Ananias, the disciple at Damascus, had been told by God, in a vision, that Saul was a chosen vessel to bear His Name to the Gentiles, and that He would show him how great things he was destined to suffer for His Name's sake. S. Paul, of course, would have heard of this, but he was not the sort of man to be alarmed by such a prospect.

Later on, when his friends besought him not to adventure himself into Jerusalem for fear of the Jews, he answered them, "What mean ye to weep and to break my heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the Name of the Lord Jesus." (Acts XXI.: 13.)

And so, in the humility of his soul he uses such words as we have quoted in our text. "I count not myself to have apprehended. I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus." From the moment that he entered the service of our blessed Lord it became his duty, a duty which he embraced with all the fervour of his zealous nature, to give himself up to practical exile. He was forced, as a Christian, to break away from his old Hebrew friends; in fact, he placed his life in jeopardy by doing so, for we read of frequent designs on their part to put him to death. The endearments of domestic life he was obliged to abandon in order to become a missionary. Like his Divine Master during the years of His ministry, he had no fixed abode, but wandered about from place to place.

If he gained some few followers in one place he

had to leave them and seek for fresh ones in another. He had (before the time when he wrote this Epistle) been seized, together with Silas, and cast into a dungeon in Philippi, after having been unmercifully flogged. He tells us that five times he had been scourged by the Jews.

After visiting the various States of Greece and Asia Minor, braving every danger by land and sea in his pastoral solicitude for the Churches he had founded, he was called by the Spirit to Jerusalem, and of this he speaks in the following manner: "Behold I go bound in the Spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there, save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy." (Acts XX.: 22-24.)

He yielded himself up to God completely, to do with him according to His good pleasure. The one thing that supported him was the joy that was set before him: "That I might finish my course with joy."

For two long years he was held in imprisonment by the Governor, Felix, before whom (nothing daunted) he proclaimed the faith, and preached of justice and temperance, and judgment to come.

Such is a mere sketch of the suffering he endured for Christ's Name's sake; and in spite of all this we look in vain for any symptom of depression on the Apostle's mind. Writing from his Roman prison, he

begs the Church in Philippi to "understand that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather to the furtherance of the Gospel." From his bonds, and the manner and spirit in which they were borne, his very jailors would be impressed with something of that leaven which would eventually revolutionize the thinking and feeling of the world.

Of himself he took no account; so long as the cause of Jesus Christ was made to prosper he was content, and he rejoiced. The energy of his soul rose superior to the need of human sympathy. He lived so completely in the world above that he felt no need of the consolations of this world below. We are inclined to wonder whether such an one had any lively experience of the bitterness of the struggle which we feel through the stress of temptation; whether correspondence with divine grace was not so easy a matter for him that the force of temptation could not make itself felt. Most assuredly he was not exempt from this; for a greater than he, even the Master in whose footsteps he was treading, had felt the bitterness of Satan's wiles, and struggled against temptation in the agony and bloody sweat of Gethsemane; for "He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

And this is why S. Paul rejoiced in afflictions. They made him conformable to the death of Christ; they pointed forward to the resurrection of the dead.

The knowledge of the potent force of temptation

drew from him the confession that he had not as yet attained, neither had yet been made perfect; that the struggle must still go on; that his Christian race was still being run; that the mark for the prize had not yet been reached, but that he must continue to press onward towards it. That he must bend himself still to the race in order to secure the final and complete possession of so great a prize and so glorious a crown.

It is quite unnecessary to conclude, from what the Apostle says in our text, that he had misgivings as to the final issue of the spiritual struggle in which he was continually engaged. There is abundant evidence, throughout his numerous epistles, of the sure trust and confidence with which he reposed upon divine grace. For instance, to the Galatians, he thus declares himself: "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God." (Gal. II.: 20.)

What he is really asserting is this: that if it were of any benefit to have confidence in the flesh, he of all men might put in such a claim; for he was a circumcised Jew, a zealous Pharisee, and blameless touching the righteousness which is by the law. But indeed he was not standing upon any merit of his own. Any goodness that might be in him was the product of divine grace, not of works that he had done. All such things, yea and everything, he counted loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus.

For Him, he says, "I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, but the righteousness which is of God."

And this disregard of self, this absolute refusal to claim any personal merit, he makes because he so fervently desires to know Jesus Christ, and the power that His resurrection from the dead was capable of effecting in him. To this most desirable end he was ready, nay anxious, to endure bonds and imprisonment and death itself.

Although he could have had no doubt that Christ had placed him on the straight and narrow way which leads unto life, he knew how easy it might be for himself, as well as for others, to swerve off the track.

Like the racers in the Greek games, he was resolved to concentrate every thought and every act upon reaching the goal, which was not set at any point short of the final finish of the contest. To use another metaphor, he realized that he, and his Philippian disciples, had to fight the good fight of faith until the foes that were opposing them in the struggle were utterly vanquished.

He is more fearful of the failure of some of the Philippians than of his own failure, and it is in order to encourage them that he bids them look at what he himself is doing in the Christian struggle that is going on. He knows the danger of seduction, coming from the Jews for instance, whom he calls dogs,

and evil workers. They had done their best to thwart him, and they were pretty sure to attack him in his Philippian converts. As a faithful pastor, he calls upon them to be faithful followers together with himself, and to take note of those who were walking after the example that he had set them. (III.: 17.)

“Stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.” (IV.: 1.)

Be stablished in the good work already begun in you. It is by the grace of God that ye are what ye are.

He would have his beloved disciples so possessed with the resolution to be true to their high calling in Christ Jesus that they would be able to say, as he had said of himself, “His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain.” (I. Cor., XV.: 10.)

The practical way to carry out such good resolutions was to press toward the mark, forgetting those things which are behind, bending every energy towards those things which are before.

The Christian must not, like Lot’s wife, look back on Sodom; he must look forward, and press forward, to the place of refuge. This does not mean that we must put entirely out of mind the past experiences of our Christian warfare.

A penitent Christian can never cease to mourn over his former sins; the thought of them will be ever present to him, even though they have been washed away in the tide of the precious Blood. What has been can never be as though it had not been. Our

sins that are past are not only a constant warning to us of the misery that may befall us again, through defection from divine grace, but they are a goading of the conscience which ought to cause us to sorrow for the cruel treatment we have meted out to our most loving Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,—to cause us to mourn over the fact that we have so often crucified the Lord afresh, and put Him to an open shame. And this remorseful attitude of the soul, this true contrition, will move us the more to love our dear Lord, who nevertheless patiently endured the stripes we laid upon Him, and loved us, none the less, but only the more, because He so ardently desired our reformation and the salvation of our souls.

“Forgetting those things which are behind,” if it means forgetting (in a certain sense) our past sinfulness and our past sins, really imports this, that the penitent and striving Christian is to bear in mind that he has turned his back upon sin, and is resolved that the enticing allurements, and the pleasure it procured to his corrupt nature shall never again seduce him from allegiance to God, and obedience to the monitions of the Holy Ghost.

Instead, and as a medicine to heal his sickness, he places God always before him.

He no longer faces sin, he faces God.

“Forgetting those things which are behind” may also mean that we are not to allow the recollection of sin and guilt to weigh us down and bring a dejection bordering on despair.

There is no sin so foul but that, when brought in true penitence to the throne of mercy, it cannot be washed away in the superabundance of the stream of Precious Blood that our blessed Lord poured forth from His sacred veins. We can never commit the sin of despair with that inspired word of the Apostle ringing in our ears: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all men to be received, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Or again, those very words of Christ Himself, "I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."

Infinite as are the varieties of life, so manifold are the paths of holiness of living, and he who has not found out how to make ordinary things converge towards the sanctification of his soul, has not grasped the real meaning of his having been brought at all into this world. It is not by regretting what cannot be undone that true work can be accomplished, but by making the most of present opportunities, and the best of what we are.

To be a Christian is a very lofty thing, "a high calling," for a Christian is one who is restoring Christ's likeness to his character.

Let a man first of all yield to the conviction of the Holy Ghost that he is a wretched sinner, and then let him fix his eye, in faith, on the love of God in Christ Jesus, for it was while we were yet sinners that Christ died for us.

It would never enter into the human mind to suffer for a wicked man. When a criminal is con-

demned we all look for the speedy execution of justice, and we want to see him put out of the way for the protection of society, and for a warning to others. To suffer and to die for one's enemies belongs only to the fire of Divine Love. As Christ was the first to pray for His enemies, so is He the only one capable of loving sinners, who are His enemies, and dying for them.

What should, then, our attitude be to God our Saviour?

Surely we should be moved to most bitter sorrow; surely we should pour out our soul in anguish as we realize the sinfulness of sin. And we must implore the mercy of God, and invoke the outpouring of His Grace to the end that, in the strength thereof, we may hereafter struggle to shape our lives in obedience to His holy will, and to plant our feet in the footprints He has left for us to walk in, in the way that leadeth to eternal life.

THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST.

TEXT: St. Luke XVIII: 18-19.

"A certain ruler asked Him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou Me good? None is good save One, that is God."

This incident is one of very special importance, and is recorded in each of the three synoptic Gospels. St. Luke is the only one of the Evangelists who speaks of the man as a young ruler.

According to St. Mark's account he exhibited great earnestness in his approach to Christ.

"There came one running and kneeling to Him, and asked Him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" (Mark X.: 17.)

From this we learn that he evidently did not come tempting our Lord, as others did, but sincerely desirous to be taught by one whom it is not improbable he looked upon as a great prophet, if not the Prophet who should come into the world.

Our blessed Lord does not meet him with reproof. He was evidently impulsive, but sincere, and withal ignorant of himself, and of the demands of God upon him.

St. Mark tells us that Jesus beholding him loved him. That reminds one of the way Christ received Nathaniel, "Behold an Israelite indeed in whom

there is no guile." He meets him, however, at the outset, with a question which would sober him, as it were, and make him careful how he answered One who would take him at his word; not as he understood it, but as he ought to have understood it. "Why callest thou Me good?"

It is as if He asked, Dost thou call Me good out of mere courtesy, as thou wouldst call any scribe or rabbi "good"; or dost thou call Me good as being the only Son of Him who alone is essentially good?

This question of our blessed Lord's is a very deep one. It does not appear to have anything to do with the mission on which this enquirer had approached Him. He came to know what good thing was required of him to have eternal life, and instead of at once replying to that question, our Lord abruptly interposes another question.

It is as though Christ had said to him, Before we come to consider what you are to do to inherit eternal life, let there be a clear understanding of your estimate of the One of whom you make this enquiry. Our blessed Lord, when He said, "There is none good but One, that is God," is not repudiating the title.

It cannot, however, be applied to Him if He be merely man. God alone is "Good" in the absolute sense.

All who had heard of Jesus of Nazareth, and of the works of kindness and mercy He had been doing, regarded Him as a good man; His very enemies felt this to be so.

What our blessed Lord was seeking for this young man whom He loved was to teach him something about Himself which would enable him to discover that the way to eternal life was through a knowledge of God and of His Son, Jesus Christ.

That He Himself was the Way; that eternal life depended on knowing God and Jesus Christ, whom God hath sent.

It is observable that, notwithstanding the greatness of our Lord's miracles and teaching, there is a remarkable absence of any full and clear declaration respecting Himself.

He would have men find out for themselves that He was the long-looked-for Messiah. He would have them search the Scripture, "for they are they which testify of Me." He constantly points to His words, works, or miracles.

When John sent two of his disciples to ask Him if He were the Christ, He replies by performing works of healing, and then says, "Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard, how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the Gospel is preached." (Luke VII.: 22.)

Again, at the feast of the Dedication at Jerusalem, "the Jews came round about Him, and said unto Him, How long dost Thou make us to doubt? If Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly."

Jesus answered, "I told you and ye believed not: the works that I do, in My Father's name, they bear witness of me." (John X.: 22, 39.)

If John did not say that He was the Christ, neither did our Lord Himself say so; but both John and Christ Himself referred to His works. Each taught the doctrine **by implication.**

As S. Chrysostom says: "S. John, by calling Him 'the Lamb' plainly sets forth the Cross; as no other-wise than by the Cross did He take away the sin of the world."

And so, in our text: "Why eallest thou Me good?" it is by implication that our blessed Lord teaches His divinity.

If this young man had not gone away from Jesus sorrowful, because he couldn't bring himself to part with his great possessions; if he had, by renouncing his wealth, taken up his cross and followed Jesus, he would have been taken into the company of the Lords' disciples, and would have enjoyed the disciplinary training the Apostles enjoyed in having their hearts and minds opened step by step to the recognition of Jesus as the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. As it was, he went away sorrowful, taking with him, no doubt, the words of Jesus to ponder over; and, let us hope that after our Lord was crucified—having long pondered over this interview—he would have cried out with the centurion, "Truly this was the Son of God." (Matt. XXVII.: 54.)

The number of books spread abroad throughout Christendom is ever growing, in which what is derogatory to the honour of Jesus Christ is loudly proclaimed.

One, translated into English within the last ten years, speaking of the Holy Gospels, says: "The portions to which exceptions are taken are open to the suspicion that they are the outcome of feelings of devotion, and not purely objective renderings of the facts as they actually occurred." (Arno Neumann, Preface IX.)

And, in another place: "The figure of Jesus was originally a truly human one, and we can therefore speak of Him as 'divine' only in the sense that divinity is possible within the limits of the human." (Idem, p. 11.)

This sort of thing is the subtle work of the Devil. There is in it the wisdom which is neither of God nor of man. It is the serpent that eludes, slips out of sight, and strikes unawares.

Satan was once an angel of light, and although we are not told exactly wherein his rebellion against God consisted, it is by no means unlikely that it was in some way connected with the preordained Incarnation of the Son of God; for Jesus seems to be the special object of Satan's diabolical machinations and attacks. It is Him that he attacks in the children of men.

He is ever striving to pervert souls by robbing them of the belief that Jesus of Nazareth was the only Son of God.

From the very beginning he has insinuated the poison of heresy into the Church.

Within the past few years a priest in England was inhibited by his bishop for publishing a book

proclaiming the denial of the truth that Jesus was conceived in the womb of a pure Virgin by the direct operation of the Holy Ghost; by which truth is meant that the Holy Ghost did not work in co-operation with a human father, but in place thereof.

The book is written with the purpose of disparaging the verity of every miracle recorded in the Gospels.

"We have no experience," says the writer, "and can never hope to have experience, of water suddenly changing into wine, of trees withering away in a moment, of iron gates swinging open of their own accord. Either these events are miracles, or they never happened. The upshot of our inquiry," he continues, "is that they never happened."

It is quite true that we have no experience of such events as these, and it is for this very reason that they are given such prominence in the Gospel narrative. We have no experience of them because no mere man ever lived who could do such mighty works. Man is not endowed with faculties capable of healing the sick, cleansing lepers, giving sight to the blind, and hearing to the deaf, making the lame to walk, and raising the dead. Such power belongs only to the Creator and Controller of all things visible and invisible. We have no experience of them because we do not live in that period of time when the Son of God was manifested in the flesh. He appeared in human form only once, when He came and accomplished the greatest achievement it is possible to contemplate, the magnificence of which baffles the angels to look into.

He came only once, but let it ever be remembered that He will come again, and the second time it will be to sever believers from the unbelieving, to judge both the quick and the dead.

The great work of our age, and for all who are striving for the Truth, is to contend against and to exterminate the primary error of those false notions of Christ's personality, which regard Him as the mere Founder of a system, whether moral, philosophical or religious.

The modern form of Socinianism, the Straussian, after denying the Son and the Holy Spirit, has ended in denying the Father also, and has plunged over the precipice of Pantheism into the abyss of Atheism.

It is not because Christ was miraculously conceived in the womb of a Virgin, not because He rose from the dead having seen no corruption, not because He performed miracles, not because He forgave sins while here on earth, not because He promised everlasting life to His faithful disciples; it was by reason of none of these that Jesus was Divine. It is, on the other hand, precisely because He was what He was, the second Person of the adorable Trinity, that, consistently with the nature of His being, these things were accomplished in and by Him.

It could not be otherwise. Mighty works showed themselves forth in Him who was the Maker and the Controller of the Universe.

It was those who knew Him not that were "amazed at the mighty power of God" in Him. (Luke IX.: 43.)

God's permission of evil, and man's awful capacity to commit sin, can alone be explained by the admission of the truth that the Lamb of God came down from heaven to mediate between God and man. God endowed man with the power to choose between good and evil, and He permitted sin to enter into this world because, in the exercise of His foreknowledge, He had ordained the means whereby He would restore the broken law of His creation.

The Incarnation, and the consequent Atonement, shows this process of restoration actually at work in the world, and it is prophetic of its eventual accomplishment.

The advent of Jesus Christ in the flesh was a new fact in human history.

"The Word made flesh," "The Lord from heaven," is exhibited in the human life of Jesus, as set forth in the Gospels.

He claimed to be sinless in the midst of a sinful world.

He challenges His enemies to convict Him of sin, if they can.

He never hints that He has done or said anything which needs forgiveness. He teaches His disciples to pray, "Forgive us our trespasses," but He never prays for pardon for Himself. Sorrow and contrition make us men think of our sins—which cause both. Jesus, in His sorrow, has no sins of His own to think about: He thinks only of the sins of others. True, He is tempted, but there is nothing within Him that can respond or yield to temptation. He is "holy,

harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." And no attempts to fasten sin upon Him have had a trace of success, except so far as they have gone hand-in-hand with a denial of His personal claims. He claimed authority to innovate upon the moral legislation of the past—"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time" such and such things, "but I say unto you"—something quite different, and something springing from Christian love, or from love itself, which is from God.

To the astonishment of His hearers, He claimed power on earth to forgive sins.

He claimed the personal allegiance of men. He promised to the weary and heavy laden **rest in Himself**. He is the Shepherd of their souls, the way to immortality, the Life-tree of humanity.

Men were commanded to forsake everything, houses and lands, wife and children, to become His disciples. The gift of eternal life He offered to those who fed upon His Body and His Blood.

Such are the claims Jesus Christ made for Himself, and to perpetuate these claims He founded the Church.

The powers He claimed for Himself He transmitted to the Apostles, to whom He said, "As may Father hath sent me, even so send I you."

The Church has produced in every age, and still continues to produce, men and women whose holiness marks them off from the average, and whose moral influence has raised the standard and improved the condition of the world.

Yes, Jesus claimed to be God, and the Church's continued existence is the result of the fact that Jesus still lives within it as the Source of all its life. And, as for us individual members of the Church, our spiritual condition depends upon our personal relation to Christ, and this, of course, must be affected by our conception of what and who He is.

We know Him to be God incarnate, and His advent on earth to be that of a pre-existent Being.

In respect of His human nature, He is a new creation,—a new creation of the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life.

His personality was conceived, and His human nature created, when the Angel of the Annunciation said to Mary: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, wherefore also that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

Enquiring minds have ever been occupied with attempts to fathom the mysterious personality of Jesus. His real greatness affirms itself in each repeated failure which betokens human incapacity to comprehend His Being, and to interpret Him aright.

That precisely now He has some word for us, that precisely now we have some need of Him, is the overwhelming conviction of the Holy Ghost in our inmost heart. Yet then only can He speak to us, then only can He be a help to us, when apprehended as He really was. Bossuet has said that He had it in Him to be, and He is, "Leader of humanity to God."

What He knows Himself to be He proclaims that

He is. One with God, He has shared the Divine Glory. He had come down from heaven in all the fulness of divine knowledge and power, and He returns finally to the throne on high.

Of Himself and of His Father He speaks in the same breath; He proclaims His oneness with the Father, and He accepts the great confession, "My Lord and my God." (Jno. XX.: 28.)

To quote Bossuet once more:

"The short-lived but crowded Ministry hurries to a close; then, not a victim of an official blunder, but by reason of asserted claims, He goes to death, which, cruel and ignominious, is the Crown and consummation of His life."

It was a wondrous transmutation on the part of those who drank deepest of His Spirit.

The kingdom of His proclamation and expectation was realized in the Christian Church.

The activities of His Church are inspired by Him; of them He is the Source and Fountain Head.

We see in Him the Sower of His own parable who goes forth to sow the seed of His teaching and of Himself in the immeasurable field of time.

If the conception of Christ by the Holy Ghost, as the Church accepts that doctrine, be not true; if Jesus be not what He proclaims Himself to be, come forth from the Father into the world, the whole fabric of Christian doctrine falls to the ground.

He would have had no authority, and would have possessed no qualifications to fit Him for making any revelation of the Father, or of verities relating

to the world to come.

There would remain nothing to assure us of the inspiration of the ancient Scriptures. The history of God's chosen people would be nothing more than so many pages of profane and not of sacred history.

Our blessed Lord longs for the acknowledgment from us of His Godhead. You remember how He led His disciples away to the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, "leading them," as S. Chrysostom says, "far away from the Jews, so that, being free from all alarm, they might speak with all boldness all that was in their mind."

And thus, alone with the Twelve, He utters, with most ardent desire, the question, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" He longs to hear some acknowledgment of that glory which He had laid aside for us men and for our salvation; and when He hears (as He knew he would) that men didn't know what estimate to form of Him, some thinking that He was Elias, and some John the Baptist or another great prophet, He then puts the further question: "But whom say ye that I am?" (Matt. XVI.: 13.)

He wanted to rejoice His heart by hearing Peter say not only "Thou art the Christ," but "Thou art the Son of the living God."

Consider the joy of our blessed Lord on hearing from the lips of His disciple this fervent acknowledgment of His glory.

S. Augustine evidently realized how honourable it was to his Divine Master, and what delight it

would bring to His sacred Heart to hear the exultant proclamation of His glory, which he enunciated, and which the Church will never cease to sing in that song of praise—the *Te Deum*.

“Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ, Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father. When Thou tookest upon Thee to deliver man, Thou didst not abhor the Virgin’s womb. When Thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, Thou didst open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers.”

“Thou sittest at the right hand of God, in the glory of the Father. We worship Thy Name ever world without end.”

Yes, it brings joy to our Lord God to hear His children sing His praises, and it brings unutterable grief to His loving Heart to hear others defame and desecrate His sacred Name.

We who believe in Him are all too ready to sing His praises, but are we as eager to manifest this forth in our lives?

The power of the spirit of Christ, what S. Paul speaks of as “the power of His resurrection,” is what we need to stimulate us and make us follow the footsteps of His most holy life.

So that we must not only say, “Thou art my God, and I will thank Thee; Thou art my God, and I will praise Thee,” (Ps. CXVIII.: 28) but also, “Teach me to do the thing that pleaseth Thee, for Thou art my God; let Thy loving Spirit lead me forth into the land of righteousness.” (Ps. CXLIII.: 10.)

And finally, my brethren, be not carried about with

every blast of vain doctrine, but abide in the unconquerable faith of the Church of the living God.

Let each of us, as we value the safety of our immortal souls, see to it that we are not found among the number of those unfortunate agnostics; for it is necessary for every one who willeth to be saved, above all things to hold the Catholic Faith.

HOLY BAPTISM.

Preached on the occasion of the baptism of my Grandson.

TEXT: S. John I: 12.

"As many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name."

We read in the earliest pages of Holy Scripture that God created man in His own image, and that He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. And so God is our Creator, the Author of our being, and in this sense God is our Father; and if He is our Father then are we the sons of God.

We derive our sonship through our parents. Our parents are but the instruments whereby God brings each one of us into the world.

Now, when the creation of man took place is not definitely revealed, but there were countless generations of men before S. John wrote these words, "As many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God."

It is manifest, therefore, that the sonship of which the Apostle speaks is something transcending even our sonship by creation; something additional to it; something drawing us into a much closer relationship to our heavenly Father than that which we

derive as children of Adam.

Indeed, the Apostle expressly asserts this to be so, for he says these sons of God are not born according to the law of nature, they are not born of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but they are born of God.

This is assuredly something new—a sonship which dates from the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh; a sonship which depends upon our receiving Him who is come in the flesh.

In one of his Epistles, S. John calls out to us, and in a tone of admiration exclaims: “Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God!” (1. Jno. III.: 1.)

We have just witnessed an exhibition of this exercise of the love of God our Father, through His Son Jesus Christ. We have just seen a child of nature made a child of grace. We have just witnessed that of which S. Paul speaks in his Epistle to Titus: “But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.” (Titus III.: 4-5.)

Holy Baptism is the divinely appointed Sacrament whereby the recipient is made a new creature, and is brought into that family of God of which Jesus Christ Himself is the Elder Brother. The Holy Ghost kills sin in us, in the waters of Baptism, and

we rise out of these waters into a life of righteousness.

We are restored to a state of justification through our incorporation into Christ Jesus.

We have something to do with this ourselves; some part to take in it. You will notice that the Evangelist tells us that this power to become the sons of God, by adoption and grace, is given to those who receive Jesus Christ by faith. As far as the part we must take in the matter is concerned, faith is the foundation, or the root from which our justification springs.

The good-will of him who comes to Holy Baptism, and his concurrence, must combine with the sacramental means instituted by God's loving mercy for his salvation. It is to this concurrence that S. Augustine refers when he says: "God created you without your aid, but He will not save you without your aid."

But how can this infant you have just seen baptized perform his part in this covenant with God?

Renunciation or repentance (whichever you choose to call it), and faith, are both required, and the expression of these two, in the name of the child, by its Godparents, is accepted by the Church. The Godparents do for the occasion represent the Church, the spiritual mother of the child to be born again.

She, being guided by the Holy Ghost, in this matter cannot err. Moreover, She, the Spouse of Christ, who can look up to Her Lord and say: "My Beloved is mine and I am His," knoweth the mind

of Christ. She knoweth His mind who said, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

In the Epistle to the Romans S. Paul writes: "Ye have received the spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with Him that we may be also glorified together." (Rom. VIII.: 14, 17.)

In another verse of the same chapter we read: "Whom He justified, them also He glorified."

This being glorified together with Jesus, or more accurately this "sharing in the glory of Jesus," must not be misunderstood.

Though the word "glorified" is properly applied to the final beatification in heaven, that does not appear to be its special meaning here.

You will remember the words of our beloved Redeemer in His High-priestly prayer in the 17th chapter of S. John. "The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them," (Jno. XVII.: 22), and in the Christmas Gospel the Evangelist says: "We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father."

So that, being made sons of God and joint heirs with Christ, we not only look forward to being partakers of His glory hereafter, but we actually share His glory here and now, and that glory consists in being the brethren of the Incarnate Son of

God, as S. Paul tells us in these solemn and impressive words: "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren." (Rom. VIII.: 29.)

This is the glory of the Christian. A son of God because a member of Christ, and a sharer in the glory which He had with the Father in the beginning when the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Again I say, Behold how the love of God for us is thus manifested. To secure this sonship for us, to secure to us the incalculable privilege of sharing in the glory of His only-begotten Son, so fervently has He loved us that He sent Him into the world to purchase our redemption by the shedding of His most precious Blood. Sin had caused such disorder in our nature, such aversion to what is good, and such inclination to evil, that we needed as much a perfect Restorer to rescue us from that disorder as we did a perfect Redeemer to make satisfaction for our guilt. The Son of God, then, in undertaking of His infinite goodness to redeem the human race, not only merited for us redemption from all our sins, but also left us an example and pattern of every virtue for the reformation of our life and ways.

Accordingly, S. Paul teaches us that, as we have borne the image of the earthly Adam, (being conceived and born in sin), so must we endeavour to bear the image of the heavenly Adam, our Lord Jesus Christ, by the change and renewal of our life,

as soon as we have been incorporated with Him by His grace communicated to us in Holy Baptism. (I. Cor. XV.: 49.) And, in another place, he exhorts us, as having put on the Lord Jesus, to live as men redeemed by His Blood and taught by His example. (Rom. XIII.: 14.)

Now, when the Apostle speaks of our heavenly Father as "God our Saviour," as he does in the words, "When the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared," he does so because the goodness and love of God the Father is the source of man's redemption.

He who, from all eternity, foresaw man's fall, from all eternity devised the means of man's recovery. He gave His only-begotten Son, and His Son yielded up Himself in obedience to His Father's will, and that offering was well-pleasing and acceptable to God.

Thus, through the infinite Love of the Triune God, and on account of all that the precious Blood merited for us, we are by baptism brought into a state of salvation, and made heirs of eternal life.

In the passage I have quoted from the Epistle to Titus: "Not by works done in righteousness which we did ourselves, but according to His mercy He saved us," the Apostle emphasizes the fact that we do not effect our own salvation, nor does God effect it in return for any merit of ours; but, on the other hand, he gives no encouragement to the belief that we have nothing to do with working out our own salvation, and that we have simply to remain pas-

sive, and accept what has been done for us.

No man can fit himself for the kingdom of heaven by any unaided effort of his own, but we must realize that God will fit a man for heaven only if that man co-operates with divine grace. It is the indwelling grace which sanctifies and fits for heaven, and without personal holiness no man can see God.

To the intent that he may grow in holiness the new-born Christian must appropriate and use the grace bestowed upon him in this holy sacrament of baptism.

To the end that this growth may have a continual development, we ask God, in the Christmas Collect, to grant that we who are regenerate and made His children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by His Holy Spirit.

And in the Baptismal Office, immediately after the child is baptized and received into the congregation of Christ's flock, the priest, first stating that holy baptism has regenerated the infant and grafted it into the body of Christ's Church, calls upon the congregation to make their prayers with one accord to God, that this child may lead the rest of his life according to this beginning.

Man's co-operation is indispensable to the perfect work of his salvation, for God saves no man against his will. The omnipotence of God and the free-will of man are bound together by some inscrutable law by which the Justice and Mercy of Almighty God are pleased to be governed.

The teaching in our Prayer Book regarding Baptismal regeneration is clear and emphatic. There is nothing whatever obscure about it. That there are those outside the Church who deny this doctrine is not so much to be wondered at as that there are some within the Church who do.

They say that all one has to do . . . to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and we shall be saved.

These words are taken from what S. Paul said to the heathen jailor. This man came, trembling and affrighted, and fell down before S. Paul and Silas, crying: "What must I do to be saved?" The Apostles answered: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved and thy house."

Now what followed?

First, S. Paul and Silas instructed them in the truths of the Gospel, this man and his family: "They spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house"; and in the next place they baptized them.

"And the jailor took Paul and Silas the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his straightway."

And yet people say, all that is necessary is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved.

Most undoubtedly that is all that is necessary, but that is very much. It does not mean that you only have to believe fully and self-convincingly that Christ died for your sins and for those of the whole world; it does mean that, but it means much more. To believe on the Lord Jesus Christ means, to put

every trust and confidence in Him; to surrender yourself in full obedience to Him; to do exactly what He tells you to do, and believe every word He uttered. Now He has said: "Except a man be born again he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," and when He said this He did not allow Nicodemus to misinterpret its meaning. He explained to him that being "born again" meant being born of water and of the Spirit; and accordingly when He commissioned the Apostles to go out and preach the Gospel throughout the world He bade them baptize in the name of the Blessed Trinity; and He spoke this most solemn word: "Whosoever believeth and is baptized shall be saved; and whosoever believeth not shall be damned."

It is inconceivable how any thinking man can really believe that a just God will save him simply because he gives his consent to the Atonement made by Christ Jesus. If that is all, why distress ourselves by taking up our cross every day to follow Jesus? Why worry ourselves to do as S. Paul tells us and work out our own salvation with fear and trembling? Why, indeed, be so careful about all our religious obligations?

No, my brethren, God is merciful, but God is equally just; and He will account no man holy except that man has really become holy by the infusion of divine grace. As I have just said: it is the indwelling Christ which sanctifies and fits for heaven.

And that this incorporation into Him may be effected He has appointed holy baptism. It is a

means or a channel through which the Holy Ghost operates. A sacrament is of efficacy only because it is ordained and appointed by Christ Himself as a means whereby the grace of such a sacrament is imparted to the receiver of the same.

It is not water that cleanses in holy baptism; it is the Holy Ghost; but water must be used, and a certain definite form of words, for the simple reason that Christ has so ordered.

Now, if any man believes in the Lord Jesus Christ he will take Him at His word. He won't argue about the logic of what Christ teaches.

Baptismal regeneration, for him, will be regarded as lifted above the realm of discussion and placed upon the higher plane of revelation.

I wish I had time to say something about the Church's purpose in directing this Sacrament of Holy Baptism to be administered in the presence of a large congregation.

You will find this set forth in the first rubric of the Baptismal Office.

Never forget this, my brethren, Holy Baptism brands us with a mark, an impress, a character, such as can never be effaced.

That impress may be soiled, blotted, defiled—but obliterated never. Christians we are, stamped with God's image upon our souls, whether for weal or woe.

This is what this beautiful Sacrament of regeneration brings back to our minds, the obligations under which we stand to God our Saviour.

Consider the debt of love we owe to Him, even to

Christ, who "also loved the Church, and gave Himself up for it that He might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water by the Word." (Eph. V.: 26.)

My brethren, let it be our earnest endeavour to sanctify the Lord God in our hearts, for we are very members incorporate in His mystical Body which He loves with that tender affection which is faintly typified by the love between man and wife.

It is because He desires to present to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that our dear Lord exhorts us in these words: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect."

Every man, in his peculiar vocation, is predestined by Almighty God to some particular and definite function; this is God's loving purpose towards each one of us; and in order that each may bend his will to correspond to this loving purpose of God, we are bidden to strive to attain, if not to the state of perfection, at any rate to the perfection of our state.

In this stimulating call to perfection our blessed Lord is not speaking exclusively to His disciples, but to the multitudes who were thronging about Him. It was upon seeing the multitudes He went up into a mountain, and sitting down there He opened His mouth and taught them. And what did He teach them? The nine beatitudes!

Blessed are the poor in spirit.

Blessed are they that mourn.

Blessed are the meek, and so forth.

Then, summing it all up, He appeals most yearningly: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

Fidelity to the grace of God; fidelity to the service of our Master, fills the soul of the faithful servant with the confident assurance that nothing will be left undone on God's part to secure his final salvation. This is the virtue of Hope.

We may at times pine and languish for some sensible indication of the operations of grace within our souls; but are we not unconscious of the circulation of the blood in our veins, and are we not even unconscious of the indwelling of the soul within the body? So then we need not worry if God withholds from us a sensibility of the operations of the Holy Ghost, provided we do no despoise to that Holy Spirit.

We have gone to the Font and come forth regenerate and made sons of God. With broken and contrite heart (which God will never despise) we confess our sins to Him, and hear the priest, from whom we receive absolution, remind us of the power the Lord Jesus left with His Church to forgive sins; and we come away from the confessional with our souls washed in the Blood of the Lamb. Also do we go to the Altar of God where we are fed with His Flesh and refreshed with His Blood, and whether, in any of these sacraments, we experience a sensibility

of the Grace of God, and of His Divine Presence, within us or not, we may (nothing doubting) rest in the blessed assurance that our Blessed Lord comes to dwell with us, and to make His mansion in our souls.

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER.

TEXT: Psalm CXIX: 10.

"With my whole heart I have sought Thee: O let me not go wrong out of Thy commandments."

The parable of to-day's Gospel, that of the Sower, is the first one recorded of the many spoken by our blessed Lord.

Although this method of teaching was undoubtedly employed by Christ in order to reach the hearts of all who came to hear Him, yet it would seem that He always had His beloved disciples primarily in view.

After recording the parable of the mustard seed, S. Mark goes on to say, "With many such parables spake He the Word unto them, as they were able to bear it. But without a parable spake He not unto them: and when they were alone He expounded all things to His disciples." (Mark IV.: 33, 34.)

The reason for this will be found in our Lord's reply to that enquiry of the disciples, "Why speakest Thou unto them in parables?" (Matt. XIII.: 10.) "Because," He said, "it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God; but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables." (Mark IV.: 2.)

And then our Lord adds: "For whosoever hath to him shall be given . . . but whosoever hath not from him shall be taken away even that he hath." (Matt. XIII.: 12.)

Now, if it be asked what the disciples had, which the scribes and Pharisees and the multitudes had not, surely the answer is that they had childlike, simple faith, and they were both anxious and willing to learn; their hearts were open to receive our Lord's teaching about the mysteries of the kingdom.

On the occasion of these seven parables, (of which the parable of the Sower was the first), much people, according to S. Luke, were gathered together, and this fact receives greater emphasis from S. Matthew and S. Mark, according to whom the multitudes were so great that our Lord went into a ship so as to be more free to address the people crowded about on the shore to hear Him.

Such was ever the case throughout our blessed Lords' life.

To all except the rich and learned, who were hardened against His teaching, and those who were too busy with other pursuits, our Lord was very attractive. "The common people heard Him gladly," i.e., the bulk of the people, the multitudes, heard Him gladly.

Now, the throng being very great, our Lord's disciples would naturally take this as evidence of great enthusiasm; they would estimate the followers of Jesus numerically. Not so, however, our blessed Lord Himself. He would discern the different mo-

tives which each had in coming to hear Him. It is much the same with any large congregation of people to-day. Churches are often filled to overflowing, especially when some notable preacher is going to occupy the pulpit.

The Great Discerner of hearts alone can tell where earnest desire to hear God's truth exists.

As He sits in the ship, on this occasion, He sifts and winnows His hearers. Mere numbers do not deceive Him; He trieth the very hearts and reins.

In God's husbandry, the harvest does not depend upon the quality of the seed sown, or upon the faithfulness of the sower, but upon the quality of the soil into which the seed falls. The Sower is always the Lord Jesus Christ; sometimes He sows the seed by His direct word, as, for instance, when He says, "If ye love Me, keep my commandments," and by the many other sayings of the Lord Jesus which have been preserved for us in the Holy Gospels.

Sometimes it is by the Holy Spirit that His message is brought home to our conscience. Sometimes He speaks to us through those to whom He entrusted His own commission which He received from the Father. That is to say, the clergy of the Church are the ministers of His Gospel.

Now, in this case, it may be thought that there are portions of the Lord's vineyard where much does depend upon the quality of the seed sown; for it is not given to all, who are commissioned to teach, rightly to divide the word of truth. In answer to this difficulty, it may be said that whenever anything

is taught which is not in full harmony with the truth, as the Church has received it, then the seed of God's word is not sown, but rather some spurious and deleterious cockle which, alas, grows up with the pure wheat of Truth and too often renders it unfruitful. The sad thing about this is that they who are subjected to such false teaching, being left without proper guidance, are ensnared and beguiled, and their deluded teachers—(for they are often themselves deluded)—are laying up for themselves a heavy burden of judgment to come, and they will have to answer for the sheep of His pasture whom they lead into dangerous paths.

But it is with God's law, the genuine word of truth, that we are at present dealing.

It is of the seed, which is indeed the Word of God, we are speaking when we say that in God's husbandry the harvest does not depend upon the quality of the seed sown, but upon the quality of the soil into which it falls.

In the parable of to-day's Gospel our blessed Lord explains that "That on the good ground are they which, in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience."

They are not like the wayside hearers of the word who are wholly taken up with the love of self and are servants to their own unrestrained and unsubdued wills; resembling the enemies of Christ, who, when He was hanging upon the Cross and pouring out His Precious Blood for the remission of their

sins, and the redemption of their souls, passed that loving Sufferer by, wagging their heads.

Nor, once more, are the honest and true-hearted like the supereilious, and the intellectually self-sufficient who, like the chief priests and the scribes and the elders, arrogantly demanded of the Great Teacher by what authority He wrought His wonders and laid down His precepts, and whence He derived that authority. (Mark XI.: 27, 28.)

There are some whose demeanour, even in the House of Prayer, conveys the impression that they think themselves paying a compliment to the Almighty by honouring Him with their presence.

Unlike the Pharisee who thanked God that he was not as other men, the supereilious congratulates himself upon his superior enlightenment, which scoffs at dogma, and rises superior to what others in their childlike simplicity believe to be the very revelation of God. Touching this attitude of mind toward religious truth, our blessed Lord says: "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes." (Matt. XI.: 25.)

The word of God is the life of the soul, and if people waste the precious moments which God specially devotes to visiting us with His grace, it is an easy matter for the fowls of the air to pluck the seed and devour it at the very doors of the Church.

Neither are the honest and true-hearted like those, the good soil of whose hearts is so thin that, although

the seed springs up, it soon withers away because there is no depth to insure its growth.

There was probably a large proportion of those followers of Christ belonging to this class. To them His manner and His message was attractive. They pressed upon Him to hear the word. They were people of an impressionable nature, and had a certain kind of fervour. Their impressions, however, were not permanent. The music of His voice was forgotten when the Sweet Singer was absent. "In time of temptation they fell away."

When our blessed Lord speaks of eating His Flesh and drinking His Blood, their minds are baffled, their reason shocked; their devotion is chilled, and a spirit of opposition takes its place. "Many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him." (Jno. VI.: 66.)

So it is, alas, with many of us, my brethren; we go back into the world, and when we come under the burning sun of strong temptation when some old and habitual sin offers to us the pleasure of its enjoyment, the seed is dried up and withers.

If we do yield, it is because we fail and forget to betake ourselves to that which alone holds us in communion with God, earnest prayer, our only hope of overcoming.

We look back and we discover that when we received the word we were only yielding to a passing fit of enthusiasm, and that our fervour was not warm enough to enable us to realize that the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation.

All of us, my brethren, have hearts far too hard for the great gifts of God to perform in us their most effectual work.

We all of us need to break up the stoniness of our hearts, to crush and make them contrite—for “contrite” means “utterly crushed.” We must water what soil there is with tears of sorrow for our sins, with tears of repentance for our lukewarmness. We must dig and labour these hard hearts of ours by the practice of much prayer, by the exercise of sincere resolution, and by striving to gain the habit of grappling with temptation in such a way as one would struggle with an assailant who is trying to throttle one.

To break up a stony heart is no easy matter; it means much labour, it means great submission; but as there is no short road to heaven we may as well abandon the hope of ever getting there unless we resolve to plod along the only road which leads to it.

If our hearts are so hardened by contact with the world, or by the love of pleasure and of sin, Jesus Christ can find no entrance. He will only dwell with such as be of a contrite spirit. But when the message of salvation falls upon the honest and true-hearted, it does not lie upon the surface; it sinks through the soft, susceptible flesh and reaches the heart. Not through a soil made barren by the pursuit of frivolous pleasures, or corrupted by the love of sensual lust, but into deep and mellow soil capable of retaining it, and of allowing it so to germinate that good fruit may be brought forth with patience. Yet, the

fruit does not come immediately, even in God's husbandry. The seed is not quickened except it die—patience must be allowed to have her perfect work.

And patience, in its primary sense, means "suffering."

We must not only receive the word (as we do by believing in Christ) but patience requires that we endure trials and temptations from within and from without for His Name's sake. In the Epistle to the Hebrews we are taught the need of patience, for it is through patience as well as through faith that the promises are inherited. (Heb. VI.: 12; X.: 36.)

"With my whole heart have I sought Thee; O let me not go wrong out of Thy commandments."

These words of our text are from the 119th Psalm, that sublime panegyric of "the word of God," every verse of which, like a beautiful fugue in music, is constantly playing upon the original theme, now in one key, and now in another.

"The word of the Lord"; "Thy righteous judgments"; "Thy law"; "Thy commandments"; "Thy statutes"; or some equivalent expression, is to be found in every verse of the 116 verses of the 119th Psalm. By such glorious acclamations does David laud and magnify God's gracious message of salvation to the souls of men.

"Thy word have I hid within my heart." There David placed it, in the very seat of the soul's affections, in readiness to be drawn upon at any moment.

"Thy word have I hid within my heart, that I should not sin against Thee."

To him the law of God is a shield and buckler, a protector in the hour of temptation. "That I should not sin against Thee."

"Thy testimonies are my delight, and my counsellors."

He refers everything to God's law.

The word of God is the life of the soul, and that is why David clung to it: "I will never forget Thy commandments; for with them Thou hast quickened me."

It was the guide of all his actions; it showed him the way in which he should walk: "Thy word is a lantern unto my feet; and a light unto my paths."

The cares and pleasures and the riches of this world were not allowed to choke the seed which David kept hidden in his heart: "I have had as great delight in the way of Thy testimonies as in all manner of riches." "The law of Thy mouth is dearer to me than thousands of gold and silver." And again: "I love Thy commandments above gold and precious stones." And yet again: "Thy testimonies are wonderful; therefore doth my soul keep them."

In him it conquers and rules his whole being. Hidden within his heart, back of all earthly and selfish voices, the divine voice is ever speaking to him, resounding in that most sacred inner temple, the dwelling-place of the Holy Ghost, and making his life beautiful and fruitful, so that he was verily a man after God's own heart.

This, or something akin to it, will result in the

case of all who receive the great message of salvation our Lord proclaimed by precept and example, by miracle and by parable, into an honest and loyal heart; with undivided attention to all the lessons it has to teach us, with childlike submission to all the great truths it has to expound to us, and with a ready obedience to all the precepts it has to enjoin upon us.

We can only bring forth the fruits of good-living if we abide in Him, for apart from Him we can do nothing; and how can we abide in Him except by letting His word abide in us? Holding fast to His law, His joy; His peace; His life are ours. We poor, weak creatures become strong in the power of His infinite might, and like S. Paul we shall be able to do all things through Christ which strengtheneth us. (Phil. IV.: 13.)

CHARITY.

TEXT: I. Cor. XIII: 13.

"Now abideth, faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."

It would seem that the Corinthians—for it is to them that S. Paul is writing—were sadly lacking in the one most necessary of all the Christian graces, namely, Love, and to this fact we are indebted for the marvellous panegyric of charity, or love, which forms the subject of the Epistle for Quinquagesima Sunday.

Envy, and vanity, or self-glorification, and consequent discord, had resulted from the misuse the Christians at Corinth had made of the spiritual gifts with which they had been endowed.

The Apostle is evidently censuring them for the discord that had manifested itself among them, when he writes: "There should be no schism in the body, but the members should have the same care one for another." (XII.: 25.)

Spiritual gifts are not for the glorification of the possessor, but for the edifying of the whole community, that is of the Church. Consequently, the gift to be most desired is that which tends to the greatest edification, and that gift is love.

Love, the Apostle declares to be greater even than giving of all one's goods to feed the poor, or of giving one's body to be burned.

It is true Christ told the young man who asked Him what he should do to inherit eternal life, that he must sell all that he had and give to the poor; but our Lord meant that he must do that ungrudgingly and not as of necessity; and from a sincere desire to become impoverished in order that he might find no hindrance in taking up the Cross and following Jesus. The motive must lie behind the deed.

As to the giving of one's body to be burned, that is, the enduring of martyrdom, we can hardly understand why the Apostle should say anything seemingly in disparagement of such a wonderful act of self-sacrifice, unless we know the somewhat curious fact that the stoicism of people, like the Greeks of S. Paul's day, actually led some of them to seek the stake and the arena for the sake of acquiring a posthumous reputation; and not only in Greece, but also in Rome, fanaticism of this kind had become so prevalent that prohibitive legislation had to be invoked to put a stop to it.

S. Paul doesn't really say a word against suffering to the death for the love of Jesus Christ.

Gifts and conduct, of a spiritual colour, which bring men prominently before the eyes of the world, are not necessarily an indication of spirituality, unless they are rooted in and guided by love.

A man will be judged by what he is rather than by what he does.

Love cannot be fabricated. It is the result of God entering in and taking possession of a man's heart. "He that loveth is born of God." (I. Jno. IV.: 7.) And so where love is absent there is no true religion.

The danger that existed in the newly-formed Church of Corinth exists still in the Church of to-day.

People look for something in the Church, and especially in the Church's teachers, which will make them loom large in the eyes of the world. They "size a man up," so to speak, after the measure of his intellectual capacities, rather than according to the measure of his spirituality. And we do not only estimate others according to this rule, but many of the Church's teachers themselves succumb to the temptation of vain glory and exalt themselves rather than the message which it is their privilege as well as their duty to deliver.

How shall we preachers ever lead men on to love God, and to love man for God's sake, with any power so great as the force of example?

We can draw men to the exercise of love by letting the love of God shine forth, and exhibit its force, in our word of exhortation as well as in our lives, ever keeping in mind that we have this treasure,—to wit, the love of God,—in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God, and not of ourselves. (II. Cor. IV.: 6, 7.)

Now, S. Paul, from whom this thought is derived, was, of all the Apostles, the most highly gifted in intellectual attainment, and although it is impossible for him to conceal the power of his great mind, yet, I

ask, where will you find greater humility and greater devotion and love for the Lord Jesus than in this Apostle?

Talent, of one kind or another, is indeed a most precious gift, a gift from God from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift; and it is a magnificent thing to behold men of great talent devoting that gift exclusively to the service of God. God can be served, nevertheless, by those who are endowed with small and meagre intellectual gifts, and served quite as well. We can come much closer to a resemblance of the great Master, whose servants we are, by possessing our hearts in meekness, in lowliness, and in love, than we can by the possession of any other great gifts. When our blessed Lord chose the Virgin Mary to be His mother, it was the lowliness of His handmaiden which He regarded; and who can ever hope to love our Lord with anything approaching to the love and devotion of His mother?

Love, my brethren, is the mainspring of every other Christian virtue. It is better than the others only because it is the mother of all the rest. Without love lying at the back of any other Christian grace, that grace is fictitious.

What is the real motive which prompts men to obey God? Is it for the sake of gaining heaven, or of avoiding hell—nothing more than this? If it is so, it will be found that such a motive is not strong enough to last long; sore temptation will overcome it with the greatest ease. But if we keep God's law because we love God, then obedience will become

more and more habitual to us ,and we will find delight in running the way of His commandments.

“Whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected, hereby know we that we are in Him.” (1. Jno. 11.: 5.)

It is because Love is the only true motive lying behind all Christian conduct, that the Apostle is able to say: “Love is the fulfilling of the law,” and he is speaking of that love of God by which we are able to love one another. “Love worketh no ill to his neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law” (Rom. XIII.: 10.) “Love is that which finds its felicity in another’s good.”

In our Epistle of to-day the description of love is given chiefly in negatives.

She doth not behave herself unseemly; she seeketh not her own; she is not easily provoked, and thinketh no evil. She rejoiceth not in iniquity. But who cannot read herein the **positive** assertion of what Love is?

It is no mere negative innocence which is greater than all mysteries, greater than knowledge, and than the tongue of angels; greater than self-inflicted poverty, and the endurance of martyr’s flames.

It is the chief grace here below, and it is a grace which will abide forever in heaven.

Of all the various Christian virtues, S. Paul selects three: “Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.”

These are the only three that abide. “Whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be

tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away."

Charity, however, never faileth. And, alike with charity, there abideth faith and hope.

Now, in a certain aspect of faith and hope, they will pass away. We shall not always know God by faith, but in the world to come we shall see God face to face; then will faith be lost in sight.

We shall no longer behold Christ by faith, verily present in His Body and Blood in the Holy Sacrament of His love, but we shall see the Lamb upon His Throne in heaven, where the four beasts and the four and twenty elders, continually prostrate before Him, sing the new song of adoration. (Rev. V.: 8, 9.)

Hope, too, in a certain aspect, will be satisfied in fruition.

As far, however, as faith and hope have to do with human life, they are permanent elements of it; for it is by faith that our communion with God is maintained, and without faith it is impossible to please Him. Hope, too, is continually renewing within us the expectancy of future glory; that glory which will be ours when we awake up in God's likeness, and are satisfied with it.

Hope renews our energy, and is a guide to our aims, and it draws us on to love.

Let us for a moment consider the relation that Faith bears to Love. Faith, of the very best quality, is not based upon intellectual considerations, even though it be true that we ought to be ready to give a reason for the faith that is in us. The great ma-

jority of those who take religion for their portion and stake their happiness upon it, do so, not because they have examined the evidence which undoubtedly exists to support the truths of religion, but they do so from a spontaneous movement of the heart towards the things of God. The Apostles who put their trust in Jesus Christ were not men of great intellectual attainments; they were most of them fishermen; and it was not because Christ was continually fulfilling what was written by the prophets concerning Him, that these disciples were able to discern in Him the promised Messiah. That never occurred to their minds at all, in the beginning; they were simply drawn to Him by the spontaneous movements of their hearts.

And when one looks about one to-day, one does not find the strongest and the purest faith among the highly educated and the learned, nor among the professors who could give valuable instruction on the evidences of Christianity; but you find faith strongest among the poor and the unlettered. The grounds of faith, indeed, for the majority of the faithful, rest upon testimony within their own hearts, of which they can hardly give any account, and not upon external testimony.

If children, if the poor, if the busy, can have true faith (and they certainly can and do), seeing that they cannot weigh evidence, and don't want to, then is evidence **not** the simple foundation upon which faith is built.

If the great bulk of serious men and women be-

lieve, not because they have examined evidence, but because they are disposed, in a certain way, they are of those who are ordained to eternal life.

They are they who in an honest and good heart receive God's message of salvation.

The foundation of their faith, then, is the love which God has implanted in their heart.

Love, then, is greater than faith, because it is the ground and root of the highest and purest kind of faith, faith of the meek and lowly in heart, faith of the uninquisitive mind.

Love is the foundation, and love is the safeguard of faith.

It was from lack of love towards Christ that the Jews discerned not in Him the Shepherd of their souls. He said of them: "Ye believe not, because ye are not of My sheep. My sheep hear My voice and follow Me."

It was the love shed abroad in their hearts, by the God of Love, which drew the disciples to Jesus. It was the new life, not the natural reason, which led the disciples to find in Jesus the Shepherd of their souls.

And so it will, my brethren, always be.

We shall only find in Jesus the Great Cleanser from sin; the Great Fountain of Life; the Great Supporter in temptation; the Guardian and Shepherd of our souls, both here and in the valley of the shadow of death, in proportion as we open our hearts to Him, in proportion as we love Him, and desire Him as our chiefest delight.

Now, it is not in the nature of all of us to be moved towards heaven and heavenly things through the medium of our natural affections.

Some people are far more affectionate by nature than others. There are many, indeed, who are very phlegmatic, and almost antipathetic, and they are reached rather through their minds than through their hearts. Must we conclude, then, that such as these cannot love God, and Jesus Christ, just as warmly and just as truly as people of more affectionae disposition? By no means, my brethren. If the sorrows of Jesus, and the agonies of Calvary, don't draw actual tears from our eyes, yet we all of us have a higher nature within us, a regenerate nature it is too, which is fully competent to respond to the love of God manifested in Christ; and there are countless assurances in Holy Scripture that God tests our love by our deeds rather than by our emotions; that the real test of love is obedience. "Whoso keepeth His word," says the Apostle of love, that Apostle who reclined on the Lord's breast at Supper. "Whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected."

And our blessed Lord's own appeal is this: "If ye love me, keep My commandments."

We can all of us love God so truly that temptation, when we are under the stress of it, will find itself in conflict with our determination not to crucify the Lord afresh by yielding to its inducement.

Of this character was the love of God, and of God's law, which kept Joseph in the path of rectitude, and

preserved him pure and undefiled against the seductive allurements of a beautiful woman.

"How can I do this great wickedness," said Joseph, "and sin against God?"

That, my brethren, is the secret of the whole thing, to remember that all wickedness is, in the last analysis, sin against God.

"Against Thee only have I sinned, and done this great wickedness in Thy sight," is the confession of one of the profoundest penitents under the Old Dispensation.

Let obedience be the test of your love, and let tears of sorrow flow from the soul and not from the eyes.

STRENGTHENING GRACE.

TEXT: Psalm LXXXVI: 16.

"Give Thy strength unto Thy servant, and help the son of Thy handmaid."

Coming, as this Sunday does, in the middle of Lent, a popular idea has grown up that the title "Refreshment Sunday," implies that the people are expected, and allowed, to relax the Lenten discipline during the coming week.

It is just an instance of that tendency in human nature to allow religious associations to degenerate; to seek for some purely secular idea as the origin of what really had its beginning in deep religious sentiment.

Anyone who has been much on the continent in Europe will recall the festivities that prevail during the coming week,—the "Carnival" as it is called.

There is no break expected or allowed at any time during the forty days of Lent.

If we seek for an explanation of the title "Refreshment Sunday," we have not to go far to find it. We simply turn to the Gospel appointed for to-day, where our blessed Lord feeds 5,000 hungry people with five barley loaves and two small fishes. This is so significant an act that one is not surprised to find an account of it in each one of the four Gospels.

The great teaching of the doctrine of the Holy Eucharist, a teaching which preceded the Institution

itself of this Blessed Sacrament, is (as you know) given in the 6th chapter of S. John's Gospel. If the disciples could not at the time take it in, yet there it was, to speak to their understanding and their hearts when it, and all the other things Jesus said to them, should be made clear by the Holy Ghost.

This miracle of to-day's Gospel was a sort of parable intended to throw its light upon the teaching which followed so soon afterwards.

It was only the day following the feeding of this great company that Jesus said to His disciples. "Ye seek Me not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give you." (Jno. VI.: 26, 27.)

How necessary indeed it was to approach so sacred and important a subject as the doctrine of the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood with the loving consideration He showed for the simplicity of their minds!

Pointing them back to the miracle of the day before, He bids them labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give you. What could it be that He had in store for them?

And now He speaks yet more clearly. "The Bread of God is He that cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world."

"I am the Bread of life." "I am the living Bread

which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this Bread he shall live forever; and the Bread that I will give is My Flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

Now, when we find all this wonderful teaching following so closely upon the feeding of the multitude it is impossible not to connect the miracle with the subsequent teaching.

And to-day is called "Refreshment Sunday" because this miracle sets forth in parable how sorely in need we are of Divine sustenance to prevent our weary and starving souls from perishing by the way.

A great multitude had followed Jesus out of the cities. They were on their way to Jerusalem to keep the feast of the Passover. On the way to Jerusalem, just as we are journeying toward the Jerusalem which is above.

They had to pass through the open country, a country so barren and depopulated that it is described as a desert. When they were far away from their home their natural requirement for food engaged the careful thought of our Lord.

With the thought of their hunger in mind He beholds them, and He is moved with compassion.

He doesn't mean them to suffer. He has arranged everything beforehand.

They must have given some evidence of expecting aid from Him, and that is why the disciples thought it would be better to send them home again.

They didn't seem to understand that a crowd of needy people never were a worry or annoyance to

our Lord. It was only two Sundays ago that they made the same mistake wanting to send away that poor Canaanitish woman.

He didn't send her away, and He was too compassionate to send these people away. He said, "They need not depart."

You will search the Gospels in vain for any account of our blessed Lord sending people away. He came here to draw all men to Himself, and there never was a more compassionate Friend of the public than Jesus Christ.

David cries, "Give Thy strength unto Thy servant" because he felt a void needing to be filled, just as this famished multitude felt their physical emptiness. David couldn't get on without strength from God

A conspicuous mark of his character was his keen sense of dependence on God.

You can see what he felt later when he uttered this prayer, if you look at the way he begins the Psalm. "Bow down Thine ear, O Lord, and hear me; for I am poor and in misery." He is poor; i.e., he experiences a sense of impoverishment. He wants something to fill a void he feels in his soul, and David always knew where to go when he felt in need. He knew, too, what appeal to make to the Divine commiseration. "I am poor and in misery." This, he is sure, is a valid plea with a God full of compassion.

"Thou, O Lord God, are full of compassion and mercy; long suffering, plenteous in goodness and

truth. O turn Thee, then, unto me, and have mercy upon me; give Thy strength unto Thy servant, and help the son of Thy handmaid."

The petition of to-day's Collect is much the same as this. We ask God that we may be relieved by the comfort of His grace, and although we begin by acknowledging that we deserve for our evil deeds to be punished, we are not so much asking to be spared that punishment as we are asking to be comforted by His grace in the distress we find ourselves in by reason of our evil deeds.

We ask to be relieved, i.e., refreshed, reinvigorated, by the comfort of Divine grace

This word comfort really means strengthening. The Latin equivalent is frequently found in the Latin version of the New Testament. Our blessed Lord is strengthened by ministering angels, in the garden of Gethsemane. Saul of Tarsus is strengthened with meat after his sight is restored.

We find the word in no less than six different Epistles from his hand. For instance, in the Epistle to the Philippians, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." (Phil. IV.: 13.)

So that the comfort of God's grace means even more than the soothing and consolation of the soul.

Ofcourse it carries with it that idea. It carries with it that beautiful idea in the mind of Christ when He said, "Come unto Me and I will give you rest."

That idea is contained in the petition, and it is a sort of echo of the refreshment in the Gospel. And

yet divine grace is so manifold in its operation that besides the refreshment and comfort, besides the rest and consolation it brings to the weary soul, it contains the vital power of energizing our spiritual faculties and strengthening them to go forth in the power of its might to battle against the foe, and overcome all difficulties, and brave all dangers.

Divine grace sustains and invigorates the activities of the soul, just as bread and wine sustain and invigorate the activities of the body.

And when we seek this grace we learn from David's Psalm in what spirit we are to make our request. "I am poor and in misery." No man is a true seeker after grace who doesn't feel the need of it.

You may indeed seek it that it may create in you a desire for the same; the very wish, however, to long for God, is in itself more than a germ of that more passionate longing which you feel you don't possess. Any soul that seeks God at all is really labouring under a sensibility of its poverty. The soul longs for God because it begins to feel the pinch of its impoverished condition. Its poverty has brought it into a state of misery.

The nourishment it has been trying to live on has been found to be incompatible with its nature.

Gold and precious stones are very valuable, but they are not fit for food. Our natures won't re-fashion themselves, and we can't re-make them. We were made for God, and nowhere else but in Him can we find anything but famine.

A horse would die if you fed it on carrion, or a lion if you fed it on grain.

"Man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live." (Deut. VIII.: 3.)

Man's creation was the outcome of divine love, and in making man in His own image God gave him a nature that could maintain its vitality only by abiding in Him.

When, therefore, God sees man perishing with hunger He is moved with compassion.

Long before the sinner comes to a sense of his misery, long before the soul is sufficiently aroused to feel the pangs of famine, the divine compassion is poured forth for that soul.

Our blessed Lord is always described in the Gospels as moved with compassion in the presence of distress. In His own country, where by reason of their unbelief He could do no mighty work, He laid His hands upon a few sick folk and healed them. (Mark VI.: 5.)

He couldn't pass these poor sick folk by.

And so it was in the case of the 5,000 in the Gospel. He was moved with compassion when He saw this great company come unto Him. In such a large number their motives and their needs would be all different. But there was one point of unity in that great crowd. They were all weak and weary.

Weak through the want of food, and weary by reason of the length of the way. And are not many of us weak and weary? Wearied with the hurry-

hurry of present-day life; ever seeking some new scene of excitement as one by one they pall upon our jaded senses.

Wearied in the spiritual life, some of us with religious controversies that never seem to come to an end, but have been going round in a circle for hundreds of years. They never seem to thrash themselves out, but are repeatedly cropping up in some fresh disguise.

Wearied, all of us, with the ever-recurring struggle against difficulties which each has peculiar to himself, and which we foolishly imagine are far greater than the difficulties of others.

Tired at one time with the burden of our sins, and the unsatisfactoriness of our efforts to approach that far-off state of perfection in which we shall be free from the thralldom of sin; at another time wearied with our efforts to stave off the temptation to give it all up, and content ourselves with letting things follow their own course.

Jesus beholds all this, is able to enter into it all and He is moved with compassion.

"Make the men sit down." That is His command. "Be still and know that I am God." Cease from your worrying, and don't let weariness get the better of you. "Come unto me, and I will give you rest."

He always knows what the soul's need is, and He always provides the very remedy needed. Rest, comfort, consolation, refreshment, everything that is needed to recuperate the languishing soul.

O these unruly wills and affections of curs! That's what is at the root of all our troubles. That's what keeps souls from seeking rest in Christ. He desires that we abide in Him; He desires our service, but He does not desire a constrained service. He will not treat us as though we had no capacity of choice.

If we need His grace to comfort us, if we need it to strengthen us, we have an equal need of it to control our wills and affections. The will is the centre of the soul's activity, and the heart is the mainspring of the will. Wherefore, "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." (Col. III.: 2.)

"For where your treasure is there will your heart be also." (Matt. VI.: 21.)

The truths of the Gospel appeal to our understanding; the holiness of God to the conscience, and the love of God appeals to the heart. If ever He said, "My son, give Me thine heart," (Prov. XXIII.: 26), He never said it more plainly than by the silent appeal of the Cross.

What an exhibition of love, and what an appeal to our hearts!

"The love of Christ constraineth us," says the Apostle. This is the secret of S. Paul's unselfishness, of his freedom from all other desires; the secret of his counting all things as dung if he may win Christ and be found in Him.

He is constrained by the love of Christ. It hems him in, as it were, and urges him on in a course which he cannot avoid pursuing.

He places himself under its irresistible constraint; it has made him what he is, and it enables him to do what he does.

The love of Christ has taken hold of the man's affections and his will. And what it was to him he declares it to be to all.

He died for all, and so in Him are all dead—dead to trespass and sin. There is no soul in the world excluded from that surpassing love, and no soul that may not feel that mighty constraint which enchained and swayed the strong spirit of S. Paul.

Let, then, every soul be moved to pour out its love for Him who died, and who rose again to receive its devotion and its service.

Then indeed will this be a day of refreshment. The more we love Christ the less arduous will the labours we perform in His service become.

His yoke is easy and His burden light only to those who love His service for the love of Him. Nothing is too hard for them to do or to suffer in obedience to the dictates of that love. It relieves us from the sickness that destroyeth at noonday, that slothfulness of the spirit which makes us unfit to be of any service to our Master.

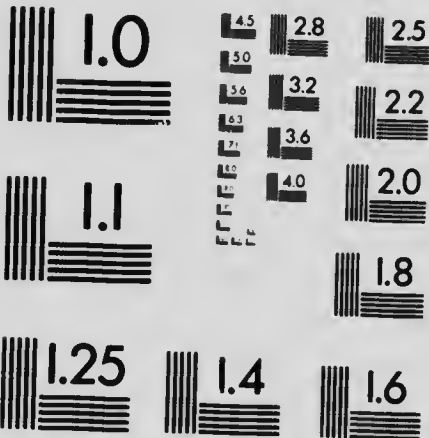
It arouses the soul to activity, and it brings us comfort in all our trials, and in all our sorrows.

Its comforts refresh the soul. It strengthens us in the Lord and in the power of His might, enabling us to do all things well, laying up for ourselves treasure in heaven, and winning the crown which is alone worthy of human striving.



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WATCHING JESUS.

TEXT: Matt. XXVII: 36.

"And sitting down, they watched Him there."

He had always been persecuted by this watching of his enemies. The chief priests and the scribes, fearing to lay hands on Him on account of the people, set themselves to watch Him, and even sent forth spies for that purpose. (Luke XX.: 20.)

The Pharisees and the Herodians, burying their political animosities, joined together to watch Jesus. (Matt. XXII.: 16.)

Hardly a Sabbath Day passed that they did not watch to see if they could accuse Him of breaking it.

They seemed to have brought a poor man suffering from dropsy into the house of one of the chief Pharisees on the Sabbath Day, not that they cared for the poor sufferer, but simply to watch for further occasion of bringing an accusation against Him. (Luke XIV.: 1-2.)

Again, when He was teaching in the Synagogue, they come in to see if He would restore a poor creature with one hand withered. (Luke VI.: 6-7.)

They were always watching Him as though He were a malefactor, and trying to prevent His deeds of mercy as if they were acts of a criminal—watch-

ing Him with malice, hatred and blood-thirstiness.

And now at last they had succeeded. Pilate had handed him over to them, and they put the innocent victim of their malignity to the most ignominious form of death by crucifying Him on the gibbet of a felon.

No sooner had the soldiers raised the cross and left the sacred Body to suffer there than they betook themselves to their wonted pastime of gambling, and threw dice to see who should have the seamless robe His mother had made for Him.

Thus, while the Lord of the Universe was left to suffer, these puny beings of His own creation seated themselves comfortably and watched Him.

There, in Jerusalem, they watched the Lord of Glory, while from the battlements of the Heavenly Jerusalem angels were looking down upon the spectacle in awful adoration. It may be that they had to carry out their orders, but surely they were never told to sit down and watch Him; there was no possibility of His being rescued. His friends had forsaken Him and fled. He was treading the wine-press alone. There was none left to pity Him. They might mock Him with the challenge to save Himself and come down from the cross, they thought He couldn't do it, and they had no fear that His disciples would come and steal Him away.

There was no possible excuse for their brutal gloating over His agony, save the one that Jesus Himself found in their favour, that they were destitute of the smallest gleam of insight into what was really

being enacted. Verily, they knew not what they did.

In carrying out the prophetic predictions they were unconsciously proclaiming the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world.

Equally unwitting were they of declaring a most blessed truth of the Gospel when they tauntingly cried out, "He saved others, Himself He cannot save."

It was because He was saving others by that perfect and willing sacrifice that He could not and would not save Himself. He needed no saviour, but He is the Saviour of those who do need salvation.

Delivered up to His enemies to be crucified and handled by them as they chose, Jesus appears as though divested of His divine power. So does sin show the sinner as declaring himself independent of the power of God. Sin, in its essence, is self-assertion in defiance of God's power, as though He could not requite; a defiant contempt of His just judgment and a despising of His goodness and mercy. "He is despised and rejected of men."

Sin is the rejection of divine truth, righteousness and grace as offered to man through Christ.

In the act of wilful sin the soul makes a decision against God, and the thing that offers salvation from the fearful consequences of such a decision is the mercy and love of an offended God, and that love is manifested in His Son Christ Jesus crucified.

This is our faith, but do we realize it? Is it conceivable that if we did we could ever consent to the suggestions of temptation? As a reasonable truth

we can bring it before our reasoning faculties, but can we bring it vividly before our consciences and let it sink into the depths of our heart?

Our spiritual faculties are so destroyed by sin that to do this adequately is impossible. Only the Sinless One can know clearly all that sin means and feel fully all that sin costs. Thank God that if we cannot grasp it, He knows we can't grasp it. That sinful man cannot see sin in its true significance God knows, and so He prays the Father, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Perhaps someone will say to himself—in fact, there are some who do say to themselves—well, if I can't grasp the true significance of sin, if only Christ can do this, why need I trouble about it? There is no use trying to do the impossible.

What are we here for? To be made like unto Christ, is it not so? To do in all crises of life just what we believe He would have done in like crises. We are meant to journey through life just as He would; to be guided in all our thoughts, words and deeds by the principles that guided Him. To do everything according to God's will. Has any man yet been able to do that? Do you see in yourself much resemblance to Christ? Are you the least bit like him? Don't you know perfectly well that your moral character is as far removed from the mind of Christ as is the farthest fixed star from this earth? Why has God set such an unattainable standard of perfection before us?

Surely that we should do our utmost to get as near

to it as we can. If we do this, i.e., do our utmost, then a good work is begun in us, and we can trust God to perfect that good work.

And so when our Lord says, "Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow," isn't He calling out to us to do our utmost to pierce through the mists that befog our vision and get at least a glimpse of the enormity of that thing which caused the human soul of the Son of God to suffer such bitter anguish. We can certainly see enough to tell us that sin must be very dreadful, however much more dreadful it be than we can ever know in this world.

If we can't get far enough on to actually hate sin for the simple reason that God hates it, and that its virulence was so great that it severed Christ's soul from His body for three days, we can at least make up our minds to shun it and have nothing more to do with it. We can flee before the face of sin with all the terror with which we would fly out of a house in flames. So then, in the strength of divine grace, we can avoid deliberate, wilful sin, even if we can't escape from its power over our involuntary actions and thoughts. From sins of infirmity no man living is free, but men and women have lived for years together free from wilful and deliberate sin.

It is of this kind of sin, i.e. of deadly sin, that the apostle John speaks when he says, "Whoso is born of God doth not commit sin, for His seed remaineth in him and He cannot sin because he is born of God." (I. John III.: 19.)

But when he speaks of sins due to the infirmity of

our sinful nature, of sins to which we have not wilfully consented, this is his language: "If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." (1. John 1.: 8.)

Yes, it is possible, by the help of God, to be kept free from downright, deliberate sin.

Looking at our suffering Lord, we can so draw down love into our hearts that for very pity's sake we can't bear to add one more wound to the bleeding Saviour.

The soldiers who sat and watched Him had no idea of sin. They didn't know there was any connection between sin and the passion and death of Christ.

Mary knew it. Jesus had probably told her a good deal about it; and Mary's sister, wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene, and John too, knew much about it. These loving souls were standing back of the soldiers, and they too were watching Jesus, but, oh, in what a different spirit. Rather than watching Him, they were gazing upon that vision of redeeming love.

To which of these two groups would you like to belong? Are you going to join the soldiers, or are you going to join John and the three Marys? Let me try and help you see something of the blessedness of joining this little group.

You will remember that only very shortly before this awful day of the crucifixion, there had come from the most affectionate heart that ever beat in human breast, that pathetic and thankful recognition to the Twelve framed in these words: "Ye are they which

have continued with me in my temptations." Whatever had been their mistakes, their hearts had been true. Notwithstanding that their rulers and their priests had rejected Him, notwithstanding that the world received Him not, yet had they clung to Him in the days of His humiliation, "In my temptations have ye continued with me." This devotion would not go unrequited, for it was devotion to Him that is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. (Heb. XI.: 6.)

And is not this an encouragement to us who are joining ourselves to the little group of those who loved Him? Never was He under sorer temptation than as He hangs upon the cross; all the powers of darkness are let loose against Him. This consolation at least we can give Him, the continuance of our devotion. Never had master such poor and inefficient servants as had Jesus Christ, and never had servants so compassionate and tender a master as He.

We may fail in courage and in patience, but one thing we can do, one thing we must do, we must love and continue with Him with such sincerity of purpose that we may be able to say with Peter, "Lord, thou knowest that I love thee."

We want to know, we need to know, more than we do about why He suffered and why He died; what this scene that is being enacted means for you and for me; what I have to do with it, and what it is doing for me.

These questions of vital importance can never be too fully considered, never too deeply pondered;

some fresh light can always be gained by prayerful communion with Jesus crucified, and some fresh light upon the mystery of the death of Christ is ever in readiness to be shed by that great Illuminator, the Holy Ghost.

He hangs, as it were, between heaven and earth, mystically signifying that He is what He is,—the Mediator between God and man. In Him heaven and earth are met together, righteousness and peace kiss each other.

Estranged as we are from God by sin, we see Him reconciling us to God by His blood.

His arms are outstretched to enfold us to His bosom.

“Thou, O Jesus, Thou dost me
Upon the cross embrace.”

Then we see those arm stretched out in intercession. Moses' arms grew heavy and had to be supported lest Amalek should prevail.

No nails or ropes were needed to keep the arms of our Lord outstretched upon that cross from which He refused to come down. They were held there by the bands of redeeming love, and by the constraint of a divine design. He is expressing the largeness of His heart and its longing for the souls of men.

And then that sacred brow, with no cushion to rest upon but one of thorns, suffering to expiate my evil thoughts, my faltering faith, all the designs I ever formed to carry out some evil deed; the lies I have told, the anger I have given way to, the slanders I have spread, the malice I have entertained.

Oh, how often have I pressed those piercing thorns into that holy brow. How often have I crucified Thee afresh, my Lord, my God, my only good!

Thoughts of such a character as these must fill the mind of every one who comes with proper desires to contemplate Christ crucified.

Let us be careful when we go forth from here and return to the ordinary routine of life, to take away with us the memory of what we have seen and learned.

It is something we ought never to lose, something worth cherishing, something that is indeed to those who retain the memory of it, a sure anchor to the soul.

Memory has such an important part to play. Most solemn charges are laid upon it in God's dealings with Israel. They are constantly being called upon to remember that they were bondmen in Egypt, and that the Lord had redeemed them. (Deut. XV.: 15.) "Thou shalt remember what the Lord did to Pharaoh." (Deut. VII.: 18.) "Remember how thou provokedst the Lord thy God." (Deut. XIX.: 7.)

In the New Testament, too, solemn charges are laid upon memory. "Son remember," said Abraham to the rich man in torments, "Son remember at thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things;" by which we see what a poignant element of the sufferings endured for past and unforgotten sin memory was.

On the other hand, remembrance in this life of sins that are past, but forgiven, calls down divine

grace and creates humility.

By thus keeping in memory the wretchedness from which, by a good confession, we have happily been delivered, we strengthen ourselves for the future. Memory of a wretched past is, as it were, an angel of the Lord with drawn sword to guard us against fresh lapses from grace, to ward off from us the fiery darts of the enemy.

David had in continual remembrance the goodness of God. "I will remember Thy loving kindness which have been ever of old."

And we sinners are permitted to offer that sacrifice which our blessed Redeemer instituted to be a perpetual memory of His death and passion.

We cannot do greater honour to God and bring greater joy to the throbbing heart of our dear Lord than by working out the salvation of our own souls and in helping other souls to find their salvation in Him. For on nothing has He expended greater love than on the souls of men. Our souls are, therefore, the peculiar objects of His care. "He careth for us," as Peter tells us. (1. Pet. V.: 7.) And to the question, "Carest Thou not that we perish?" (Mark 8: 38), the answer is that He gave His flesh to be eaten, that we might live on Him. He gave it once, and He continually gives it in the holy mystery of the Eucharist.

"Come unto me" for "I am the bread of life." This is the voice of Jesus as He calls us to kneel at His altar and feed upon His flesh and blood.

Let us sanctify ourselves for His sake. Let us

respond to the tenderness of His love by pouring forth a more abundant love to Him than we have ever yet known. Drive we out from within us every affection that hinders us from yielding to Him the unreserved devotion of our lives, so that when He comes to make His abode with us on the morning of His resurrection He may find our souls prepared and purified to receive and welcome Him. "I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me and before all the people will I be glorified." (Lev. X : 3.) These were the words God spake to Moses in rebuke of Nadab and Abihu. They speak to us of the awful holiness and purity of God, and of the reverential dread with which He wills that they who come nigh Him shall be filled.

Well indeed may we fear to approach His altar before purging our consciences from sin that we may serve the living God.

God is a discernor of hearts, and "the Lord knoweth them that are His." If a man purge himself from iniquity "he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use." (11. Tim. II. : 19-20.)

It isn't enough that we be sorry for our sins; we must have them washed away in the precious blood; our souls must be made a fitting abode for so pure and holy a Guest.

Put yourselves under the direction of the Holy Spirit and ask Him to show you in what way He wants to purge and purify within you a place for Christ to come and dwell in on Easter morning, and if He points you to confession, don't act like that

foolish leper Naaman, who "went away in a rage" because God's prophet told him he must wash and make him clean in a river of Israel. It was a long and arduous journey from Damascus to the Jordan, and a long and arduous journey it is, for the penitent to make, who goes for the first time to confession.

May He who alone can prepare the way for Christ be your counsellor and guide you to the cleansing rivers of the precious blood.

THE RESURRECTION.

TEXT: S. John XI: 25.

"I am the Resurrection and the Life."

The Resurrection of our blessed Lord is the keystone of the arch of our Faith. Take that away and the whole fabric falls to the ground.

S. Paul sees this quite clearly when he says: "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain." "And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." (1. Cor. XV.: 14 and 17.)

You will notice that the evangelist S. John is careful to give us facts of equal evidential force respecting the death of Christ, with those facts which are given us in respect of His resurrection.

Pilate sends soldiers to break the legs, so as to hasten death; but when they come to our Saviour they find Him already so surely dead that, disregarding their orders, "they brake not His legs." (Note: This is also a fulfilment of prophecy, of which the soldiers knew nothing, for they were Romans, not Jews. Exodus XII.: 46. Ps. XXXIV.: 20.) One of them, however, as though to make doubly sure, pierces His sacred side, and a stream of blood and water rushes forth.

St. John, in relating these incidents, betokens his anxiety to establish beyond controversy the actuality of our Lord's death before going on to give an account of the resurrection. A true resurrection must be preceded by an actual death.

Then we have the further fact that, after the crowds were dispersed, and all danger seemed to have passed away, some of His former followers took courage and drew near to lower the sacred body from the cross.

There was no life left in it: they found it absolutely lifeless.

So they wrapped it in fine linen, and Nicodemus brough 100 pounds of myrrh and aloes, after the manner of the Jews for a burial, and the dead body of our Lord was laid in the tomb.

His enemies, too, were quite satisfied of His death, for they came to Pilate and said: "Sir, we remember that that deceiver"—that is the way they spoke of Him—"we remember that that deceiver, while He was yet alive, said, 'After three days I will rise again.'"

Of course, they thought that was perfectly absurd (and people who are unwittingly God's enemies now, think so too), but they believed His disciples were capable of deceit and were in league with Him, so they asked Pilate to let them have a guard to watch the tomb and prevent the disciples coming and stealing the body away.

Pilate seems to have lost all interest in the matter, or, more probably, his conscience was giving him a

good deal of trouble.

By this time his wife must have been in a fearful state of alarm. S. Matt. XXVII.: 19.) The earthquake, and the splitting of the rocks, besides what she would have been told about the rending of the veil in the Jewish Temple, must have been very terrifying. No doubt she communicated her fears to her husband.

He had not taken her advice before (S. Mark XXVII.: 19), but he thought it was now time to have nothing more to do with "that Just Man;" so he would not give these rulers any more help. He told them they might go and set their own watch, and make the sepulchre as sure as they knew how.

There was nothing to do but to take the matter into their own hands. They, therefore, went to the tomb and rolled a huge stone against the opening, put a seal on it, and set men there to watch. Silly people! they might as well have set a watch against the eastern mountains to prevent the sun rising the next morning. It would have been just as easy to keep the sun back as to prevent "the Sun of Righteousness" rising with healing in His wings.

The next morning the day broke as usual, but just as it was dawning the following day, the first day of the week, there was another earthquake, and at the same time an angel came down from heaven, calmly pushed aside the huge stone from the door of the sepulchre, and sat down upon it.

It may have been the lightning from his countenance that caused the earthquake; at all events, the

keepers were "no use." They began to quake and shake with fear, and, as the Bible says, "They became as dead men."

Of course they had to tell the priests about this, but they were not punished. The priests did not punish them because they knew it was through no fault of theirs; they could not help it; they were not to blame.

So a meeting was called together, the rulers and the chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin, to see what they were to do about it.

The conclusion come to was that the best thing under the circumstances was to bribe the soldiers to swear that while they were sleeping His disciples had come and stolen the body away; the very thing to prevent which they had been set to watch the tomb. It is impossible to believe that the soldiers would have dared to go to sleep all of them at the same time, and thus make it possible for that deception to be practised which it was their especial duty to prevent. Punishment by death would be the sure penalty for such negligence.

The council of the Jews, therefore, in the sure conviction of that the soldiers had been powerless to prevent our Lord's resurrection, offered them money, and promised to make the matter right with the Governor—they would let him into the secret—so they need have no fear. (S. Matt. XXVIII.: 14.)

Of course the soldiers took the money, people are always glad to get money, and they went out and began spreading this lie; they were paid to do it.

Some there are who are so incredulous of the resurrection of our blessed Lord that they attribute this doctrine of our Faith to the vividness of the imagination of those to whom He appeared alive after His Passion.

It is easy, however, reading between the lines (so to speak) of the sacred narrative, to see how impossible it is to maintain so ingenious a theory.

If the vision of the risen Christ was but the creation of the excited brains of the disciples and the holy women, it would have been in response to a very keen expectation on their part.

The theory demands the supposition that they looked forward to the resurrection of our Lord, with keen and lively expectation, that their desires and their hopes turned into a reality what was mere illusion. But who can read the naive and guileless narrative and not see unmistakably that the death of Christ had dashed their fondest hopes to the ground? Never had their expectation gone beyond a Messiah who would deliver Israel from the foreign yoke of Rome; they had not grasped the idea of a spiritual kingdom under Christ. They were all in the same frame of mind as Cleopas and his friend of Emmaus, who trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel. (S. Luke XXIV.: 21.)

The Cross had given the death blow to their hopes, and nothing was further from their thoughts than a resurrection.

They had not even regarded it as a possible thing, much less as probably likely to occur.

Instead of its being something to which they were ready to give a credulous assent, there was nothing more foreign to their thoughts. Had the holy women harboured in their hearts the faintest hopes that their Lord would be restored to them, they would not have come to the sepulchre with all the necessaries to prepare the body for burial. Nor would they have enquired among themselves who would roll away the stone from the door of the tomb. That stone as effectually closed the door to all hope in the minds of the disciples, as effectually buried them in gloom and darkness, as it barred the tomb itself to the light of day. The only Easter they thought of was the final Easter of the last day.

The spiees of the women, and the shattered hopes of the disciples, bear the strongest testimony to the reality of the resurrection of our Lord.

S. Luke tells us (Acts i. : 3) that He showed Himself alive to His Apostles, after the Passion, by many infallible proofs.

On the very day of His rising again He appeared to them in the closed room; and He showed them His pierced hands and feet, and the wound print in His side, thus assuring them of His identity.

And that they might know that although the closed doors had not barred His entrance, although His appearance had been sudden and mysterious, yet it was no mere vision that they beheld, no spiritual apparation, He said, "Handle Me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have." (S. Luke XXIV.: 39.)

There were at least seven other appearances of the risen Lord, besides His having shown Himself to above 500 brethren at one time on a mountain in Galilee.

Most of these people lived for 25 years later, when S. Paul told the Corinthians about it. (I. Cor. XV.: 6.) As an historical fact the Resurrection is as firmly established as the fact that Julius Caesar was at one time the ruler of Rome. Needless to say, it is a fact of incomparably greater importance.

Now, there is one rather curious circumstance, and that is that we do not read anything about our Lord appearing to His Mother. I think this is easily accounted for.

You see, our Lord showed Himself to people who never expected to see Him again.

Before His death He told His disciples that He was going to rise again; he said that He was going away, but that He would see them again and their hearts would rejoice. Somehow or another they did not understand what He meant. (St. John XVI.: 16-20.)

Now He wanted them to understand for their own sakes as well as because He had a great work for them to do. They were to preach the gospel of the resurrection to all mankind; and He did see them again, and their hearts rejoiced.

Now, with Mary it was very different. Mary knew from the very beginning. She knew that she had conceived her Son by the power of the Holy Ghost. The angel told her that she was to have a child. She

could not understand this at first because she was not married, and then the angel said that that Holy Thing which should be born of her would be the Son of God. So of course she knew that nothing, not even death, would have any power over her Divine Son. She was quite sure that He would break the bars of death. She knew that He could not be holden of death.

We can't doubt that Jesus did see His Mother again, but He did not have to make an appearance to her in order to convince her of what she already knew was sure to take place, and that is not improbably the reason why the Evangelists do not give us any account of our Lord meeting with His Mother.

The resurrection is the corroboration of the Virgin birth.

He rose again because He is Himself the Resurrection and the Life. Mortal man does not rise from the dead. But when we find one who did rise from the dead, it is most evident that that person was no mere man. It was not the human nature in Him that conquered death, it was His Personality.

His human nature was joined to His divine nature in one Personality; inseparably joined. Death could not sever that union; nothing could. All death did was to separate His human soul from His body, and that for just so long a time as He willed.

For obvious reasons Joseph and Mary were obliged to keep their own precious secret about the miraculous conception.

Joseph himself was staggered about it until the

angel of God explained it to him. But now there was no further need of keeping such a secret. By His resurrection Christ proved His divine origin. It was possible now, and even necessary, to tell the disciples all about it, and it would be the simplest thing in the world for them to believe it, because it would be so congruous with the resurrection; the one would explain the other.

You will notice that our Lord did not show Himself to any of His 'enemies. He said Himself that they would not be persuaded though He rose again from the dead, and surely He knew the truth of what He said. (S. Luke XVI.: 31.)

No, He showed Himself only to those who loved Him, as He shows Himself now to those who love His appearing.

That is why people who don't love Him take no interest in the resurrection, and the reason, for some, why they don't believe it.

You can't expect to see Jesus unless you love Him; but if you love Him He will manifest Himself to you, and make you feel the power of His resurrection.

How can you dare to claim Him for your Saviour if you don't believe in Him and love Him? You must one day stand before Him as your Judge, and there is none other Name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. (Acts IV.: 11, 12.)

Those who deny that Christ rose from the dead have got only into the beginning of their difficulties. They have to explain the power of the resurrection. They have to review the history of succeeding cen-

turies, and contend against the succession of experiences of countless penitents and saints who have borne witness to their knowledge of the fact that He is still living, and that neither His compassion, nor His power, has been spent.

If the history were to be written of His wonderful miracles of grace which He has wrought since He ascended up on high, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written.

Perhaps most of you are wondering why I should devote so much time to establishing facts concerning which you have no manner of doubt.

I am sure that those of you who come to this church to worship not only believe these facts, but also greatly appreciate the value of them. Yes, you who come here to worship, believe these truths, but there are sometimes a few who don't come here to worship, nor do they go anywhere else for that purpose.

Unfortunately there are many in this supposedly Christian City of Toronto who don't believe in the Divine Personality of our blessed Lord, and to these belief in the resurrection is impossible.

Should there be any of these here to-night I would entreat them to read their Bibles again, and endeavour to do so with some real desire to find in it God's truth.

There is a way of reading the Bible to which God gives the comfort of His grace, by which we are enabled to embrace and ever hold fast the blessed

hope of everlasting life. That life is in His Son. This is the anniversary of the day when Christ proclaimed by His triumph over the grave and death, that He is the Resurrection and the Life. If you do as I exhort you to do, and look for Jesus in the Scriptures, I am quite sure that God's love will not turn you away in disappointment.

Our blessed Lord is only too ready to overtake you on your way through life, and make your heart burn within you, if you will only allow Him to expound the things concerning Himself with which throb and palpitate every page in His Holy Word, from "the seed of the woman" in Genesis to "the worship of the Lamb" in the Book of the Revelation.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

TEX. . . S. John X: 14.

"I am the Good Shepherd and know My sheep, and am known of Mine."

Of all the titles of our blessed Lord, this of the Good Shepherd makes the strongest appeal to the human heart.

All love, care, devotion, watchfulness, is wrapped up in this title. It is a veritable revelation of the character of our blessed Redeemer.

It recalls all the long-suffering mercy and forbearance of God to His people of old, when the Shepherd of Israel made His own people go forth like sheep, and guided them in the wilderness like a flock. (Ps. LXXVIII.: 52.)

It revives the vision of Isaiah, "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd; He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom." (Isaiah XL.: 11.)

In the early days of the Church's persecution the Good Shepherd was the symbol under which the protection of His Presence was shadowed forth.

It was sculptured on the walls of the sepulchres and painted in upper chambers and oratories; traced

upon saered books and engraven on the vessels of the altar. It is by this title that our Lord appropriates to Himself His own most touching parable of the lost sheep.

There is no thought or emotion of compassion, gentleness, patience and love, which is not here expressed.

It is the peculiar consolation of the lost and wandering, of the weak and weary, and of the whole flock of God scattered abroad in the midst of this wicked world. It is a Name He will never lay aside; even in the heavenly glory it is still among His titles. Even there the chief Shepherd of the sheep will still guide His flock; though more fully to express the unity of His nature with theirs, and His own spotless sacrifice in their behalf, He is called the Lamb. "The Lamb which is in the midst of the Throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters." (Rev. VII.: 17.)

In the place from which my text is taken our blessed Lord was speaking to men who came of a shepherd race. He appealed to those who knew what a shepherd's life was.

That we may grasp the full force of the allegory we must know something of an Eastern shepherd's life and of his relation to the sheep.

It is now pretty generally known that instead of driving the sheep, the Eastern shepherd went before. He led them, and the sheep followed him.

But what is not so well known is that it was the custom in Palestine for sheep to be brought at night

into a common fold, which was a walled enclosure, with a strongly barred door. Here the sheep rested until the morning, guarded by a porter. Early in the day the shepherds would return and knock at the door for the porter to open to them. Then each shepherd would call his own sheep. The sheep knew their own shepherd's voice and would come out and follow him; but the voice of a stranger they would not heed.

The porter, too, would recognize the voice of a stranger, and would not open to him. A robber, therefore, would not knock at the door, but would try to come in some other way, as by scaling the wall, thus to lay hold of the sheep. Knowing these facts, the imagery of the allegory is much more distinct.

Our Lord says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice; and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him; for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him; for they know not the voice of strangers." (John X.: 1-5.)

What more beautiful illustration could there be of the mutual relations of our Lord Jesus Christ and His faithful followers!

As the shepherd of the East went before His flock, avoiding dangerous places, so does the Good Shep-

herd of our souls go before us, leaving the impress of His sacred feet that we may follow the blessed steps of His most holy life, and thus avoid all the dangers with which our wanderings through this vale of misery are beset. Those who have travelled in the East tell us that the sheep will even go across water after one they know well. When a shepherd wants to lead his flock across the river Jordan he chooses a shallow place and goes himself first into the water, and is at once followed by the older sheep. The younger ones show some hesitation, and these the shepherd carries in his arms.

Just as the prophet describes our blessed Lord as gathering the lambs with His arm and carrying them in His bosom.

Just think of the absolute and unquestioning confidence of these mute animals in their own shepherd, and we foolish and headstrong creatures of intelligence cannot trust the Good Shepherd to guide us aright.

We hesitate to enter the troubled waters that we so often have to cross in the wilderness of this world, notwithstanding the fact that He has passed through all these streams Himself and is beckoning us to follow Him. When we come to the Jordan that separates this world of sight from the yet unseen world beyond, the Good Shepherd will meet us there too, and His rod and His staff will guide and support us.

Now let us think for a few moments of all the good things the Good Shepherd has done for us, and of all He is still doing for us; and we shall see that what

He does is far more than any of the best of Eastern shepherds could have done for their flocks. He was not content to watch over His sheep from a distance, but He came down from heaven to be their guardian and keeper, to shield them from harm, and to see that no enemy came near to terrify or molest them.

He expended all His solicitude upon them, i.e., upon us, for it is we who are the sheep of His pasture. He came and spent His whole life with us; and not only spent His life with us, but spent it for us, supplying all our wants and offering us the certain security of His constant protection.

Ever forgetful of Himself, and studying the welfare of His sheep, His life upon earth was one continual service of pastoral care and fatherly solicitude.

He allowed Himself no respite when the misery of men was to be alleviated; never did He suffer bodily fatigue to interfere with His work of mercy; never did He weight the refusals He met with, and never did He measure His benevolence by the ingratitude of those He came to rescue.

When mankind was sleeping in the oblivion of their own misery, the Good Shepherd was occupied in prayerful converse with His heavenly Father, touching the ardent desire of His heart that of all those whom the Father had given Him not a single soul should perish, but that He might raise it up with Himself at the last.

To saintly souls like the Apostles, whom His grace had drawn close to Himself, He vouchsafed a foretaste of heavenly joy in the happiness of intimate

and unrestrained intercourse.

Thin indeed was the veil that intervened between them and heaven, compared with the thick cloud which separates the soul-in-sin from God. To Peter and James and John He granted a glimpse of the beatific vision when He was transfigured before them, and Peter exclaimed, "Lord, it is good for us to be here." (Matt. XVII.: 1-4.)

Was there anything upon earth or in heaven that Mary could wish for when she had Jesus to fold to her bosom? How often she must have said to herself, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of Thee!"

At a banquet, a sinner, uninvited, breaks in upon the feast, and throws herself at His feet. He turns aside from His host and the disciples to speak to her, and He utters these words of gracious mercy and absolution, "Thy sins are forgiven."

At another time, He passes beneath a sycamore tree and beckons to Zacchaeus to come down; and he, who had little more thought of Jesus than a simple curiosity to see one whom the whole world was talking of, is changed by His grace to an ardent and devoted disciple.

So, as it was with the sinful woman, it was with the penitent thief on the cross, and with the thousands of others who were living in complete indifference to their salvation, until they heard the voice of the Good Shepherd who had come down from heaven to seek them, and hearing Him, they were enabled by His grace to follow Him and find rest to their

souls.

This was the mission foretold of Him by Isaiah: "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd: He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom. (Isai. XL.,: 11.)

In one of His parables, in S. Luke's Gospel (XV.), He compares His anxiety about a sinner-in-sin and His joy at his conversion, to the rejoicing of the man who leaves ninety and nine sheep in the wilderness while he goes to seek and to save one that is lost. "When he hath found it he layeth it on his shoulders rejoicing."

There are many interpretations of this parable, and it is clearly intended to have manifold applications. Many of the Fathers do not confine the scene of its action to this world alone.

Our Lord left the ninety and nine angels who kept their first estate and came down from heaven to seek, in the human race, the sheep that had gone astray, and wandered from the fold into which they were brought by their creation. He calls together His friends and His neighbours when He resumes His seat on the right hand of God in His glorified Humanity. His own praises and the praises of the Father are sung by the angels and the redeemed saints which John saw in a vision, and whose voices of ten thousand times ten thousand he heard singing "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches—glory and blessing."

Then there is a more particular application of the teaching of this parable. Our Lord is represented as

leaving the ninety and nine who are already safe in His fold that He may go and find the single wandered soul. And here is shown the weakness of allegory to set forth divine Truth in its every aspect. For the omnipresent God never leaves or abandons His ninety and nine faithful ones; but as the lost soul is in greater need of His compassion and mercy, so is the Saviour's compassion exhibited as wholly exercised in the recovery of that soul.

He doesn't forsake His faithful followers; He doesn't withdraw from them the arm of His protection. Infinite Love will not depart from any soul.

But with unspeakable tenderness and compassion His heart is bent upon the recovery of the soul that is gone astray, and His ear seems to be open to the cry of that soul alone.

He bends Himself over the lost sheep as though it were the only wanderer from the fold, concentrating the fulness of His saving power upon that single soul.

So that not only did He come down once for all to recover mankind from the tyranny of sin, but when these sins of ours are now being committed He is still to us the Good Shepherd, not leaving us to wander further and further away from Him, but calling us and warning us over and over again.

It was His voice that taught us prayers and catechisms in our youth. His voice it is when conscience seems to prick us and fill us with a sense of secret resistance to the commission of some wrong-doing.

Was it not His voice when He took away some dear friend—it may have been a wife, a husband, a

brother or a sister? He suits His providential calls to the particular circumstances of each of us, and how many has He not brought back to Himself by these warning voices! His sheep hear their Shepherd's voice. Are we not all of us His sheep, my brethren? Is there any here who does not desire to belong to His flock?

Then why is it we so often listen to the voice of a stranger, and though we know the Good Shepherd's voice, will not heed it? The reason is that we have laid our hearts open to the entrance of a stranger, and Christ will not share His sovereignty with another. We are *His*. *His* alone.

Wandered sheep are sometimes found in the ranks of young men and young women who, after confirmation, begin to come regularly to their communion, but as time goes on they become careless, their ardour cools, and they forget how much they owe to God for all the love and care He has bestowed upon them.

They forget what a manifestation of God's love the Blessed Sacrament is, how greatly the Shepherd of their souls longs to keep them alive, and dead to sin, by His own very presence dwelling in them; how the Good Shepherd laid down His life in order to procure to them this great gift, the gift of His very Body and Blood.

In to-day's Gospel Christ contrasts Himself with the hireling whose own the sheep are not.

I am the Good Shepherd; I give my life for the sheep. The hireling sees the wolf coming and he leaves the sheep, and he fleeth.

This Christ did not do. He grappled with the enemy, and protected the sheep from the assaults of the wolves; and in the encounter He lost His life. To protect His sheep He gave up His life, because the sheep He died to save are His very own.

This being so, we need not to measure our hope by our power to persevere; the true measure of our hope is in Christ's possession of us. Our Lord tells us that the hireling fleeth, leaving the wolves to destroy the sheep, because he is a hireling, and as such, careth not for the sheep. Not so with Him. He careth for us because He has purchased us as His peculiar possession. His interests are one with ours. He knows His sheep, and His sheep know Him. There is that intimate fellowship between the Good Shepherd and His own sheep which subsists between Himself and His Father.

By virtue of His incarnation, when we suffer He suffers too; when we strive He strives within us.

You don't have to look at Him to know how to fight; He is actually one with us, enduring our temptations, and, if we win, it is no longer we but Christ that dwelleth in us.

When He bids us persevere to the end, He is not asking us to do the impossible—and it would be the impossible, were not He with us, and in us, to win the battle. Because we are His own, we are priceless in His sight. His possession of us, then, is the measure of our hope; not our own weakness, but the strength of one who has identified Himself with the sheep of His flock. There is not a single wandering

sheep that He will not pursue to recover it.

He has appropriated to Himself every imaginable title of endearment and consolation to woo the soul of man.

To a pastoral people He pictures Himself as the Good Shepherd. To the warrior He is his shield and buckler. To the mariner, his shelter from the storm. To the traveller, the haven of rest. To the faltering and unstable, the Rock of ages. To the sick, the afflicted and the wounded, the Good Samaritan. To the struggling sinner, the Conqueror in the fight.

To him that would enter in, He is the door. To the blind, He is the light. To the dying, the Hope of glory. To the dead, the Resurrection; and to all men, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world.

To such a Shepherd of our souls as this we owe a greater love than we can understand or think.

Struggle we on, then, in the life of grace, with a heart full of love for Him, and with a joy full of hope in His gracious promises to them that love Him, for hath He not said, "Because He hath set His love upon me, therefore will I deliver him, I will set him up because he hath known My Name. He shall call upon Me and I will hear him; yea I am with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and bring him to honour." (Ps. XCI.: 14, 15.)



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