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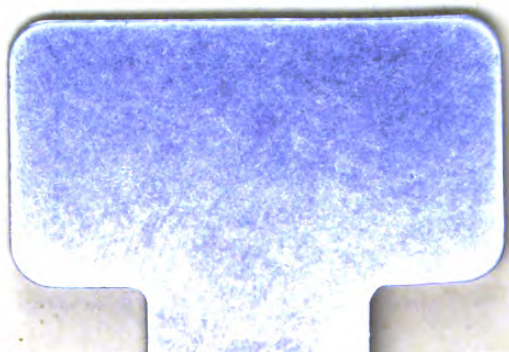
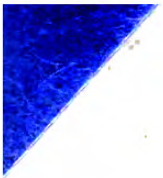
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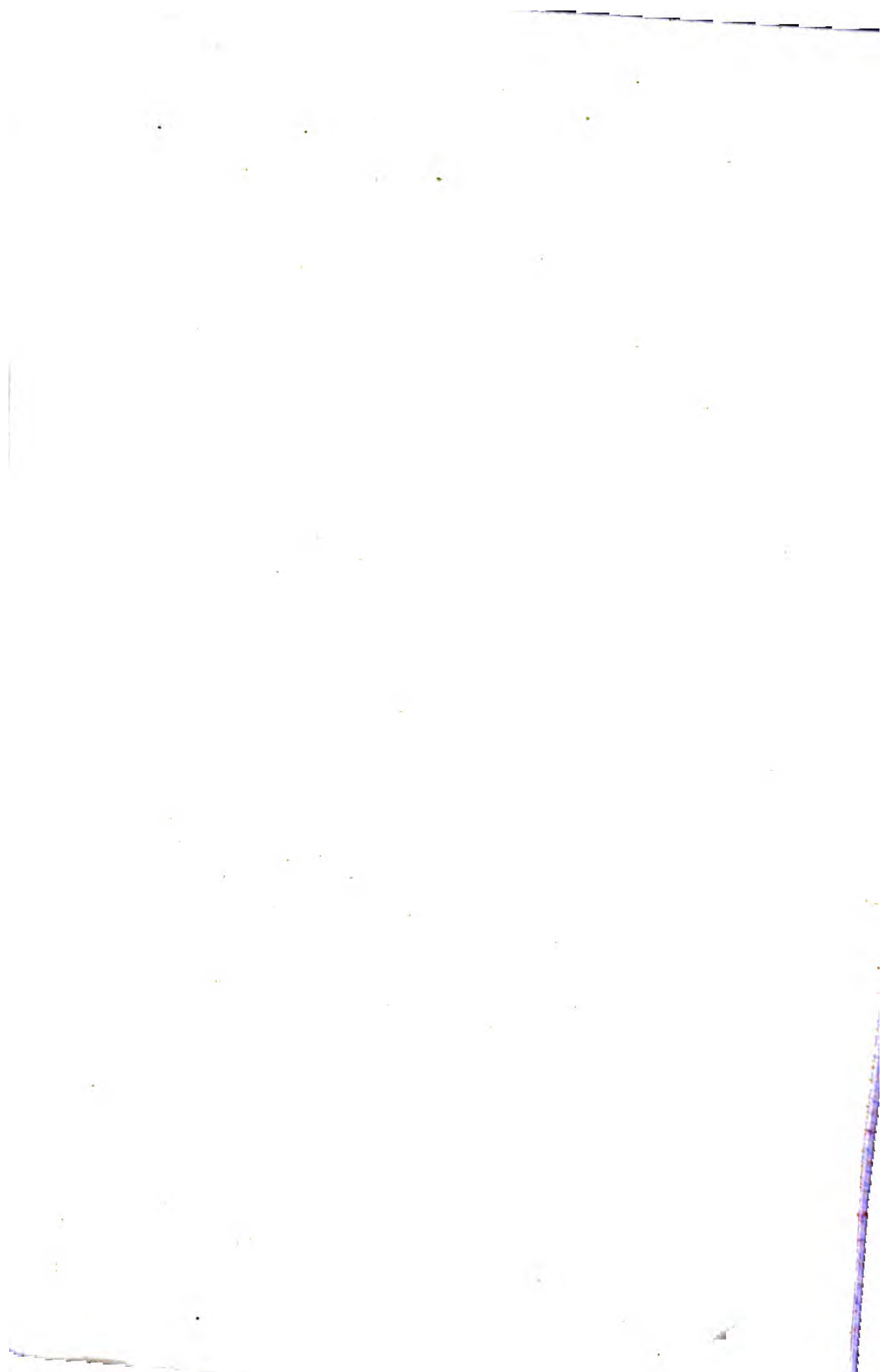


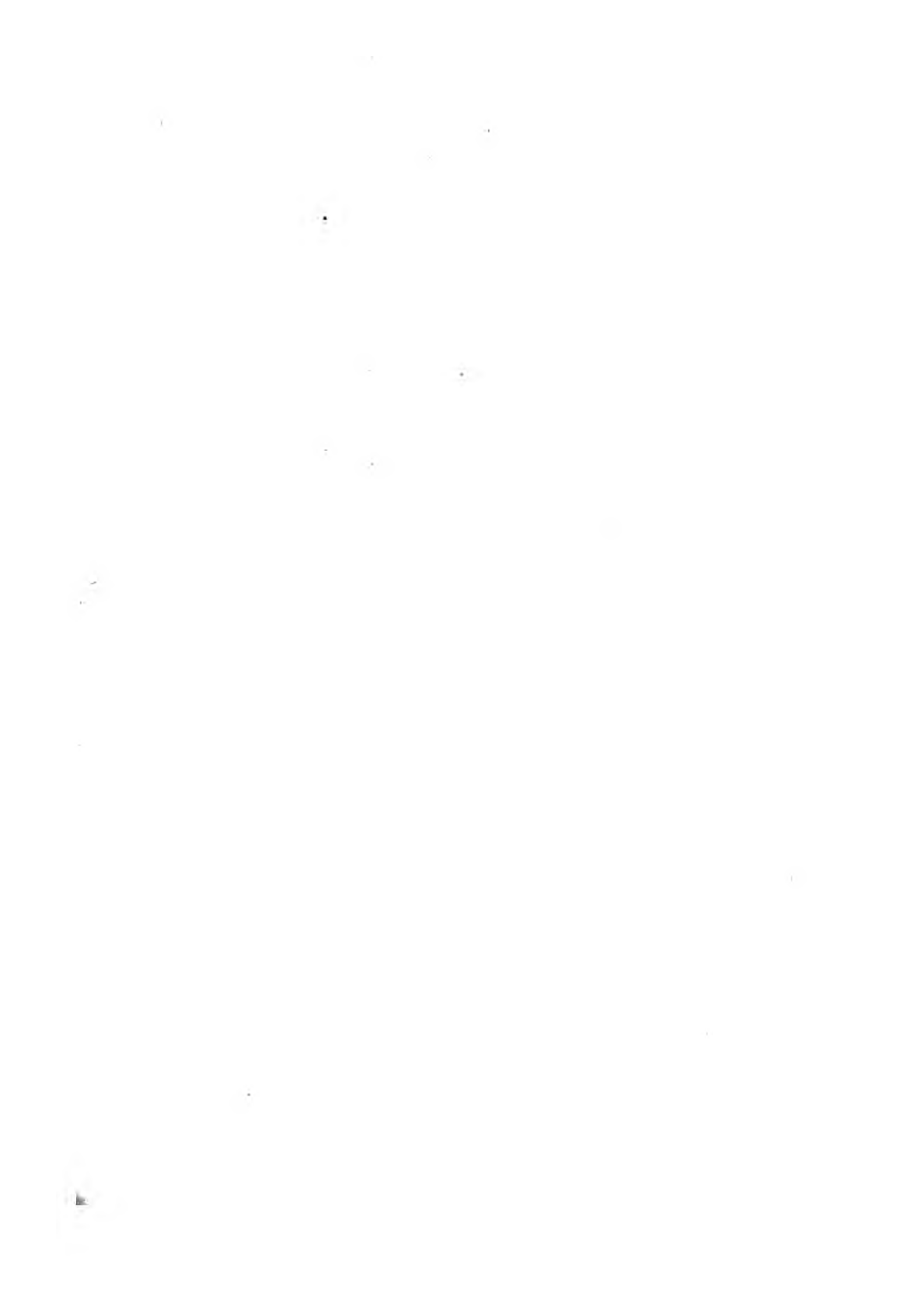
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The Sacrament
OF THE
BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST,

DOCTRINALLY AND PRACTICALLY EXPLAINED ACCORDING
TO THE HOMILY OF THE

Church of England,

WITH PREFATORY REMARKS.

BY THE

REV. JOHN BOYLE,
INCUMBENT OF HOLY TRINITY, BARNSTAPLE,
AUTHOR OF "LECTURES ON THE LORD'S PRAYER," ETC.

SECOND EDITION.

"Offering by turns, on Jesus' part,
The Cross to every hand and heart."

CHRISTIAN YEAR.

London :

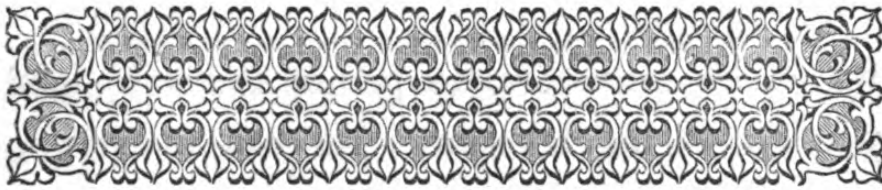
JOHN HENRY AND JAMES PARKER ;
A. P. WOOD AND J. HAYMAN, BARNSTAPLE.

1860.

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“Now if ye will compare this with the Church of Rome, not as it was in the beginning, but as it is presently, and hath been for the space of nine hundred years and odd, you shall well perceive the state thereof to be so far wide from the nature of the true Church that nothing can be more.” “Christ commended to His Church a Sacrament of His Body and Blood;” the Romanists “have changed it into a sacrifice for the quick and the dead. Christ did minister to His Apostles, and the Apostles to other men, indifferently under both kinds; they have robbed the lay people of the Cup, saying, that for them one kind is sufficient.”—HOMILY FOR WHITSUNDAY.





PREFATORY REMARKS.

WHAT does the Church of England really hold in reference to the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ? That important question is fully and candidly answered in the following pages, which comprise the substance of the searching Homily on that subject, and which, as she does of the rest of the Homilies, the Church declares to contain "a godly and wholesome doctrine." The Author has been long engaged in preparing a new Edition of these interesting and instructive writings for the press, and which, should health and leisure not be wanting, he hopes soon to give to the world: in the meanwhile, as "especially necessary for these times," and as called for by the peculiar circumstances of the Church in

which he ministers, he prints the subjoined portion of his labours. He has re-written the whole, and although it may seem an immodest, if it be not deemed a presumptuous task, to re-cast the language of the pious Bishop Jewell, he can safely aver that he was influenced only by an earnest desire to remove the somewhat repulsive quaintness, and so to bring out, distinctly and with acceptance, the opinions and teaching of that truly eminent Prelate: but while his phraseology has been almost wholly modernized, his doctrinal views have been rigidly adhered to; the Scripture references have been changed for those of the authorized version; short concluding exhortations have been added, and it is earnestly hoped that what has thus been prepared with care and caution, will be read with attention and profit. The gold has been cast into a modern crucible, and fashioned anew; but not the smallest particle of alloy has knowingly been mixed up with it.

As it becomes him, the Author in the following pages has primarily in view the instruction and edification of his own beloved people; but

what is thus designed for their especial use will, he humbly hopes, prove useful to others. That heartless volubility,—that incessant discussion,—and that assumed purity and pre-eminence, which characterize the religious profession of the day, are symptoms which it is impossible to regard with indifference, denoting as they unquestionably do, that unhealthy and feverish state of the public mind which beclouds, or perverts, the power of right apprehension. The more difficult the subject, the greater seems to be the confidence of those who presume to discuss it; and matters which have occupied the life, subdued the mind, and exerted the constant prayers of many “a Master in Israel,” are spoken of with indifference, and without hesitation, by hundreds whose age and opportunities preclude the possibility of competent information. Amongst these, the doctrinal bearing and tendencies of the Holy Eucharist are, in our own Church, as freely and as confidently discussed, as though there were nothing in those Holy Mysteries to demand caution and forbearance,—as though a question pre-eminently calcu-

lated to inspire us with modest and reverential feelings may be treated as a mere ordinary topic! So thought not the judicious Hooker. "*I wish,*" exclaimed that holy and learned man, "*that men would give themselves to meditate with silence what we have by the Sacrament, and less to dispute of the matter how?*" Were this pious wish complied with, less pretension, and more practice,—less speculation, and more spirituality, would be the happy consequences: that division and those heart-burnings and ungodly jealousies, which now disturb and distress us, would be displaced by unity, and reverence, and godly fear: and that morbid love of controversy which rends asunder many a kindred and many a social tie, whilst it exasperates the irritable, unsettles the weak, and offends the pious, be exchanged for that warm and fertilizing love which "rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;" "which beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."*

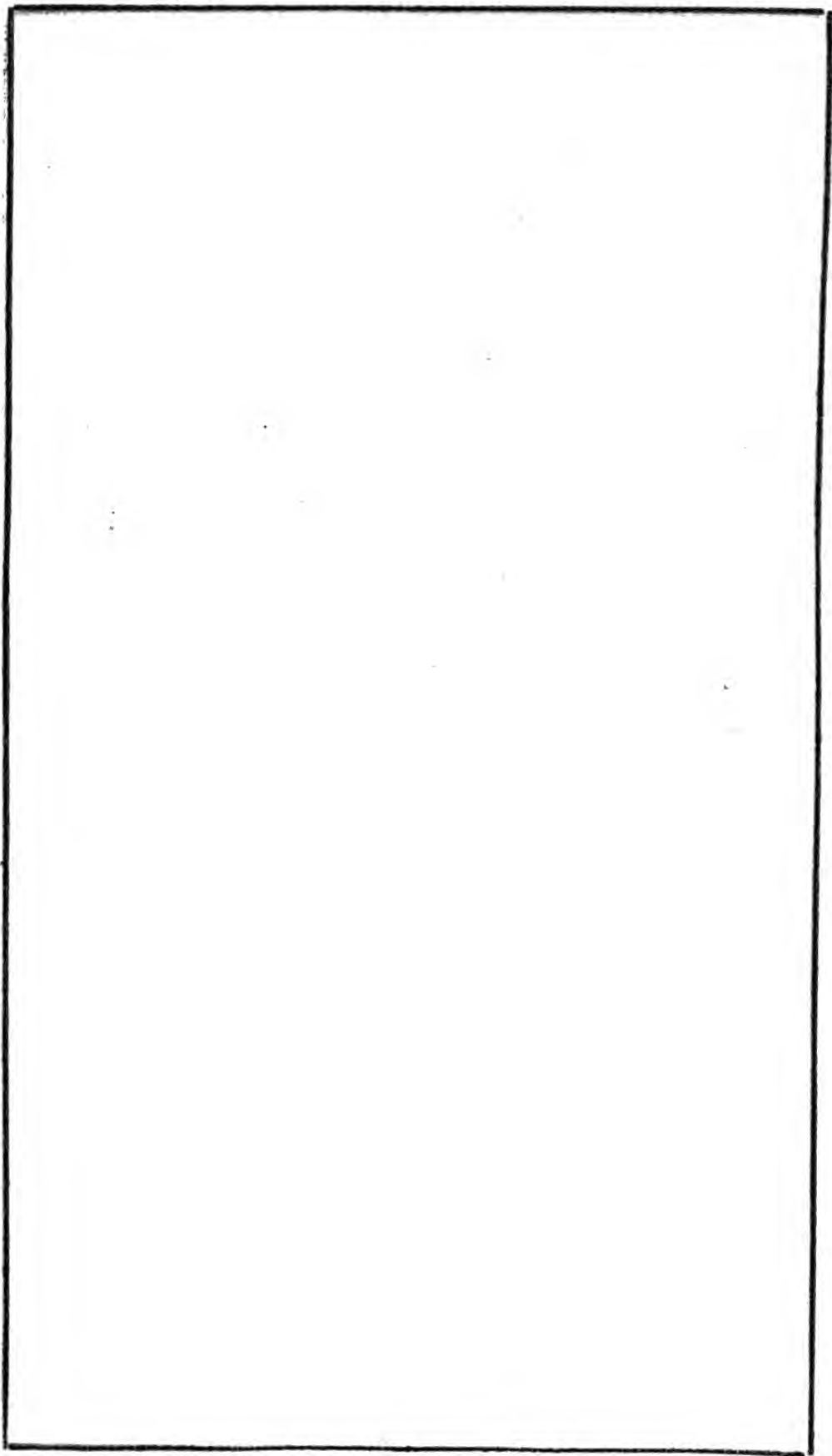
Reader you are earnestly requested to peruse

* 1 Cor. xiii. 6, 7.

the following pages with seriousness and attention; they are designed to put you into possession of the views and sentiments of our Church in reference to the High Mystery to which they relate; and happy will the Author deem himself, if, by the blessing of God, for which he devoutly prays, his unpretending labours tend to establish you in the faith, and, notwithstanding all that has been written to the contrary, to convince you that the characteristics of that Church are “EVANGELICAL TRUTH and APOSTOLIC ORDER.”

Holy Trinity Church, Barnstaple.

October 1st, 1860.





OF THE WORTHY RECEIVING, AND REVERENT
ESTEEMING, OF THE SACRAMENT OF THE
BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST.

Part First.

LUKE xxii. 19.

“Do this in remembrance of me.”

THAT the love of Christ passeth knowledge,* is a truth to which every devout and reflecting mind will readily and most thankfully subscribe. The dear-bought benefit of our redemption and salvation, which so mysteriously issued from His death and passion, and the merciful provision which He made, that that marvellous sacrifice might be had in continual remembrance, strikingly and affectingly demonstrate it. As tender and provident parents are not content merely to acquire valuable possessions, but adopt means

* Ephes. iii. 19.

to preserve and secure them for their children, so did not our blessed Lord and Saviour think it sufficient to repurchase for us the forfeited favour of His heavenly Father, but prescribed and enjoined the means most likely to secure to us the perpetual enjoyment, and abiding possession, of the glorious inheritance which He thus obtained for us.

Amongst these is the public commemoration of His precious death at the Lord's Table. This holy Institution, however despised and neglected by some, is the source of joy and consolation to every believing soul. Through the weakness of our mortal nature we can do no good thing, but are much readier to remember injuries than benefits; it was, therefore, meet to strengthen and comfort the inner man,—to call up feelings of peace and gladness,—to awaken and foster the principles of love and gratitude,—and to encourage all holy conversation and godliness, by arrangements which should perpetually remind us of our wants, our privileges, and our duty.

The means chosen for this purpose existed

in principle under the Jewish Dispensation. God decreed that the rites and ceremonies of the Passover should be observed by the children of Israel in perpetual memorial of that wonderful deliverance, when, "with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders,"* He rescued them from Egyptian bondage; and it was by the adoption, or rather by the adaptation, of this significant custom† that our blessed Saviour ordained and established the Rite which we are commanded to observe in remembrance of His death, and of the great and endless mercy which, by His precious blood-shedding, He obtained for us.‡ The Institution of the Lord's Supper, which all ought to join, and from which no earnest and thoughtful Christian will willingly absent himself, is in fact the anti-type of the Passover, and forms that heavenly Banquet at which we must be guests, not gazers,§—thankful partakers, not

* Deuteronomy xxvi. 8.

† Exodus xii. 14. ‡ Matthew xxvi. 26-28.

§ 1 Cor. xi. 21.

indolent spectators,—feeding ourselves, that we may acquire that spiritual food and sustenance whereby we grow in grace, and not perish for hunger while we blindly and supinely allow others to devour that of which we are specially invited, nay straitly commanded, to partake.

Here the commandments of our Lord are most explicit: “And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, take this and divide it among yourselves,”* “and He took the bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, this is my Body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.”† On presenting the cup He said, “drink ye *all* of it; for this is my Blood of the new testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”‡ Of necessity, therefore, we must ourselves be partakers of this Holy Supper, and not mere beholders, always remembering that our responsibility in reference thereto is strictly a personal one;

* Luke xxii. 17.

† Luke xxii. 19, and 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25.

‡ Matthew xxvi. 27, 28.

that as without food the body would weaken and die, so unless we feed on the banquet of that most heavenly food our souls must likewise perish: the bread which others eat cannot possibly nourish us; neither can the faith, and piety, and obedience of others, conduce to our salvation.

We must accordingly determine regularly to approach the Table of the Lord, with reverence and godly fear,—with thankful hearts and pious resolutions; otherwise that which is so mercifully designed for our good, will certainly redound to our injury, and, like misapplied medicine, increase the sickness which it is beneficently intended to cure.

“He that eateth and drinketh unworthily,” says the great Apostle, “eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s Body.”* The Supper of the Lord is that Feast of holiness which the unprepared and the unholy must not approach, lest, like the rejected guest in the parable, they hear the withering rebuke, “Friend, how camest

* 1 Cor. xi. 19.

thou in hither not having a wedding garment!"* It is, therefore, most important that, in compliance with the Apostle's advice, we carefully examine ourselves, before we presume to eat of that Bread and drink of that Cup;† and

I. That we duly consider the real nature and end, and acquire correct and becoming notions, of that Holy Mystery.

II. That we come in faith, nothing doubting.

III. That we are influenced by a firm determination, in humble dependence upon God's sustaining grace, to proceed in all virtue and godliness of living, and "to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto the Lord."‡

I. And here it behoves us to ascertain whether the Supper to which we are invited is so administered as our Lord commanded, as the holy Apostles practised, and as the primitive Church celebrated it. It is well remarked by St. Ambrose that he is unworthy of the Lord who celebrates this Mystery

* Matthew xxii. 12. † 1 Cor. xi. 28. ‡ Romans xii. 1.

otherwise than the Lord himself commanded; nor can that be esteemed a devout or dutiful celebration which has not regard to the precise form and spirit in which its Divine Author instituted it. Great care must be taken lest, as in the Romish Church, instead of a *memorial*, it be esteemed a *sacrifice*; lest, instead of a *communion*, it be converted into a *private feast*; lest its benefits be selfishly restricted by the withholding of the cup, and instead of the whole we receive only a part; and lest we presumptuously and superstitiously apply to the dead, what is clearly designed to nourish and spiritualize the living. Following the wise caution of St. Cyprian, and discarding all other traditions, let us hold fast by the Lord's tradition, by doing that only which the Lord himself both did and commanded, and which we know His holy Apostles piously followed and adopted. What is thus read in, and may be proved by, Holy Scripture, we are bound to receive and obey without either limitation or addition: other commandments and other practices, by whatever authority enforced, are necessarily of

uncertain, and cannot be of imperative, obligation.

Looking, then, at the simple truth as it is in Jesus, and carefully regarding the circumstances and object of the institution of the Lord's Supper, let us strive to acquire correct and becoming notions respecting it: for without these we shall neither properly appreciate, nor rightly esteem, nor effectually secure, the marvellous graces and benefits which always accrue to the devout communicant; but on the contrary grievously offend God by lightly esteeming, or expose ourselves to final condemnation, by utterly disregarding them. Negligence of the Saviour's commands necessarily invites the Divine displeasure; and contemptuous indifference to them threatens the loss of life eternal.

The principle of Solomon's advice in reference to an earthly monarch is also applicable to the great King of kings; "When thou sittest to eat with a ruler consider diligently what things are before thee."* Before we approach the Table of the Lord it is indeed

* Proverbs xxiii. 1.

most important that we rightly estimate the nature and quality of the entertainment to which we are summoned; that we do not look upon it as a means of pampering the body, but of strengthening and refreshing the soul; not as a means of carnal indulgence, but of spiritual advancement; not as a preparation for the life that now is, but for that which is to come. These Holy Mysteries were "instituted and ordained as pledges of the love of Christ, and for a continual remembrance of His death to our great and endless comfort,"* and we are not to consider the mere creatures of bread and wine which are therein exhibited, but the heavenly graces, and the never-ending glories, which the eye of faith beholds, and which are the promised end of the means thus thankfully used by the devout and grateful recipient. Our feelings, views, and hopes, must all centre in the One and All-sufficient Sacrifice which we thus commemorate; and instead of hovering with unsanctified view, and unsubdued feelings, and unfelt prayers, over the mangled Body thus

* Communion Service.

figuratively brought before us, we must, with the eager impetuosity of the quick-sighted eagle, "feed upon it in our hearts by faith with thanksgiving."*

The great importance of approaching the Table of the Lord with a right understanding, is shewn from the fact that, before every celebration of the Passover, the Jews were commanded to instruct their children not only in its peculiar rites and ceremonies, but as to the reason and end of its institution. The power and goodness of Jehovah as the cause, and reverence, gratitude, and love, as the consequences, were thus firmly impressed upon the mind of the worshipper; and for the same reason, and with reference to similar results, it is indispensable that we acquire correct and befitting notions of that still more significant institution to which the Passover was merely introductory; for without a clear understanding of its strictly spiritual import, we shall derive neither fruit nor comfort from it.

This is painfully shown by the earnest and

* Chrysostom.

cutting rebuke which St. Paul addressed to the Corinthians, whose ignorance and inconsideration in this respect led to many fatal excesses. "Not discerning the Lord's body," they partook of the Lord's Supper in a manner and spirit so unworthy, as to convert it into an occasion of unholy riot and intemperate festivity; thus literally eating and drinking their own damnation, entailing weakness and sickness upon themselves, and provoking God to plague them with "divers diseases, and sundry kinds of death."*

And while these considerations induce us to regard with reverence and godly fear this prime Mystery of our holy religion, let them also restrain us from the opposite extreme. Acquiring—as we are bound to acquire—correct and reverential views on this all-important point, we must guard—as we are indeed most bounden—against that false and superstitious estimate which, as is unhappily the case in the Church of Rome, may betray us into idolatry. For want of that correct and spiritual discernment which ought to ac-

* 1 Cor. xi. 20-29. See also Communion Service.

company every religious exercise, and especially one so important as that of communicating, worship and adoration have been improperly paid to the consecrated elements themselves, which the blessing of the priest is supposed to have changed into the actual body, and actual blood of Christ! The *visible* signs of the *invisible* Saviour, through whose atoning blood, and all-availing righteousness, we are justified freely in the sight of God, are presumptuously assumed to become the actual Saviour himself; the memorials are vainly supposed to become the thing commemorated; carnal adoration is made to supply the place of spiritual worship; and the nature and meaning of the Sacrament thus absolutely and impiously destroyed.

Views so carnal and unreasonable have led to much superstitious observance, and to many fearful abuses; have occasioned the decay of vital religion, and the prevalence of mere sanctimonious profession, and of much idolatrous worship. To them must be attributed the origin of the mummeries of the Mass; of that daring assumption which leads the

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Romish Church to dethrone the Saviour, by requiring her members to believe that, under the veil of bread and wine, the Body and Blood of Christ are actually offered in sacrifice to God, as well for the living as for the dead, as *really* as they were upon the Cross, and that by such offering, atonement and propitiation are made for sin ! And to them must be attributed much of that uncharitable and persecuting spirit which has striven to subdue the will and reason and conscience to mere human conceits ; and to plant the standard of war and discord where that of Christian love and charity ought to have been erected.

Avoiding the extreme of carnal reception on the one hand, and of superstitious and idolatrous views on the other, let us endeavour so to understand, and so to receive the Lord's Supper, that our worship may be the worship of the heart ; our reverence, a spiritual reverence ; our faith a scriptural faith ; and our practice deformed neither by hate, malice, nor ill-will, but contrariwise distinguished and adorned by the enduring fruits of piety and charity. By cleaving to the

simple truth, and obvious meaning of Scripture, we shall, if we ask in prayer, nothing doubting, acquire such clear and consistent notions as will enable us rightly to understand, and savingly to profit by, the receiving of the Holy Sacrament. Knowledge so exact and comprehensive as to qualify us for subtle disputants, or for able controversialists, is not needful for this purpose: this much, however, is needful for every professor, that he clearly understand that although the thing signified cannot be the thing itself, yet the ceremony is by no means a vain or empty one,—not merely a sign or figure to represent something absent, but that the Body and Blood of Christ are, in a strictly sacramental sense, verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful communicant. The Person of Christ, we know, cannot be present with us; *that* is seated at the right hand of God where Christ ever liveth to make intercession for us;* but the Spirit of Christ we may be assured is there, approving of our heartfelt obedience, and blessing and consecrating

* Hebrews vii. 25.

those appointed memorials whereby we shew forth His great and endless love in dying for, and redeeming us. "The cup of blessing," says St. Paul, "which we bless, is it not the communion," or *partaking together*, "of the Blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion," or *partaking together*, "of the Body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one Bread."*

Thus we are united to Christ in this highly privileged Ordinance, through the operation of the Holy Ghost, in a wonderful manner, and in a marvellous incorporation; feeding upon Him in our hearts by faith; being strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; our souls realizing the substance of things hoped for, and practically appreciating the evidence of things not seen, being made to rejoice in the prospect of life eternal, and to anticipate the blessings and the privileges of a glorious immortality.

A clear perception and correct understand-

* 1 Cor. x. 16, 17.

ing of that fruition and union, which undoubtedly exist between the Body and the Head,—between true believers and Christ Himself, induced many of the Primitive Fathers of the Church, themselves the happy recipients of its sanctifying influence, to commend it to their people in terms of high and rapturous approval. They spoke of the Lord's Supper as the anointing to immortality, and the sovereign preservative against death; they characterized it as the divine communion,—the choice dainties of our Saviour,—the pledge of eternal health,—the defence of faith,—the hope of the resurrection,—the food of immortality,—the healthful grace,—and the conservatory to everlasting life.*

Sayings like these, as well as the many reverent and commendatory ones to be found in Holy Scripture, are calculated to impress us with the great importance of the solemn Rite to which they refer, and to show the

* Iren. lib. 4. cap. 34. Ignat. Epist. ad Ephes. Dionysius. Origen. Optat. Cyp. de Cœna Domini. Atha. de Pec. in Spir. Sanct.

imminent danger of neglecting it. Deeply does it behove us, therefore, thus to think of these Holy Mysteries, and to covet earnestly the celestial food with which they sustain the eager and faithful soul ; not, however, to covet the terrene and earthly elements which are presented to the carnal eye, but those spiritual and heavenly gifts of which they are but the signs and symbols, and which are ever present to the eye of faith. Not to convert a representative Rite into an atoning Sacrifice, but to cleave to the one and only Sacrifice once offered ;—not to regard with blind and superstitious feelings the things which signify, but to reverence with lowly and grateful ones the things signified, cleaving by faith to the Rock from which, as to the thirsting Israelites in the wilderness, flows the water of life to all who thankfully and piously drink of it.* At the Table of the Lord the heart of the devout Communicant is filled with all joy and peace in believing ; there the abundant and never-failing mercies of God are sealed,—the satis-

* Exodus xvii. 6 ; and 1 Cor. x. 4.

faction of Christ confirmed in the assurance that he is the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world ; and remission of sin established. Thus is the troubled conscience tranquillized,—faith increased,—hope strengthened and purified,—brotherly kindness enlarged and diffused, and every becoming and devout affection called into action ; but these, the precious fruits of spiritual discernment, can never be tasted by those who approach the Holy Table in ignorance and unbelief, whose eyes and hearts are not open to the enduring privileges and advantages which it confers. Pray we, therefore, that God will take away our hearts of stone, and give us hearts of flesh ; that He will remove the film from before the eyes of the mind, and enable us to perceive and to know the nature of the spiritual sustenance thus placed within our reach, and which to every humble and faithful believer is indeed the Bread of Life.

II. With a knowledge of the nature, object, and efficacy of the Lord's Supper, correct doctrinal views must also be combined.

We must not presume to eat of it “trusting in our own righteousness, but in the manifold and great mercies of God,”* really feeling, and devoutly acknowledging, not only that the death of Christ is available for the redemption of mankind, for the remission of sins, and reconciliation with the Father, but that He made upon the cross “a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world,”† so that we acknowledge no other Saviour, Redeemer, Mediator, Advocate, or Intercessor, but Christ alone, “who loved us, and gave himself for us.”‡ Thus shall we hold to the promise which Christ made in his holy Institution; thus will Christ become ours, and we His; thus shall we be one with Christ, and Christ with us; and thus will those merits which He only can impart be applied to our naturally polluted souls.

St. Paul distinctly points out the importance and efficacy of the true and lively faith here enjoined: “Without faith,” says he, “it

* Communion Service.

† Communion Office.

‡ Galatians ii. 20.

is impossible to please God,"* and it is well remarked by an ancient writer that, when the Israelites were overthrown in the wilderness, Moses, Aaron, and Phineas, by eating manna, pleased God, inasmuch as they partook of visible meat with spiritual discernment; they seriously considered the miraculous power of its gracious Giver, whilst they acknowledged its outward use; and ate it in a religious sense, that it might be blessed and sanctified in the eating. Spiritually they hungered after it; spiritually they tasted it, that they might be spiritually satisfied.†

And as a sound and healthy stomach is necessary to convert the food we take into wholesome nutriment, so in order that religious knowledge, and religious exercises may benefit, is it indispensable that they be acquired and discharged in faith. By faith, we are assured, we profitably break and divide the holy Bread of which we partake; and without faith our souls will never be strengthened and refreshed by our par-

* Hebrews xi. 6.

† Augustin in Johan. Hom. 6.

taking.* The Feast to which we are invited is not carnal, but spiritual, designed only for the strengthening and refreshing of the soul; it is a heavenly refectio, not an earthly one, supplying invisible, not corporeal food: to partake of it without faith, therefore, is not to discern the Lord's Body; it is to reverence the Elements instead of regarding the solemn truths of which they are designed to remind us; and to convert that into an outward and profitless ceremony, which otherwise might be made to produce fruit unto life everlasting.

In approaching the Table of the Lord, therefore, it is meet and right that the Church call upon us to lift up our hearts unto God, —to look beyond, and above, the Elements themselves, and with hopes strengthened, and with eyes quickened, by faith, to cleave unto Him of whose sacrificed Body and Blood those Elements are the prescribed representatives†. Following the injunction of one of the Fathers, all who are sincerely desirous to partake of the benefits of the Lord's Supper, must thankfully remember the REAL SACRIFICE

* Cyprian de Cœna Domini.

† Concilium Nicen.

which it shadows forth,—must remember that *then no sacrifice is made*, but that the consecrated Signs and Symbols of the ONE GREAT SACRIFICE are before them ; must remember that these Signs and Symbols are spiritually administered through the operation of faith unfeigned ; must marvel with reverence,—must eat and drink them with the mind,—must receive them with the heart, and take them with the inner man.*

Thus is it indispensable that, in resorting to the Table of the Lord, we go as living branches of the True Vine,—as spiritual members of Christ's mystical Body, in full assurance of faith, neither doubting the mercy, nor distrusting the never-failing promises of God. Unbelievers and faithless professors, though they receive the Elements, receive not the sacramental efficacy which is the sanctified portion of the pious and faithful Communicant : the former eat, but do not feed ; the latter feeds upon Christ in his heart with thanksgiving ; in the one case the Rite is converted into a mere formal cere-

* Euseb. Emis. Serm. de Euchar.

mony, in the other it is the actual communion of the Body and Blood of our Saviour, in whom the faithful live and abide, to whom they are savingly united, and with whom they are mysteriously incorporated. Wherefore let us try and examine ourselves, and that "not lightly, and after the manner of dissemblers with God, but so that we may come holy and clean to such a heavenly feast, in the marriage garment required by God in Holy Scripture."* Let us ascertain whether we be thriving plants of the fruitful Olive,—living branches of the True Vine,—members indeed of Christ's mystical Body: whether God has purified our hearts by faith to the sincere acknowledging of the everlasting Gospel, and the embracing of the truth and mercy which are only and ever in Christ Jesus; that when we approach His Table, we may receive not only the outward Sacrament, but the Spiritual Thing also; not merely the Figure, but the Truth,—not the Shadow only, but the Body,—not the decaying sustenance of the life that now is, but the

* Exhortation to the Holy Communion.

sure promise of the life which is to come,—not condemnation, but honour, and glory, and immortality.

And now, beloved brethren, having laid before you the views and teaching of our venerable Church, we desire to dismiss you with the urgent request, that you will seriously consider them, and piously prepare for the worthy receiving of the important Rite which they are designed to explain. Our next discourse shall, by God's permission, be devoted to a consideration of that portion of the subject which our prescribed limits have compelled us to leave untouched. In the meantime, heartily commending you to the guidance and sanctification of the Spirit of Truth, and according to our office, "we bid you in the name of God, we call you in Christ's behalf, we exhort you, as you love your own salvation, that ye will be partakers of this Holy Communion."



OF THE WORTHY RECEIVING, AND REVERENT
ESTEEMING, OF THE SACRAMENT OF THE
BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST.

Part Second.

JOHN vi. 55, 56.

*“ For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is
drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and
drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in
him.”*

HAVING, in the preceding Discourse, shewn the reason of the institution of the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ; and having also shewn that that Sacrament is to be regarded as a perpetual memorial of the death and passion of our risen and glorified Redeemer, until He shall again appear in power and great glory to judge both quick and dead; that it is the bounden duty of all to partake of it themselves, not blindly to

expect its benefits from the participation of others; that a right estimate of its value, and a correct knowledge of its benefits, ought to be possessed by every Communicant; that we must receive it in faith, nothing doubting; that, the eyes of our understanding being enlightened,* we must eat and drink with spiritual discernment,—we now proceed to elucidate the third point which we proposed to consider, that, as essential to worthy receiving, we partake of it with a firm determination, in humble dependence upon God's enlightening grace, to proceed in all virtue and godliness of living, and to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto the Lord.

Newness of life, and godliness of conversation, as the fruits of faith, are indispensable in him that would not eat of this Bread, nor drink of this Cup, unworthily.

The typical lamb was not allowed to be partaken of but by those who had been solemnly dedicated to God by the rite of Circumcision, which rite imposed an obliga-

* Ephesians i. 18.

tion to fulfil all righteousness, as it implied a sanctification of the heart as well as a cleansing of the person. Thus may we learn that inward purity and preparation, not mere outward profession and compliance, are required of every Communicant. St. Paul clearly shews—reminding us that these things happened unto them for ensamples, and are written for our admonition—that although the Jews partook of the Sacraments under Moses, they were, notwithstanding, subjected to many grievous visitations, because they partook without spiritual understanding, or pious intention, and because they did not abjure the haunts and the practice of sin; they openly violated, while they nominally adhered to the Law; they offended God by idolatrous compliances and by debasing sensuality; they tempted Him by their manifold transgressions, and insulted His power, and distrusted His mercy and truth by unholy murmurings; hence were they overthrown in the wilderness, and destroyed of the destroyer.*

* Consult 1 Cor. x. 1-11.

These admonitory facts clearly shew that more, much more, than mere outward compliance is requisite to please God, "who seeth not as men seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart."* "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall;"† let him who is resting satisfied with mere nominal religion realize the awakening truth, that unto God all hearts are open, all desires known, and that from Him no secrets are hid; let him take heed, lest, after the manner of the Jewish formalist, he adopts the means while he disregards the end,—lest, by resorting unto the Sacrament without holiness of life or pious determination, he foolishly trusts to the outward receiving, and being infected with corrupt and uncharitable propensities, repels the mercy and the grace of God.

III. The assurance of the Almighty by the mouth of the prophet, "For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God, more than burnt offerings,"‡ denotes

* 1 Sam. xvi. 7. † 1 Cor. x. 12. ‡ Hosea vi. 6.

very clearly *the principle* which must animate all our religious exercises. This assurance, it is important to remark, was pressed by our blessed Lord himself upon the attention of the sanctimonious Pharisees,* whose rigid, but heartless, attention to forms and ceremonies almost entirely superseded all practical religion. Wherefore, as is well remarked,† it behoveth him that cometh unto the Body and Blood of Christ, in commemoration of Him that died and rose again, not only to be pure from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit—from all evil practice, and from all evil intention,—lest he eat and drink his own condemnation—but that he give an unequivocal proof of his pure and grateful remembrance of Him who died and rose again for us, by himself dying from sin, and rising again unto righteousness,—by mortifying the flesh with its affections and lusts,—and by constantly and prayerfully seeking that spiritual transformation, that re-creation into righteousness and true holiness,—that habitual living unto God in

* Matt. xii. 7.

† Basil de Bap. lib. i. c. 3.

Christ Jesus,—which are essential to all acceptable worship.

But whilst we thus bear outward testimony to the import and obligations of the Lord's Supper,—whilst we thus piously commemorate the exceeding great love of our Master and only Saviour, Jesus Christ, in thus dying for us, let us also remember that our confession of sin, our sense of unworthiness, and our resolutions of amendment, must be accompanied by the expression and the feeling of gratitude;—that we must “render humble and hearty thanks to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, for the redemption of the world by the death and passion of our Saviour Christ both God and man, evermore praising Him, and saying Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory, Glory be to Thee, O Lord, most high.”

So important, in the estimation of the ancient Fathers, was the duty of thanksgiving, that they named the Lord's Supper, *Eucharistia*, or *the Feast of Thanksgiving*, thereby implying that, however important it is at all times and under all circumstances, to remem-

ber with filial love and gratitude, the constant favour and boundless compassion of our Heavenly Father, it is especially incumbent upon us to laud and praise Him whenever we commemorate His inestimable love in the redemption of the world, involving, as that redemption does, the means of grace and the hope of glory. This is the matter, the cause, the beginning, and the end of all Thanksgiving; and if this does not move us to gratitude, we are indeed most insensible: our hearts cannot be right towards God, inasmuch as we yield neither thankfulness nor praise for benefits so numerous, so wonderful, and so profitable.

Seeing that the very name, equally with the nature, of the Lord's Supper, requires that we approach it in the spirit of Praise and Thanksgiving, let us, therefore, offer the Sacrifice of Praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His Name,* for we are reminded by the Psalmist, "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me."† But striking and manifold as are the mercies of the Creator, confined and reluctant is the gratitude of the

* Hebrews xiii. 15.

† Psalm l. 23.

creature : compared with the unthankful indeed, the thankful are few, and painfully disproportionate. Of the Lepers in the Gospel, although ten were healed, one only returned to give glory to God,* and well would it be if amongst those who profess and call themselves Christians, a greater amount of gratitude could be found : but so ungraciously do we receive the most weighty benefits,—so oblivious are we of the most signal favours,—such proud and presuming suppliants do we prove, that we seem neither to care for our supreme good, nor to take pains either to discharge or to understand our duty to God, nor to be willing even to acknowledge all that we receive at His hands. And when a consciousness of our own vileness and weakness, and a constraining sense of the holiness and justice of the Almighty, compel us to acknowledge His power, and to supplicate His help and forgiveness and favour, it is much to be feared that our desires and affections are cold, and wavering, and constrained ; that though the lips be eloquent, the heart is unmoved,—that

* Luke xvii. 17.

though our tongues bless, our lives disown Him,—that though we worship Him in word, we dishonour Him in deed. O let us, therefore, learn to render unto God the praise which is so justly due unto Him: let us so acknowledge the great and undeserved mercies which He has showered upon us, that they, being treasured up in the heart, our gratitude may in due time so manifest itself in our life and conversation as to bring forth thirty, sixty, and an hundred fold to the praise and the glory of His everlasting Name.

As evidence of our sincerity, and in testimony that we walk in newness of life, we must bear in mind, and endeavour to realize, the declaration of the Apostle, “For we, being many, are one bread and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread.”* Herein are we reminded not only of our Communion with Christ, but also of that unity and concord which ought to bind all who frequent the Lord’s Table one to another. Dissension, vain-glory, ambition, strife, envying, contempt, hatred, or malice, must never be allowed

* 1 Cor. x. 17.

to disturb the peace, or to destroy the consistency, of the Christian community, every member of which should be so united in spirit—so knit together in the bonds of love and amity,—so incorporated in the same mystical body, as to resemble the grains of wheat which are ground and kneaded into one loaf.

In the primitive Church so essentially were kindly and united feelings identified with the act of communicating, that the Sacrament was called the *Supper of Love* ; thus clearly implying that none ought to partake of it whose dispositions are not those of meekness and mildness, and charity and truth ; who bear no malice nor hatred in their hearts ; and who do not evidence their regard for the poor and afflicted by relieving their wants and soothing their sorrows. This we know to have been the practice of the early Christians, and whilst we admire, let us earnestly pray that we may be enabled to follow their example,—that we may so esteem this Heavenly Banquet, that, like them, we may become worthy and godly guests.

And deeply does it behove us thus to pray,

seeing that we are set in the midst of many and great dangers; that discord and disunion are rife amongst us. How many own the Christian name, who habitually violate the Christian spirit,—who speak bitter things, and encourage unkind thoughts, and cherish evil intentions, against their neighbour; and who, notwithstanding that they have not been reconciled to their offended brother, nor put away bitterness, and wrath and anger, and clamour and evil speaking, venture to approach the Table of the Lord.* Being encumbered with the concealed hatred of Cain,† or the long cherished malice of Esau‡, or the dissembled falsehood of Joab,§ they presume, notwithstanding, to join that Feast from which every harsh, every unholy, and every uncharitable feeling must be banished. But O let us not presume to rush unadvisedly, or without serious preparation and solemn thought to these sacred and fearful Mysteries. We are invited to a Table of peace, and are, therefore, bound to eschew

* Consult Ephesians iv. 31, 32. † Gen. iv. 8.

‡ Gen. xxvii. 41. § 2 Sam iii. 27.

whatever does not savour of peace. We are invited to a Feast of sincerity, and therefore must leave behind us hard thoughts and malicious intentions. We are summoned into the Region of quietness, and must, therefore, resolve to abandon envy, and strife and debate. We are called to a Banquet of mercy, and must, therefore, strive to be merciful, even as our Father in heaven is merciful. We must fear God, the gracious Giver of this glorious Entertainment; we must thankfully reverence His Christ, our Refection and Meat; we must sincerely regard his Spouse, his well-beloved guest; and though our conscience accuse us; though weary and heavy-laden, our souls are disquieted within us, we must eagerly seek, and earnestly pray for that rest and peace, which are never denied to the sorrowing and faithful Communicant.

Wherefore, brethren, as we value our own salvation, let us try and examine ourselves; let us ascertain whether we really love the brethren; whether we have the Spirit of Christ within us; whether by faith un-

feigned, and by holy and consistent lives, we duly regard the image of God reflected in our precious and undying souls. If we have given offence, let us seek reconciliation ; if by evil counsel, or by evil example, we have seduced any from the paths of godliness, let us make haste to undeceive and to restore them ; if we have disquieted our brother, let us pacify him ; if we have wantonly defamed, let us instantly do him justice ; if we have wronged or defrauded, let us not hesitate to make him restitution ; if we have spitefully entreated, let us ask his forgiveness and his friendship ; if we have fostered hatred and malice, let us so openly shew our returning love and charity as to embrace every opportunity of promoting his interests, both spiritual and temporal, and by doing unto him on all occasions as we would that he should do unto us.

By thus preparing ourselves for the Table of the Lord we shall escape that heavy and dreadful burden of God's displeasure which always rests upon uncharitable and unsanctified dispositions ; and secure that Sacramental efficacy which is the sure and blessed

portion of those who approach in faith, and gratitude, and love. Here is emphatically the Mystery of peace,*—the Sacrament of Christian society,—the Pledge of that sincere love and affection which ought always to subsist between true Communicants: here also are the instructive tokens of purity and innocence,—the speaking symbols of truth and righteousness,—the touching evidence of pious submission,—of unexampled condescension, and of boundless love; and these are all designed—as they are wonderfully calculated—to induce us to purge our souls from all uncleanness, iniquity, and wickedness; to make us practically alive to the exceeding sinfulness, and the destroying nature of sin, and thus to prevent our eating and drinking unworthily, lest, receiving the mystical Bread, we eat it in an unclean place, with a defiled and polluted soul.†

The importance of this holy preparation is indicated by the fact that, by the Mosaic Law, whoever presumed to eat the Passover with his

* Chrysost. ad Popul. Ant. Homil. 6.

† Origen in Levit. cap. 23.

uncleanness upon him was sentenced to be cut off from the people.* To go to the Table of the Lord, therefore, wilfully violating the purity and holiness which it is designed to foster and enlarge, is to invite the displeasure of the Almighty; it is to mock Him by empty profession, and by insincere avowal, and to render Him the sacrifice of fools. This is painfully shewn by the temporal punishment which overtook the unreflecting Corinthians, whose fearful prostitution, and horrible profanation of this Holy Ordinance, entailed upon their unhappy Church much suffering, and sickness, and sorrow. So regardless were they of its spiritual import, and so unworthily did they eat and drink of it, that they literally ate and drank their own damnation: "for this cause," as St. Paul admonished them, "many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." Let us, then, one and all, look into our hearts, and deploring the guilt and impurity which they contain, supplicate pardon, and sanctification, and strength. Calling our manifold

* 1 Cor. xi. 29. Luke xvii. 1. Homil. xiv. Numb. ix. 10.

sins to remembrance, and recollecting, with unfeigned sorrow and regret, how little our conversation has become the Gospel of Christ, let us solemnly resolve to “eschew evil and to do good; to seek peace and to ensue it.”* The Church requires of all who come to the Lord’s Supper, that they “repent them truly of their former sins, steadfastly purposing to lead a new life; that they have a lively faith in God’s mercy through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of His death; and that they be in charity with all men.”†

Prayerfully endeavouring to fulfil these wise and pious requirements, let us forthwith prostrate ourselves before the Throne of Grace, and there, bemoaning our oft-repeated offences, and asking in faith unfeigned, earnestly desire, and urgently crave, the mercy and forgiveness of God, in the Name and for the Sake of Him, who is “the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth,”‡ and who made upon the Cross “a full, perfect, and sufficient Sacrifice, Oblation, and

* 1 Peter iii. 11.

† Catechism.

‡ Romans x. 4.

Satisfaction for the sins of the whole world.” Unless we thus seek to cleanse the pollutions, and to tranquillize the guilty terrors of the soul, we shall derive neither strength, nor comfort, nor encouragement, from the act of communicating : the Bread which we eat, and the Wine which we drink, will not become our spiritual sustenance ; but, like food introduced into a diseased stomach—which rejects or corrupts what, in a healthy state, it would convert into wholesome and satisfying nutriment,—will repel and distress us ; will be ate and drank to our own condemnation.*

Hence, we repeat, it is most important that we try and examine ourselves, and that not lightly and superficially, but seriously and thoroughly ;—not trusting to what other people may say, or do, for us, but, listening to the honest dictates of our own hearts and consciences, judge ourselves without partiality and without hypocrisy. Let no Judas, says the venerable Chrysostom,† resort to this

* Chrysost. ad Popul. Ant. Homil. vi.

† Ad Popul. Ant. Hom. vi.

Table, nor let any worldly or covetous man approach; but if any man be really a disciple let him take and eat, under the assurance that the Bread and Wine will strengthen and refresh his soul; for it was the desire of our blessed Lord to keep the Passover with his disciples only.*

It is both an interesting and instructive fact, that, in the primitive Church, the officiating Deacon was directed to proclaim, "If any be holy let him draw near." The Lord's Supper was then never administered until the choir door was closed, and all chance of unholy interruption prevented; while public penitents, and those who were only becoming acquainted with gospel truth, were forbidden to approach,—circumstances which clearly indicate that no sinful, or unprepared, or unenlightened professor, should presume to become a Communicant. A sense of his displeasure, and the consciousness that we have been unfaithful to him, will frequently keep us from the table, and induce us to shun the presence, of an earthly master; and shall it

* Matt. xxvi. 18.

be thought that we may rush into the presence of our Lord and Jūdge while we are in a state of estrangement from, or in one of actual rebellion against Him ; whilst, instead of seeking his favour and forgiveness, we know that we deserve his displeasure and condemnation ? As they truly are worthy of blame who presume to kiss the hand of an earthly sovereign with impure and uncleansed lips, so are they fearfully culpable who, with tainted and unsanctified souls, and hearts full of covetousness, fornication, drunkenness, pride, and almost every other unholy propensity, breathe out iniquity and uncleanness on the consecrated Elements ; who sully the purity, and mar the holiness of the Feast of the Lord, by obtruding carnal dispositions and worldly desires, and mere sanctimonious profession, where penitence and faith and pious inclination ought only to be found.

Thus, have we endeavoured to shew how, with reverence, and propriety, and benefit, we may approach the Table of the Lord ; let us, therefore, all resolve to become worthy Com-

municants, and worthy Communicants we shall become, if, searching the Word of God, we acquire therefrom correct and consistent views of the nature and obligations of the Lord's Supper. Remembering the affecting circumstances, and interesting reasons of its institution ; and remembering also that when properly received, it must bring forth fruits unto holiness, and the end everlasting life, let us determine to receive in penitence, and in faith, steadfastly purposing to keep and to walk in God's holy Will and Commandments, and in that broad, and comprehensive, and fertilizing charity which, having reconciled us to our brother, shall animate us with peace and good will towards all mankind. Faith, be it remembered, is the root and well-spring of all newness of life ; without faith we cannot possibly please, nor acceptably praise God ; and without faith we cannot exemplify that love to our neighbour which is the fulfilling of the law : by faith, indeed, the conscience is purged from all uncleanness, and by uniting us in spirit and in hope to our glorified Saviour, enables us to purify ourselves

even as He is pure. Seeking, therefore, that preparation of the heart which is from the Lord, and which is always vouchsafed to fervent and continuous prayer, let us guard against that ignorance which may induce us to misunderstand or underrate the Holy Ordinance;—against that unfaithfulness which may render us weak and unfruitful;—and against that sin and iniquity which must expose us to the Divine displeasure: so will it be our blessed portion to grow in grace, and in the sanctifying and saving knowledge of the Lord; so will faith practically unite us to the great and availing Object of the Holy Mysteries which we are invited to celebrate; so will the fruits of faith be conspicuous in our daily life and conversation,—the peace and the comfort of piety will be ours in this life, and its enduring triumphs, and glorious rewards, our blessed portion in that which is to come.

Adopting the affectionate invitation of our Church, and speaking in her name and by her authority, we now say to you,—“Draw near with faith, and take this Holy Sacra-

ment to your comfort." Superstitious reverence on the one hand, and misplaced fear on the other, are the two dangerous extremes which must be avoided. Yield not, we adjure you, to that terrifying and needless apprehension which, from a feeling of unworthiness, induces many to stay away from the celestial Banquet : unworthy we all are ; but a sense of unworthiness when really felt, and earnestly deplored, is a reason for receiving, not for rejecting, "for thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy ; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."* Come, then, in penitence ; come in faith ; come in hope ; come in thankfulness ; come in steadfastness of purpose ; come in the perfectness of charity, and you will not come in vain. Weary and heavy-laden, and burdened in soul, you may be ; but be ye well assured that there is balm in Gilead, that there is to

* Isaiah lvii. 15.

be found a Physician who will heal all your diseases, and bestow upon you the portion and the privilege of peace.

“Offering by turns, on Jesus’ part.
The Cross to every hand and heart,”*

we beseech you to take up that Cross, and to trust in, and to follow Him who died upon it; we beseech you to count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge which it teaches; we beseech you to remember, and remembering, to act upon the encouraging assurances of the Saviour, “He that eateth my Flesh, and drinketh my Blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him;” for “whoso eateth my Flesh, and drinketh my Blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.”

“Wherefore, beloved brethren, as the Son of God did vouchsafe to yield up His soul by death upon the Cross for your salvation; so is it your duty to receive the Communion in remembrance of the Sacrifice of His death, as He himself hath commanded; which if ye shall neglect to do, consider with yourselves

* Keble’s “Christian Year.”

how great injury ye do unto God, and how sore punishment hangeth over your heads for the same ; when ye wilfully abstain from the Lord's Table, and separate from your brethren, who come to feed on the Banquet of that most heavenly Food. These things, if ye earnestly consider, ye will, by God's grace, return to a better mind ; for the obtaining whereof, let us not cease to make our humble and united petitions unto Almighty God our Heavenly Father."



