LECTURES

ON THE

PRINCIPAL DOCTRINES AND PRACTICES

OF THE

CATHOLIC CHURCH,

DELIVERED AT ST. MARY'S MOORFIELDS, DURING THE LENT OF 1836,

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ADVERTISEMENT TO VOL. II.

In the Lectures which compose the following volume, a slight deviation has been made from the order in which they were delivered. The tenth Lecture was upon the Real Presence, or Transubstantiation; but, as this subject was treated on three successive Sundays, on account of the greater numbers who could attend on that day, while other topics were discussed on the Wednesdays and Fridays, it has been thought expedient to proceed with these, and place the three Lectures on the Real Presence together, at the close of the series.

A Discourse has been added on Indulgences. This was not delivered at Moorfields, from want of time. It had, however, been given at the Sardinian Chapel, in a short course delivered there during Advent, 1835; and a strong desire having been expressed by many who heard it, that it should be published, the author has been induced to write it from his notes, and add it as part of the present series.

54, Lincoln's Inn Fields,
Eve of SS. Peter and Paul.

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VOL. II.

LECTURE THE TENTH.

ON THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE.

JOHN xx. 23.

"*Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins ye shall forgive, they are forgiven them, and whose sins ye shall retain, they are retained.*"

I SHALL this day endeavour to explain to you, in the simplest manner, the doctrine of the Catholic Church regarding confession, or the forgiveness of sins, and the grounds whereupon she maintains this practice to be an institution of our Lord. It would, however, be necessarily unjust to the subject to enter into it alone, and detached from all those other important institutions, which are considered an essential part of the remedy established by Christ for the forgiveness of sins. It will, therefore, be necessary for me to enter, perhaps at some length, into other considerations connected with this subject, and endeavour rather to lay before you the entire form and substance of that sacrament, which the Catholic Church maintains, and believes, to be one of the most valuable institutions left by our Saviour to the ministration of his Church—that is to say, the sacrament of Penance, of which, indeed, confession is to be considered but a part.

Nothing, I own, is more common than to separate our belief from our practice; and then, placing the latter before the consideration of mankind, as something which stands on independant grounds, and has no connexion with the former, to represent it as necessarily a human invention, devoid of authority in the word of God. In order to remove any impression that may have been made of this nature, it will be proper that I show you this institution as really prescribed in the Church of Christ, in connexion with other and still more important doctrines. I shall, therefore, endeavour to go through all parts of

this sacrament, comparing the institution believed by us to have been left by our Saviour, and preserved in the Church of God, with the method supposed by other religions to have been instituted, and to be in operation there, for the attainment of the same objects.

I have again and again inculcated, that in the works of God, or in all those institutions left by him to mankind, there must be always found a certain consistency or harmony of parts,—so that whatever has been demonstrated regarding one portion of the system which he left on earth, must be allowed to be of considerable weight towards influencing our belief, at least as to the probability of other similar institutions having been provided. For example, with regard to the present case, all are agreed, that among the most important objects of our Saviour's coming among mankind,—I may say, indeed, the most important of all,—was that of rescuing fallen man from sin. We must, consequently, suppose that he did not leave his work imperfect; and, while we all concur in common belief, that the work of redemption was quite perfect and complete, so far as the giving a full equivalent to the divine justice, we all must likewise agree, that a means was provided by him whereby this full and general redemption was, in some way or other, to be applied to each individual case. No one can, for a moment, suppose, that because Christ died for our sins, we are rescued from all co-operation on our parts; that, without a single act, I do not say external, but at least of our minds, we shall have the full benefit of that redemption; that nothing was demanded from us, whereby that general redemption, which would have cancelled the sins of ten thousand worlds, was to be accepted by God, in our particular case. Consequently, so far we all admit that redemption was perfected by Christ's death; and so, likewise, must all agree that some instrument or other, whether of outward act or inward movement, was necessary for the purpose of making that redemption applicable to ourselves.

But if we look into the institutions of Christ, we shall see,

that, in every other case, at least, he was pleased to make use of external agency. Is not the blood of Christ applied to the sanctification of man in the waters of regeneration? Is not baptism a sacrament instituted by our Lord for the purpose of cleansing the soul from original sin? Is not the sin there forgiven, through the only forgiving power, that is, through the cancelling blood of our Redeemer?—and yet, is not this applied by means of the outward act and ministration of man?

Was not the redemption of Christ complete in itself, so far as it was intended also for our greater sanctification? Were not his sufferings in themselves all-abundant, as directed to the end of uniting us in love and affection with him, by making us feel what he suffered for our sakes?—and do not all agree, even those who differ from us in the real and essential character of the sacrament of the Eucharist—do they not all agree, that it is instituted for the purpose of applying to ourselves those feelings at least which he intended to excite by his sufferings and death? And is not this again a visible institution? Is it not applied through the agency of man, and is it not done by outward acts and rites, both on the part of the minister, and of him who receives it?

Did not our Saviour come on earth to teach all mankind? Did he not establish a code of doctrines and morals, a system of laws for our edification both in faith and conduct? And has he not left an outward instrument of this in his written word? And has he not appointed ministers, and constituted a hierarchy, to whom was committed the care of his flock, with power and authority to instruct? And here again, is not one of the most signal and important benefits which our Saviour intended to communicate to man, communicated through outward means, by an institution founded by himself for that purpose?

Now, if the great end for which he came on earth was the abolition of sin; and that not merely considered as the cancelling of a general debt, but as a specific means by which each individual should have the benefit of his redemption, if we

see, at the same time, that, in every other part of the system, the benefit conferred on mankind was attached to the outward observance of some given forms, committed to a ministry destined for that purpose, can we conceive the system so broken and imperfect, that in this important case, in this momentous matter, no visible or outward means should have been instituted for its accomplishment? On the contrary, if, in the less important case—viewed with reference to the character of the guilt—of original sin, in which we have no personal participation, he was not contented that the child or adult should conceive his belief, by any inward act of himself or another, but exacted that he should appear as an offender, and as one seeking forgiveness and sanctification, that he should be examined and give promise of his fidelity, in the face of the Church, and make confession of his faith before mankind; can we believe that, in the more important case, where the great end for which he came on earth is to be fulfilled, in the wiping away the deeper and more enormous offences, actually committed by us, whereby we more especially outrage the majesty and glory of God, he should have left no road, no outward visible means, for the attaining of this mercy, and that he should not, as in the other, by outward manifestations of sorrow, require some compensation in the sight of man. Now, on these grounds, while even approaching the subject from a distance, I am sure no one can consider it inconsistent with all that we know of the dealings of God with us, with the natural line of providential conduct towards fallen man, in the establishment of Christianity, to suppose that Christ left in his Church an express institution for the cancelling of sins, through the application of his all-redeeming and all-sufficient blood.

We now come to examine what is the Catholic doctrine regarding the existence of such an institution. The Catholic Church teaches, that Christ did establish on earth a means whereby forgiveness should be imparted to wretched sinners—whereby, on the performance of certain acts, all who have offended God may obtain authoritative forgiveness. It is ge-

nerally said,—I mean by those who preach and write against our doctrines,—that the institution maintained by the Catholic Church to have been established by Christ, is *confession*. This, at the outset, is an error,—the Catholic Church believes that the institution left by our Saviour was the Sacrament of Penance, consisting of three parts, whereof confession is only one, and that one not the most essential. Here, therefore, is manifestly a mis-statement or misrepresentation, however unintentional, of our belief. For I will proceed to show you, that the Catholic Church teaches and urges the necessity of every thing that any other Church requires; and that even in more complete perfection than any other system of religion. We believe, therefore, that the Sacrament of Penance is composed of three parts,—contrition, or sorrow—confession, or its outward manifestation—and satisfaction, which is in some respects also a guarantee of perseverance in that which we promise.

With regard to the first, the Catholic Church teaches that sorrow or contrition, which involves all that any other religion means by repentance, of which it is only a part, has always been necessary on earth to obtain the forgiveness of God. It maintains, that without that sorrow, no forgiveness can possibly be obtained in the new law; that without a deep and earnest grief, and a determination not to sin again, no absolution of the priest has the slightest worth or avail in the sight of God; that, on the contrary, any one who asks or obtains absolution, without that sorrow, instead of thereby obtaining forgiveness of his sins, commits an enormous sacrilege, and adds to the weight of his guilt, and goes away from the feet of his confessor, still more heavily laden than when he approached him. Such is the Catholic doctrine with respect to this portion of the Sacrament.

But what is the contrition or sorrow which the Catholic Church requires? I believe, if any one would take the trouble to analyse the doctrine of any reformed Church, on the exact meaning of the word repentance, distinguishing its different steps from the very act of forgiveness,—that is, examining

closely the means by which we arrive at that last act, which purges us from sin, he will find it exceedingly difficult to resolve it into any tangible system, or any forms of apprehension which will bear a strict examination. In the Articles, for instance, of the Church of England, every thing is laid down in the vaguest manner. We have it simply said, that "we are accounted righteous before God, only for the merits of Christ, by faith, and not for our own works; wherefore that we are justified by faith only, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort," and we are referred to the homily on justification for farther explanation.* Again, we are told that there is a place of forgiveness to such as truly repent.† If any one will read over that homily, he will find it repeated, again and again, that men are to be justified by faith alone without works. We find, indeed, that love is spoken of as an ingredient in this faith. But we are never told how the sinner is conducted to it. We are never informed how his return, like that of the prodigal son, is to be accomplished, when he becomes sensible of his guilt; in what way he is to be gradually conducted to that faith which justifies the sinner. We are not even told in what that faith consists. Are we simply to be satisfied with the firm persuasion or conviction, that the merits of Christ are sufficient to purge us from all sin? Or, are we to believe that his blood has been applied to us all, and that we are forgiven? Or is there a more individual application to each one, whenever sin is regretted? What are its criterions, its tests, whereby the true may be discerned from the imaginary or false? What is its process?—is it one of simple conviction? What is to authorize you to feel that conviction? What are the previous steps which make you worthy of it, which can make you suppose that you have obtained it? On all this we are left completely in the dark. Each one gives us the opinions or devices of his own mind; and hence we find as many different ideas, when we come to investigate the subject, as there are persons who have written on it.

* Art. xi. † Art. xvi.

But if we look into the works of the foreign reformers,—if we examine the writings of those who may be considered the fathers and founders of the Reformation, although there is considerable contradiction and inconsistency, we yet have an attempt made to show the steps whereby the justification of the sinner is attained. We are told constantly, both in the works of Luther and the articles of faith of several Churches, that the first step is the terror of conscience; that the soul, contemplating the dreadful abyss of misery whereby it is surrounded, seeing itself necessarily on the brink of eternal destruction, is excited to a deep sorrow for its sins, and returning, through the merits of Christ and his faith in him, his sins are covered, and taken away in the sight of God. The preliminary step is simply terror, or dread of God's judgment,—the next and final step, is an act of faith in the power of Christ, to redeem and save by the efficacy of his blood.* Now, not only does the Catholic Church require all these dispositions, but it considers them as mere inchoative acts, mere embryos which must be farther matured before confession can be valid. The Council of Trent lays down a most beautiful and philosophical doctrine on the nature of this introductory act; it traces the steps whereby the soul is brought to turn away from sin by the desire of reconciliation with God. It does, indeed, represent the soul as terrified and struck with horror at the awful state to which guilt has reduced it; but this is far from immediately preceding justification,—it is but the imperfect germ which appears, before the full Christian virtue can come into bloom. For the sinner, awe-struck by the sense of God's judgment, is for a moment lost in fear and apprehension, till turning naturally to look round him for relief, he sees on the other hand, the immense mercy and goodness of God, and balancing that with his more awful attributes, he is buoyed up with the hope of mercy,—that he yet may rise and return, like the prodigal, to his father's house, with the prospect of being, at least, one of the last and lowest

* See the admirable chapter on this subject in Möhler's Symbolik.

of his servants. Yet, is even this only another step towards the feelings of affection naturally excited, at thinking that God is so good,—that his kindness to us extends so far as to receive such wretched beings into his arms; and then in a moment fear is banished, for as St. John says, "perfect love sendeth forth fear,"*—and the soul is inflamed with an ardent love of God, and brought into that state which we find described in the New Testament, as the immediate precursor and cause of forgiveness. "Many sins are forgiven her because she hath loved much."†

Thus, while faith is the principal root of all justification, there are yet other acts and other feelings of virtue, more conformable to the attributes of God, and more consistent with the order of his institutions in the New Law, through which the soul passes, up to that last act which seals its justification.

St. Paul tells us again and again, that, except through faith, no man can be justified, and that all justification is through Christ and through faith in him; and so this progress of justification begins in that faith, and ends in the application of the blood of our Redeemer, as the only means of salvation. Thus far, therefore, we have every thing included in the order, progress, or purport of the acts of forgiveness, required by any other religion for the justification of the sinner. And I will simply ask, before I come to treat of its other parts, can it be said that this is a system favourable to crime? Can it be said, that the Catholic holds forgiveness or absolution to be so completely attached to an outward act, that he is reckless of the commission of offences, because he believes that his soul can be as easily cleansed from sin, as his body from outward defilement? that his penance is a bath or laver, wherein, by a plain and easy application, offences are washed away, and the soul restored to its original purity?

But we are not yet arrived at the close of this important subject: for it must be observed, that these are only the ingre-

* Jo. iv. 18. † Luke vii. 47.

dients, or rather, the preparatory steps for that act of sorrow or contrition, which is the essential concomitant of confession: and not only its concomitant, but so much superior and more important, that the Catholic Church believes and teaches,—and, in her daily practice manifests that belief—that, if from circumstances a person have no means of practising confession, if illness surprize the sinner before the minister of repentance can approach him—if accident place him out of the reach of such a comforter, and there be no one to apply the consolations of that institution—an act of contrition, including a willingness, if in his power, to practise confession, because it is an institution established by Christ for the forgiveness of sins, would of itself procure their pardon, and reconcile him as completely with his God, as if he had confessed all his crimes and received absolution. This, I say, is the practice and feeling of every Catholic; not only of the instructed, but also of the most illiterate and least educated; that, in cases of sudden illness, or danger of being surprised by death, a fervent act of sorrow, is equivalent to all that Christ instituted for the forgiveness of sins.

And what is that sorrow?—I will read you its definition in the words of the Council of Trent, of that council which has most clearly defined the Catholic doctrine on this subject. "Contrition," that is, sorrow—such being the technical term used in the Church for it; "which holds the first place among the acts of penance (or repentance) is sorrow and detestation of sin committed, with a determination not to sin again. The holy synod declares, that this contrition contains, not only the abandoning of sin and a purpose of new life, but also a hatred of the old."* Thus you see what is expected of every penitent before absolution can be considered of any avail, or confession worth any thing to his salvation.

And now we come to the second part of this sacrament. The Catholic Church teaches that the sinner, being thus sorry for having offended God, and sorry upon the motives which I

* Sess. xiv. cap. iv.

for having offended God, and sorry upon the motive which I have stated—that is, on account, not of evil thence resulting to himself, but of the graciousness and infinite goodness of the God whom he has injured, must next perform an outward act, which would seem of itself the natural and spontaneous consequence of this feeling. Catholic divines have again and again described this sorrow for sin, when they say that it must be supernatural, that is, that its motives must be exclusively drawn from the attributes of God; not from the consideration of what sin has brought on us here below, but from our relations with God, and the manifestations of love we receive from him; that it must be supreme—that is, that we must detest, abhor, and hate sin beyond every other evil on earth; and that it must be universal—that not one single fault or transgression should be excepted from that deep and solemn sorrow which we feel for having offended God. Now, these dispositions naturally make the soul ready to give any compensation or atonement that may be required for the offences it has committed against God. Not only so, but it is the very nature of love itself to make that manifestation—love, which was the last step in the work of conversion. We find it thus in the case of Magdalen, who did not rest satisfied with merely being sorry for having offended God, or with only regretting the evil done, and retiring from it, and by a new life, declaring her sorrow; but must brave contumely and insult, and every other humiliation. She breaks through the crowd of attendants, penetrates into the house of the rich Pharisee, one of the proudest and most conceited class of men—she rushes in and intrudes upon his solemn banquet, casts herself at the feet of her spiritual physician, weeps bitter tears, and lavishing all her precious things on his feet, shows by outward deeds, that she really loved God, that she was overwhelmed with grief from having offended him, and was ready to make any reparation to his outraged majesty. Thus, the natural tendency of repentant love is to make some outward manifestation, to testify itself in some way by an act of sorrow, and even of humiliation before others,

and so seek that forgiveness which the soul requires. And therefore, even thus, we have a most perfect consistency in this institution, linking it harmoniously with the feelings that precede it; although of course this natural and spontaneous origin, in no way forms the ground on which the Catholic Church believes and enjoins it.

She maintains, then, that the sinner is bound to manifest his offences to the pastors of his Church, or rather, to one deputed and authorised by the Church for that purpose, to lay open to him all the secret offences of his soul, to expose all its wounds, and, in virtue of the authority vested by our Blessed Saviour in him, to receive through his hands, the sentence on earth, which is ratified in heaven, that God has forgiven him. But, as the primary object of this institution is the salvation of the soul, and as there may be cases where, by too easily receiving forgiveness, sufficient impression would not be made on the sinner to lead him to amendment of life; as it may happen that the dispositions wherewith it is approached, are not sufficiently manifest, or that the sorrow is not sufficiently supreme; as also from constant relapse into sin, after forgiveness, it may appear that there was not a solid resolution of amendment, and consequently a sincere and efficient sorrow for the crimes and offences committed, so it may be prudent to deny that forgiveness; and therefore we believe that this case also was provided for, by Christ, and that he gave to the Church a power of withholding forgiveness, or delaying it to a more seasonable time.

Before entering into the proofs of this doctrine, allow me to examine how far it is the sort of institution which we should expect our Saviour to have made. I have shown you already, that, consistently with the plan followed by our Redeemer, in the establishment of his religion, and according to the method of action he has uniformly chosen, we should expect some outward institution wherein the forgiveness of sins should be committed to his Church, and the blood of Christ might be applied

to the soul, for the cleansing of it from guilt. I did not, however, then enter upon the nature of the institution.

Allow me now to premise a few remarks on the aptness of such an institution to the ends for which we believe it appointed.

1. In the first place, it seems the institution most conformable to the wants of human nature, whether we consider it in its native constitution or its fallen state. As to the first, it seems natural to the mind to seek relief from guilt, by manifestation: we are not surprized when we hear of culprits, who have been guilty of some great crime, and have escaped the vengeance of the law, leading a restless and unhappy life, until, of their own accord, they confess their guilt, and meet the punishment which the law awards. We are not astonished when we hear of those condemned to death, being most anxious to find some person to whom they may disclose their guilt, and when we hear it declared again and again, that they could not have died in peace unless they had manifested their transgressions. All this shows, that human nature finds herein the most natural and obvious relief, that even in that confession of guilt, some balm is applied to the soul's inward suffering; because it is the only method left of making compensation to that society against which such men have transgressed. Nay, this feeling goes much farther; for the culprit, who at once humbly acknowledges his guilt, gains our compassion, and we cannot in our minds consider him any longer the black and hardened villain, which before we were inclined to suppose him. We immediately trust that such a one is truly sorry for what he has done; and consequently his guilt, although the crime may be equal, is not so great as his who daringly denies it. If the declaration of our Blessed Saviour had not been made to the penitent thief, or if it had not been recorded, we should in our minds have distinguished between the two sharers of his sufferings, between him who humbly confessed that he died according to his deserts, and him who persisted in hardened

effrontery to the end. If, therefore, God did establish any outward form, whereby the conscience might be saved from sin, we cannot conceive one more adapted to that purpose, than the manifestation of sin.

It is, however, congenial to our nature, not merely in its general constitution, but still farther in its present fallen state. For what, my brethren, is sin? It is a rising up of the pride of man against the majesty of God. The sinner, fully aware of the consequences of his iniquity, instructed in the end to which sin must lead him, seems to stand up before God's judgment-seat and looking his future judge in the face, insults him by the commission of that which he knows he will one day fully avenge. Now, what would be the natural corrective of this? the humiliation before others of that proud spirit, that hath raised itself up against God, by kneeling at the feet of man, and asking forgiveness, and owning itself guilty of having insulted the majesty and justice of God on his eternal throne. Pride is the very principle and root of all evil; and as the third portion of this sacrament, Satisfaction, which I shall reserve for another occasion, tends to correct that concupiscence and those passions, which are the stimulants of sin, this seems to be the most completely opposed to that pride which is its principle.

So true is this connexion between the confession of our guilt and the reparation done to the majesty of God, that his holy word considers the two almost identical. For thus Josue spake to Achan; "My son, give glory to the Lord God of Israel, and confess, and tell me what thou hast done; hide it not."*

There are some beautiful reflections of Pascal's on this subject. He expresses himself astonished that any man could treat the confession of sin to one individual, under such circumstances as the Catholic Church prescribes, as any thing but the most lenient mitigation of what ought naturally to be expected. You have sinned before mankind, and outraged God by your

* Jo. vii. 19.

offences; and you might naturally expect full compensation to be required, you might reasonably suppose that he would demand a reparation as public and as open as the crime,—an humiliation as complete as was the pride in which you sinned. To consider as a hardship, the manifestation of humility to one person deputed and chosen to receive it—to one bound by every possible law not to reveal, or in any way betray aught that has passed between you—to one who feels it his duty to receive you with compassion, with sympathy, and affection, and to direct, counsel, and assist you,—to consider this any thing but the most lenient, the most merciful mitigation of what is due to you, is an idea that fills the mind with pain and regret.*

2. But, in the second place, my brethren, not only is such an institution conformable to the wants of man, it is precisely in accordance with the method always pursued by God, for the forgiveness of sins. We find in the old law, that there was an institution for the forgiveness of sins, and that this institution was such as to make the manifestation of transgressions preliminary to its application. God divided the sacrifices into different classes. There were some for sins committed through ignorance, and others for voluntary transgressions of the law of God; and in the 5th chapter of Leviticus, we find it prescribed, that if any one transgressed he should confess his sin, and the priest should pray for him, and a particular sacrifice be offered, and so forgiveness be obtained. Hence it appears that the manifestation of sins to the Priests of the Temple, was a preliminary condition for their forgiveness, so far as legal sacrifice could be considered a means of pardon, that is to say, as a means of exciting faith in that great sacrifice, through which alone the forgiveness of sins could be obtained. I might farther, as I have done again and again, point out analogies between the systems established by God in the Old Law, and that by our Saviour in the New. But it is not necessary to dwell longer upon this point.

* Ap. Möhler, *ubi sup.*

3. But, finally, such an institution is exactly consistent, and analogous to the system of religion established through the new law. For there we find, as I have taken some pains to show you, that our Saviour established a kingdom, or species of dominion, in his Church, consisting of an organized body, intended to minister to the wants of the faithful, with authority coming directly from him, that there was rule and command on the one side, with the obligation of learning and obeying on the other. Now, this system of authoritative government, which I also showed you pervaded even the minor departments of the Church, as established by Christ, seems to require for its completeness and perfection, that there should be also tribunals within it, to take cognizance of those transgressions which are committed against its laws, that is to say, the laws of God, to administer which it was appointed. We should naturally expect, for the complete organization of such a Church, a collation of authority within it for the punishment of offences against its fundamental laws and precepts of morality; and as it was appointed by Christ to teach, so also should it be the judge of offences, and empowered to administer all necessary relief. Such an order, therefore, is consistent in every way, with all that belongs to such a religious constitution.

Now, after these remarks, which I trust will have prepared the way, I proceed to the reasons with which our doctrine presents itself to our belief, that there is a power of forgiving sins in the Church, such as necessarily requires the manifestation even of hidden transgressions, and that it was so established by Christ himself.

The words of the text are the primary and principal foundation on which we rest. I need hardly observe, that as, in the old law, a confession or manifestation of sins was appointed among the means of obtaining forgiveness, so there are sufficient allusions, in the new, to a similar practice, sufficient to continue its recollection to the early Christians, and make them suppose that providence had not completely broken up

the system it had till then pursued. They were told to confess their sins to one another.* It is very true that this text is vague,—it does not say confess your sins to the priest, nor to any private individual; although the mention of the priests of the Church, in the preceding verses, might naturally suggest the idea of their being a special party to the act. And farther, the words, "Confess your sins one to another," seem to command more than a general declaration of guilt, or the saying what even the most hardened sinner, when all around him are joining in it, will not refuse to repeat, "I have sinned before God." They seem to imply a more peculiar communication between one member of the Church and another. At any rate, they serve to prove, that the manifestation of sin is not of modern date, and refute the objection that there is nothing in the New Testament to show this natural, obvious, method of obtaining relief, to exist in the law of Christ.

But in the text, which I have prefixed to this discourse, have we not something more specific? Christ was not addressing his flock in general, but was giving a special charge to the Apostles; in other words, to the pastors of the Church; because I have before shown you, that when a command was given to the Apostles, not of especial privilege, such as that of working miracles, but one connected with the welfare and salvation of the flock, that was a perpetual institution to be continued in the Church. What does he tell them—"Whose sins ye shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins ye shall retain, they are retained." Here is a power, in the first place, to forgive sins; and this expression "to forgive sins," in the New Testament, always signifies truly and really to clear the sinner of guilt against God. "Many sins are forgiven her," says our Saviour of Magdalen. What does he mean? Surely that she was purged, cleansed from sin. Those who heard the words so understood them. For they said—"Who is this that forgiveth sins also?"† They considered the privilege he here claimed as superior to the powers he had, till

* James v. 16. † Luke vii. 49.

now manifested by the working of miracles. This could only be so thought of the right actually to remit or pardon an offence against God. And speaking to the penitent woman, he first said, "thy sins are forgiven thee;" and then, "go in peace,"—words of comfortable assurance, which must have led her to believe that she was fully pardoned. Again: "Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee."* Those who heard him in this case went farther, and "said within themselves, he blasphemeth:"—they considered it an assumption of a privilege belonging to God alone; they understood his words in their primary, obvious meaning, of remitting the sins of man, committed against the Almighty; and our Saviour confirms them in this interpretation, by the words that follow: "Which is easier to say, thy sins are forgiven thee, or to say, arise and walk; but that you may know that the son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins," &c. So that to "forgive sins" always signifies to pardon, to absolve, or cleanse the soul from sin. But all this reasoning is superfluous, if we treat with those who adhere to the Anglican Church. For, their service for the visitation of the sick, appoints the clergyman to say, in the very words which we use: "By his (Christ's) authority, I absolve thee from all thy sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen." The Apostles, and their successors on earth, received this power; consequently, to them was given a power to absolve, or purge, and cancel the soul from its sins. There is another power also given, that of retaining sins. What is the meaning of retaining sins? Clearly the power of not forgiving them. But then this implies, of course—for the promise is annexed, that what sins they retain on earth are retained in Heaven—that there is no other means of obtaining forgiveness, save through them. For the forgiveness of Heaven is made to depend upon that which those give on earth; and those are not to be pardoned there, whose sins they retain. If a judge were sent forth with a commission, that whomever he should absolve, that person should go free; but that, to whomever he

* Mat. ix. 2.

should refuse pardon, he should not be forgiven; would not this imply that no forgiveness was to be obtained except through him? And would not the commission otherwise be a nullity, an insult, and a mockery? For, would it not be an insult and a mockery of his authority, if another judge was also sent with equal power to pardon or punish delinquents; if there were other means of forgiveness, over which his award had no control. Not merely, therefore, a power to forgive sins is given in our commission, but such a power as excludes every other instrument or means of forgiveness in the new law. In fact, when Christ appoints any institution, for objects solely dependent on his will, that very fact excludes all other ordinary means. When he instituted baptism as a means of washing away original sin, that very institution excluded any other means of obtaining that benefit. In still stronger manner, then, does the commission here given constitute the exclusive means of forgiveness, in the ordinary method of God's appointments; for not only does it leave this to be deduced by inference, but, as we have seen, it positively so enacts, by limiting forgiveness in Heaven to the concession of it here below, by those to whom it is entrusted.

But what must be the character of that power? Can you suppose that a judge would be sent on a circuit with a commission, to go through the country, so that whomever he sentenced should be punished according to that sentence, and those whom he acquitted should be pardoned; and understand that this discretionary power lodged in his hands, could be discharged properly by going into the prisons, and saying to one man "you are acquitted," to another, "you must be punished," to a third, "you I pronounce guilty," and to a fourth, "you I declare innocent," without investigation into their respective cases, without having the slightest ground for passing sentence of absolution upon the one, or of condemnation upon the other? Does not this two-fold authority imply the necessity of knowing the grounds of each individual case? Does it not suppose that the entire cause must be laid before the judge, and

that he must examine into it, and pronounce sentence consistently with the evidence before him?—and can we then believe, that our Saviour gave this two-fold office as the only means of obtaining pardon, to the priests of his Church, and does not hold them bound to decide according to the respective merit of each case? Does he not necessarily mean, that, if the Church retain or forgive, it must have motives for so doing? And how can we suppose that to be obtained, but by the case being laid before the judge; and who is able to do that but the offender alone? Therefore, does the commission itself imply, that whoever seeks, through this only channel, forgiveness, must manifest the guilt he has committed; he must bring the whole cause under the notice of his judge, and only upon its complete hearing can he pronounce a proper sentence.

This is the basis, this is the ground-work in Scripture of the Catholic doctrine, that sin is to be forgiven by the pastors of the Church, in consequence of the institution of Christ, who has appointed them as his judges, his vicegerents, and ministers, for that purpose; and that, to obtain this forgiveness, it is necessary to lay the case,—in other words, all our transgressions—before him who is entrusted with the responsibility of the sentence pronounced.

But, my brethren, clear and simple as this reasoning may be, we perhaps might feel ourselves less secure in sanctioning it, were we not so completely supported by the conduct and authority of all antiquity. Many of you may, perhaps, have heard it repeatedly said, that auricular confession, as it is called, was not heard of in the first or second century of the Church. Let it be so; let us suppose it, or rather allow it for a moment. But do those who tell you so, (for the assertion is incorrect,) tell you also the reason why it is not so much mentioned? The reason is, that instead of *auricular* confession, we read a great deal more of *public* confession; for, the sinner was obliged to manifest his hidden crimes in the presence of the whole Church, and undergo a severe penance in

consequence of it. And those who are such sticklers for antiquity on this head, and regret auricular confession, should surely take antiquity to its extent; and if they reject ours, why not adopt the other practice, as consistent with the usages of the ancient Church? This is the fact, that as to the extent of the manifestation of sins, this may be a matter of secondary or disciplinary consideration; whether she may direct private or public confession, is altogether matter of discipline. It is sufficient to establish that there is no forgiveness except by the manifestation of crime: that they who alone were empowered to grant forgiveness, were the priests of the Church; and that the practice of confession is exactly the same, with this exception, that in times of fervour, when crime was more rare, the Church deemed it fit that offenders should not only declare their sins in secret, but stand before the entire congregation and manifest them publicly. Thus, therefore, instead of any argument arising against this institution, from the supposed silence of the ancient fathers, the only conclusion, on the contrary to which we must come is, that there has been a mitigation, or reduction of its rigour, but no change in its essence.

I now proceed to read you passages from these ancient fathers, and I will not come later than 400 years after Christ; because, after that time, the texts increase immensely. I will divide them into two classes. I will give you one or two where confession in general, that is, public confession, is alluded to; for they will show the feeling of the Church, as to its being the only means of obtaining forgiveness.

St. Irenæus, who flourished 100 years after Christ, mentions that some women came to the Church, and accused themselves of secret crimes unknown to others. Again, of others he thus writes; "Some, touched in conscience, publicly confessed their sins; while others, in despair, renounced their faith."* Look at this alternative; some confessed, and others renounced the faith. If there were any other means of forgiveness, why

* Adv. Hær. c. xiii. p. 63, 65.

should they have abandoned their faith? Tertullian, who is more generally known, as being the oldest Latin writer, says: "Of this penitential disposition the proof is more laborious, as the business is more pressing, in order that some public act, not the voice of conscience alone, may show it. This act, which the Greeks express by the word *exomologesis*, consists in the confession of our sin to the Lord; not as if he knew it not; but in as much as confession leads to satisfaction; whence also penitence flows, and by penitence God is mollified."* This is said with reference, more or less to the public practice. However, still more clearly as to the necessity of the practice. "If still you draw back, let your mind turn to that eternal fire, which confession will extinguish: and that you may not hesitate to adopt the remedy, ponderate the greatness of future punishment. And as you are not ignorant, that, against that fire, after the baptismal institution, the aid of confession has been appointed, why are you an enemy to your own salvation?"†

Proceeding to the other class of passages,—for, as I have been led to speak at greater length than I intended, I must pass over several much to the same purpose, and still speaking of the necessity of confession—they treat of the manifestation of secret or hidden sins in confession to the clergy, as the means of obtaining forgiveness. St. Cyprian thus writes; "God sees into the hearts and breasts of all men, and he will judge not their actions only, but their words and thoughts, viewing the most hidden conceptions of the mind. Hence, though some of these persons be remarked for their faith and the fear of God, and have not been guilty of the crime of sacrificing (to idols) nor of surrendering the holy Scriptures; yet, if the *thought of doing it* have ever entered their mind, this they confess, with grief and without disguise, before the priests of God, unburdening the conscience, and seeking a salutary remedy, however small and pardonable their failing may have been. God, they know, will not be mocked."‡

* De Pœnit. c. ix. p. 169. † Ibid. c. xii. p. 170. ‡ De Lapsis, p. 190.

Again, speaking of smaller faults, he thus expresses himself; "The fault is less, but the conscience is not clear. Pardon may more easily be obtained; still there is guilt: and let not the sinner cease from doing penance, lest, what before was small, be aggravated by neglect. I entreat you, my brethren, let all confess their faults, while he that has offended enjoys life; while his confession can be received, and while the satisfaction and pardon imparted by the priests, are acceptable before God."* So that here we have resolved two important points; —first, that those who were guilty of only petty or smaller offences, not of great or deadly sins, went to the priest, acknowledged their transgressions, and confessed their sins:— and in the second place, that the pardon which these penitents received from the hands of the priest, was considered valid before God.

There are a great many other passages to the same effect in this father which I must pass over; and I will take the next from the Greek Church. Origen, after having spoken of baptism, observes; "There is yet a more severe and arduous pardon of sins by penance, when the sinner washes his couch with his tears, and when he blushes not to disclose his sin to the priest of the Lord, and seek the remedy. Thus is fulfilled what the Apostle says; *Is any man sick among you, let him bring in the priests of the Church,* (James v. 14.)"† Again; "We have all power to pardon the faults committed against ourselves; but he, on whom Jesus breathed, as he did on the Apostles—he forgives, provided God forgive; and retains those, of which the sinner repents not, being his minister, who alone possesses the power of remitting. So the prophets uttered things not their own; but what it pleased God to communicate."‡ Once more; "They who have sinned, if they hide and retain their sin within their breasts, are grievously tormented; but if the sinner becomes his own accuser, while he does this, he discharges the cause of all his malady. Only

* De Lapsis, p. 190. † Homil. ii. in Levit. T. ii. p. 191.
‡ L. de Orat. T. i. p. 255.

let him carefully consider, to whom he should confess his sin; what is the character of the physician; if he be one who will be weak with the weak, who will weep with the sorrowful, and who understands the discipline of condolence and fellow feeling. So that, when his skill shall be known and his pity felt, you may follow what he shall advise. Should he think your disease to be such, that it should be declared in the assembly of the faithful, whereby others may be edified, and yourself easily reformed—this must be done with much deliberation and the skilful advice of the physician."* This is an interesting passage; we see an ornament of the early Church inculcating the necessity of manifesting our sins, and speaking just as we do now; exhorting the faithful to be careful to seek out and select a prudent and charitable director, and lay before him their hidden sins, and be guided by his counsel as to the propriety of making or withholding a public confession. You see, then, that the practice of public confession in the Church, so far from excluding private confession, supposes it; and that it was only to be made through the advice of a spiritual director consulted for that purpose. And Origen expressly says, too, that only the priests have power to forgive, and that to them must our sins be manifested. Once more; "They who are not holy, die in their sins; the holy do penance; they feel their wounds; are sensible of their failings; look for the priest; implore health; and through him seek to be purified."† "If we discover *our sins, not only to God, but to those,* who may apply a remedy to our wounds and iniquities, our sins will be effaced by him who said; *I have blotted out thy iniquities, as a cloud, and thy sins, as a mist.*" Isa. xliv. 22.‡

A little later we have some very strong passages,—several in the writings of St. Basil, who was exceedingly zealous in keeping up the penitential canons, and whose system of public penance prevailed through a great part of the east:—"In the confession of sins," he writes, "the same method must be observed, as in laying open the infirmities of the body. For

* Homil. ii. in Psal. xxxvii. T. ii. p. 688.

† Homil. x. in Numb. T. ii. p. 302. ‡ Hom. xvii. in Lucan.

as these are not rashly communicated to every one, but to those only who understand by what method they may be cured: so the confession of sins must be made to such persons as have the power to apply a remedy."* He tells us who those persons are:—"Necessarily, our sins must be confessed to those, to whom has been committed the dispensation of the mysteries of God."† In his canons, he declares, that persons who had been guilty of secret crimes, and had confessed them, are not to be obliged to confess them publicly:—"That women, guilty of adultery, and who had confessed it, should not be made public, agreeable to what the Fathers had appointed."‡ Clearly, the same discipline as is observed now, that they who receive the confession should be careful not to betray it. This is, again, auricular confession made to an individual. St. Gregory of Nyssa, another eminent Father of the Greek Church, thus writes:—"You whose soul is sick, why do you not run to a physician? Why do you not confess and discover your malady to *him* by confession? Why do you suffer your disease to increase till it be inflamed and deeply rooted in you? Re-enter into your own breasts; reflect upon your own ways. You have offended God, you have provoked your Creator, who is the Lord and judge, not only of this life, but of the life to come.—Enquire into the disease wherewith you are seized; be sorry; afflict yourselves, and communicate your affliction to your brethren, that they may be afflicted with you; that so you may obtain the pardon of your sins. Show me bitter tears, that I may mingle mine with yours. *Impart your trouble to the priest*, as to your Father; he will be touched with a sense of your misery. Show to him what is concealed without blushing; open the secrets of your soul, as if you were showing to a physician a hidden disorder; he will take care of your honour and of your cure."§ Again:—"Whoever secretly steals another

* In Regul. Brev. quæst. ccxxix. T. 2. p. 492.
† Ibid. quæst. cclxxxviii. p. 516.
‡ Ep. cxcix. ad Amphiloch. Can. 34. T. iii. p. 295.
§ Serm. de Pœnit. p. 175, 176, in append. ad Op. St. Basilii, Paris, 1618.

man's goods, if he afterwards discover, by confession, his sin to the priest, his heart being changed, he shall cure the wound: but then he must give to the poor, and thereby clearly show, that he is free from the sin of avarice."* I pass over a great many others, and quote one passage from St. Ambrose, the great light of the Church at Milan:—"There are some who ask for penance, that they may at once be restored to communion. These do not so much desire to be loosed, as to bind the priest; for they do not unburden their own conscience, but they burden his, who is commanded not to give holy things to dogs; that is, not easily to admit impure souls to the holy communion."† So that the persons who pretended to expect forgiveness, except by a complete and clear manifestation of their consciences, only deceived themselves and their director. To this authority we may add that of St. Pacianus:—"I address myself to you," he says, "who, having committed crimes, refuse to do penance; you, who are so timid, after you have been so impudent; you, who are ashamed to confess, after you have sinned without shame.—The Apostle says to the priest: *Impose not hands lightly on any one; neither be partakers of other men's sins.* (1 Tim. v. 22.) What then wilt thou do, who deceivest the minister? *Who either leavest him in ignorance, or confoundest his judgment by half communications?* I entreat you, brethren, by that Lord whom no concealments can deceive, to cease from disguising a wounded conscience. A diseased man, if possessed of sense, hides not his wounds, however secret they may be, though the knife or fire should be applied.—And shall a sinner be afraid to purchase, by present shame, eternal life? Shall he dread to discover his sins to God, which are ill hidden from him, and at the time he holds out assistance to him."‡ The confession, therefore, was complete—it extended to all sins, and obliged the sinner to manifest the whole state of his conscience to the minister of God.

* Ep. Canon. ad Letoium, Can. vi. T. i. p. 954. † Ib. c. ix. p. 434.
‡ Paræn. ad Pœnit. Ibid. p. 316.

These examples might be sufficient. I will, however, read one or two more from the same century. St. Jerome, after alluding to the institution of God regarding leprosy, thus writes:— "In like manner with us, the Bishop or Priest binds or looses; not them who are merely innocent or guilty; but having heard, as his duty requires, the various qualities of sins, he understands who should be bound, and who loosed."* Here is precisely the same reasoning which I drew from my text, that the priest must not be content merely to give absolution on a vague impression of the guilt, or innocence, of the party, but that, only on judging of the different sins, can he know how to direct his sentence. I will just step, for one moment, over the limits I prescribed myself; and give you one decisive passage from Pope Leo. Thus he writes to the Bishops of Campania:— "Having lately understood, that some of you, by an unlawful usurpation, have adopted a practice which Tradition does not allow, I am determined by all means to suppress it. I speak of penance, when applied for by the faithful. There shall be no declaration of all kinds of sins, given in writing, and publicly read: for it is enough, that the guilt of conscience be made known to the Priests alone by a private confession. That confidence, indeed, may be thought deserving of praise, which, on account of the fear of God, hesitates not to blush before men; but there are sins, the public disclosure of which must excite fear; therefore, let this improper practice be put an end to, lest many be kept from the remedies of penance, being ashamed, or dreading, to make known to their enemies such actions, as may expose them to legal punishment. That confession suffices, which is first made to God, and then to the priest, who will offer up prayers for the sins of penitents. And then will more be induced to apply to this remedy, when the secrets of the confessing sinner shall not be divulged in the hearing of the people."†

I should think that these passages, although I had prepared

* Comment. in C. xvi. Matt. T. iv. pars 11. p. 75.

† Ep. cxxxvi. al lxxx. ad Episc. Campaniæ, p. 719.

twice as many, must satisfy any unprejudiced person, that the doctrine of confession is not modern, and has not, as is commonly stated, been introduced by the Council of Lateran. If any one will peruse the canon of that Council, he will find, so far from establishing that, it supposes the practice to exist over the entire Church. For it simply says, that "all the faithful, men and women, shall confess their sins, at least once a year, to a priest approved by the Church." It sanctions a discipline already observed in the Church, that all should confess their sins, at least once a year, to their pastors. It takes for granted, that all knew this duty; and surely it could hardly be conceived possible to introduce a new institution of this nature into this or any other country, by any act of convocation or other legislative body, enacting simply, that all the members of the Established Church shall confess their sins once a year to the clergy. I ask, whether such a canon as this enacts? or whether such a doctrine could be first introduced by it? Any person who should, in three or four hundred years, say that such a practice had been so introduced into this country, would be considered very foolish and credulous. We must, therefore, conclude that it did exist, long before this canon, and that the canon only regulated the times of its observance. If you look to the nature of this institution, which the early Reformers used to call the "butchery of the soul," as being something too severe, too torturing, and too cruel, to be practised, I would ask, could any one bring himself to believe, that an institution, which could merit such a name and character, could be introduced so silently and so easily into any Church? Could it have been introduced so as to extend universally to all ranks, beginning with the sovereign Pontiff himself? Could it have been possible to induce all degrees and conditions of men, the most learned as well as the rude, to go before their fellow-men, and cast themselves at their feet, and lay open all their hidden transgressions? I ask, if any thing but a conviction from the beginning, that it was an institution necessary for the obtaining of forgiveness, could have secured

the complete and constant exercise of this practice throughout the Church? The more difficult it is represented, the more it is said to do violence to natural feelings, to tyrannize over the human mind, the more difficult is it to suppose that it could have been brought into the Church, in this simple way, in later times. Or even, could it have been possible to find any other period, at which it could have been so introduced into the Church?

But, my brethren, it is also very common to speak of this institution as one which tends to disturb the peace of families; —as one which causes great demoralization; and which leads, by the facility of obtaining pardon, to the commission of sins, from a conviction that the remedy is so easy. I have already said sufficient regarding this latter observation—I have already shown, that we require not only whatever is required by others for the forgiveness of sin, but also a more perfect disposition, and, besides confession, the performance of that satisfaction, or those works of penance, which will form the subject of another discourse. Now, it is rather inconsistent to charge our sacrament, with two contradictory defects; one of which makes it a burden too heavy to bear, and the other an incentive to sin, by rendering it so easy to obtain forgiveness. These are two irreconcileable qualities, one only can belong to it; only one, at least, should be imputed to it. But is this the case? You will find quite the contrary expressed in the writings of those who caused this institution to be rejected in many parts of Europe. Luther writes expressly, that, although, according to him, the practice of confession, as used in the Catholic Church, cannot be clearly proved from Scripture, yet he considers it a most excellent institution, and so far is he from wishing to see it abolished, that he rejoices at its existence, and exhorts all to use it. So that, even as a human institution, he thinks it is to be approved. In the articles of Smalkeld, we find that the practice of confession is to be continued, especially for the guidance and preservation of youth, that

they may be thus directed in the paths of virtue.* Doubtless the practice of confession is enjoined no less in the Established Church, in the same terms as by us; for we find that among the instructions laid down in the order for the visitation of the sick, it is thus prescribed; "Here shall the sick person be moved to make a special confession of his sins; if he feel his conscience troubled with any weighty matter. After which confession, the priest shall absolve him (if he humbly and heartily desire it) after this sort." Then follows, word for word, the absolution pronounced by the Catholic priest in confession. I do not quote this authority for the sake of reproaching the Church of England with inconsistency, or of showing how its practice and commands are at variance, or of charging those with injustice, who impute to us as a gross perversion and corruption of the doctrines of Christianity, that which even their own Church uses, and accuse us of usurping a power which is assumed and exercised in the same words, by the ministers of their own persuasion. It is not for such purposes that I mention this rite; but only to prove that those who caused its abolition were convinced of its utility; and that, so far from considering it an instrument of evil, they believed it the best method of relieving the conscience, and, at the same time, of guiding men in virtue. They believed or affected to believe, that God had left a power to his ministers to absolve from sin, and that a special confession of sins was therefore necessary: so that the difference between us is, that we practise what the others have pronounced expedient; that the Catholic Church exacts that duty which they keep confined to their books.

But I appeal to you, who know that the number of Catholics is not small, and that even in these islands, those who profess the Catholic religion, are more numerous than the followers of any other particular creed. I appeal to you, if our practice were mischievous and led to evil, would not some circumstances connected with that mischievous operation, have, ere this,

† See Möhler, *ubi sup.*

come before the public? Has any one ever complained of it? Has any Catholic—and assuredly every one can consult some conscientious and upright member of our Church,—has any Catholic ever found that it gave him a facility for the commission of sin? that it was easier to him than the practice of other religions in this regard? or that any advantage has been taken of it, which is not strictly within the objects of the institution? Or has any Catholic father of a family, having himself, by experience, knowledge of the tendencies and uses of confession, been ever known to restrain the most delicate or timid portion of his family from its practice, or discouraged it in his servants or his children? This is assuredly an obvious test, when we consider the thousands that, even in this metropolis, practice it within the year; that not one case of abuse has ever been quoted, not one instance has been brought forward of a Catholic being led to abandon the practice of confession, by finding it conducive to any thing but good. On the contrary, if you inquire, you will find, that the Catholic considers it the greatest corrective and preservative from evil, that in his confessor he finds the most faithful, and sincere and useful adviser, who, with the assistance of the grace of God, best preserves him in that path of virtue to which he has been trained. I have said that I reserve the subject of Satisfaction for the next evening; not only because I have already detained you so long, but because it is connected with the doctrine of Purgatory, and Praying for the Dead, which will form, in conjunction with it, the subject of my lecture on Wednesday evening. In conclusion, I have only to exhort those who have the happiness to believe in the efficacy of the blessed sacrament which I have just endeavoured to explain—and those who are conscious that in it they find relief from their burthens, and forgiveness of their sins, to reflect that the time is now approaching which the Church has especially appointed for their partaking of the benefits of this sacred institution. It is particularly at Easter that the Church

exhorts you to make use of this means of obtaining salvation; and therefore, should you employ well the short interval that still remains before that holy Season commences, as a time of more especial recollection and more peculiar fervour; retiring within yourselves, and preparing gradually for the solemn work you have to do, not merely by looking into your transgressions, but also by studying the causes of your fall, by stirring up in your hearts a true and lively sorrow; and so to make your coming confession more effectual and more serviceable to your spiritual improvement, than those which have preceded it.

LECTURE THE ELEVENTH.

ON SATISFACTION AND PURGATORY.

JOHN xx. 23.

"*Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins ye shall forgive, they are forgiven them, and whose sins ye shall retain, they are retained.*"

I OBSERVED, my brethren, in my opening discourse, that nothing was less easy than to render our doctrines acceptable to those who differ from our creed; because difficulties of the most contradictory character are ever found on some point of each doctrine. I may safely say that this remark is particularly true with regard to that dogma which I considered in our interview of Friday last, and which I shall continue to treat of this evening. On the one hand, as I then observed, we are told that the practice enjoined by the Catholic Church, as necessary to obtain remission of sin, is so cruel, so much beyond the power of human endurance, that it cannot be considered a means appointed by the Almighty, as indispensable for the sinner's forgiveness. I remarked that it has been called the rack, the torture, the butchery of the soul;* and it has been thought a sufficient reason for excluding it from the institutions of Christianity, that it was apparently so opposite and contradictory to its mildness.

But then, on the other hand, we are told that the Catholic theory of the forgiveness of sins leads to the commission of crime, by the encouragement held out in the facilities which it presents of obtaining pardon. We are told that the Catholic, who has offended God, believes that he has only to cast himself at the feet of Christ's minister, and accuse himself of his offences, and that in one moment, on the raising of the priest's hand, he is perfectly restored to grace; and returns,

* "Carnificina animæ."

prepared and encouraged to recommence his career of crime. How can these two objections be reconciled? How is confession so difficult a practice? and how, at the same time, does it hold out an encouragement to that evil of which it is received as the remedy? And if this answer hold with regard to that portion of the Sacrament of Penance, whereof I have already treated, you will see that the contradiction becomes still stronger, when you take into consideration the third part with its accessaries, which will form the subject of this evening's entertainment; that is, the doctrine of satisfaction,

But even here we are once more assailed by the same contradictory forms of reasoning. We are told, and that by learned divines of the present day, that this very principle, that man can make satisfaction to God, is enough to reconcile Catholics, through a corrupt sentiment of pride, to our doctrine of penance; that we call in the aid of that pride which is always too near to every man, by the idea that he can expiate his sins, or in any way make satisfaction to the divine justice; which feeling insinuates itself into his heart, and becomes more congenial to his spirit, than that process or means which other religions suppose necessary for justification. Assuredly they must know but little of the human heart, who reason thus: for take a system which not merely exacts from the sinner all the sorrow and regret for sin which they demand—not merely the same determination never again to offend, and to reform his life; but, in addition to this, imposes a course of painful humiliation, consisting first, in a declaration of hidden sins to another fellow-creature, and then in the persuasion that he must punish himself, and crucify his flesh; that he must fast, and weep, and pray, and give alms according to his ability; and will you for a moment imagine that all these difficulties become quite palatable, only because joined to the idea that an infinitely small portion of them has some sort of connexion with a power, on the sinner's part, to please and satisfy God? For you will see that the whole merit, so called, of Catholic satisfaction, reduces itself to nothing more than this. Yes, I say that they must have taken a very superficial

measure of the understanding, and passions and feelings of men, who fancy that any other system opposes a severer barrier to sin, and can act more powerfully on the offender, which does not demand from him the slightest outward act that can be disagreeable, and which places the entire difficulty in the consideration, that, by another *exclusively*, and by the application of his merits, the sinner is to be justified. Balance the two together—weigh the systems, one against another—examine the internal structure of one, as I analysed it for you at our last meeting; view it in its outward circumstances, calculate the painful sacrifices which it demands—and, comparing it with the other, tell me which system, supposing each to be equally efficacious, the sinner would prefer, as most easy for obtaining pardon of his sins?

But what a pity that this Protestant doctrine did not appear much earlier in the Church—what a pity that some among the zealous pastors of the Church, holding a similar principle, did not then appear, and standing in the vestibules and outward courts of the churches in great cities, cry out to the penitents clothed in sack-cloth and ashes, some of whom had been for twenty and thirty years doing penance there, "Ye miserable deluded men, what are you doing? You that from a fond idea, that by these painful acts you are satisfying divine justice, are in sooth setting at naught the merits of the Son of God! You are undergoing all this suffering to no purpose; you are not acquiring the slightest favour or grace from God; on the contrary, you are only outraging his mercy and power, and denying the efficacy of his Christ's saving blood. Why not raise up your souls to God, and laying hold of the merits of your Redeemer, without all these penitential works, in one moment be justified; and the time which you are now losing, might be devoted to other, and more useful pursuits." Such, no doubt, had been the preaching of a Protestant, had he existed, in days of old. Think you that those holy penitents would have listened to it? — think you that, with the example of David and the saints before

them, who retired from the world to expiate their sins in humiliation and affliction before God and his people, on the preaching of these doctrines, they would have opened their eyes, and discovered the principle on which they acted to be erroneous? Or can you believe, that so soon after the establishment of Christianity, its vital principle was already lost?

But, my brethren, let us examine a little more closely the two principles of justification. It is said that the Catholic destroys the efficacy of Christ's merits, because he believes that it is in his power to satisfy the divine justice, in some respect, for sin: in other words, that the intervention of any human act in the work of justification, or this introduction of human merits, is radically opposed to simple justification, through the merits of Christ. I would ask is there not as much done by man, in any other system, as there is here? How is it that in other system, he lays hold of the merits of our Saviour, and by their application, to himself obtains justification? Is not man a sinner, and is not this a much more difficult act for one immersed in sin? Does it not imply greater power and energy in the criminal, than our doctrine that God alone can indeed forgive sins, but that he demands humiliation and painful sacrifices, to appease, in some degree, his offended majesty? Surely this is not giving very much to man, strengthened by grace; for as you will see, the Catholic maintains grace to be the chief instrument in the work of satisfaction. But how much more do you attribute to man, when you suppose that in a moment, while wallowing in his iniquities, he can appropriate to himself all the sublime merits of Christ, and by an effort of his will, so completely clothe himself in them, as to stand justified and holy in the sight of God. The latter attributes to man, a valid complete act of justification, the other imposes upon him painful conditions, subject to a sacramental action, with the consoling thought that God will accept them.

But, proceeding a little nearer still with the investigation—what is the Catholic doctrine regarding satisfaction? I have

proved to you, in the first instance, that sin is forgiven by a sacrament instituted by Christ for that purpose, for which the power of pronouncing judicial sentence of remission was communicated to the pastors of the Church. Now, through the whole of this process, which I showed you the Catholic doctrine requires for the forgiveness of sin, the entire power of forgiveness is vested exclusively and entirely in God: inasmuch as the minister no more acts in his own name, than he does in the sacrament of baptism, whereby it is believed that sin is forgiven; but is simply God's representative in taking cognizance of the case, and pronouncing thereon, with the assurance that ratification of his sentence will necessarily and infallibly follow. We believe that sin is forgiven and can be forgiven by God alone,—we believe, moreover, that in the interior justification of the sinner, it is only God that has any part; for it is only through his grace as the instrument, and through the redemption of Christ as the origin of grace and forgiveness, that justification can be wrought. And, in fact, no fasting, no prayers, no alms-deeds, no work that we can conceive to be done by man, however protracted, however extensive or rigorous they may be, can, according to the Catholic doctrine, have the most infinitesimal weight for obtaining the remission of sin, or of the eternal punishment allotted to it. This constitutes the essence of forgiveness, of justification, and in it we hold that man of himself has no power.

Now, let us come to the remaining part of the sacrament. We believe that upon this forgiveness of sins, that is, after the remission of that eternal debt, which God in his justice awards to transgressions against his law, he has been pleased to reserve a certain degree of inferior or temporary punishment, appropriate to the guilt which had been incurred; and it is on this part of the punishment alone, that, according to the Catholic doctrine, satisfaction can be made to God. What the grounds of this belief are, I will state just now. At present, I wish to lay down the doctrine clearly and

intelligibly; that it is only with regard to the reserved degree of temporal punishment that we believe the Christian can satisfy the justice of God. But is even this satisfaction any thing of his own? Certainly not; it is not of the slightest avail, except as united to the merits of Christ's passion, for it receives its entire efficacy from that complete and abundant purchase made by our Blessed Saviour. Such is our doctrine of satisfaction, and herein consists that self-sufficiency, that power of self-justification, which has been considered sufficient to account for the Catholic's subjecting himself to the painful work of repentance, imposed upon him by his religion.

But, after all, the whole of the question necessarily rests on this consideration. Is it God's ordinance, that when he has forgiven sin, and so justified the sinner, as to place him once more in a state of grace, he still reserves the infliction of some degree of punishment for his transgressions? We say, that undoubtedly it is; and I would appeal, in the first instance, to the feelings of any individual; and I do not believe there is any one, however he may think himself in a state of favour before God—however he may flatter himself that his sins are taken away—who will not answer the appeal. Why is it that, when calamity falls upon him, he receives it as a punishment for his sins? Why do our natural feelings prompt us to consider our domestic and personal afflictions as sent by God for our transgressions, although, at the moment when affliction comes, we may not be conscious of lying under actual guilt? This is a feeling which pervades every form of religion, and more naturally that of Christ; because it is impossible to be familiar with the word of God, without receiving an impression, that he does visit the sins of men on their heads, although they may have endeavoured, with reasonable hope, to obtain their forgiveness. Assuredly, when considering the troubles of the just, we know they are for their purification, to make them more single-hearted, and to detach them from the world; we know that thereby God wishes to purge them from those lesser offences which may escape their attention; but it is impossible

not, more or less, to connect the idea of suffering inflicted, with that of sin committed.

It is to be found through the whole of the Christian religion, because the very first principles of moral conduct, whether in the Old or the New Law, seem connected with the necessity of purifications and works, painful or disagreeable, or with sufferings sent by Divine Providence, as inflictions justly deserved. Thus, we remark constantly in the Old Law, visible demonstrations of repentance and sorrow, after sin has been forgiven. We find even that such a principle is clearly indicated by God himself. When, for instance, he forgives the sin of David by the prophet Nathan, the man of God does not say, "The Lord hath pardoned you; arise, you have no further cause of sorrow; you are fully justified before God." But he tells him, that he still must atone for his crime; and that, therefore, his child, the fruit of iniquity, shall be taken from him.* In like manner did God punish his later sin, of numbering the people of Israel, with a severity which extended over the whole nation.† Indeed, in every case recorded in the Old Testament, God, after forgiving the sins of his servants, fails not to reserve some temporal and expiatory chastisement to be inflicted on them, though they were his chosen and faithful friends. We see Moses and Aaron, having slightly transgressed his commands, still more severely punished by him, after he had given assurance that their trifling sin was forgiven. For, although he continued his favour and countenance to them, he deprived them of the sight of that promised land, after which they so earnestly did sigh.‡ We see Job, after he had transgressed in words, or rather exceeded in speech, therefore humbling himself, and declaring that he did penance, in dust and ashes.§ When the men of Niniveh had their destruction proclaimed to them by the prophet, the most obvious and natural expiation of their sins, appeared to them the publication of a general fast; and all, from the king on his throne to the very animals in their stalls, were commanded to

* 2 Kings xii. 14.
† Ib. xxiv. 11.
‡ Num. xx. 12, 24. Deut. xxxiv. 4.
§ Job xlii. 6.

fast for three days, saying, "who can tell if God will turn and forgive, and will turn away from his fierce anger, and we shall not perish."*

But, my brethren, some will perhaps say, "all this happened under the older dispensation, before the law of grace, and complete freedom, had been introduced." But, in the first place, allow me to observe, that this method observed by God's servants, refers essentially to the natural manifestation of his attributes. It is nowhere instituted in the old law, it begins in the very first instance in Paradise, when our first parents' sin was forgiven, and yet the most bitter consequences were entailed on them and their posterity on its account. We never observe this practice inculcated in the form of a covenant in the old law, that they who so repent and afflict themselves shall be pardoned; but we see it followed by all in the patriarchal times, and under the law, from a natural feeling that God required it for the forgiveness of sin. This being the case, we have every reason to conclude, that, like other institutions, which rest upon a similar basis, this is continued in the law of grace. For, even had not God said, in the New Testament, that the sinner must repent and abandon sin, to obtain forgiveness, we never should have supposed, that because all this was prescribed in the old law, it was not to be continued in the new; for the very reason which I have stated, that it does not belong to legal institutions, but essentially springs from the knowledge of God's attributes, and from an instinctive conviction on the part of man. In like manner, therefore, if we find God, from the beginning, forgiving sins with the reservation of some smaller punishment, and, at the same time, his chosen servants, instructed by him, acting under the conviction, that, by penitential acts, that punishment could be averted or mitigated, we have equal reason to maintain, so long as there is nothing positively defined to the contrary, that the punishment, and its expiation, are continued in the New law.

But, in the second place, is it not really and positively con-

* Jonas iii. 9.

tinued there? Consider the economy of the two Testaments, and compare them together. Will you discover in the New such words, as that the outward practice of penance, for the satisfaction of sin, is thenceforth abolished?

The objection to human satisfaction, arises from its being considered essentially derogatory to Christ's infinite merits. For St. Paul tells us, that we are *justified freely by God's grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.** And to such free redemption, all work of man is pronounced vitally opposed. But permit me to ask, were not they who lived under the law, justified as freely through the same redemption? Was not Christ's passion and purchase the source of all grace, and the only root of righteousness, to them as much as it is to us? If, then, no injury was done to their infinite worth, by the repentance of the sinner being followed by expiatory deeds of penance, considered available towards averting God's anger, even upon sin committed; how can a similar practice now be pronounced essentially at variance with the very same merits? It is manifest that this parallel excludes the idea of any essential inherent opposition between Christ's merits and man's co-operation, between the freedom and completeness of the purchase, and its application by human acts. We require, therefore, positive testimony to demonstrate such an opposition; and it must be such, as not merely excludes the dead works of the law, abolished by the new, but as positively declares *all* work of man destructive of our Saviour's redemption.

It is often said, that the works of penance performed by the Saints of old, as well as the punishments directly inflicted on them by God's hand, after their transgressions had been pardoned, were intended only as corrections, to prevent future falls, and not expiatory of past transgressions. But surely, my brethren, we find no traces of such a distinction in Scripture. When Nathan addresses David, he says not to him—"That thou mayest not in future cause my name to be blas-

* Rom. iii. 24.

phemed among the nations, the child that is born to thee shall surely die;" but, "Because thou hast given occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, for this thing the child that is born to thee shall surely die." Nor does the royal prophet himself hint, that, when he eat ashes like bread, and mingled his drink with weeping, and watered his couch with tears, and had his sin ever before him, and held himself ready for scourges, all this was as a preventive against future failings, and not rather an expiation for his double sin. In fact, examine every instance of penitential conduct, and you will find that sin committed, and not sin possible and future, is its manifest cause and motive.

But, in the third place, so far from our discovering a single passage in the New Testament, which can prove the abolition of penitential works, we shall see, that whatever was believed on this head in the former dispensation, is confirmed in the later. Does our Saviour ever tell us, that from thenceforth fasting, one of the most usual methods for afflicting the soul for sin committed, shall cease under his law? Does he not, on the contrary, assure us, that the moment he, the bridegroom, should be taken away, his children should fast?* Did he reprove those who had believed that penance in sackcloth and ashes was efficacious for the forgiveness of sin; and not rather propose them as an example, and say that the men of Niniveh shall arise in judgment against that generation, because, at the preaching of Jonas, they did penance in that way?† And does he, on any single occasion, limit the efficacy of these practices, and tell his disciples, that if hitherto they have been considered of value towards the remission of sin, they had, from that moment, lost that worth, and were to be employed in future upon different principles, and for different motives? And if not, when he merely corrects the Pharisaic abuses in the performance of them, and gives instructions for their better observance in privacy and humility, and yet touches not once upon their intrinsic value, but leaves all

* Mat. ix. 15. † Ib. xii. 41.

as he found it,* must not they have concluded, and must not we conclude, that he tacitly approved of the doctrine then held regarding them?

But what shall we say of the language of St. Paul, when he declares, writing to the Colossians, "I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up those things which are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh, for his body which is the Church."† What is wanting of Christ's sufferings! And this to be supplied by man, and in his flesh! What sort of doctrine call we this? Is it in favour of the completeness of Christ's sufferings, as to their application? Or rather does it not suppose that much is to be done by man, towards possessing himself of the treasures laid up in our Saviour's redemption? And that suffering is the means whereby this application is made?

The doctrine which is thus collected from the word of God, is reducible to these heads:—1. That God, after the remission of sin, retains a lesser chastisement in his power, to be inflicted on the sinner. 2. That penitential works, fasting, alms deeds, contrite weeping, and fervent prayer, have the power of averting that punishment. 3. That this scheme of God's justice was not a part of the imperfect law, but the unvarying ordinance of his dispensation, anterior to the Mosaic ritual, and amply confirmed by Christ in the gospel. 4. That it consequently becomes a part of all true repentance to try to satisfy this divine justice, by the voluntary assumption of such penitential works, as his revealed truth assures us have efficacy before him.

These propositions contain the Catholic doctrine concerning satisfaction. And I think I may safely ask you, whether, independently of their clear manifestation in Scripture, they are not in themselves reasonable, and consonant to justice, such as we can best conceive it. An offence may seem to require a heavy reparation; but if friends interpose, a reconciliation is procured, on the condition that the offender make a respectful apology. The law would inflict the severest

* Mat. vi. 16. † Coloss. i. 24.

punishment, mercy steps in and pardons, but some slight and passing chastisement is imposed, as a satisfaction to public justice. Even so, when God remits a weight of eternal punishment, it seems but fair that the outrage done to his divine Majesty should be repaired by outward acts, expressive of sorrow, and directed to appease his wrath, and avert those scourges which he still reserves in his hand.

Hence, in the sacrament of penance, that third part, which we call satisfaction; and in confession, the injunction of some penitential work as a portion of this satisfaction, and an earnest on the part of the sinner, of his willingness to make full reparation to God. Besides this species of satisfaction, I must not omit another very important one, and of the greatest practical benefit in the sacrament of penance. The satisfaction which I have described, may be called prospective, inasmuch as it seeks to avert that temporal punishment which God has reserved for the sinner. But there is another and still more essential retrospective satisfaction, without which we cannot receive the forgiveness of our sins in this sacrament, and without which the absolution of the priest has not the slightest power; and that is reparation to men for any injury inflicted on them by our transgression of the law, human or divine. The theft is not remitted until what has been stolen is restored, or where this is not possible, an equivalent reparation promised, so far as possible, or even so secured, as to make us sure of its being made. Reparation must be made to any whose character may have been injured, by unjust defamation, or by any exposure of secret faults; or by any expression leading to dishonour or to discredit them where they had before lived with honour, and been considered honest and respectable. Satisfaction must be made to the wounded feelings of those who have been injured;—wherever offences have been committed against charity, all must be done once more to build up the breach, and restore harmony and good feeling between the conflicting parties.

Now, my brethren, if what I have stated be the doctrine of the gospel, we must naturally expect to find some institution

in the Church, from its earliest times, for the faithful practice of so essential a part of God's dispensations. And accordingly from the beginning, we find nothing so prominently inculcated, either in the writings of the early fathers, or in the discipline of the universal Church, as this necessity of doing penance and making satisfaction to God. It is the basis of the system, known by the name of the penitential canons, in which those who had transgressed were condemned to different punishments, according to the measure of their offences,—some being obliged to lay prostrate for a certain term of months or years before the doors of the Church, after which they were admitted to different portions of the divine service; while others were often excluded through their whole lives from the liturgical exercises of the faithful, and were not admitted to absolution until they were at the point of death. This system surely must have had its root in the strong conviction of the early Church, that such practices were meritorious in the sight of God; that they brought down his mercy on the sinner and propitiated his wrath. And what is all this but the belief of the doctrine of satisfaction? The belief in the power of man to make some reparation or atonement to God, by his own voluntary sufferings? The existence of this system is so certain and beyond dispute, that no one has affected to call it in question. There may be differences of opinion regarding its exact application, or the principle under which it may have been sometimes modified; but all must agree that there was an intimate persuasion or conviction in the Church, that such practices were pleasing and meritorious in the sight of God. And accordingly, we find that some modern writers, who have treated of the practice of the Catholic Church upon this point, as derived from the fathers, fairly give it up, and assert that, as the doctrine of Satisfaction is not to be found in Scripture, and as it existed in the Church in the first, second, and third centuries, we must thence deduce how completely Christianity had been already corrupted. By this concession, however, the testimony of the early Church is freely given up to us. I will content myself with reading one or two

out of innumerable passages, to show how its feelings accorded with ours on this head.

St. Cyprian writes thus in one of his later works, to those who had fallen from the faith. "Do entire penance; evince the contrition of a sorrowing and grieving mind. That penance, which may satisfy, remains alone to be done; but they shut the door to satisfaction, who deny the necessity of penance." He is alluding to the discipline which allowed the faithful that had denied the faith in the time of persecution, to be received again to pardon and the communion of the Church, without going through a full course of penance; and from his words it is plain that he considers the doctrine of satisfaction so certain as to condemn those who reject public penance. He continues; "Whoso shall thus have made satisfaction to God and, by penance for his sin, have acquired more courage and confidence from the very circumstance of his fall, he, whom the Lord has heard and aided, shall give joy to the Church; he shall deserve not pardon only, but a crown."* Whoever, then, does this penance, can merit, not only pardon, but a crown of eternal reward.

In the following and in succeeding centuries we have innumerable passages from the fathers who wrote regarding the penitential canons; we have them laying it down as the principle of those laws, that satisfaction was necessary to expiate offences committed. I will read you one or two from St. Augustine, and we cannot have a more illustrious witness to the doctrines of the Church. "It is not enough that the sinner change his ways, and depart from his evil works, unless by penitential sorrow, by humble tears, by the sacrifice of a contrite heart, and by alms-deeds, he make satisfaction to God for what he has committed."† In the following words we have our doctrine clearly laid down, that God, after he has pardoned sin, still punishes it in his justice. "Wash me from my sin," said David, (Psal. l.)—Implore mercy, but lose not sight of justice. In his mercy God pardons sin: he punishes it in his justice. But what? dost thou seek for mercy, and shall sin

* De Lapsis, pp. 192, 193. † Homik I. T. x. p. 208.

remain unpunished? Let David, let other sinners answer; let them answer with David, that with him they may find mercy, and say: "Lord, my sin shall not remain unpunished: I know his justice, whose mercy I seek. It shall not remain unpunished: but that thou mayest not punish it I myself will."* Is not that precisely, word for word, the Catholic doctrine at this time?—that sin is forgiven, but punishment still inflicted; that God will chastise in his justice, but that the sinner may, by punishing himself, by performing certain works propitiatory before God, avert his anger, and obtain a remission even of this lesser chastisement?

I will content myself, therefore, with these two or three passages, and conclude this portion of my subject, by reading to you the decree of the Council of Trent regarding Satisfaction, to show you how far the council was from excluding the merits of Christ, or inspiring the sinner with any self-sufficiency on this head. "But the satisfaction which we make for sin, is not so ours, as if it were not through Jesus Christ: for we, who can do nothing of ourselves, as of ourselves (2 Cor. iii. 5,) can do all things in him that strengthens us. Man then has nothing wherein to glory: but all our glory is in Christ; in whom we live—in whom we merit—in whom we make satisfaction, bringing forth fruits worthy of penance. (Luke iii. 8.) These fruits have efficacy from him; by him they are offered to the Father; and through him they are accepted by the Father. It is, therefore, the duty of the ministers of the Church, as far as prudence shall suggest, weighing the character of sins and the dispositions of the sinner, to enjoin salutary and proper penitential satisfactions; lest, by conniving at sins, and, by a criminal indulgence, imposing the performance of the slightest penances for great crimes, they be made partakers of others' sins. Let them ever consider, that what they enjoin, must tend, not only to the maintenance of better conduct, and the cure of past infirmity, but also to the punishment of the sins that have been confessed."†

* Enarrat. in Psal. l. T. viii. p. 197.

† Sess. xiv. c. viii.

From this subject of satisfaction, I naturally proceed to the consideration of another topic, intimately connected with it, the Catholic doctrine of Purgatory. I have often had occasion to remark how every portion of the Catholic doctrine is in accordance with the rest, and what complete harmony reigns between one dogma and another; and this position seems here well illustrated. On the other hand no doctrine has been so often held up to public dislike, although it is difficult to say why,—than the doctrine of Purgatory, which follows, as a consequence or corollary from that of which I have just treated; so much so that the Catholic doctrine of satisfaction would be incomplete without it. The idea that God requires satisfaction, and will punish sin, would not go to its furthest and necessary consequence, if we did not believe that the sinner may be so punished in another world, as not to be wholly and eternally cast away from God.

I have said that I know not why this doctrine is so often held up to public odium, for it is difficult to say what is in it that should make it so apt and popular a handle for abuse against the Catholic religion. I am at a loss to conceive what can be considered in it repugnant to the justice of God, or to the ordinary ways of Providence; what can be found therein opposed to the moral law, in the remotest degree. The idea that God, besides condemning some to eternal punishment, and receiving others into eternal glory, should have been pleased to appoint a middle and temporary state, in which those who are not sufficiently guilty for the severer condemnation, nor sufficiently pure to enjoy the vision of his face, are for a time punished and purged, so as to be qualified for this blessing, assuredly contains nothing but what is most accordant to all we can conceive of his justice. No one will venture to assert that all sins are equal before God—that there is no difference between those cold-blooded and deliberate acts of crime which the hardened villain perpetrates, and those smaller and daily transgressions into which we habitually, and almost inadvertently, fall. At the same time, we know that God cannot

bear to look on iniquity, however small; that he requires whatever comes into his presence to be perfectly pure and worthy of him; and we might rationally conclude that there should be some means, whereby they who are in the middle state of offence, between deep and deadly transgressions on the one hand, and a state of perfect purity and holiness on the other, may be dealt with, according to the just measure of his justice. What then, in God's name, is there in this doctrine, viewed simply in itself, that can make it so popular a theme of declamation against the Catholics? The *anti-scriptural* doctrine of Purgatory, as it is termed, is more frequently than almost any other of our less important dogmas, the theme of obloquy and misrepresentation! It seems to be fancied in some way or other, that it is an instrument either for benefitting the clergy, or for enabling them to work on the fears of the people; that the terror of Purgatory is somehow a means of strengthening the arm of the Church over its subjects; but in what way, it is impossible for any Catholic, who knows our practice and belief, possibly to conceive.

I have more than once commented on the incorrectness of that method of arguing, which demands that we prove every one of our doctrines individually from the Scriptures. I occupied myself, during my first course of lectures, in demonstrating the Catholic principle of faith, that the Church of Christ was constituted by him the depository of his truths, and that, although many were recorded in his Holy Word, still many were committed to traditional keeping, and that Christ himself taught in his Church, and secured her from error. It is on this authority that the Catholic grounds his belief in the doctrine of Purgatory: yet, not but that its principle is laid down, indirectly at least, in the word of God. To examine fully the proofs of this doctrine, it is necessary to connect it with another Catholic practice, that of praying for the dead. For this practice, as we shall see, is essentially based on the belief in purgatory; and the principles of both are consequently intimately connected together. Why does the Catholic pray for his departed friend, but that he fears, lest not having died

in so pure a state as to have been immediately admitted to the sight of God, he may be enduring that punishment which God has awarded after the forgiveness of his sins; and believes that through the intercession of his brethren, he may be released from that distressing situation? I have no hesitation in saying that the two doctrines go so completely together, that if we succeed in demonstrating the one, the other necessarily follows. For, if we prove that it has always been the belief in the Church of Christ, that they who are departed may be benefitted by our prayers, and brought to the sight of God, while at the same time it was the universal belief that they who had had incurred eternal punishment could not be released from it, assuredly we have the same system as ours,—that there was a middle state wherein the face of God was not enjoyed, and yet eternal punishment was not suffered. And, in fact, we shall see how the two are spoken of in common, in those passages of the oldest writers, on praying for the departed, wherein reasons are given for the practice; for they assure us that, by such prayers, we are able to release them from a state of suffering.

But, to begin with the word of God,—there is a passage with which, probably, most who have looked into this subject are well acquainted. It is in the 2d Book of Maccabees, (chapter xii.) where we are told how Judas, the valiant commander, made a collection, and "sent 12,000 drachmas of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice, to be offered for the sins of the dead, thinking well and religiously concerning the resurrection. For if he had not hoped that they that were slain should rise again, it would have seemed superfluous and vain to pray for the dead. It is, therefore, a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins." (vv. 43-46.) Many will say that the second Book of Maccabees is not part of the Scripture; that it is not included in its canon. I will waive that question for the present, although it would not be difficult to prove that it has the same right to be in the canon as many books in the Old, and still more in the New Testament: for it is quoted by the fathers as Scrip-

ture, and enumerated in its canon by councils which have drawn up catalogues of its books. But let us abstract from this consideration which would lead us into too long a discussion. It is allowed, at any rate, by all, to contain sound edifying doctrines; for even the Church of England allows, and even directs it to be read for instruction; whence one may conclude that she does not suppose it to contain doctrines opposed to the religion of Christ. But, my brethren, no one will pretend to deny that this is an historical work of considerable value; that it represents faithfully what the Jews believed and practised at that time. It proves, therefore, that, at the time of the Maccabees, the conviction existed, that when prayers were offered for the dead, they were beneficial to them, and that it was "a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead." We have, therefore, the practice and belief of the Jewish Church in testimony of our doctrine. Does our Saviour ever once reprove the custom of the Jews? Does he speak of it among the false traditions of the Pharisees? Does he hint that this was one of the corruptions that had crept by time into the institutions of God? But you will ask, are there any other testimonies for this practice among the Jews? Most undoubtedly, for the Jews have continued the practice up to this moment, although it will hardly be suspected that they have drawn any thing from the Christian religion. In their prayer books, a form of daily prayer is appointed for the departed, and in their synagogues there is a tablet, whereon the names of the deceased are inscribed, that they may be prayed for in succession so many Sabbaths, according to a varying formula. Nor must these practices be reputed modern; for Lightfoot acknowledges that some of their oldest writers agree with us in opinion, so far as to charge them with having borrowed from us. But surely, it would have been only fair and honest to tell how and when this doctrine was received by the Jews from the Catholic Church. On the contrary, as we have found it held by Judas Maccabæus, before the time of our Saviour, we have a right to consider its existence among the Jews as anterior to him; and

as it was never once reproved or blamed by him, and is a point which depends not upon merely legal institution, we may justly consider it as still unchanged. It is only on this principle that the Sabbath or Sunday is observed with such rigour in this country; for we might ask those who are zealous for its observance with such solemn severity, whence they derive that practice, except from that prescribed by God in the Old Law for its Sabbath. On what ground do they continue it? Because it is not a mere legal institution, and its discontinuance not having been commanded, they think that not only itself, but the method of observing it must be kept as it formerly was. And so it is here; if the doctrine was held by the Jews, and by the best and holiest among them—by the writer of this book, as well as by Judas Maccabæus, who sent the 12,000 drachmas for a sacrifice for the dead,—if by such men it was believed that they could assist the dead, by supplication, and loose them from their sins, and that, consequently, these were not necessarily in a state of final or eternal condemnation,—if there be nothing in the New Law to reprobate this belief, based on the consideration of common justice, and on the ordinary providence of God, we have a right to consider it a true belief at the present time, and we must expect it to be still continued, with its practical consequences, in the Church. For, if prayers would benefit the dead of old, and sacrifices too, they must continue to benefit them as much now. Nay, why not more? Is not the communion between the members of Christ's Church infinitely stronger than it was then? Are not the merits of Christ now more powerful to assist; and are they not more at the disposal of his servants than formerly, through their prayers and intercession? And what reason have we to believe, that this beautiful and consoling communion, whereby they who remain were able to relieve those who were departed, hath been weakened and broken, and not rather strengthened and drawn closer?

But let us look for a moment into the New Testament, and see whether, so far from anything being taught that should seem

calculated to have undeceived the Jews, had they been mistaken in their notions concerning the dead, there be not much likely to have confirmed them. Our blessed Saviour, on one occasion, distinguishes two kinds of sin, and calls one a sin against the Holy Ghost, saying, "whosoever shall speak a word against the son of man, it shall be forgiven him, but he that shall speak against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this world or in the next."* Here is a species of sin, the aggravated nature of which is expressed by its not being forgiven in the next world. Should we not thence conclude, that some other sins may be forgiven there? Why give this peculiar characteristic to one, if no sin is ever pardoned in the next world? Assuredly, we have a right to conclude that there is some remission of sin there; and yet it cannot be either in Heaven, or in the place of eternal punishment. We must therefore admit some other state in which this may be.

Thus, the Jews, so far from seeing their former opinions and belief rejected, must have thought them strongly confirmed by Christ's express words. Moreover, we are assured in the New Law, that "nothing defiled shall enter" into the heavenly Jerusalem.† Suppose, then, that a Christian dies, who had committed some slight transgression; he cannot enter Heaven in this state, and yet we cannot suppose that he is to be condemned for ever. What alternative, then, are we to admit? Why, that there is some place in which the soul will be purged of the sin, and qualified to enter into the glory of God. Will you say that God forgives all sin at the moment of death? Where is the warrant for that assertion? This is an important matter; and if you maintain that God at once forgives sins, on any occasion, you must allege strong authority for such an important institution. If you find nothing of such a doctrine in his revelation, but if, on the contrary, you are told, first, that no defilement can enter the kingdom of Heaven, and secondly, that some sins are forgiven in the next world, you must admit some means of purgation, whereby the

* Mat. xii. 32. † Apoc. xxi. 27.

sinner, who has not incurred eternal punishment, is qualified for the enjoyment of God's glory.

I pass over two or three other passages, that might be brought in favour of purgatory, upon one of which I shall probably have to comment a little later. All these texts, you will say, are, after all, obscure, and do not lead to any certain results. True; but we have enough said in them to guide us to some striking probabilities; these require further elucidation, and where shall we look for it but in the Church, especially in ancient times. Take, as a similar instance, the Sacrament of Baptism, as now practised in the Church. The Apostles were simply told to baptise all nations; but how do you prove from this that baptism is to be conferred on infants? And yet the English Church articles prescribe this infant baptism. Or whence comes the warrant for departing from the literal meaning of the word, which means *immersion*, and the adoption of mere affusion or sprinkling of the water? There may have been infants in the families or houses spoken of as baptised—probably so; but this is only conjecture, and not proof; surely not enough to base an important practice on it, which, without better authority, should seem to contradict our Saviour's command, of faith preceding or accompanying baptism.—"He that believeth, and is baptised, shall be saved." And in a positive institution, wholly depending on the will of the legislator, positive authority is requisite for any modification of the prescribed act. Where is the security for these modifications, if not in the explanations of the Church, conveyed to us by her ancient practices? And thus, in like manner, if there be not clearly expressed in Scripture a place of purgation, but still we find forgiveness of sins in the next world spoken of,—if we find that prayers are beneficial for those that have died,—that nothing defiled can enter the kingdom of Heaven,—and that it is incompatible with God's justice, that every sin should consign the offender to eternal punishment,—we have the germs of a doctrine which only require to be unfolded; we have the members and component parts of a complete system, which, as in baptism,

require only further explanation and combination from the Church of God. Now, nothing can be more simple than to establish the belief of the Universal Church on this point. The only difficulty is to select such passages as may appear the clearest.

I will begin with the very oldest Father of the Latin Church, Tertullian, who advises a widow "to pray for the soul of her departed husband, entreating repose to him, and participation in the first resurrection, and making oblations for him on the anniversary day of his death, which, if she neglect, it may be truly said that she has divorced her husband."* To make an oblation on the anniversary day of his death; to pray that he may have rest,—is not this more like our language and practice, than those of any other religion in England? And does not Tertullian suppose that good is done to the faithful departed by such prayer? And moreover, does he not prescribe it as a solemn duty, rather than recommend it as a lawful practice?

St. Cyprian thus writes:—"Our predecessors prudently advised, that no brother, departing this life, should nominate any churchman his executor; and should he do it, that no oblation should be made for him, nor sacrifice offered for his repose; of which we have had a late example, when no oblation was made, nor prayer, in his name, offered in the Church."† It was considered, therefore, a severe punishment, that prayers and sacrifices should not be offered up for those who had violated any of the ecclesiastical laws. There are many other passages in this father; but I proceed to Origen, who wrote in the some century, and no one can be clearer regarding this doctrine:—"When we depart this life, if we take with us virtues or vices, shall we receive reward for our virtues, and those trespasses be forgiven to us which we knowingly committed; or shall we be punished for our faults, and not receive the reward of our virtues?" That is, if there be in our account a mixture of good and evil, shall we be rewarded for the good without any account being taken of the evil, or punished for the evil without the good being taken into con-

* "De Monogamia," c. 10. † Ep. xlvi. p. 114.

sideration? This query he thus answers:—"Neither is true: because we shall suffer for our sins, and receive the rewards of our good actions. For if on the foundation of Christ you shall have built not only gold and silver and precious stones, but also wood, and hay, and stubble, what do you expect, when the soul shall be separated from the body? Would you enter into Heaven with your wood, and hay, and stubble, to defile the kingdom of God: or, on account of those encumbrances, remain without, and receive no reward for your gold and silver and precious stones? Neither is this just. It remains then, that you be committed to the fire, which shall consume the light materials; for our God, to those who can comprehend heavenly things, is called a *consuming fire.* But this fire consumes not the creature, but what the creature has himself built,—wood, and hay, and stubble. It is manifest that, in the first place, the fire destroys the wood of our transgressions, and then returns to us the reward of our good works."* Therefore, according to this most learned Father, (200 years after Christ,) when the soul is separated from the body, if there be smaller trangressions, it is condemned to fire, which purges away those lighter materials, and thus prepares the soul for entering into Heaven.

St. Basil, or a contemporary author, writing on the words of Isaiah, "Through the wrath of the Lord is the land burned," says, that "the things which are earthly shall be made the food of a punishing fire; to the end that the soul may receive favour and be benefitted." He then proceeds,—"*And the people shall be as the fuel of the fire* (Ibid.): This is not a threat of extermination; but it denotes expurgation, according to the expression of the Apostle: *If any man's works burn, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so by fire.* (1 Cor. iii. 15.)"† Now, mark well the word *purgation*‡ here used. For it proves that our very term purgatory is not modern in the Church. St. Ephrem of Edessa writes

* Homil. xvi. al. xii. in Jerem. T. III, p. 231, 232.

† Com. in c. ix. Isai. T. 1. p. 554. ‡ καθαρσιν.

thus in his Testament:—" My brethren, come to me, and prepare me for my departure, for my strength is wholly gone. Go along with me in psalms and in your prayers; and please constantly to make oblations for me. When the thirtieth day shall be completed, then remember me: for the dead are helped by the offerings of the living;"—the very day observed by the Catholic Church with peculiar solemnity, in praying and offering mass for the dead.—" If also the sons of Mathathias" (he alludes to the very passage which I quoted from Maccabees, 2 *Maccab.* xii.) " who celebrated their feasts in figure only, could cleanse those from guilt by their offerings who fell in battle, how much more shall the priests of Christ aid the dead by their oblations and prayers?"*

In the same century, St. Cyril of Jerusalem thus expresses himself:—" Then (in the liturgy of the Church) we pray for the holy Fathers and the Bishops that are dead; and, in short, for all those who are departed this life in our communion; believing that the souls of those, for whom the prayers are offered, receive very great relief while this holy and tremendous victim lies upon the altar."† St. Gregory of Nyssa thus contrasts the course of God's providence in this world with that in the next. In the present life, " God allows man to remain subject to what himself has chosen; that, having tasted of the evil which he desired, and learned by experience how bad an exchange has been made, he might again feel an ardent wish to lay down the load of those vices and inclinations, which are contrary to reason: and thus, in this life, being renovated by prayers and the pursuit of wisdom, or, in the next, being expiated by the purging fire, he might recover the state of happiness which he had lost.....When he has quitted his body, and the difference between virtue and vice is known, he cannot be admitted to approach the Divinity till the purging fire shall have expiated the stains, with which his soul was infected.—That same fire, in others, will cancel the corruption of matter

* In Testament. T. ii. p. 234, p. 371. Edit. *Oxon.*

† Catech. Mystag. v. n. ix. x. p. 328.

and the propensity to evil."* St. Ambrose, throughout his works, has innumerable passages on this subject, and quotes St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians (iii. 15), which you have heard already cited by other Fathers,—"If any man's works burn, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire." I will quote one passage out of many:—"*But he shall be saved, yet so as by fire.* He will be saved, the Apostle said, because his substance shall remain, while his bad doctrine shall perish. Therefore he said, *yet so as by fire;* in order that his salvation be not understood to be without pain. He shows, that he shall be saved indeed, but he shall undergo the pain of fire, and be thus purified; not like the unbelieving and wicked man who shall be punished in everlasting fire."† And in his funeral oration on the Emperor Theodosius, he thus speaks:—"Lately we deplored together his death, and now, while Prince Honorius is present before our altars, we celebrate the fortieth day. Some observe the third and the thirtieth, others the seventh and the fortieth.—Give, O Lord, rest to thy servant Theodosius, that rest which thou hast prepared for thy Saints. May his soul thither tend, whence it came, where it cannot feel the sting of death, where it will learn, that death is the termination, not of nature, but of sin. I loved him, therefore will I follow him to the land of the living; I will not leave him, till, by my prayers and lamentation, he shall be admitted to the holy mount of the Lord, to which his deserts call him."‡

St. Epiphanius, in the same century:—"There is nothing more opportune, nothing more to be admired, than the rite which directs the names of the dead to be mentioned. They are aided by the prayer that is offered for them; though it may not cancel all their faults.—We mention both the just and sinners, in order *that for the latter we may obtain mercy.*"§ St. Jerome:—"As we believe the torments of the devil, and of those wicked men, who said in their hearts, *there is no*

* Orat. de Defunctis. T. ii. p. 1066, 1067, 1068.
† Comment. in 1 Ep. ad. Cor. T. ii. in App. p. 122.
‡ De obitu Theodosii. Ibid. p. 1197-8. 1207-8.
§ Hær. lv. *sive* lxxv. T. i. p. 911.

God, to be eternal; so, in regard to those sinners, who have not denied their faith, and whose works will be proved and purged by fire, we conclude, that the sentence of the judge will be tempered by mercy."* Not to be tedious, I will quote only one Father more, the great St. Augustine:—"The prayers of the Church," he writes, "or of good persons, are heard in favour of those Christians, who departed this life, not so bad as to be deemed unworthy of mercy, nor so good as to be entitled to immediate happiness. So also, at the resurrection of the dead, there will some be found, to whom mercy will be imparted, having gone through those pains, to which the spirits of the dead are liable. Otherwise it would not have been said of some with truth, that their sin *shall not be forgiven, neither in this world, nor in the world to come*, (*Matt.* xii 32.) unless some sins were remitted in the next world."† St. Augustine's reasoning is here precisely the same as I have used, and as every Catholic now uses. In another passage, he quotes the words of St. Paul, as follows:—"If they had built *gold and silver and precious stones*, they would be secure from both fires; not only from that in which the wicked shall be punished for ever; but likewise from that fire which will purify those who shall be saved by fire. But because it is said, *he shall be saved*, that fire is thought lightly of; though the suffering will be more grievous than any thing man can undergo in this life."

These passages contain precisely the same doctrine as the Catholic Church teaches; and had I introduced them into my discourse, without telling you from whom they are taken, no one would have supposed that I was swerving from the doctrine taught by the Catholic Church. It is impossible to imagine that the sentiments of these writers agreed on this point with that of any other religion.

I observed that there was one text which I had passed over, and on which I might be led to make a few remarks a little

† Comment. in c. lxv. Isai. T. ii. p. 492.
‡ De Civit. Dei, Lib. xxi. c. xxiv. p. 642.

latter; and I advert to it now, not so much for the purpose of discussing whether it applies to Purgatory, or not, as to show how misstatements may be made regarding the grounds of a doctrine. I alluded to the passage of St. Paul, regarding building upon the true foundation, a superstructure of gold, silver, and precious stones, or wood, hay, and stubble; where he says, that the fire shall try every man's works, and that whatever is frail will be necessarily destroyed, while the foundatian shall remain. Several Fathers, as you have heard, apply this text to the doctrine of Purgatory. Yet, very lately, a writer commenting upon the Catholic doctrine of Purgatory, quotes this very text as an example of how the Church of Rome, as he calls us, perverts Scripture to prove her doctrine; for he says we have erected our doctrine of the fire of purgatory on this text, which has nothing to do with punishment hereafter, but only refers to the tribulations endured on earth.* This is manifestly an incorrect statement, and it places the author in this dilemma; either the Church of Rome was not the first to turn this text to prove the existence of Purgatory, and then his assertion is grossly inaccurate, or else those Fathers whom I have quoted, are to be included in the "Church of Rome," and are to be considered as holding the Catholic doctrine. It is not essential to our belief, that this text should refer to the doctrine of Purgatory; it is a very important one, as showing St. Paul's doctrine regarding God's conduct in punishing sin, and in distinguishing grievous transgressions and errors, from those of lesser moment; and even more directly proving, that there is a place of temporary probation, which has the power of cancelling imperfections not so completely in opposition to God's law.

In addition, I need hardly observe, that there is not a single liturgy existing, whether we consider the most ancient period of the Church, or the most distant part of the world, in which this doctrine is not laid down. In all the oriental liturgies, we find parts appointed, in which the Priest or Bishop is ordered

* Horne, vol. ii. p. 473, 7th ed.

to pray for the souls of the faithful departed; and tables were anciently kept in the churches, called the *Dyptichs*, on which the names of the deceased were enrolled, that they might be remembered in the sacrifice of the mass, and the prayers of the faithful.

The name of purgatory scarcely requires a passing comment. It has, indeed, been made a topic of abuse, on the ground that it is not to be found in Scripture. But where is the word *Trinity* to be met with? Where is the word *Incarnation* to be read in Scripture? Where are many other terms, held most sacred and important in the Christian religion? The doctrines are indeed found there; but these names were not given, until circumstances had rendered them necessary. We see that the Fathers of the Church have called it a purging fire—a place of expiation or purgation. The idea is precisely, the name almost, the same. There remains another topic in connexion with the subject of this evening's discourse—the doctrine of *Indulgences*—but it is not my intention to go into it, and this for more reasons than one: first, because I dilated sufficiently upon it in a lecture which I delivered lately at another chapel: secondly, because it would be impossible, at this late hour, to enter upon it with any satisfaction. I only refer to my former discourse, as a proof that I do not pass over it from any desire of shrinking from it, or from feeling that I have the slightest reason to conceal any thing, or avoid treating of it in the fairest and fullest manner.

It has been said by divines of the English Church, that the two doctrines which I have joined together, of prayers for the dead and Purgatory, have no necessary connexion, and that, in fact, they were not united in the ancient Church. The answer to this assertion I leave to your memories, after the passages which I have read you from the Fathers. They surely speak of purgation by fire after death, whereby the imperfections of this life are washed out, and satisfaction made to God for sins not sufficiently expiated; they speak, at the same time, of our prayers being beneficial to those who have departed this life in a state of sin; and these propositions contain our entire doc-

trine on Purgatory. It has also been urged, that the established religion, or Protestantism, does not deny or discourage prayers for the dead, so long as they are independent of a belief in Purgatory: and, in this respect, it is stated to agree with the primitive Christian Church. But, my brethren, this distinction is exceedingly fallacious. Religion is a lively, practical profession; it is to be ascertained and judged by its sanctioned practices, and outward demonstration, rather than by the mere opinions of a few. I would at once fairly appeal to the judgment of any Protestant here, whether he has been taught, and has understood, that such is the doctrine of his Church? If, from the services which he has attended, or the catechism which he has learnt, or the discourses which he has heard, he has been led to suppose that praying, in terms however general, for the souls departed, was noways a peculiarity of catholicism, but as much a permitted practice of protestantism? If among his many acquaintances who profess his creed, he has found men who perform such acts of devotion? And if not, nay, if on the contrary, he has always understood that this rite of praying for the dead is essentially a distinctive of the Catholic religion, what matters it that Bishop Bull, and one or two other divines, should have asserted it to be allowed in the English Church? Or how can conformity between the English and the primitive Church be proved from this tacit permission,—if such can be admitted on considering that prayers for the dead were allowed to remain in the first Anglican liturgy, and were formally withdrawn on revision,—when the ancient Church not merely allowed, but enjoined the practice as a duty—you will remember Tertullian's words—not merely opposed not its private exercise, but made it a prominent part of its solemn liturgy?*

* Dr. Pusey has lately written as follows:—"Since Rome has blended the cruel invention of purgatory wtih the primitive custom of praying for the dead, it is not in communion with her, that any can seek comfort from this rite." *An earnest remonstrance to the author of the Pope's Pastoral Letter.* (1836, p. 25.) Dr. Pusey's opinion is, 1st. that in the ancient Church, prayers were offered for all the departed, including apostles and martyrs, in the same manner; 2dly, that such prayers had reference, not to the alleviation of pain, but to the augmentation of happiness, or the hastening of

As a practical doctrine in the Catholic Church, it has an influence highly consoling to humanity, and eminently worthy of a religion that came down from heaven to second all the purest feelings of the heart. Nature herself seems to revolt at the idea that the chain of attachment which binds us together

perfect joy, not possessed by them till the end of time; 3dly, that the *cruel* invention of purgatory is modern; 4thly, that the English Church allows prayers for the dead, in that more comprehensive and general form. As to the first, there is no doubt, that in the ancient liturgies, the saints are mentioned in the same prayer as the other departed faithful; from the simple circumstance, that they were so united before the public suffrage of the Church proclaimed them to belong to a happier order. It is also true, that the Church then, as now, prayed for the consummation of their happiness after the resurrection. But it is no less true, that the ancients drew a line of distinction between the state of the two, and that the same as we. St. Epiphanius, quoted in the text, makes the distinction, saying; "We mention both the just and sinners, that *for the latter*, we may obtain mercy." St. Augustine also writes as follows: "When, therefore, the sacrifice of the altar, or alms, are offered for the dead; in regard to those whose lives were very good, such offices may be deemed acts of thanksgiving; for the imperfect acts of propitiation; and though to the wicked they bring no aid, they may give some comfort to the living." (Enchirid. cap. cx.) Here the three classes of departed souls are mentioned, with the effects of the sacrifice of the mass on each. Dr. Pusey, too, is doubtless well acquainied with the saying of the same father, that "he does injury to a martyr who prays *for* a martyr." "Injuriam facit martyri, qui orat pro martyre."

With regard to the second and third points, I refer to the texts given in the body of this lecture; St. Augustine uses the term *purgatorial* punishment (purgatorias pœnas) in the next world. (De Civit. Dei. lib. xxi. c. 16.) The passages which I have quoted are sufficient to prove a state of actual suffering in souls less perfect. There is another important reflection. The fathers speak of their prayers granting immediate relief to those for whom they offered them, and such relief as to take them from one state into another. St. Ambrose expresses this effect of prayer, when he says of Theodosius; "I will not leave him, till by my prayers and lamentations he shall be admitted to God's holy mount." This does not surely look to a distant effect, or to a mere perfection of happiness.

On the fourth, in addition to the remarks preceding this note in the text, I can only say, I wish it were better known that the Church of England considers prayers for the dead lawful and beneficial to them; for a judicial decision has lately annulled a bequest to Catholic chapels, with a condition of saying mass for the testatrix. Ap. 16, 1835. This was in the case of West and Shuttleworth, wherein the Master of the Rolls decided that, as the testatrix could not be benefited by such practices, they were to be held superstitious and not charitable; and declared the legacy null and void. Now, if his Honour had been aware, that the English Church admits prayers to be beneficial to the dead, and approves of them, and if he had judged, that our Eucharist (the oblation spoken of by the fathers) must be admitted by that Church to contain all that its own does at least, he surely would not have based a legal judgment, which, to say the least, savours much of old religious prejudices, upon so hollow a theological basis.—*Mylne and Keen*, vol. ii. p. 697.

in life, can be rudely snapped in sunder by the hand of death, conquered and deprived of its sting since the victory of the cross. But it is not to the spoil of mortality, cold and disfigured, that she clings with affection. It is but an earthly and almost unchristian grief, which sobs when the grave closes over the bier of a departed loved one; but the soul flies upward to a more spiritual affection, and refuses to surrender the hold which it had upon the love and interest of the spirit that hath fled. Cold and dark as the sepulchral vault, is the belief that sympathy is at an end, when the body is shrouded in decay; and that no further interchange of friendly offices may take place between those who have laid them down to sleep in peace, and us, who for a while strew fading flowers upon their tomb. But sweet is the consolation to the dying man, who conscious of imperfection, believes that even after his own time of merit is expired, there are others to make intercession on his behalf; soothing to the afflicted survivors the thought, that, instead of unavailing tears, they possess more powerful means of actively relieving their friend, and testifying their affectionate regret, by prayer and supplication. In the first moments of grief, this sentiment will often overpower religious prejudice, cast down the unbeliever on his knees, beside the remains of his friend, and snatch from him an unconscious prayer for rest; it is an impulse of nature, which for the moment, aided by the analogies of revealed truth, seizes at once upon this consoling belief. But it is only like the flitting and melancholy light which sometimes plays as a meteor over the corpses of the dead; while the Catholic feeling, cheering, though with solemn dimness, resembles the unfailing lamp which the piety of the ancients is said to have hung before the sepulchres of their dead. It prolongs the tenderest affections beyond the gloom of the grave, and it infuses the inspiring hope, that the assistance which we on earth can afford to our suffering brethren, will be amply repaid when they have reached their place of rest, and make of them friends, who, when *we* in our turns fail, shall receive us into everlasting mansions.

LECTURE THE TWELFTH.

(SUPPLEMENTARY.)

ON INDULGENCES.

2 COR. ii. 10.

" *To whom ye have forgiven any thing, I also. For what I forgive, if I have forgiven any thing, for your sakes have I done it in the person of Christ.*"

AMONG the innumerable misrepresentations to which our religion is constantly subjected, there are some which a Catholic clergyman feels a peculiar reluctance in exposing, from the personal feelings which must be connected with their refutation. When our doctrine on the Blessed Eucharist, or the Church, or the saints of God, is attacked, and we rise in its defence, we feel within ourselves, a pride and a spirit resulting from the very cause; there is an inspiring ardour infused by the very theme; we hold in our hands the standard of God himself, and fight his own battle; we gather strength from the altar which is blasphemed, and are reminded of our dignity and power, by the very robe which we wear; or we are refreshed by the consciousness that they whose cause we defend, are our brethren, who look down with sympathy upon our struggle.

But when the petty and insidious warfare begins, which professes to aim at the man and not at the cause, when, from principles of faith, or great matters of practice, the attack is changed into crimination of our ministry, and insinuation against our character; when the Catholic priest stands before his people, to answer the charge of having turned religion into a traffic, and corrupted her doctrines to purchase influence over their conscience and their purse, he must surely recoil from meeting even as a calumny, that, against which his heart

revolts, and find his very feelings, as a member of the society wherein he lives with respect, almost too strong for that office of meekness and charity which duty imposes for the undeceiving of the beguiled, and the maintenance of truth.

These sentiments are spontaneously excited in my breast, by the recollection of the very severe attacks and bitter sarcasms which the topic of this evening's discourse has for ages excited. Indulgences—pardon for sins, past and future, the sale of forgiveness for the grossest crimes, at stipulated sums; these mixed up with invectives against the rapacity of the Church, and the venality of its ministers and agents, have been fruitful themes of ridicule and reproof, of sarcasm and declamation, against us, from the days of Luther, to the irreconcileable hostility of our modern adversaries.

That abuses have existed regarding the practice of Indulgences, no one will deny; and I shall say sufficient regarding them before the close of my lecture: that they were made the ground for the dreadful separation of the sixteenth century, must be deeply regretted; for no such abuses could justify the schism that ensued. But, my brethren, here, as in almost every other instance, the misrepresentation which has been made of our doctrine, chiefly proceeds from misapprehension, from the misunderstanding of our real belief. I shall therefore pursue in its regard, the same method as I have invariably followed; that is, state in the simplest terms the Catholic doctrine, and explain its connexion with other points; and after that, proceed to lay before you its proofs, and meet such few objections as their very exposition does not anticipate. In fact, my discourse this evening will be little more than a rapid sketch of the history of Indulgences.

In treating of Satisfaction, I endeavoured to condense the proofs of our belief, that God reserves some temporal chastisement for sin, after its guilt and eternal punishment have been remitted; and that by the voluntary performance of expiatory works, we may disarm the anger of God, and mitigate the inflictions which his justice had prepared. This doctrine I

must beg of you to bear in mind, as essential for understanding what we mean by an Indulgence.

Many of you have probably heard, that this word signifies a licence to sin, given even before-hand for sins to be perpetrated: at any rate, a free pardon for past sins. This is, in fact, the most lenient form in which our doctrine is popularly represented. And yet, mitigated as it is, it is far from correct. For I fear many here present will be inclined to incredulity, when I tell them that it is no pardon for sin of any sort, past, present, or future! What then is an Indulgence? It is no more than a remission by the Church, in virtue of the keys, or the judicial authority committed to her, of a portion, or the entire, of the temporal punishment due to sin. The infinite merits of Christ form the fund whence this remission is derived: but besides, the Church holds that, by the communion of Saints, penitential works performed by the just, beyond what their own sins might exact, are available to other members of Christ's mystical body; that, for instance, the sufferings of the spotless mother of God, afflictions such as probably no other human being ever felt in the soul,—the austerities and persecutions of the Baptist, the friend of the bridegroom, who was sanctified in his mother's womb, and chosen to be an angel before the face of the Christ,—the tortures endured by numberless martyrs, whose lives had been pure from vice and sin,—the prolonged rigours of holy anchorites, who, flying from the temptations and dangers of the world, passed many years in penance and contemplation, all these made consecrated and valid through their union with the merits of Christ's passion,—were not thrown away, but formed a store of meritorious blessings, applicable to the satisfaction of other sinners.

It is evident that, if the temporal punishment reserved to sin, was anciently believed to be remitted through the penitential acts, which the sinner assumed, any other substitute for them, that the authority imposing or recommending them, received as an equivalent, must have been considered by it truly of equal value, and as acceptable before

God. And so it must be now. If the duty of exacting such satisfaction devolves upon the Church,—and it must be the same now as it formerly was,—she necessarily possesses at present the same power of substitution, with the same efficacy, and, consequently, with the same effects. And such a substitution is what constitutes all that Catholics understand by the name of an *Indulgence*.

The inquiry into the grounds of this belief and practice, will necessarily assume an historical form. For it is an investigation into the limitations or the extent of a power, which can only be conducted by examining precedents, on its exercise by those in whom it first was vested, and by those who received it from them. For the power itself is included in the commission given by Christ to his Apostles, to forgive or to retain sins. If the authority here deputed be of a judicial form, and if part of the weight imposed by sin be the obligation to satisfy the divine justice, the extent of this obligation necessarily comes under the cognizance of the tribunal. No one will, I think, deny that this application of the power committed, was made in the primitive Church. No one will contend, that satisfaction was not exacted, and that the pastors of the Church did not think themselves, I will not say allowed, but obliged, to impose a long train of penitential inflictions, in punishment of sin. Something of this matter I have already touched upon; more I shall have occasion to say to-day. For the present, I am only stating my case. Well then, the Church having, in ancient times, considered herself competent to superintend the discharge of satisfaction due for sin, and having claimed and exercised the right of exacting, in her presence, full and severe expiation, in virtue of the commission above cited; and we having thus proved its extension to the *imposition* of penance, it remains for us to see, whether she went one step further, and claimed and exercised the right and power of relaxing the rigour of those inflictions, without a diminution of their value, and ascertain on what ground this relaxation was made. For, if we discover that the substitution of a lesser punish-

ment, or the total discharge of the weight imposed, was made in consideration of the merits and sufferings of God's holy servants, and that such commutation or remission was considered valid, we shall have sufficient proof that *Indulgences* were in use, upon the same grounds whereon we admit them now. The scholastic precision of the middle ages may have prescribed for them more definite terms, and may have classified them, their source, and effects, under distincter and clearer forms. But the doctrine as to substance is the same, and has only shared the fate, or rather the advantage, of every other doctrine, of passing through the refinement of judgment, which sifted the dogma till it was cleared of all the incumbrance of indefinite opinion, and stript of the husk of an ill-defined terminology. And for this purpose does divine Providence seem to have interposed that school of searching theology, between the simplicity of faith in ancient days, and the doubting latitude of opinion in modern times.

Now, therefore, let us at once enter upon the proofs of this doctrine, which forms but the completion of that already expounded, regarding the power of the Church in the remission of sin. For, a tribunal which has the power of forgiving guilt, and substituting a smaller satisfaction to the majesty of the offended, must surely have the comparatively insignificant authority, still further to modify, or even to commute, the satisfaction which it has imposed.

The New Testament seems to furnish a clear instance of such a power being exercised. In his first epistle to the Corinthians, St. Paul not only severely reproved, but manifestly punished grievously, a member of that Church, who had fallen into a scandalous sin. These are his words:—"I, indeed, absent in body, but present in spirit, have already judged, as though I were present, him that hath so done. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, you being gathered together, and my spirit with the power of our Lord Jesus; to deliver such a one to Satan, for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

* 1 Cor. v. 3-5.

Several remarks present themselves naturally upon the perusal of this text. First, a punishment is here inflicted of a severe character. We do not, indeed, precisely know what is meant by the delivery of the sinner to Satan. According to some, it signifies literally his condemnation to possession, like the instance of the swine in the Gospel;* others suppose it to mean the infliction of a painful sickness; a third party understands by it excommunication from the Church. Secondly, this punishment, whatever it may have been, was remedial, intended to reclaim the sinner, and, by the injury of the body, to rescue the soul from eternal loss. Thirdly, the act here described was not within the terms, strictly so called, of remission or retention of actual guilt; inasmuch as it was performed, and the punishment inflicted, by the whole congregation, with St. Paul at their head, but only in spirit, that is, sanctioning by his authority and concurrence all their acts. But the sacramental forgiveness, or retention of sin, has never been considered a congregational act, or one to be performed by the body of the faithful, nor even by any pastor of the Church, however dignified, at a distance. Hence we must conclude, that a penance of some sort was imposed upon the incestuous Corinthian, intended for his amendment, and for reparation of the scandal and disedification committed before the Church. For this, also, is clearly intimated by the Apostle, in the verses preceding and subsequent to the passage which I have read.

Well, the consequences of this heavy infliction were such as St. Paul probably foresaw, and certainly such as he must have desired. The unfortunate sinner was plunged into a grief so excessive, as to appear dangerous to his welfare. The sentence which had been pronounced is revoked, and under circumstances somewhat varied, though on that account more interesting. It appears from the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the same Church, that the Corinthians did not wait for his answer upon this subject, or even if they did, that he remitted the whole conduct and decision of the matter to

* Matt. viii.

their charitable discretion. For he thus writes:—"To him that is such a one, this rebuke is sufficient that is given by many. So that, contrariwise, you should rather pardon and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with over-much sorrow. For which cause I beseech you that you would confirm your charity towards him. For to this end also did I write, that I may know the experiment of you, whether you be obedient in all things. And to whom you have pardoned any thing, I also. For what I have pardoned, if I have pardoned any thing, for your sakes have I done it in the person of Christ."* Here, again, St. Paul alludes to the severity of the chastisement inflicted, owing to its being conveyed in a public reproof of the entire congregation. He then entreats *them* to forgive him and comfort him; and adds, that he has already confirmed the sentence which they have passed, or were going to pass. Evidently, therefore, the entire transaction is not a ministerial one, affecting the forgiveness of the crime, for that could not be in the hands of the flock.

But no less is it evident, that the term of punishment is abridged, and the sentence reversed, before the completion of the awarded retribution is arrived; and this was in consequence of the very great sorrow manifested by the penitent, which was considered an equivalent for the remaining portion. This is precisely what we should call an Indulgence; or a remission of that penance enjoined by the Church, in satisfaction of God's justice. But it is likewise manifest, that such a relaxation must have been considered perfectly valid before Heaven. For as the punishment was inflicted that his soul might be saved, it would have been an endangering of that salvation to remove the punishment, unless the same saving effects would ensue after its relaxation.

After this striking example in the word of God, we shall not be surprized at finding the Church, in the earliest times, claiming and exercising a power similar in every respect. We must naturally expect to see it imitate the Apostle, first in im-

* 2 Cor. ii. 5-10.

posing, and then in remitting or modifying, such temporary chastisements. To understand its practice clearly, it may be necessary to premise a few words on the subject of canonical penance. From the age of the apostles, it was usual for those who had fallen into grievous offences, to make a public confession of them—whereof I gave one or two examples in treating of confession—and then to subject themselves to a course of public penance, which received the name of canonical, from the canons or rules whereby it was regulated. Such penitents, as we learn from Tertullian, and other early writers, put on a black and coarse habit, and, if men, closely shaved their heads.* They presented themselves before the assembly of the faithful on the first day of Lent, when the presiding bishop or priest placed ashes on their heads, a custom still preserved in the Catholic Church; whence the name of Ash-Wednesday given to that day. The term of this penance was various, according to the grievousness of the offence. It lasted sometimes only forty days; at others, three, seven, and ten years; for some enormous crimes, its duration was the natural life of the penitent. During this course every amusement was forbidden, the sinner's time was occupied in prayer and good works, he practised rigorous fasting, and came only on festivals to the Church, where he remained with the penitents of his class; first lying prostrate before the door, then admitted at stated intervals within, but still for a time excluded from attendance on the liturgy, till he had accomplished his prescribed term of satisfaction.

There are the strongest reasons to believe, that in most cases, absolution preceded the allotment of this penance, or at least that it was granted during the time of its performance; so that all or much of it followed sacramental absolution. The custom of the Roman Church, and of others, was, that the penitents should be yearly admitted to communion, on Holy Thursday, a circumstance incompatible with the idea of their receiving no pardon till the conclusion of their penance.

* Tertull. "Lib. de Pœnit." St. Pacian, "Parænes. ad Pœnit." lib. ii. &c.

Innocent I., the Council of Agde in 506, St. Jerome, and others, mention this usage.*

But while these penitential observances were considered of the greatest value and importance, the Church reserved to itself the right of mitigation under various circumstances, which I will now explain.

1. The extraordinary sorrow and fervour manifested by the penitent, during the performance of his task, was always considered a justification of a proportionate relaxation. Thus, the Council of Nicea prescribes on this subject:—"In all cases, the disposition and character of repentance must be considered. For they who by fear, by tears, by patience, and by good works, manifest a sincere conversion, when they shall have passed over a certain time, and begun to communicate in prayer with the faithful, to these the bishop may show more indulgence: but not to those who manifest indifference, and think it enough that they are allowed to enter the Church. These must complete the whole period of penance."† St. Basil says, in like manner, that "he who has the power of binding and loosing, can lessen the time of penance to the truly contrite."‡ The Council of Lerida says,—"Let it remain in the power of the Bishop either to shorten the separation of the truly contrite, or to separate the negligent a longer time from the body of the Church." That of Ancyra, in 314, decrees as follows:—"We decree, that the Bishops, having considered the conduct of their lives, be empowered to show mercy, or to lengthen the time of penance. But chiefly let their former and subsequent life be examined, and thus lenity be shown them."§

2. Another motive of relaxation was, the approach of a persecution, when the penitents would have an opportunity of testifying their sorrow by patient endurance, and where it was thought inexpedient to leave them unfortified by the blessed Eucharist, and the participation in the prayers of the

* See Bellarmine, tom. iii. p. 960, *Par.* 1613. ‡ Ep. Can. ad Amphiloch.
† Can. xii. Conc. Gen. T. ii. p. 35. § Conc. Gen. T. i. can. v. p. 1458.

Church. This, St. Cyprian informs us, in the following words, was the practice of the Church. "He that gave the law, has promised, that what we bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven, and what we loose on earth shall be loosed also in heaven. But now, not to those that are infirm, but to the healthy the peace of reconciliation is necessary; not to the dying, but to the living it must be extended; in order that those whom we incite to battle, be not left without arms, but be fortified by the body and blood of Christ. For since the design of the holy Eucharist is, to give strength to those that receive it, they must not be deprived of its support, whom we would guard against the enemy."*

3. A similar indulgence was granted to penitents in danger of death, as was decreed by the Council of Carthage. "When a sinner implores to be admitted to penance, let the priest, without any. distinction of persons, enjoin what the canons enact. They who show negligence, must be less readily admitted. If any one, after having, by the testimony of others, implored forgiveness, be in imminent danger of death, let him be reconciled by the imposition of hands, and receive the Eucharist. If he survive, let him be informed that his petition has been complied with, and then be subject to the appointed rules of penance, so long as it shall seem good to the priest who prescribed the penance."† Whence it appears that the canonical penance was to be continued after absolution and admission to the Eucharist, consequently that it was meant for satisfaction after sin remitted; and likewise that the Church held itself competent to give a mitigation or indulgence in it. For the penance after recovery was not to be the full term, but such a modification as the priest should think proper. And Pope Innocent I., in the epistle to which I have before referred, confirms this discipline. Thus he writes: "In estimating the grievousness of sins, it is the duty of the priest to judge; attending to the confession of the penitent, and the signs of his repentance; and then to order him to be loosed, when he

* Ep. lvii. p. 116, 117. † Conc. Gen. T. ii. can. lxxiv. lxxv. lxxvi. p. 1205.

shall see due satisfaction made. But if there be danger of death, he must be absolved before Easter, lest he die without communion."*

4. St. Augustine gives us another ground whereon mitigation of penance was sometimes granted; that is, when intercession was made in favour of the repenting sinner by persons justly possessing influence with the pastors of the Church. In the same manner, he tells us, as the clergy sometimes interceded for mercy with the civil magistrate in favour of a condemned criminal, and were successful, so did they, in their turn, admit the interposition of good offices from the magistrates in favour of sinners undergoing penance.†

5. But the chief ground of indulgence or mitigation, and the one which most exactly includes all the principles of a modern indulgence, was the earliest, perhaps, admitted in the Church. When the martyrs, or those who were on the point of receiving the crown, and had already attested their love of Christ by suffering, were confined in prison, those unfortunate Christians who had fallen, and were condemned to penance, had recourse to their mediation; and upon returning to the pastors of the Church with a written recommendation to mercy from one of those chosen servants of God and witnesses of Christ, were received at once to reconciliation, and absolved from the remainder of their penance.

Tertullian, the oldest Latin Father, is the first to mention this practice, and that, under such different circumstances as render his testimony painfully interesting. First, when in communion with the Church, he approves of the practice. For, after exhorting the confessors of Christ to preserve themselves in a state of peace and communion with his Church, he thus continues. "Which peace some not having in the Church, are accustomed to beg from the martyrs in prison; and therefore ye should possess and cherish, and preserve it in you, that so ye may, perhaps, be able to grant it to others."‡ Here,

* Ep. ad Decent. Conc. Gen. T. ii. p. 1247.
† "Epist. ad Maced." 54, ‡ "Ad. Martyr." cap. i.

then, Tertullian speaks of the custom without reprehending it; and, indeed, even builds his exhortation to the martyrs upon its propriety. But after he had, unfortunately, abandoned the faith, and professed the fanatical austerity of the Montanists, he rudely reproaches the Church with this as an abuse; at the same time that he more clearly reveals the principle whereon it was founded. For thus he now speaks: "Let it suffice for a martyr to have purged his own sin, it is the part of a proud, ungrateful man, to lavish upon others, that which he hath himself obtained at a great price." He then addresses the martyr himself in these words: "If thou art thyself a sinner, how can the oil of thy lamp suffice for thee and me?"* From these expressions it is clear, that according to the belief of the Church, which he blamed, the martyrs were held to communicate some efficacy of their sufferings in place of the penance to be discharged, and some communion in their good deserts was admitted to be made.

St. Cyprian, in the following century, confirms the same practice and its grounds. For he expressly says, speaking of it; "We believe that the merits of the martyrs, and the works of the just, can do much with the just judge."† In an epistle to the martyrs, he writes to them as follows: "But to this you should diligently attend, that you designate by name those to whom you wish peace to be given."‡ And writing to his clergy, he thus prescribes the use to be made of such recommendations: "As I have it not yet in my power to return, aid, I think, should not be withheld from our brethren; so that they who have received letters of recommendation from the martyrs, and can thereby be benefited before God, should any danger from sickness threaten, may, in our absence, having confessed their crime before the minister of the Church, receive absolution, and appear in the presence of God in that peace, which the martyrs in their letters requested should be imparted to them."§

* "De Pudicit." c. xxii.
† "De lapsis."
‡ Epist. xv.
§ Ep. xviii. p. 40.

Hence, therefore, it appears, that in the ancient Church, relaxation from the rigour of the penitential institutions was granted in consideration of the interposition of the martyrs of Christ, who seemed to take on themselves the punishment due to the penitents according to the canonical institutions. The practice, doubtless, led to abuses; St. Cyprian complains of them repeatedly; the works from which I have quoted, are expressly directed to correct its evils, and check its exercise, but the principle he never for a moment calls in question; he admits, on the contrary, that it should be acted on, apparently in every instance.

There appears but one only point further, requisite to complete the resemblance between the ancient and modern indulgences. The instances hitherto given, apply chiefly to a diminution of punishment, not to a commutation, which seems the specific characteristic of indulgences at the present day. But although, the abridgment of a punishment and the substitution of a lighter one, are in substance the same thing, being only different forms of mitigation; yet, even in this respect, we can illustrate our practice from antiquity. For the Council of Ancyra already referred to, expressly sanctions the commutation of public penance in the case of deacons who have once fallen, and afterwards stood firm. Later, another allows some other good work to be substituted for fasting, one of the essential parts of the old penance, in the case of persons with whose health it is incompatible; and Ven. Bede mentions the same form of indulgence by commutation.

Coming then to the indulgences of modern times, they are nothing more than what we have seen were granted in the first ages, with one difference. The public penance has disappeared from the Church, not in consequence of any formal abolition, but from the relaxation of discipline, and from the change of habits, particularly in the west, caused by the invasion of the northern tribes. Theodore of Canterbury was the first who introduced the practice of secret penance, and in the eighth century, the custom became general, of substituting

prayer, alms, or other works of charity, for the rigorous course of expiation prescribed in the ancient Church. It was not till the thirteenth that the practice of public penance completely ceased. Now, the Church has never formally given up the wish, however hopeless it may be, that the fervour and discipline of primitive times could be restored; and consequently, instead of abolishing their injunctions, and specifically substituting other practices in their place, she has preferred ever considering these as mitigations of what she still holds herself entitled to enforce. The only difference, therefore, between her former and her present practice is, that the mitigation or commutation has become the ordinary form of satisfaction, which, however unwilling, she deems it prudent to exact. Indeed, so completely is this the spirit and meaning of the Church, that, as we learn from Pope Alexander III,. writing to the Archbishop of Canterbury, it was the custom of the Church, in granting indulgences, to add to the word, the phrase "from the penance enjoined;" to intimate that primarily the indulgence regarded the canonical penance. Several general councils and Popes, down to Leo X., confirm this formula.

From all that I have said, you will easily conclude, that our indulgence, and that of the ancient Church, rest upon the following common grounds. First, that the satisfaction has to be made to God for sin remitted, under the authority and regulation of the Church. 2dly. That the Church has always considered herself possessed of the authority to mitigate, by diminution or commutation, the penance which she enjoins, and that she has always reckoned such a mitigation valid before God, who sanctions and accepts it. 3dly. That the sufferings of the saints, in union with, and by virtue of Christ's merits, are considered available towards the granting this mitigation. 4thly. That such mitigations, when prudently and justly granted, are conducive towards the spiritual weal and profit of Christians.

These considerations at once give us a key to the right

understanding of much that is connected with the practice of indulgences. For instance, they explain the terms employed.

First, the periods for which indulgences are usually granted, are apparently arbitrary, such as in an indulgence for forty days, of seven, thirty, or forty years, or plenary. Now, these were precisely the usual periods allotted to public penance, so that the signification of these terms is, that the indulgence granted is accepted by the Church as a substitution for a penance of that duration; a plenary indulgence being a substitute for any entire term of awarded penitential inflictions.

Secondly, the phrase, forgiveness of sin, which occurs in the ordinary forms of granting an indulgence, applies in the same manner. There was in ancient times a twofold forgiveness; one sacramental, which generally preceded or interrupted the course of public penance, as I have shown you was the case in the Roman Church; this was the absolution from the interior guilt, in the secret tribunal of penance. But absolution or forgiveness, in the face of the Church, did not take place till the completion of the public satisfaction, for it was the act whereby an end was put to its duration. Now, in indulgences, as we have all along seen, the Church has no reference to the inward guilt or to the weight of eternal punishment incurred by sin, but only to the temporal chastisement and its necessary expiation. When, therefore, an indulgence is said to be a remission or forgiveness of sin, the phrase applies only to the outward guilt, or that portion of the evil whereof the ancient penitential canons took cognizance. This is still further evinced by the practice of the Church, which always makes, and has made, confession and communion, and consequently exemption from the guilt of sin, an indispensable condition for receiving an indulgence. So that forgiveness of sin must precede the participation of any such favour.

Thirdly, the very name Indulgence becomes clear and appropriate. More errors are committed in judging of our doctrines from a misunderstanding of our terms, than from any other cause. The word indulgence is supposed to refer to

something now existing; and as there is nothing visible of which it is a relaxation, it is assumed to mean an indulgence in reference to the commission of sin. But when considered in connexion with its origin, when viewed as a mitigation of that rigour with which the Church of God, in its days of primitive fervour, visited sin, it becomes a name full of awful warning, and powerful encouragement; it brings back to our recollection, how much we fall short of that severe judgment which the saints passed on transgressions of the divine law; it acts as a protest on the part of the Church against the degeneracy of our modern virtue, and animates us to comply with the substitution conceded to us, up to the spirit of the original institution, and to supply its imperfection by private charity, mortification, and prayer.

It is argued, that the works enjoined for the acquisition of an indulgence, have been sometimes even irreligious or profane: at others, have had no object save to fill the coffers of the clergy; and in modern times, are habitually light and frivolous.

I. Such charges, my brethren, proceed from ignorance; they arise from what I have just adverted to, a misunderstanding of the name. In the middle ages, Europe saw its princes and emperors, its knights and nobles, abandon country and home, and devote themselves to the cruel task of war in a distant clime, to regain the sepulchre of Christ from the hands of infidels. And what reward did the Church propose? Nothing more than an indulgence! But the form wherein it was granted proves all that I have said, that such a commutation was considered to stand in place of canonical penance, and that far from its being compatible with sin and vice, it required a devotedness of purpose, and a purity of motive, which show how completely the Church only bestowed it for the sanctification of her children, through a work deemed most honourable and glorious. "Whoever," decrees the celebrated Council of Clermont, "shall go to Jerusalem to liberate the Church of God, out of pure devotion, and not for

the purpose of obtaining honour or money, let the journey be counted in lieu of all penance."* It may be said that many took the cross from sordid or profligate motives. Be it so: but they did not partake in the spiritual benefit of this indulgence. They were men like Godfrey and St. Lewis, whom the Church wished to encourage to the battle of Christ; and had none gone save those, who, with them, valued her gifts beyond their earthly diadems, or the repose of home, they would indeed have been in numbers few, like Gideon's host, but like it, they would have conquered in the strength of the Most High. And who will say that this earliest public substitution or commutation was a relaxation from former inflictions? It was true that the iron minds and frames of the northmen could not easily be bent to the prostrations, and tears, and fasts of the canonical penance, and that their restless passions could not easily be subdued into a long unvaried course of such severe virtue; but well and wisely did the Church, conscious of this, and called upon to repress aggression that had snatched from her very bosom a treasure by her dearly loved, and exterminated religion in one of her choicest provinces,—dreading too with reason, the persevering determination of the foe to push his conquest to her very heart and centre;—well did she to arouse the courage of her children, and to arm them with the badge of salvation, and to send them forth unto conquest; turning that very rudeness of character, which refused humiliation, into the instrument of a penance which required energy, strength, and ardour. And who that contemplates the strength of mind, and the patience with which every human evil was endured,—perils on land, and perils at sea, and perils from false brethren, war, famine, captivity, and pestilence, from an enthusiastic devotion to a religious cause, from a chivalrous affection for the records of redemption, will venture to say that the indulgence deserved

* "Quicunque pro sola devotione, non pro honoris vel pecuniæ adeptione ad liberandam ecclesiam Dei Jerusalem profectus fuerit, iter illud pro omni pœnitentia reputetur." Can. ii. This was A. D. 1095.

that name, or imposed but a light and pleasant task? Whether the object justified the grant, some men will, perhaps, permit themselves to doubt; for there are always some cold hearts that measure others' ardour by their own frozen temperament; and refer the feelings of distant ages, and of men whose minds were cast in a nobler mould, to the conventional codes of modern theories. To such the enthusiasm of the crusader will appear a phrenzy, and the soil which was watered by our Saviour's blood, no possession worth reconquering. But for our purpose it is sufficient to know, that they who imparted spiritual blessings to the warriors that placed the cross upon their shoulders, judged otherwise, and believed it an undertaking of value and glory for every Christian.

II. Such is the charge of indulgences granted for profane or evil purposes; what shall we say of the avarice which has so multiplied them? For what other object was the Jubilee instituted, save to fill the coffers of the sovereign Pontiff with the contributions of thousands of pilgrims, eager to gain its special indulgences? Aye, my brethren, I have witnessed one of these lucrative institutions; for I was in Rome, when the venerable Pontiff, Leo XII., opened and closed the Jubilee, or Holy Year. I saw the myriads of pilgrims who crowded every portion of the city. I noted their tattered raiment, and wearied frames; I saw the convents and hospitals filled with them at night, reposing on beds furnished by the charity of the citizens: I saw them at their meals served by princes and prelates, and by the sovereign Pontiff himself;—but wealth poured into the Roman coffers, I saw not. I heard of blessings abundant, and tears of gratitude, which they poured upon our charity as they departed;—but of jewels offered by them to shrines, or gold cast into the bosoms of priests, I heard not. I learnt that the funds of charitable institutions had been exhausted, and heavy debts incurred by giving them hospitality; and if, after all this, the gain and profit was in favour of our city, it is, that she must have a large treasure of benediction to her account in Heaven; for there alone hath she wished her deeds

on that occasion, to be recorded. Will you say that the undertaking, and the hopes of these men, were fond and vain? Or that they thought to gain forgiveness by a pleasant excursion to the Holy City, and by the neglect of their domestic duties? Then I wish you could have seen not merely the churches filled, but the public places and squares crowded, to hear the word of God—for churches would not contain the audience: I wish you could have seen the throng at every confessional, and the multitudes that pressed round the altar of God, to partake of its heavenly gift. I wish you could know the restitution of ill-gotten property which was made, the destruction of immoral and irreligious books which took place, the amendments of hardened sinners which date from that time; and then you would understand why men and women undertook the toilsome pilgrimage, and judge whether it was indulgence in crime, and facility to commit sin, that is profered and accepted in such an institution.

And what I have feebly sketched of the last Jubilee, is the description of all. So far was the very first of these holy seasons, in 1300, from bringing crowds of wealthy people to lavish their riches in the purchase of pardon, as it is generally expressed, that I have evidence, in which I am particularly interested, to the contrary. The number of English who flocked to Rome on that occasion was very great. But such was the state of destitution in which they appeared, and so unable were they even to obtain a shelter, that their condition moved the compassion of a respectable couple who had no children;* and they resolved to settle in the Eternal City, and devote their property to the entertainment of English pilgrims. They accordingly bought a house for that purpose, and spent the remainder of their lives in the exercise of that virtue which St. Paul so much commends, "harbouring strangers, and washing the feet of the saints."† To this humble beginning additions were soon made; the establishment for the reception of English pilgrims became an object of national charity; a church, dedi-

* Their names were John and Alice Shepherd. † 1 Tim. v. 10.

cated to the Blessed Trinity, was erected beside it; and it was in later times considered of sufficient consequence to merit royal protection. When the unhappy separation of this country from the Church took place, the stream of pilgrims ceased to flow; but the charitable bequest was not alienated. A cruel law forbade the education of a Catholic clergy in this country; and it was wisely and piously determined by Pope Gregory XIII., that, if men came no longer from our island to renew their piety and fidelity at the tomb of the Apostles, the institution intended for their comfort should be employed in sending to them that which they could no longer come in person to take, through zealous and learned priests, who should imbibe the faith, or catch new fervour, from those sacred ashes. The hospital of English pilgrims was converted into a college for the education of ecclesiastics; many therein brought up have sealed the faith with their blood, on the scaffolds of this city; and now, in peaceful times, it remains a monument of English charity, dear to many,—to none more than to me,—and, at the same time, a record of the poverty and destitution of those for whose reception and relief it was originally erected.

Do I then mean to say, that during the middle ages, and later, no abuse took place in the practice of indulgences? Most certainly not. Flagrant and too frequent abuses, doubtless, occurred through the avarice, and rapacity, and impiety of men; especially when indulgence was granted to the contributors towards charitable or religious foundations, in the erection of which private motives too often mingle. But this I say, that the Church felt and ever tried to remedy the evil. These abuses were most strongly condemned by Innocent III. in the Council of Lateran in 1139, by Innocent IV. in that of Lyons in 1245, and still more pointedly and energetically by Clement V. in the Council of Vienna, in 1311. The Council of Trent, by an ample decree, completely reformed the abuses which had subsequently crept in, and had been unfortunately used as a ground for Luther's separation from the Church.*

* Sess. xxv. Decret. de Indulg.

But even in those ages, the real force, and the requisite conditions, of indulgences were well understood, and by none better than by that most calumniated of all Pontiffs, Gregory VII. In a letter to the Bishop of Lincoln, he amply explains what are the dispositions with which alone participation can be hoped for, in the indulgence offered by the Church.

We may, indeed, be asked, why we retain a name so often misunderstood and misrepresented, and not rather substitute another that has no reference to practices now in desuetude? My brethren, to this I answer, that we are a people that love antiquity even in words. We are like the ancient Romans, who repaired and kept ever from destruction the cottage of Romulus, though it might appear useless and mean to the stranger that looked upon it. We call the offices of Holy Week *Tenebræ*, or darkness, because the word reminds us of the times when the night was spent in mournful offices before God's altar; we retain the name of Baptism, which means immersion, though the rite is no longer performed by it. We cling to names that have their rise in the fervour and glory of the past; we are not easily driven from the recollections which hang even upon syllables; still less do we allow ourselves to be driven from them by the taunts and wishes of others, who seize upon them to attack and destroy the dogma which they convey. No other word could so completely express our doctrine, as this "distinguished name," to use the words of the Council of Trent.

III. After all that I have said, I need hardly revert to the common method of throwing ridicule on indulgences, by depreciating the works of piety or devotion to which they are attached. Surely did this accusation, even in its substance, hold good, the true enquiry would be, do Catholics, in consequence of such indulgences, perform less for God than their accusers, or than they themselves would perform, if such indulgences were not granted? I answer unhesitatingly—No. From what good work does an indulgence, granted at any festival, hinder us? What prayer less is said than by Protes-

tants, or even than by Catholics at other times? On the contrary, small as the work may be, while the desire is hopeless of restoring a more rigorous discipline, is it not better to exact that, which, if in no other way, by its necessary conditions, leads to what is valuable and salutary? For you, my Catholic brethren, know, that without a penitent confession of your sins, and the worthy participation of the blessed Eucharist, no indulgence is any thing worth. You know that the return of each season, when the Church holds out to you an indulgence, is a summons to your conscience to free itself from the burthen of its transgressions, and return to God by sincere repentance. You know, that were not this inducement presented to you, you might run on from month to month in thoughtless neglect, or unable to rouse your courage for the performance of such arduous duties. The alms which you then give, and the prayers which you recite, are thus sanctified by a purer conscience, and by the hopes of their being doubly acceptable to God, through the ordinances of his Church. And let me add, that one of these times of mercy is now approaching, and I entreat you, allow it not to pass by unheeded. Prepare for it with fervour—enter upon it with contrite devotion, and profit by the liberality with which the Spouse of Christ unlocks the treasure of his mercies to her faithful children. And thus shall the indulgence be, as it is intended, for your greater perfection in virtue, and the advancement of your eternal salvation.

LECTURE THE THIRTEENTH.

INVOCATION OF SAINTS: THEIR RELICS AND IMAGES.

LUKE i. 28.

"*And the Angel being come in, said, Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou amongst women.*"

THE words which I have quoted to you, my brethren, are taken from the Gospel read in the festival of this day;*—a festival which, as its very name imports, commemorates the great dignity bestowed on the mother of our blessed Redeemer, through a message communicated to her by an angel from God;—a festival which stands registered in the calendar of every religious denomination, as a record and a monument of that belief which was once held by the forefathers of all, but which now has become the exclusive property of one, and for which that division of Christians is, more than for any other reason, most frequently and most solemnly condemned. For I am minded, this evening, to treat of that honour and veneration which is paid by the Catholic Church to the Saints of God,—and, beyond all others, to her whom we call the Queen of Saints, and venerate as the mother of the God of the Saints. I intend then to lay before you the grounds of our doctrine and practice, in regard to this matter, as also with regard to some others which naturally spring from it.

Nothing, my brethren, seems so congenial to human nature, as to look with veneration and respect on those who have gone before us, holding up to us distinguished examples of any qualities, which we venerate and esteem. Every nation has its heroes and its sages, whose conduct or teaching is proposed to succeeding generations as models for imitation. The human race itself, according to Holy Writ, had, in olden times, its giants, men of renown;—those who made greater strides than

* March 25. The Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

their successors in the paths of distinction, whether in things earthly, or in those of a superior order; men whose fame seems the property of entire humanity, and whose memory it has become a duty, discharged with affection, to cherish and preserve, as a public and common good, at once honourable and cheering to our nature.

But, alas! only in religion is it otherwise the case. It would seem as though many thought that the religion of Christ may be best exalted, by depreciating their glory, who were its highest ornaments;—by decrying their merits, who were the brightest examples of virtue to the world; yea, and even by depressing below the level or standard of ordinary goodness, those great men who, preceding us here below in our belief, not only have left us the most perfect demonstration of its worth, but ensured us its inheritance by their sufferings, by their conduct, or by their writings. It jars most cruelly with all our natural affections, to see how such true heroes of the Church of God are not merely stripped of the extraordinary honours which we are inclined to pay them, but are actually treated with disrespect and contumely: how some should seem to think that the cause of religion can be advanced by representing them as frailer and more liable to sin than others, and ever descant, with a certain sort of gloating pleasure, on their falls and human imperfections.

Nay, it has been even assumed, that the cause of the Son of God was to be promoted, and his mediatorship and honour exalted, by decrying the worth and dignity of her whom he chose to be his mother, and by striving to prove that sometimes he had been undutiful and unkind to her; for it has been asserted, that we ought not to show any affection or reverence for her,—on the blasphemous ground that in the exercise of even filial love towards her, our Saviour himself was wanting![*] Nor yet, my brethren, is this the worst fea-

[*] It is the reason given by more sermons than one, against our devotion to the Blessed Virgin, that our Saviour treated her harshly, especially on two occasions: John ii. 4; Matt. xii. 48. This is not the place to enter into the argument on these passages, especially the first; for which I hope soon to find a fitting opportunity.

ture of the case; for a graver and most awful charge is laid upon us, in consequence of our belief: we are even denounced as idolators, because we pay a certain reverence, and, if you please, worship, to the Saints of God, and because we honour their outward emblems and representations. Idolators! Know ye, my brethren, the import of this name? That it is the most frightful charge that can be laid to the score of any Christian? For throughout God's Word, the crime of idolatry is spoken of as the most heinous, the most odious, and the most detestable in His eyes, even in an individual; what then if committed in a mass, by millions of men?

Then, gracious God! what must it be, when flung as an accusation upon those who have been baptized in the name of Christ, who have tasted the sacred gift of his body, and received the Holy Ghost; and of whom, therefore, St. Paul tells us, that it is impossible that they be renewed unto penance;* for this is what St. John calls a sin even unto death, for which men are not to pray!† Assuredly they know not what they say, who deliberately and directly make this enormous charge; and they have to answer for misrepresentation,—yea, for calumny of the blackest dye,—who hesitate not again and again to repeat, with heartless earnestness and perseverance, this most odious of accusations, without being fully assured—which they cannot be—in their consciences, and before God, that it really can be proved.

For, my brethren, what is idolatry? It is the giving to man, or to any thing created, that homage, that adoration, and that worship, which God hath reserved unto himself; and to substantiate such a charge against us, it must be proved that such honour and worship is alienated by us from God, and given to a creature.

Now, what is the Catholic belief on the subject of giving worship or veneration to the Saints or their emblems? Why, it is comprised in a definition exactly contradictory of the one I have just given of idolatry! You will not open a single

* Heb. vi. 6. † 1 John v. 16.

Catholic work, from the folio decrees of Councils, down to the smallest catechism placed in the hands of the youngest children, in which you will not find it expressly taught, that it is sinful to pay the same homage or worship to the Saints, or to the greatest of the Saints, or the highest of the Angels in Heaven, which we pay to God: that supreme honour and worship are reserved exclusively to him, that from him alone can any blessing possibly come, that he is the sole fountain of salvation, and grace, and all spiritual, or even earthly gifts,—and that no one created being can have any power, energy, or influence of its own, in carrying into effect our wishes or desires. No one surely will say, that there is no distinction between one species of homage and reverence, and another; no one will assert, that when we honour the King or his representatives, or our parents, or others in lawful authority over us, we are thereby derogating from the supreme honour due to God. Would not any one smile, if he did not give way to a harsher feeling, were he taxed with defrauding God of his true honour, because he paid reverence or esteem to others, or sought their intercession or assistance? It is wasting time to prove that there may be honour and worship,—for, as I will show you presently, this word is ambigious,—that there may be reverence or esteem demonstrated, so subservient to God, as in no way to interfere with what is due to him.

What I have cursorily stated, is precisely the Catholic belief regarding the Saints: that they have no power of themselves, and that they are not to be honoured and respected as though they possessed it; but at the same time that they are intercessors for us with God, praying for us to him, and that it is right to address ourselves to them, and obtain the cooperation of this, their powerful intercession, in our behalf. The very distinction here made, excludes the odious charge to which I have alluded with considerable pain. For the very idea that you call on any being to pray to God, is surely making an abyss, a gulf, between him and God;—it is making

him a suppliant, a dependant on the will of the Almighty; and surely these terms and these ideas are in exact contradiction to all we can possibly conceive of the attributes and qualities of God.

But I go further still. Instead of taking any thing from God, it is adding immensely to his glory: by thus calling on the Saints to pray for us, instead of robbing him of a particle of the honour which belongs to him, we believe him to be served in a much nobler way than any other. For we thereby raise ourselves in imagination to heaven; we see the Saints prostrate before him in our behalf, offering their golden crowns and palms before his footstool, pouring out before him the odours of their golden vials, which are the prayers of their brethren on earth,* and interceding through the death and the passion of his Son. And surely, if this be so, we are paying to God the highest homage, which his apostle describes as paid in heaven; for we give occasion, by every prayer, for this prostration of his Saints, and this outpouring of the fragrance of their supplications. Such being the Catholic belief regarding the Saints, we must be further convinced that it is, and can be, no way displeasing to God, that we should show a respect and honour to their remains on earth, or to those images and representations which recal them to our remembrance. Nay, we believe more than this: for we believe that God is pleased with this respect we show them, inasmuch as it is all ultimately directed to honour him in them. We doubt not, that he may be pleased to make use of such outward and visible instruments, to excite the faith of his people, and to bring them to a disposition of fervour, which may produce salutary effects.

This is the sum of our belief on this subject, which I intend to explain and support this evening. Before leaving this introductory portion of the subject, allow me to make one or two remarks on the ambiguity of terms employed in the explanation, and still more in the rejection, of this doctrine. The

* Rev. iv. 10, v. 8.

words, "to worship," for instance, are constantly quoted; it is said, that we speak of worshipping the Saints as we do of worshipping God, and that so we necessarily pay the same honour to both. This conclusion only arises from the poverty of language, and from the difficulty of substituting another word. We all know perfectly well, that the word 'worship' is used on many occasions, when it does not mean anything more than respect and honour; and such was its ancient and primary signification in our language. For instance, in the marriage service, no one attaches to it the signification of giving supreme or divine honour to the person said to be worshipped. "With my body I thee worship." We know that it is also a title of civil honour; and no one imagines, that when a person is called worshipful, he is put on a level with the Almighty. Why then, if Catholics use the term in speaking of the Saints,—when they tell you again and again that they mean a different honour from what they pay to God,—why shall they be charged with paying an equal honour, merely because they make use of the same term? It would not be difficult to find innumerable words and phrases, which are applied to the most dissimilar acts, and the most varied circumstances, where no misunderstanding is occasioned, simply for the reason that I have stated; because mankind have agreed to use them for different purposes; and no one will call his neighbour to account for so using them, and taking them in any one of their peculiar senses. It is the same with the Latin word, "to adore," of which the primary meaning was to place the hand to the mouth; it simply signified to show a mark of respect by outward salutation. The term was later applied to supreme worship, but was applied also in the Church to other objects of respect; but in ordinary language, we no longer use it, except when speaking of God. It would be very unjust to hold us accountable for the word being found in those formulas of devotion, which were instituted before these controversies arose, and when its meaning was so well understood, that no ambiguity could occur. And certainly they are not

consistent, who quote against us those services in which we are said to adore the Cross, for they are taken from liturgies used in the very earliest ages of the Church.

There is another point on which I shall not be able to deal at length; although if time allow me I may touch upon it later; I mean the abuses said to follow from the Catholic doctrine. We are made responsible for all its abuses. Why so? We have only to demonstrate our doctrines; and supposing—granting, that abuses have at times and in some places crept in, I would ask is that any reason why what is in itself lawful should be abolished? Are men to be deprived of that which is wholesome, because some make an improper use of it? Is there any thing more abused than the Bible, the Word of God?—is there any thing more misapplied?—has it not been employed for purposes and in circumstances which may not be named? Is there any thing which has been more frequently called in to the aid of fanatical proceedings than this sacred word of God, or which has been more repeatedly quoted in such a way, by the thoughtless and ignorant, as to expose it even to ridicule? And are others to be charged with these abuses? Shall we say that the Word of God is to be abolished? The same must be said here;—when I have laid down the Catholic doctrine, and its reasons, I leave it to any one's judgment how far the Church can be expected to abolish any doctrine received by it from Christ, on the ground that it has given rise to abuse. But, as I before observed, if I have time, I may touch upon these supposed abuses, and inquire how far they exist.

The Catholic doctrine regarding the saints is therefore twofold;—in the first place, it teaches that the saints of God make intercession before him for their brethren on earth;—in the second place, that it is lawful to invoke their intercession; knowing that they do pray for us, we say it must be lawful to turn to them, and ask and entreat of them to use that influence which they possess, in interceding on our behalf.

There is a doctrine inculcated in every creed, known by the

name of the Communion of Saints. Perhaps many who have repeated the apostles' creed again and again, may not have thought it necessary to examine what is the meaning of these words, or what is the doctrine they inculcate. It is a profession of belief in a certain communion with the saints. How does this communion exist between us and the saints? May any friendly offices pass between us, or if no sort of intercourse exists, in what can this communion consist? What is the meaning of communion among the faithful, among the members of a family, or among the subjects of a state, but that there is among them an interchange of mutual good offices, and that one is ready to assist the other in any way. If therefore we believe in a communion between us and the saints, assuredly there must be acts, reciprocal acts, which form the bond of union between them and us. Where then does this exist? The Catholic Church has always been consistent in every portion of its doctrines. It does not fear examining to the quick any proposition it lays down, or any dogma or profession of faith to which it exacts submission from all its subjects. It is not afraid of pushing to the furthest scrutiny all the consequences that flow from its doctrines; and, consequently, if you ask a Catholic what does he mean by the communion of saints, he has no hesitation on the subject; his ideas are clear and defined, he tells you at once that he understands by it an interchange of good offices between the saints in heaven, and those who are fighting here below for their crown; whereby they intercede on their part on our behalf, look down upon us with sympathy, take an interest in all that we do and suffer, and make use of the influence they necessarily possess with God towards assisting their frail and tempted brethren on earth. And to balance all this, we have our offices towards them, inasmuch as we repay them in respect, admiration, and love; with the feeling that those who were once our brethren having run their course, and being in possession of their reward, we may turn to them in the confidence of brethren, and ask them to use that influence with their lord

and master, which their charity and goodness necessarily move them to exert.

This is a portion of the doctrine, and seems to enter so naturally and fitly into all our ideas, of Christianity, as to recommend itself at once to any unprejudiced mind. For what is the idea which the Gospel gives us of the Christian religion? As I showed you on another occasion, the very expressions and terms used of religion in the Old Law were continued in the New, whence I deduced, that the religion of Christ was the perfection, the completion, but still the continuation, of that which preceded it. Well, in like manner do we find that the very same terms and expressions, applied to the Church of Christ on earth, are constantly adopted in allusion to the Church in Heaven, the reign of the saints with God. This likewise is spoken of as the kingdom of God, the kingdom of the Father and of Christ, precisely as the Church on earth; as though it formed with us but one Church and community of brethren—they in a glorified and happy, and we in suffering and tempted state—still having a certain connexion implied, and being considered in the same manner under the guidance and direction of God. It is spoken of in these terms by St. Paul. Instead of representing the Blessed in Heaven as removed immeasurably from us, as Lazarus in Abraham's bosom was from the rich man, he speaks as if we already enjoyed society with them—as if we had already come to the heavenly Jerusalem, and to the company of many thousands of angels,* and to the spirits of the just made perfect; thus showing that the death of Christ had actually broken down the barrier or partition wall, made all extremes one, and joined the Holy of Holies to the outward precinct of the Tabernacle.

We are told likewise by St. Paul, that those virtues which existed on earth are annihilated in heaven—all except one, and that is Charity or Love. Faith and Hope are there extinguished, but Charity, affection, remains unimpaired, and even is become the essence of that blessed existence. Who will for a moment

* Heb. xii. 22.

imagine—who can for an instant entertain the thought, that the child which has been snatched from its parent by having been taken from a world of suffering, does not continue to love her whom it has left on earth, and sympathise with her sorrows over its grave? Who can believe that, when friend is separated from friend, and when one expires in the prayer of hope, their friendship is not continued, and that the two are not united in the same warm affection which they enjoyed here below? And if it was the privilege of love on earth—if it was one of its holiest duties, to pray to the Almighty for him who was so perfectly beloved, and if it never was surmised that injury was thereby inflicted on God, or on the honor and mediatorship of Christ, can we suppose that this holiest, most beautiful, and most perfect duty of charity, hath ceased in heaven? Is it not, on the contrary, natural to suppose, that as that charity is infinitely more vivid and glowing there than it was here, in its exercise also, it must be infinitely more powerful; and that the same impulse that led the spirit, clogged and fettered with the body, to venture to raise its supplications to the clouded throne of God for its friend, will now after its release act with tenfold energy, when it sees the innumerable pitfalls and dangers, the immense risks, and the thousands of temptations, to which he is exposed, and the infinite joys he is destined to possess; which experience now teaches it are thousands and millions of times more than earth can possibly give or take away. Seeing clearly in vision the face of God, enjoying the fulness of his glory and splendour, having the willingness and power to assist—can we believe that it will not with infinitely more effect raise its pure and faultless prayers in a tone of confident supplication, in favour of him to whom it was linked in affection here below? Can we believe that God would deprive charity of its highest prerogative, when he has given it its brightest crown? Truly then, my brethren, there is nothing repugnant to our ideas of God or of his attributes or institutions in all this;—on the contrary, it seems absolutely necessary to fill up the measure of his mercy, and to complete the

picture of his Church here as connected to that above, which he has exhibited to us in his word.

But have we not something much more positive than what I have stated in this word of God? Yes; for we have the plainest and strongest assurances that God does receive the prayers of the saints and angels, and that they are constantly employed in supplications in our behalf; and this is the chief fundamental principle of our belief. Of this we have all the proof we can desire. For we have the belief of the universal Jewish Church, confirmed in the New Law. The belief of the Old Law is clear; for we find that, in the later books particularly, the angels are spoken of constantly as in a state of ministration over the wants and necessities of mankind. In the book of Daniel, for instance, we read of angels sent to instruct him, and we have mention made of the princes, meaning the angels of different kingdoms.* In the book of Tobias, which, whatever any one present may think of its canonicity, as I said on a former occasion of the book of Maccabees, must be considered at least as a strong testimonial of the belief of the Jews,—we find these words expressly put into the mouth of an angel:—"When thou didst pray with tears, and didst bury the dead, and didst leave thy dinner and hide the dead by day in thy house, and bury them by night, I offered thy prayers to the Lord."† In the book of Maccabees we have the same doctrine repeated. It is there said, that Onias, who had been High Priest, appeared to Judas Maccabeus, "holding up his arms, and praying for the people of the Jews. After this, there appeared also another man, admirable for age and glory, and environed with great beauty and majesty. Then Onias said, 'This is a lover of his brethren, and of the people of Israel: this is he that prayeth much for the people, and for all the holy city, Jeremias the prophet of God.'"‡ Such, then, was the belief of the Jews, and such it is at the present day.

But is there any thing in the New Testament to contradict

* Dan. viii. 16; ix. 21; x. 13; xii. 1. † Tob. xii. 12. ‡ 2 Mac. xv. 12.

it, and give reason to suspect for a moment, that our blessed Saviour rejected and reprobated this conviction? Does he not, on the contrary, speak of it as a thing well understood, and in terms which, so far from reproving, must have gone far to confirm his hearers in this belief? "Even so," says our Saviour, "there shall be joy in Heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just that need not penance."* What is here signified, but that communion of which I spoke, whereby a sinner's repenting here below is matter of joy and gladness to the angels? And we are elsewhere taught that the saints of God shall be like his angels.† We have also the angels of individuals spoken of: and we are told not to offend any of Christ's little ones, or make them fall, because their angels always see the face of their Father, who is in Heaven.‡ Why, this to all appearance goes as much as the Catholic belief, and more, to affect the superintendence and guidance, and general providence of God. That we are to take care to avoid sin, because it offends the angels—that we are to avoid being the cause of these little ones' fall, because *their* angels see the face of God! What does this mean, but that they have an influence with God, and will use it to bring down judgment on the offender? For, in fact, wherefore is the connexion between the angels and men alluded to, except to show that the former, enjoying the divine presence, have a powerful advantage over us, which they will use to bring signal judgment down on the heads of the offenders? And what is that but establishing a communion and connexion between them and their little charge in the way of intercession?

But in the Apocalypse, we have still stronger authority; for we there read of our prayers being as perfumes in the hands of angels and saints. One blessed spirit stood before a mystical altar in heaven, "having a golden censer, and there was given to him much incense, that he should offer the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, which is before the throne of

* Luke xv. 7, 10. † Mat. xxii. 30. ‡ Mat. xviii. 20.

God. And the smoke of the incense of the prayers of the saints ascended up before God, from the hand of the angel."* And not only the angels, but the twenty-four elders, cast themselves before the throne of God, and, as I before remarked, pour out vials of sweet odours, which are the prayers of the saints. What does all this signify, but that they do present our prayers to God, and become intercessors with him?

From all this it is proved, that the saints and angels know what passes on earth—that they are aware of what we do and suffer; otherwise they could not rejoice in any good that we do, or resent any misfortune that befals us. In the second place, we have it sufficiently proved, that the saints do more than barely know and interest themselves about us; for they actually present our prayers to God, and intercede in our behalf with him. Here, then, is a basis, and a sufficient one, for the Catholic belief,—such a basis as surely should give rise to some doctrine or other in the true religion. Now, where is this doctrine to be found in those which reject and exclude all intercession of the saints, all intercourse between those on earth and their brethren already in bliss? Assuredly these texts prove something. What do they demonstrate? For if all contained in the word of God is true, and must form a rule of faith, such clear testimony as this, regarding the connexion between mankind and the blessed, must form the subject of a doctrine. Where is this found? No where but in the Catholic belief—that prayers are offered for us by the saints, and that, therefore, we may apply to them for their supplications.

Now, to establish this more fully, it is necessary to look into the doctrine of the Church in the earliest ages; and I can have only one fear, one motive of hesitation, in laying before you passages on this subject. It is not that I may weary you by the number of my quotations; for that, I fear, is the case with regard to almost every doctrine that I have attempted to support, by tradition, or by the testimony of the Fathers; in every case I have read a great number,

* Rev. viii. 3, 4.

though, in reality, I have given you comparatively only a few. This is not my reason for apprehension, but it is that, in the authorities from the Fathers, their expressions are so much stronger than those used by the Catholics at the present day, that there is a danger, if I may so say, of proving too much; they go far beyond us; and consequently, if we are to be considered idolators, God knows what terms must be found to qualify their expressions. Let us begin with the very first ages of the Church, and let us not take ambiguous words, but the simplest and most natural expressions of the feelings of the earliest Christians.

Every part of Rome is undermined with catacombs, in which the bodies of the saints and martyrs were deposited after their deaths; the tombs are even some of them as yet sealed up and unbroken; some with inscriptions on them, or perhaps a palm branch rudely sculptured, to show that there repose the martyrs of Christ. We have phials adhering, and fastened, to the covers of the tombs, in the walls of the catacombs, in which are sponges, or sediment, still tinged with the colour of their blood: indeed, the very instruments of torture are constantly found in them. Certainly, these were men who knew Christianity, who fully appreciated what was due to Christ, for whom they died, who were fully convinced that nothing on earth was to be preferred before him, and that no creature could pretend to one particle of the honour reserved to himself! Surely we cannot want purer or more satisfactory testimonies to what Christ instituted, than they who shed their blood to seal its truth; we cannot want teachers better imbued with the spirit of Christianity, than those who were ready to lay down their lives to defend it! Let us see what was their belief regarding their brethren, when they deposited them in these tombs, and sealed them up, and inscribed on them their regrets or their hopes. Nothing is more common than to find a supplication, a prayer to the saints or martyrs, to intercede for them with God. In the year 1694, was discovered a remarkable tomb of the martyr Sabbatius, in

the cemetery of Gordian and Epimachus. On the one side was the palm branch, the emblem of martyrdom, and on the other, the wreath or crown given to the victors, with this inscription, in a rude latinity:—

SABBATI · DVLCIS · ANIMA · PETE · ET · ROGA
PRO · FRATRES · ET · SODALES · TVOS

"Sabbatius, sweet soul, pray and entreat for thy brethren and comrades."

These early Christians, then, pray to the martyr to intercede for his brethren on earth.

In the cemetry of Callixtus, is another inscription of the same antiquity, which runs thus:—

ATTICE · SPIRITVS · TVVS
IN · BONV · ORA · PRO · PAREN
TIBVS · TVIS

"Atticus, thy spirit is in bliss: pray for thy parents."

In that of Cyriaca, we have an inscription in much the same terms:—

IOVIANE · VIBAS · IN · DEO · ET
ROG ·

"Jovianus, may you live in God and pray."

In that of Pricilla, we have another, very touching and beautiful in the original:—

ANATOLINVS · FILIO · BENEMERENTI · FECIT
QVI · VIXIT · ANNIS · VII
SPIRITVS · TVVS · BENE REQVIES
CAT · IN · DEO · PETAS · PRO · SORORE · TVA

"Anatolinus made this monument to his well-deserving son, who lived seven years. May thy spirit rest well in God, and thou pray for thy sister."

Marini gives us another old Christian inscription, to this effect:—

ROGES · PRO · NOBIS · QVIA · SCIMVS · TE · IN · CHRISTO

"Pray for us, because we know that thou art in Christ."

These are most of them inscriptions on the tombs of martyrs, whose bodies were deposited therein during the very first centuries of Christianity, when men were ready to die for the faith

of Christ.* They were inscribed by those who saw them suffer, and who were, perhaps, themselves to be the next to lay down their lives; and yet did they not think, that by entreating their prayers, they were derogating from the glory of God, or the mediatorship of Christ.

If from these monuments, which are of the greatest interest, because they exist as they did when first erected, and cannot have been subject to the slightest change, we descend to the recorded opinions of the fathers, we have precisely the same sentiments. And I beg particularly to direct your attention to the following circumstances in these authorities. In the first place, they directly ask the saints to pray for them; secondly, in speaking of the saints, they mention the way in which they are to assist them, through intercession; and thirdly, they make use of expressions apparently exacting from the saints themselves, that assistance which was to come from God. They do not simply say, "pray for us, intercede for us:" but "deliver us, grant us:" not that they believed the saints could do so of themselves, but because in common parlance it is usual to ask directly from an intercessor, the favour which we believe his influence can obtain. I insist on this point, because it is charged against Catholics, that they ask of the Blessed Virgin "deliverance;" saying, in the introduction to the Litany, "deliver us from all danger;" that they beg of the saints to help them: although this is nothing more than the same form of speech as the fathers use. And in the fourth place, I request you to observe how they distinguished, as Catholics do, between worship due to God, and the homage due to his saints, using the self-same terms as we.

In the second century, we have St. Irenæus telling us that, "as Eve was seduced to fly from God, so was the Virgin Mary induced to obey him, that She might become the advocate of her that had fallen."† In the third century we have the tes-

* See my learned friend Dr. Rock's Hierurgia, where these inscriptions have been collected. Vol. ii.

† Adver. Hæres. L. v. c. xix. p. 316.

timony of several fathers; but I will select two, one from the Greek and one from the Latin Church. Origen says: "And of all the holy men who have quitted this life, retaining their charity towards those whom they left behind, we may be allowed to say, that they are anxious for their salvation, and that they assist them by their prayers and their mediation with God. For it is written in the books of the Maccabees: *This is Jeremiah the prophet of God, who always prays for the people.*"* Again he thus writes, on the Lamentations: "I will fall down on my knees, and not presuming, on account of my crimes, to present my prayer to God, I will invoke all the saints to my assistance. O ye saints of heaven, I beseech you with a sorrow full of sighs and tears; fall at the feet of the Lord of mercies for me, a miserable sinner."† St. Cyprian in the same century; "Let us be mindful of one another in our prayers; with one mind and with one heart, in this world and in the next, let us always pray, with mutual charity relieving our sufferings and afflictions. And may the charity of him, who, by the divine favour, shall first depart hence, still persevere before the Lord; may his prayer, for our brethren and sisters, not cease."‡ Therefore, after having departed this life, the same offices of charity are to continue, by praying for those who remain on earth.

In the fourth century, Eusebius of Cæsarea thus writes: "May we be found worthy by the prayers and intercession of all the saints."§ In the same century, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, speaking of the Liturgy, thus expresses himself: "We next commemorate those who are gone before us; the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs; begging that, through their prayers, God would receive our supplications. We then pray for the holy fathers and bishops that are dead, and for all the faithful departed, believing that their souls receive very great relief by the prayers that are offered for them while this holy

* Lib. iii. in Cant. Cantic. T. iii. p. 75. † Lib. 11. de Job.
‡ Ep. lvii. p. 96. § Com. in Isai. T. 11. p. 593. Ed. *Par.* 1706.

and tremendous victim lies upon the altar."* St. Basil, one of the most eloquent and learned writers of that century, expresses himself in much warmer and enthusiastic terms, in his panegyric on four martyrs, in these words: "These are they, who, having taken possession of our country, stand as towers against the incursions of the enemy. Here is a ready aid to Christians. Often have you endeavoured, often have you toiled, to gain one intercessor. You have now forty, all emitting one common prayer. Who is oppressed by care, flies to their aid, as does he that prospers: the first to seek deliverance: the second, that his good fortune may continue. The pious mother is found praying for her children; and the wife for the return and the health of her husband. O ye common guardians of the human race, co-operators in our prayers, most powerful messengers, stars of the world, and flowers of Churches, let us join our prayers with yours."†

St. Athanasius, the most zealous and strenuous supporter that the Church ever possessed, of the divinity of Jesus Christ, and consequently of his infinite superiority over all the saints, thus enthusiastically addresses his ever Blessed Mother: "Hear now, O daughter of David; incline thine ear to our prayers. We raise our cry to thee. Remember us, O most holy virgin, and for the feeble eulogiums we give thee, grant us great gifts from the treasures of thy graces, thou who art full of grace. Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Queen and mother of God, intercede for us."‡ Mark well these words; "grant us great gifts, from the treasures of thy graces;" as if he hoped directly to receive them from her. Do Catholics use stronger words than these? Or did St. Athanasius think and speak with us or with Protestants?

* Catech. Mystag. v. n. viii. ix. p. 327, 328. This text affords additional proof of what I advanced in a note to Lecture xi. p. 67, that the fathers clearly distinguish between the commemoration of martyrs and saints in the Liturgy, and that of other souls departed; and that they distinguish two states, one for the perfect, and the other for the imperfect.

† Hom. xix. in 40 Martyres, T. ii. pp. 155, 156.

‡ Serm. in Annunt. T. ii. p. 401.

Another saint of this age, St. Ephrem, is remarkable as the oldest father and writer of the oriental Church. His expressions are really so exceedingly strong, that I am sure many Catholics of the present day would feel a certain delicacy or difficulty in using some of them in their prayers, for fear of offending persons of another religion; they go so much beyond those which we use. "I entreat you," he says, "holy martyrs, who have suffered so much for the Lord, that you would intercede for us with him, that he bestow his grace on us."* Here he simply prays to the saints, asking their intercession, just as the Catholics do. But now listen to the following: "We fly to thy patronage, Holy Mother of God; protect and guard us under the wings of thy mercy and kindness. Most merciful God, through the intercession of the most blessed Virgin Mary, and of all the angels, and of all the saints, show pity to thy creature;"†—the very form of prayer quoted again and again in the itinerant discourses made against us, from the beginning of the Litany of the blessed Virgin, as the strongest proof that we worship her. There are passages, however, innumerable in his writings, much stronger; and I will read you one or two, as specimens of the many prayers found in his works addressed to the Blessed Virgin. "In thee, Patroness, and *Mediatrix* with God, who was born from thee,‡ the human race, O Mother of God, placeth its joy; and ever is dependent upon thy patronage: and, in thee alone, hath refuge and defence, who hast full confidence in Him. Behold, I also draw nigh to thee, with a fervent soul, not having courage to approach thy Son, but imploring, that, through thy intercession (*μεσιτειας*) I may obtain salvation. Despise not, then, thy servant, who placeth all his hopes in thee, after God; reject him not, placed in grievous danger, and oppressed with many griefs; but thou, who art compassionate, and the mother of a merciful God, have mercy upon thy servant; free me from

* Encom. in SS. Mart. T. iii. p. 251.

† Serm. de Laud. B. Mar. Virg. T. iii. p. 156.

‡ *Μεσιτην πρὸς τὸν ἐκ σου τεχθέντα Θεὸν.* This prayer occurs in his Greek Works, to. iii. p. 532.

fatal concupiscence, &c." In the course of this prayer, our Blessed Lady is called, "the precious vision of the prophet, the clearest fulfilment of all prophecy, the eloquent mouth of the apostles, the strength of kings, the boast of the priesthood, the forgiveness of sins, the propitiation of the just Judge, the rise of the fallen, the redemption from sins, &c." In another prayer, we meet the following words, addressed to the same ever-glorious Virgin. "After the Trinity (thou art) mistress of all; after the Paraclete another paraclete; after the Mediator, mediatrix of the whole world."* Surely this is more than enough, to prove, that if this glory of the Syriac Church, this friend of the great St. Basil, had lived in our times, he would not have been allowed to officiate in the English Church; but would have been obliged to retire to some humble chapel, if he wished to discharge his sacred functions.

For these are stronger expressions than are ever used by any Catholic now; yet this Saint is not only considered by us the brightest ornament of the Syriac and Oriental Church, but is equally regarded as such by Nestorians, and Monophysites, and other sectaries who have separated from us since then. We have a glowing panegyric of him in the works of St. Gregory of Nyssa; he was the bosom friend of St. Basil, and is always spoken of by him with the greatest affection and reverence, as a man of distinguished virtue, and so humble, that he never advanced beyond the order of deacon in the Church of Edessa. And I will read you a passage from St. Gregory of Nyssa, who thus addresses him after his death: "Do thou now, being present at God's altar, and with his angels offering sacrifice to the Prince of life, and to the most holy Trinity, remember us; begging for us the pardon of our sins."† So that this doctrine then prevailed in every part of the Church; and was as much held in the Greek, as in the Latin or Oriental Church.

* Ἡ μετὰ τὴν Τριάδα παντῶν δεσπόινα, ἡ μετα τὸν παράκλητον ἄλλος παράκλητος, καὶ μετὰ τὸν μεσίτην μεσίτης κοσμοῦ παντὸς. —p. 528.

† Tom. ii. p. 1048.

St. Gregory of Nazianzum, speaking of his deceased friend, St. Basil, says: "Now, indeed, he is in heaven; there, if I mistake not, offering up sacrifices for us, pouring out prayers for the people: for he has not left us, so as to have deserted us.—And do thou, sacred and holy Spirit, look down, I beseech thee, on us: arrest by thy prayers that sting of the flesh which was given to us for our correction, or teach us how to bear it with fortitude: guide all our ways to that which is best: and, when we shall depart hence, receive us then into thy society; that with thee, beholding more clearly that blessed and adorable Trinity, which now we see in a dark manner, we may put a final close to all our wishes, and receive the reward of the labours which we have borne."* St. Gregory of Nyssa, the brother of St. Basil, whom I have once already quoted, uses language equally expressive, in his discourse on the martyr Theodorus. These are his words: "Invisible though thou art, come as a friend to them that honour thee; come and behold this solemn Feast. We stand in need of many favours: be our envoy for thy country before our common King and Lord. The country of the Martyr is the place of his suffering: his citizens, his brothers, his relations, are they who possess, who guard, who honour him. We are in fear of afflictions: we look for dangers: the Scythians approach us with dreadful war. Thou, indeed, hast overcome the world; but thou knowest the feelings and the wants of our nature. Beg for us the continuance of peace, that these our public meetings be not dissolved; that the wicked and raging barbarian overthrow not our temples and our altars; that he tread not underfoot thy holy places. That hitherto we have lived in safety, we owe to thy favour: we implore thy protection for the days that are to come; and if a host of prayers be necessary, assemble the choirs of your brother martyrs, and supplicate all together for us. The united services of so many just will cover the sins of the people. Admonish Peter, solicit Paul, call John, the beloved

* Orat xx. de Laud. S. Basil. T. i. p. 372, 373.

disciple, and let them intercede for the Churches, which they themselves have founded."*

Here is a passage from St. Ambrose: "Peter and Andrew interceded for the widow. (*Luke* iv. 38.) It were well if we could obtain so speedy an Intercessor: but surely they who implored the Lord for their relation, can do the same for us. You see, that she who was a sinner, was little fitting to pray for herself, or at least to obtain what she asked. Other Intercessors to the Physician were therefore necessary.—The Angels, who are appointed to be our guardians, must be invoked; and the martyrs likewise, whose bodies seem to be a pledge for their patronage. They, who in their blood washed away every stain of sin, can implore forgiveness for us: they are our guides, and the beholders of our lives and actions: to them, therefore, we should not blush to have recourse."†

Now then I will show you, by an example, how nicely these early writers drew the distinction which Catholics now do. St. Epiphanius thus writes of the Blessed Virgin, reproving the errors of the Collyridian heretics, who adored her, and offered sacrifice to her: "Though, therefore, she was a chosen vessel, and endowed with eminent sanctity, still she is a woman, partaking of our common nature, but deserving of the highest honours shown to the saints of God.—She stands before them all, on account of the heavenly mystery accomplished in her. But we adore no saint:—and as this worship is not given to Angels, much less can it be allowed to the daughter of Ann. —Let Mary then be honoured; but the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, alone be adored: let no one adore Mary."‡ St. Augustine makes the same exact distinction, where he thus writes:—"The Christian people celebrate the memories of the martyrs with a religious solemnity, in order that they may learn to imitate them, and may be associated to their merits, and be aided by their prayers: but to no martyr—to the God alone of martyrs, in memory of them, do we raise altars. For

* Orat. in Theod. Martyr. T. ii. p. 1017.
† Lib. de Viduis, T. ii. p. 200.
‡ Adv. Collyridianos Hær. lix. sive lxxix. T. i. p. 1061, 1062, 1664.

what bishop, among the repositories of holy bodies, assisting at the altar, was ever heard to say: To thee, Peter, to thee, Paul, or to thee, Cyprian, do we make this offering? To God, alone, who crowned the martyrs, is sacrifice offered in the places where their relicts rest; that the sight of these places may excite a warmer sentiment towards those whom we should imitate; and towards him, by whose aid it can be accomplished. We venerate, therefore, the martyrs, with that veneration of regard, with which holy men are here treated upon earth, who are disposed, we know, to suffer for the truth of the gospel. When they have suffered, and have conquered, our veneration is more devoted and more firm, as they are translated from a state of conflict to a state of permanent happiness. But with that worship, which the Greeks call λατρεια, and which in Latin cannot be expressed by one word—as it is a worship properly due only to the Divinity—*with that worship we worship God alone.* To this belongs the offering of sacrifice; whence they are idolators, who sacrifice to idols. We offer no sacrifice to any martyr, nor to any saint, nor to any angel; and should any one fall into the error, sound doctrine will so raise its voice, that he be corrected, or condemned, or avoided."* Before making a few remarks on these passages, I will quote one more from this great Father, which confirms as well the doctrine of purgatory:—"It is a proof," he writes, "of kind regard towards the dead, when their bodies are deposited near the monuments of saints. But hereby what are they aided, unless in this, that, recollecting the place where they lie, we be induced to recommend them to the patronage of those saints for their prayers with God? Calling therefore to mind the grave of a departed friend, and the near monument of the venerable martyr, we naturally commend the soul to his prayers. And that the souls of those will be thereby benefitted, who so lived as to deserve it, there can be no doubt."†

* L. xx. c. xxi. contra Faustum. T. viii. p. 347.
† De curâ pro mortuis gerenda, c. iv. T. vi. p. 519.

The distinction drawn in the two passages just quoted, and in many others, is precisely the same as we make; that sacrifice and supreme homage is reserved to God alone, but the saints are intercessors for us, and that we may invoke them as such. What are we to say to these testimonies? Nothing can be more manifest, than that the doctrine of these fathers is precisely the same as I have laid down, and just what is declared in the Council of Trent, or the Catechisms taught to our children. Are we to say that they were involved in the same idolatry as ourselves? For it is not with this dogma as with some others: the consequences of error here are most serious. It might have been said in other circumstances, that some errors were allowed to creep into the Church; but when it is said that it is all involved in idolatry, it is a fatal charge. Will you venture to say that the whole of the Church, in the first, second, third, and fourth centuries, in Italy, in Greece, in Syria, in Mesopotamia, and in every other part of the world, was universally plunged into idolatry? Is it not a fearful venture in any man to assert that a few individuals in one country,—that a small Church, or rather a collection of conflicting religious communities, in one island of the globe, and perhaps a comparatively small number of Christians in some other parts, are alone the possessors, after a lapse of eighteen hundred years, of the true faith of Christ? and that to such an extent, as to suppose that from this deep morass of frightful and fetid corruption, it did not emerge until the superior illumination of this small portion of mankind enabled them to see the light of truth; to such an extent as to imagine that they who were ready to die for him, and who were actuated by the purest zeal for his glory, were idolaters! Who will refuse to call Basil, Augustine, Jerome, Ambrose, and Irenæus, saints? Who will refuse to give them that title? Read their works, and will any man venture to say that such men, such chosen, favoured spirits, were immersed in that damnable idolatry in which all men were plunged for eight hundred years

and more, according to the stern declaration of the Book of Homilies. Is it not on their testimony that many dogmas, most essential to Christianity now rest? Is it not on the authority of these men that we mainly receive the doctrine of the Trinity and of Christ's divinity? Can they have preserved these doctrines pure and uncontaminated as they came from God; and shall it be said that they themselves were so grossly corrupted in faith, as to be wallowing in what must be considered the lowest abyss of sinful idolatry? Here is a solemn problem to be solved, not only by those who charge us with idolatry, but by all who deny ours to be the true doctrine of the true Church of Christ.

Then their difficulties encrease at every step; for I further ask, what will they say of the worth and power of Christ, who came to establish his religion on the ruins of idolatry, if in less than one or two hundred years it triumphed again over his work: yea, if even while the martyr's blood flowed, it could have been written, that in behalf of idolatry it was shed; and that they, indeed, died for refusing to give homage to the false gods of the heathens, yet at the very time were showing honour to their deceased fellow men, and thereby perpetrating the enormous crime which they were slaughtered for refusing to commit! Surely these are difficulties that must be overcome; for is it not mocking, deriding Christ to believe, that he came down to cast a fire upon earth, saying, "I will that it be enkindled,"* that is, the fire of charity, and faith, and the true light of God, and that after this expression of his will and determination, it should have been extinguished so soon; that the truth should have been trodden out by that very monster whose head he came to crush; that the idolatry which he came to uproot was of so powerful a growth, and that the seed of the word was so feeble, as to have been thereby choked before it came to maturity? Is it not an insult to the Son of God, and to his saving power, to suppose his religion so soon sunk into this

* Luke xii. 49.

degraded state: and yet this *must* be asserted if you allow the fathers who held these doctrines to be involved, as they must be, in the same charge, which is flung upon us.

Nor could it be said that they did not understand these popular and trite objections, that through such doctrine, the merits and mediatorship of Christ are annihilated. They must have known that the entreaty for the prayers of one man by another could not interfere with that mediatorship—on the contrary, they must have felt what we feel, that there cannot be a greater homage paid to God than to consider it necessary that his saints, after being received into final happiness, should still appear before him as intercessors and suppliants. So far from feeling any of that delicacy which is so common now, about applying the same words to God and the saints, we have the two joined without scruple under the same expression. I will only cite one example of this; an inscription discovered two years ago, which was erected by a person of considerable consequence, being governor of the district around Rome. The inscription is in these words:—"Anicius Auchenius Bassus, who had enjoyed the consular dignity, and his wife Honorata, with their children *devout to God and the saints.*"* We find God and the saints here joined together; nor does it appear that any apprehension was entertained of thereby derogating from the honour of the Deity.

Thus far then, my brethren, regarding the saints themselves; such as you have heard is the Catholic doctrine, such its consistency, and such its proofs. Another point intimately connected with it, is the respect paid by us to the relics of the saints. The Catholic believes that anything which has belonged to men distinguished by their love of God, and by what they have done and suffered in his cause, deserves that respect and honour which is constantly shown, in ordinary

* ANICIVS · AVCHENIVS · BASSVS · V · C · ET · TVRRENIA · HONORATA · C · F · EIVS · CVM · FILIIS · DEO SANCTISQVE · DEVOTI.—See Letters to J. Poynder. Esq., p. 38.

life, to that which has belonged to any great, or celebrated, or very good man. Nothing is more common than to see such objects receive marks of respect. We meet with such feelings shown even in the established Church; for we are told that in the Church of Lutterworth there is preserved the chair of Wycliffe, his desk, and a portion of his cloak. Wherefore are they kept? They are relics; precisely what the Catholic means by relics: for they are kept by those who consider him to have been a very great and good man; intending thereby to honour him, and feeling that a sort of connexion or link is kept up between him and those who come in after times, by the possession of these remembrances of him. Catholics, however, go further; for they believe that they please God by showing respect to these objects, and that by honouring these relics of the saints, they are incited to imitate their example.

This, many exclaim, is rank superstition! My brethren, there is no word more common than this, and yet these are few more difficult to be defined. What is superstition? It is the believing that any virtue, energy, or supernatural power exists in anything independent of God's voluntary and free gift of such virtue to that thing. The moment you sincerely and from conviction introduce God—the moment you hope or believe, because you are intimately persuaded that God has been pleased to make use of anything as an instrument in his hands, superstition ceases. And it matters not whether you speak of the natural or of the supernatural order of things. If any man believe, that by carrying a charm about him, it will do him some good, will cure him or preserve him from danger, because of some innate virtue or power of its own, or if he chuse to imagine that God has given it such a power, without any solid reason, this is superstitious. But if I take a medicine, persuaded of its natural power, resulting from the laws by which God has been pleased to regulate his creation, there is no superstition. In the same manner, whatever is practised from a complete conviction that God has ap-

pointed it or approved of it, is not superstitious. It would have been a superstition in the Jews to believe that by looking on a brazen serpent, they could be healed from the bite of fiery serpents; but the moment God ordered such a symbol to be erected, with a promise of such an effect, superstition ceased. The moment he has given the comment, every glance upon it becomes, as it were, a look towards God, who has given it that virtue and efficacy, and what of its own nature would have been superstitious, becomes not only lawful, but most salutary. Had man raised two images of cherubim on the ark of the covenant, and bowed down before them and worshipped them, and asked that in them God would hear his prayers, it would have been gross superstition, and there would have been even danger of falling into idolatry, as in the worship of the golden calf. But the moment God directed these to be raised, and called them his mercy seat, and said that there he would hear the prayers of his servants, and before it the high priest was ordered to bring his gifts, that instant it became an instrument appointed by God, and there was no superstition in placing a trust in its instrumentality. Had precious stones been worn on the breast, and inscribed with certain letters for oracular purposes, without a divine assurance, it would have been a charm, or whatever you please; but the moment God orders the Urim and Thummim to be made; or when David applies to the Ephod to learn what he should do,* knowing that God had made use of it for that purpose, there is no longer any superstition. This is a distinction to be clearly kept in view, because it goes to confute the popular imputation of superstition to Catholics.

If an ignorant man prays before any object, or goes by preference to any certain place, in consequence of an experience having produced conviction in his mind, no matter whether justly or not, that his prayers are more effectual there than elsewhere, certainly, by acting on that feeling, he com-

* 1 Reg. xxiii. 9.

mits no act of superstition; for he attributes all that special efficacy to the appointment of God, whereof he has become convinced. In other religions, the same idea may be found. Is it not a common thing for a person to think that he can pray with more devotion in a certain part of his house, or in one oratory or chapel, rather than in another? And yet who says that such a one is superstitious? It is from no idea that the building or walls will bring down a blessing on his prayers, but from a conviction that in that place he prays better; and that, consequently, his prayers are better heard; and assuredly that is not superstition. Precisely in the same manner, why do some go to hear the preaching of one clergyman rather than another's, though, in reality, he is not more eloquent? And often, if you ask them, they cannot tell you why; they feel that when he speaks, his words go more to their hearts, and they receive more satisfaction. Would it be said, that this was attaching a virtue to the man, that it supposed some individual efficacy to reside in him? Consider the matter in the simplest form, that it pleases God to make that person an instrument of his work, and it loses the character of superstition, and the glory given is referred to God alone.

Apply these considerations to the relics of the saints, to those memorials of them which Catholics bear about their persons, or preserve with care, with the feeling that it is a sort of pledge, or symbol of the saints' protection and intercession,—that they serve to record our devotion, and to remind us of the virtues that distinguished those servants of God, and make us turn to God and pray; so long as we believe that there is no virtue in them, independently of a bestowal from the goodness and power of God, it cannot be called superstition. The belief of the Catholic simply is, that it having pleased God to make use of such objects as instruments for performing great works, and imparting great benefits to his people, they are to be treated with respect, and with an humble hope, that as God has been pleased often to employ

them, so he may again; and thus, we consider them as possessing that symbolic virtue which I have described. Now, we do find that God has made use of such instruments before. In the Old Law, he raised up a dead man, by his coming in contact with the bones of one of his prophets. The moment he was cast into the tomb—the moment he touched the holy prophet's bones, he arose, restored to life.* What did God thereby show, but that the bones of his saints were sometimes gifted by him with a supernatural power; and that, on an occasion when, apparently, there was no expectation of such an extraordinary miracle? We read, that upon handkerchiefs which had touched the body of St. Paul, being taken to the sick, they were instantly restored to health;† and those were relics, in the Catholic sense of the word. We read, that a woman was cured who touched the hem of our Saviour's garment;‡ that the very skirts of his raiment were impregnated with that power which issued from him, so as to restore health, without his exercising any act of his will. These examples prove, that God makes use of the relics of his saints as instruments for his greatest wonders. Here is the foundation of our practice, which excludes all idea of superstition; we have the express authority of God, that he chuses to make use of these means, and, consequently, there can be no superstition in the belief that he may use them so again.

Nor can it be said that there was more authority for the expectation of such assistance in these cases, than there is at present. It was nowhere told to the faithful that handkerchiefs or aprons were to be applied to the person of Paul, to receive virtue from the contact, or that, if they were so used, they would heal the sick. It is no less evident, that the woman who touched our Saviour's dress, did it not in consequence of any invitation or encouragement, nor from the actual experience of others; for, manifestly, it was the first experiment. Jesus attributes her cure to the faith which accompanies the

* 4 Reg. xiii. 21. † Acts xix. 11, 12. ‡ Mat. xix. 20.

act:—" Be of good heart, daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole." Now, if these persons were not superstitious by trusting for the first time to the efficacy of such means, and if, instead of being reprehended, they were praised, on account of the faith which actuated them to try them; how much less will the accusation hold, where the same faith, the same feeling, has the encouragement of the former success, and the sanction of those formal approbations.

After these examples from Scripture, after this groundwork in the word of God, I have nothing to do but to show you again, that, from the beginning of the Church, ours was the universal belief and practice. We find the demonstration of this, in the care and anxiety with which the Christians sought to save the bodies of the martyrs from destruction. The moment a martyr was put to death, we read throughout ecclesiastical history, what eagerness the Christians displayed to snatch up their bodies, and sometimes at considerable expense, to bribe the guards to give up their mangled limbs for honourable burial. This spirit carried them still further; they gathered up all their blood, as well as they could, and preserved it in vessels placed in their tombs. St. Prudentius describes a painting, which he saw in one of the catacombs, of the martyrdom of St. Hippolytus, who was dragged to death at the heels of horses; because bearing the same name as the person fabled to have been so treated, his judge ordered him to undergo the same punishment. The body of the saint is described as torn in pieces, and a crowd of Christians followed, gathering up, not only the fragments of his body, but every particle of his blood, with sponges or linen cloths, to preserve them; and accordingly, we find sponges, or phials, tinged with blood, constantly in the tombs of the martyrs. Another species of relic also found there, are the instruments of torture, whereby they were put to death. There is an apartment attached to the Vatican library at Rome, called the Museum of Christian Antiquities, in which all such instru-

ments of torture are carefully preserved, after being accurately authenticated. The Christians, therefore, it appears, collected all such instruments, and buried them with the martyrs' bodies. Another way in which they testified their respect for the relics of the martyrs, was, by always erecting their oratories, or churches, where they had suffered; and the tombs of the martyrs were their altars. Not only is this proved by the liturgy in which the relics of martyrs are mentioned as necessarily present in the altar, and from the fact of every old church at Rome being built over the shrine of a martyr, but it is expressly enacted in the Council of Carthage, held in 398, wherein the following decree was issued:—" Let those altars be overturned by the bishop of the place, which are erected about the fields and the roads, as in memory of martyrs, in which is no body, nor any relics.—Care almost must be taken to ascertain genuine facts. For altars, which are raised from dreams and the idle fancies of men, must not be supported."* We have a beautiful letter of the holy Archbishop of Milan, St. Ambrose, to his sister Marcellina, wherein he relates, how when, on a certain occasion, he announced to his flock his intention of dedicating a new church, several of them cried out, that he must consecrate it, as he had done the Roman Basilica. To whom he replied, " I will, if I can discover the bodies of martyrs." Whereupon, seized with a holy ardour, he commanded a search to be made, and discovered the bodies of SS. Gervasius and Protasius, with their blood, and other evidences of authenticity. They were solemnly translated to the Ambrosian basilica, and on the way a blind man recovered his sight. He then gives his sister the substance of his sermon on the occasion.†

Nothing remains but, according to my practice, to read a few out of many passages, to show you that the ancient Christians believed all regarding relics that we do. We begin with

* Can. xiv. Conc. Gen. T. ii. p. 1217.
† Epistolar. Lib. vii. ep. lvi. Oper. Tom. v. p. 315, *Par.* 1632.

the Church of Smyrna, one of the seven mentioned in the Apocalypse, and one founded by St. John; St. Polycarp, its bishop, was one of the last who had seen that evangelist, and was his personal disciple, under whom, consequently, we cannot suppose that the doctrine taught by Christ and his apostles was completely obscured. After his death, the Christians of the Church of Smyrna wrote a letter, preserved by Eusebius, giving an account of what took place on that occasion, in which is this passage:—"Our subtle enemy, the devil, did his utmost, that we should not take away the body, as many of us anxiously wished. It was suggested that we should desert our crucified master, and begin to worship Polycarp. Foolish men! who know not that we can never desert Christ, who died for the salvation of all men; nor worship any other. Him we adore as the Son of God; but we show deserved respect to the martyrs, as his disciples and followers. The centurion, therefore, caused the body to be burnt. We then gathered his bones, more precious than pearls, and more tried than gold, and buried them. In this place, God willing, we will meet and celebrate, with joyous gladness, the birth-day of his martyr, as well in memory of those who have been crowned before, as, by his example, to prepare and strengthen others for the combat."*

In this passage there are important statements, upon which I may be permitted to enlarge. In many respects, indeed, this is a very striking narrative: it proves the eagerness of the Christians to have the body of the saint,—it shows that his bones were considered by them more "precious than pearls, and more tried than gold,"—and that they would honour them by meeting at his tomb to celebrate his birth-day. But the most striking circumstance is this: it says, that their enemies, the Jews, suggested that the Christians would adore Polycarp. How comes it that their adversaries could, for a moment, have suspected, or pretended to suspect, that the Christians would worship Polycarp, and desert Christ? Certainly, if there had

* Hist. Eccl. L. iv. c. xv. p. 170, 171.

never been any marks shown of outward respect, or honour, to the relics of martyrs, it could not possibly have come into these men's heads, that there was any danger of their worshipping the body of Polycarp; the very charge supposes that such practices existed, and were well known to the adversaries of the Christians.

St. Ignatius, who suffered martyrdom at Rome, 100 years after Christ, was Bishop of Antioch; and we read how his body was conveyed back to his see, and carried as an inestimable treasure, from city to city.* But on this translation we have an eloquent passage of St. Chrysostom, which I must read:—"When, therefore, he had there (at Rome) laid down his life, or rather when he had gone to heaven, he returned again crowned. For the goodness of God was pleased that he should return to us, and to distribute the martyr between the cities. For that city received his dropping blood, but you have honoured his relics. You rejoiced in his episcopacy; they beheld him struggling, and victorious, and crowned; you possess him perpetually. God removed him from you for a little while, and with much more glory has he restored him. And as they who borrow money, return with interest what they received, so also God, having borrowed of you this precious treasure for a short time, and shown him to that city, sent him back to you with increased splendour. For you sent forth a bishop, and you have received a martyr: you sent forth with prayers, and you have received with crowns. And not you alone, but all the intermediate cities. For how think you were they affected, when they beheld the relics transported? What fruits of gladness did they gather? How much did they rejoice? With what acclamations did they salute the crowned conqueror? For as the spectators, starting up from the arena, and laying hold of the noble combatant who has overthrown all his antagonists, and is going forth with splendid glory, do not permit him to touch the ground, but carry him home with innumerable encomiums; so all the

* See his acts in Ruinart.

cities, in order receiving this holy man from Rome, carried him on their shoulders, and accompanied the crowned martyr with acclamations even to this city, celebrating the conqueror with hymns, and deriding the devil, because his artifice turned against himself, and what he had thought to do against the martyr, had proved adverse to himself."* Thus, therefore, we find the relics of the saints treated by the immediate disciples of the Apostles, by those who knew them, and had learnt from them, with the greatest respect. Afterwards, the texts multiply without end.

St. Basil, bishop in Cappadocia, answers St. Ambrose, archbishop of Milan, who had written all that way to request a portion of the relics of St. Dionysius: and this shows the communion between the Churches in all parts of the world, and the object to which it was applied. These are his words: —" Affection to our departed brethren is referred to the Lord, whom they served: and he who honours them, that died for the faith, shows that he is inspired by the same ardour; so that one and the same action is a proof of many virtues."— He then relates, how, much against the will of those who possessed them, the saint's relics had been taken up, and sent; and that of their being genuine there was not the smallest doubt.†

The following is a strong passage from the saint whom I have before quoted, with particular praise, St. Ephrem:— " See, how the relics of the martyrs still breathe! who can doubt of these martyrs being still alive? Who can believe that they have perished?" He then extols the virtues of relics, and exhorts the faithful, in every distress, to have recourse, with confidence, to them: " For the deity dwells in the bones of the martyrs, and, by his power and

* Homil. in St. Ignat. Mart. xliii. is translated by the Rev. F. C. Husenbeth, in his triumphant exposure of Faber—" Faberism Exposed," 1836, p. 623.

† Ad Ambros. Mediol. Ep. cxcvii. T. iii. p. 287.

presence, miracles are wrought."* St. Asterius writes:—"Wherefore, decently disposing of the bodies of the martyrs, let us preserve them for ages as gifts of high value. By them we are fortified; and the Church is protected, as a city is guarded by an armed force." St. John Chrysostom:—"That which neither riches nor gold can effect, the relics of martyrs can. Gold never dispelled diseases, nor warded off death: but the bones of martyrs have done both. In the days of our forefathers the former happened: the latter in our own."†

There is literally no end to these testimonies, and that for reasons which I will explain in a few words. We have, about this time, appearing in Church history, two evidences, which fully evince what the belief of the Christians was. The first is the writings of Eunapius the Sophist, about the year 380, which were directed to show that the Christians worshipped the martyrs. He charges them, in the first place, with taking great care of their bodies, and placing them under their altars; in the second place, with paying them divine adoration, and treating them as Gods: whereon he accuses them of downright idolatry. So that this is not a modern accusation: it is a very old tale, a very antiquated charge, made 380 years after Christ; when, for precisely the same belief and practice as we now follow, the entire Church was taxed by a heathen with being idolatrous. This proves, at least, what great honour and veneration was paid to the Saints and to their remains.

The second evidence is,—that a few years after, we have Vigilantius condemned as a heretic, for saying that the relics of Saints ought not to be honoured. An express treatise yet remains, written by St. Jerome against him; but the very fact of the practice being impugned by Vigilantius, shows that it existed before. St. Jerome makes a very accurate distinction: "We worship not, we adore not, the relics of the martyrs;—but we honour them, that our minds may be raised to him, whose martyrs they are. We honour them, that this

* T. v. p. 340, Ed. *Rom.* † Homil. lxxi. S. Drosidis Mart. T. v. p. 882.

honour them, that this honour may be referred to him, who says: *He that receiveth you, receiveth me.*"*

This is just what Catholics have always said in modern times: that the respect paid by them to relics, is referred ultimately to God; and that in honouring his servants, we honour God, who chose them as his champions and faithful servants. About this time, therefore, we have a multiplicity, an endless variety of writers, teaching the same doctrine; and I remember particularly being struck with one of the letters of St. Augustine, meant as a letter of recommendation to some friends who were travelling in Italy. During his time, the relics of St. Stephen, the first martyr, were discovered in the East, and a portion of them brought into Africa. St. Augustine,—and no one, it will be admitted, was more remote from credulity or superstition,—gives an account of what happened on the introduction of his bones. The Bishop of a neighbouring diocese was cured of a long and harassing disease, for which he was to undergo a painful operation in a few days, by carrying the relics into the church. But the circumstance which I wished to mention relative to the recommendatory letter is, that after he has made a long encomium on the character of the travellers, he says: "What is still more precious, they carry with them a portion of the relics of St. Stephen." Were any one now-a-days to write a letter of this sort, he would be considered superstitious. And yet, who is it that writes it?—what an age did he live in, and what a man! Surely such passages as these ought, at any rate, to make our traducers modify their language, when they speak of our doctrines, if it were only out of respect to the individuals whom they involve in the same condemnation. Thus much shall suffice on the subject of our veneration for relics. We see a strong ground-work of our belief in the Word of God, and we are completely borne out by the practice of the Church.

There is still another subject in connexion: that of images

* Ep. liii. ad Riparium, T. i. p. 583, 584.

or pictures in our churches. The Council of Trent defines two things, as the belief of the Catholic Church on this head. First, that it is wholesome and expedient to have pictures, or images and representations of the Saints; in the second place, that honour and respect are to be paid to them.* This is, therefore, the whole of the Catholic doctrine. I suppose no one will go the length of saying, that it is unlawful to have pictures in churches, on the ground of its being opposed to a Jewish commandment; although we have been ignorantly charged with having corrupted the decalogue, by putting one commandment into two, to get rid of the prohibition, which applied to the making of images, as distinct from that of adoring them. The first question, therefore, appears to be, is the making of all images forbidden, or are we only forbidden to worship them? If the former be the case, then no monument can be allowed in a church, and no altar-piece; and yet it is well known that there are many such in the Established Church. In the church of St. Stephen, Walbrook, I believe there is one; in that of Greenwich, there is a painting of St. Paul; and in many other places of Protestant worship. We cannot suppose, therefore, that the representation of human beings is prohibited under any circumstances; and consequently the first part of the first commandment is modified essentially by the second, and from it only receives its force. We agree that no image should be made for adoration or worship, because the first commandment is against idolatry, or the making of images for such purpose. But the making of images was prescribed by God: for in the Tabernable there were two cherubim in the Holy of Holies, and the two walls of the Temple were sculptured with graven images; and a brazen fountain, supported by twelve oxen, stood in its court. Indeed, there is no doubt that the temple was adorned with carved images and representations of the human countenance, as much as it was possible for any build-

* Sess. xxv. "De venerat. SSorum."

ing to be. The whole question then turns upon this: whether the Catholics are justified in making use of them as sacred memorials, in praying before them, as inspiring faith and devotion. I may be asked, what warrant there is in scripture for all this? I might answer, that I seek none; for rather I might ask, what authority there is, to deprive me of such objects: because it is the natural right of man to use anything towards promoting the worship of God, which is not in any way forbidden. I might as well be asked, what warrant there is in Scripture for the building of churches, for the use of the organ, for the ringing of bells, for music, or for a thousand other things that appertain to the worship of the Church. Do I want a warrant, do I require Scripture, for the use of the organ? Certainly not: because if the thing be innocent, and serve to raise our hearts towards God, we consider that we have a right to use it, and nothing but a positive enactment can deprive us of it. And I wish to know would any one charge me with bad feeling, if, on coming before the representation or image of any one whom I had loved and had lost, I stood before it, fixed in veneration and affection, as though the object itself were really before me? And even if my eyes filled with tears, and I appeared to address it with feelings of affectionate enthusiasm, I might be guilty perhaps of some extravagance in sentiment, of too vivid a feeling; but no one surely would say that I was superstitious or idolatrous in its regard.

Such is precisely all that the Catholic is taught to believe regarding the images or pictures set up in churches. They are memorials in the same way as other representations are, and we consider them calculated to excite similar feelings, only of a religious class. And if I find that the gazing on that picture or representation will bring my cold and stagnant feelings into closer communion with the person whom I have loved and cherished, undoubtedly I may lawfully indulge myself without any one presuming to blame me. In like manner

then, if I find that any picture or representation of our Saviour, or of his Blessed Mother, or of his Saints, acts more intimately on my affections, and excites warmer feelings of devotion, I am justified, and act well, in endeavouring so to excite them. It is precisely the same motive as that for going to one place of worship rather than another, because by it I find my feelings more easily drawn to God. This is an obvious and simple ground, on which to uphold the Catholic practice: that it is no where forbidden; and as the prohibition formerly made was only against making images to worship them as Gods, that prohibition does not apply here, because ours are only made as those were which God ordered to be erected in his very temple.

Whether pictures and images were used in the Church of old, is not a point of much importance; for their use has always been a matter of discipline. The Council of Trent does not decree that we are obliged to use them; it only says that it is wholesome to have them, and that they are to be treated with respect: with a relative respect, that is, such as is shown to the portrait of a father, or of any one whom we esteem and reverence. But the Council of Trent, in its directions to the parochial clergy, expressly enjoins them to explain this doctrine to the faithful; it commands them to warn the people, and make them understand, that these images are nothing but mere representations; that any honour paid them is to be referred to the prototype, or being represented; but that the image itself cannot have any virtue, nor give them the slightest help.

However, although the Christians were careful, and most anxious, while idolatry was around them, to distinguish their religion from it, we find that they used these representations in the oldest times. In the catacombs, we have exceedingly ancient ones; some of them are cut in two by the tombs of the martyrs, and consequently must have been made before these were opened. D'Agincourt has compared the paintings of

the sepulchre of the Nasoni family, with those found in the catacombs, and has decided that they are contemporary productions, or paintings of the second century. In the same manner, Flaxman, in his Lectures on Art, acknowledges them to be of great antiquity. So that this practice of decoration was very ancient; and this is singularly confirmed by the fact, that throughout the catacombs, the representations are uniformly the same, and precisely those described by the oldest father, Tertullian, as used on Africa, on the cups of the Christians; such as the good shepherd carrying a sheep on his shoulders;—an emblem of our Saviour's charity used, thus early, to excite feelings of affection towards him. This uniformity, especially in such distant countries, proves that the common type was much more ancient,—for all could not accidentally have agreed on the same subjects and same methods of representation; but not an inconsiderable time must have elapsed, between some one's inventing the type, and all artists in different parts adopting it.

This very brief sketch must suffice for the present. Perhaps I might be expected to say something of abuses, had I not interspersed several observations throughout my discourse, which must be, I flatter myself, sufficient. In one word, I will only remark that the charge of abuse arises, in a great measure, from persons not taking the pains to understand or know the feeling of Catholics. If we go into other countries, we find demonstrations of outward feeling, ever of a much warmer and more enthusiastic character than here; and consequently nothing is more common than to condemn these exhibitions, by comparison with what occurs in colder countries, and among more phlegmatic characters, as superstitious and idolatrous. But they who are acquainted with the people, and who have been instructed concerning their belief, know that, however extravagant they may outwardly appear, inwardly their faith and conviction are perfectly safe, and in accordance with that laid down as the belief of the Church.

This subject closes the lectures, with the exception of those on the Eucharist, which I will enter upon at our next meeting. Before concluding this evening, I wish to make one or two remarks, which seem connected with our subject. They regard those vague declamations which are daily heard respecting the Catholic doctrines. I have not the least doubt, that this course of lectures will give rise to others of a contrary tendency;* in which attempts will be made to show that the doctrines and practices of Catholics are superstitious, idolatrous, and deserving of every opprobrious epithet. I entreat all who may be induced to listen to such replies, to keep their minds and imaginations exceedingly cool, not to allow themselves to be carried away by eloquence however fervent, nor by assertions however positive, but to demand proof for every proposition which affects Catholics; and if opportunity to do so is not afforded them, to search for proofs, and try to verify the grounds on which our doctrine is impugned, before yielding up their minds to the arguments by which we are attacked. I am confident that that method will save a great deal of trouble; because I am sure it will be found in almost every instance, that the doctrine assailed is not that of Catholics, and that consequently the argument against it is thrown away; the reasons may be very good against the imaginary doctrine attacked, but worth nothing, as confuting ours.

I am satisfied that we have nothing to fear from persons carrying on the discussion in the way I have represented. I am confident that the time is gone by, when they could raise against us the war-cry of our practising superstitions injurious to God, as much as it is for raising the cry of disloyalty and disaffection to the state. Both have had their day, and the day of both is passed; and no one can serve our cause better, or more thoroughly disgust his hearers, than he who shall endeavour to found his attack upon Catholics, on such declamatory and groundless imputations as these. Thank

* This was actually the case.

God, and thank also the generosity and uprightness of our fellow-countrymen, we can now stand fairly and openly before the public. We are anxious, not to shrink from enquiry, but to court it; we throw open our places of worship to all men, we publish our books of prayer and instruction before the world; we submit the least of our children and their catechism to examination; we invite all to inspect our schools, and present the masters and their scholars to their interrogation; all that we write and read is at the command of the learned; and, if in our power, we would open our breasts, and ask them to look even into our hearts,—for God knows that we have nothing to shade, nothing to conceal;—and there let them read our belief, as written on its tablets in the simplest and plainest terms. No attack can any longer be allowed by any sensible, reasonable, generous, or liberal-minded man, except through calm and cool investigation, based entirely on the correct statement of our doctrines, and conducted exclusively, not by vague quotations from the word of God, but by arguments clearly and strongly addressed to his understanding.

These are the concluding admonitions which I wish to impress upon you. At our next meeting, I shall commence, as I have promised, the most important of all subjects, the Eucharist. Perhaps the length to which it will lead me, may not allow me time to make many concluding reflections; and I did not wish you to separate, without a few such as I have just indulged in. There are a great many other observations that offer themselves, but the time has flown too rapidly, and I have only space again to assure you, as I have done before, that if I have touched lightly upon some points, and seemed to omit others, it has been solely and exclusively through feeling sensible, that almost every evening I have detained you here longer than it became me, and that I have trespassed by a desire of communicating too much, rather than by withholding any thing that appeared useful.*

* Acts xx. 20.

LECTURE THE FOURTEENTH.

TRANSUBSTANTIATION.

PART I.

JOHN vi. 11.

"*And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to them that were sat down; in like manner also the fishes, as much as they would.*"

ALTHOUGH, my brethren, not accustomed to attach any great importance to such accidental coincidences, I will acknowledge that I felt some pleasure on discovering, when, brought this evening, by my arrangement of the topics to be discussed in your presence, to the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist, that it was precisely the very lesson proposed to us by the Church, in the Gospel of the day. For I cannot but hope that the blessing of God will be more abundant on our labours, when our teaching is not merely in accordance with, but even in its outward forms all regulated by that authority which he has appointed to govern and instruct us. Thus, therefore, I shall enter with confidence at once upon the task which I have assigned myself; and as the course which we shall have to pass over the evening will be rather protracted, and as, even to do it but partial and tolerable justice, it will be necessary for me to omit many merely special and digressive questions which will present themselves in our way, I will, without further preface, enter at once on the great object now before us. It is no other than to examine the grounds on which the Catholic Church proposes to us her belief on this subject,—the most important, the most solemn, the most beautiful, the most perfect of all I have previously demonstrated,—the True and

Real Presence of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar.

This doctrine of the Catholic Church, which perhaps of all other dogmas, has been most exposed to misrepresentation, or, at least, certainly to scorn and obloquy, is clearly defined in the words of the Council of Trent, where we are told, that the Catholic Church teaches, and always has taught, that in the Eucharist, or Blessed Sacrament, or Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, that which was originally bread and wine, is, by the consecration, changed into the substance of the body and blood of our Lord, together with his soul and divinity, in other words, his complete and entire person; which change the Catholic Church has properly called Transubstantiation.* Such, my brethren, is our belief; and I will proceed to lay before you, in this and subsequent discourses, the grounds whereupon we hold this doctrine; which, to those who have not embraced it, appears most incomprehensible, and repugnant, and which forms with too many the greatest bar to their uniting themselves with our communion; but which to every Catholic is the most consoling, the most cheering, and in every way the most blessed portion of his creed.

Now, before entering on the arguments from Holy Writ, regarding this point, it is important that I should lay down clearly before you, the principles which will guide me in the examination of Scriptural texts. I have had, on other occasions, opportunity to remark, how there is a vague and insufficient way of satisfying ourselves regarding the meaning of Scriptural texts:—that is to say, when, reading them over, and having in our minds a certain belief, we are sure to attach to them that meaning, which seems either absolutely to support it, or is, at least, reconcilable with it. It is in this way, that many most opposite opinions are by various sects, equally held to be demonstrated in Scripture. Certainly there must be some key, or means of interpreting it more securely; and on the occasion alluded to, when I had to exa-

* Sess. xiii. c. iv.

mine several passages of Scripture, I contented myself with laying down, as a general rule, that we should examine it by means of itself, and find the key in other and clearer passages, for the one under examination. But on the present occasion, it is necessary to enter more fully into an exposition of a few general and simple principles, which have their foundation in the philosophy of ordinary language, and in common sense, and which will be the principles that I shall seek to follow.

The ground-work of all the science of interpretation is exceedingly simple, if we consider the object to be attained. Every one will agree, that when we read any book, or hear any discourse, our object is to understand what was passing in the author's mind when he wrote or spoke those passages,—that is to say, what was the meaning he himself wished to give to the expressions which he then wrote or uttered. At this moment, for instance, that I am addressing you, it is obvious, from every conventional law of society, that I wish and mean you to understand me. I should be trifling with your good sense, your feelings, and your rights, if I intended otherwise; and thence it follows, that I express myself to the best of my power, in the way that I believe most conducive to convey exactly to your minds, the ideas passing in mine at the moment I am relating them. In fact, the object of all human intercourse, pursuant to the established laws of social communication, is to transfuse into other minds the same feelings and ideas that exist in one; and language is nothing more than the process whereby we endeavour to establish this communication.

It is evident that we have here two terms, which are to be equalized,—the mind of the speaker and that of the hearer; and if the process of communication be properly performed, the one must thoroughly represent the other. To illustrate this by comparison,—if, from the lines which you see impressed on paper from a copper-plate, you can reason, and that infallibly, to those inscribed on the plate, so can you, in like manner, if you see only the plate, just as correctly reason to the impres-

sion which must be thereby produced, provided the process followed be correct, and calculated by its nature to communicate that impression. Just so, therefore, the object of any person who addresses others, either in writing or in speech, is to convey as clearly as possible, his meaning to their minds. If the processes of language be correct, except in extraordinary cases of error—for it is an exception if we misunderstand one another—if the act of imprinting be correctly performed, we receive the impressions and ideas which the writer or speaker wished to convey.

And hence we can accurately reason from the meaning attached to a speech by those who heard it, to the ideas passing in the speaker's mind. If then we wished to ascertain the meaning of any passage or book written a hundred or a thousand years ago, we must not judge of it by what we might understand by such words at present: we must know what their meaning was at the time they were spoken. If we open an English author one hundred years old, we shall find some words used to convey a different signification from what they do now. We find, for instance, the word *wit* to mean great and brilliant parts including information and learning. A few centuries before, words which are now trivial and in common use, were then dignified. Thus, in old versions of Scripture, for *canticle*, the word *ballad* is constantly used; now, were any one to argue on a passage written at those times, from the meaning which such words at present bear, it is evident that he would err. The true rule of interpretation, therefore, is to know what must have been the only meaning which the actual hearers who were alive and present at the time the words were addressed to them, could have put on any expressions; and if we find that to be a certain definite signification, and the only one which *could* have been given, it is clear that it must be the true one. If we ascertain that the Jews must have attached a certain meaning to our Saviour's words, and could have conceived no other, he must have used them in that sense, if he wished to be understood. This is called by critics,

the usage of speech, and is considered by the writers on the interpretation of Scripture, as the true key to understanding its language.

Such is the simple process which I intend to follow. I shall investigate the expressions used by our Saviour, on different occasions—I shall endeavour to put you in possession of the opinions of those who heard them, and to make you understand, from the language in which they were spoken, what was the only signification which they could possibly have attached to them. You will thus see how their feelings must have wrought at the time they were uttered, leading them to a proper explanation; and whatever we shall find must have been the exclusive interpretation given to phrases by these persons, we shall have a right to consider their true meaning. By the same test I will try every objection,—I will enquire how far they seize the true meaning which the expressions bore at the time they were spoken, and by that ordeal only must they be justified.

If we look into ancient phrases and words, we must bear other considerations in mind; we must weigh the peculiar character of the teacher, for every person has a method of addressing his hearers—every man has his peculiar forms of speech; and it becomes necessary to make a sort of individual investigation, to see whether the explanation given can be reconciled with the ordinary method of him who spoke. Moreover, it has been justly observed by an acute writer, that he who would lead others, must in some respects follow; that is to say, no wise and good teacher will run counter to the habits and ordinary feelings of those whom he addresses. If he have to recommend amiable and inviting doctrines, he will not clothe them in imagery which must disgust them, by their very proposition. Without sacrificing one principle, or particle of his opinions, he certainly will not go out of his way to render them odious. These are the principal considerations which I have deemed it necessary to present to you, before entering on the examination of what we consider the

first proof of the Catholic doctrines of the Eucharist, as contained in the sixth chapter of the gospel of St. John.

The question regarding the interpretation of this chapter of the gospel, like all others of the same nature, reduces itself to a simple enquiry into a matter of fact. All are agreed, for instance, both Catholics and Protestants, that the first part of the chapter, from the beginning to the 26th verse, is simply historical, and gives us an account of the miracle wrought by our Saviour, in feeding a multitude of persons with a small quantity of bread. All are also agreed as to the next portion of the chapter; that is, from the 26th, so far as about the 50th verse, that in it our Saviour's discourse is exclusively about faith. But at this point enters the material difference of opinion among us. We say, that at that verse, or somewhere about it, a change takes place in our Saviour's discourse, and that from that moment we are not to understand him as speaking of faith, but of the real eating of his body, and drinking of his blood sacramentally in the Eucharist. Protestants, on the other hand, maintain that the same discourse is continued, and the same topic kept up to the conclusion of the chapter. It is manifest that this is a question of simple fact. It is like any legal question regarding the meaning of a document; and we must establish by evidence, whether the latter part can continue the same subject as the preceding.

I need hardly premise that nothing was more familiar with our Saviour than to take the opportunity of any miracle which he performed, to inculcate some doctrine which seemed to have a special connexion with it. For instance, in the ninth chapter of St. John, having cured a blind man, he proceeds to reprove the Pharisees for their spiritual blindness. In the fifth, after restoring a man who had been deprived of the use of his limbs, or who had been at least in a very languishing state of illness, he takes occasion, most naturally, to explain the doctrine of the Resurrection. Again, in the twelfth chapter of St. Matthew, after having cast out a devil, he proceeds to discourse upon the subject of evil spirits. These

examples I bring merely to show that, such being his custom, it will not be denied, that if ever he did wish for an opportunity to propose to his hearers, the doctrine of the Real Presence, in the Eucharist, he could not, in the whole course of his ministry, have found one more suited to his purpose. For, as on this occasion, by blessing the bread, he gave it a new efficacy, and made it sufficient to feed several thousands, we could not suppose anything more parallel to that sacrament, wherein his body is multiplied, in a manner, so as to form the food of all mankind in whatever part of the world. This, therefore, makes it, in the first place, not at all improbable that if such a doctrine was to be ever taught,—if such an institution was to be ever made, this was the favourable moment for preparing his hearers for it.

But we can still better illustrate the natural manner in which this discourse is introduced. The Jews asked our Saviour for a sign from heaven, and the sign they insisted on was; "What sign, therefore, dost thou show us, that we may see and believe thee,—what dost thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert as it is written,—he gave them bread from heaven to eat." To which in the following verse he answers; "Amen, amen, I say unto you, Moses gave you not bread from Heaven, but my father giveth you the true bread from Heaven." Now, it is remarkable that the Jews, in one of their earliest works after the time of Christ, that is, the "Midrash Coheleth," or commentary on the Book of Ecclesiastes, assert that one of the signs which the Messiah was to give, was precisely this; that in the same manner as Moses had brought down the manna from heaven, so should he bring down bread from heaven. This being the persuasion of the Jews, it was natural that they should choose that criterion of Christ's being sent from God, in the same way as Moses; and why our Saviour should give a parallel on his part to the former food from heaven, in a divine institution, whereby men should be nourished by something more excellent than manna, by the true living bread coming down from heaven.

So far is but preliminary matter; now let us enter on the question itself. I have no hesitation whatever in supposing that the transition takes place in the 48th instead of the 51st verse, where it is commonly placed. I need not enter upon my reasons, because it is immaterial; it makes no difference whether we place it one verse earlier or later. My reasons are founded on a very close and minute analysis of the portion of our Saviour's discourse, between the 48th and 53d verses, as compared with other discourses of his, which shows a construction indicative of a transition. I pass them over, however, as they would be likely to detain us too long; and come at once to the point.*

In the first place it may be said, is it probable that our Saviour, who had just been speaking of himself as the bread of life, should in the 51st verse, going on with precisely the same expressions, make such a complete transition in the subject of his discourse?—Should we not have something to indicate this transition to another subject? To show that there is no weight in this objection, I will refer you to another passage in which precisely the same transition takes place; namely, the 24th chapter of St. Matthew. It is agreed by most modern Protestant commentators, English and foreign,—and allow me to repeat a remark that I made on a former occasion, that when I vaguely say commentators, I always mean exclusively Protestant commentators; because I think it better to quote such authorities as will not be so easily rejected by those who do not agree with us in doctrine,—it is the opinion, therefore, of all those whom I have read, that in the 24th and 25th chapters of St. Matthew, there is a discourse of our Saviour on two distinct topics, the first regarding the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem; and the second, the end of the world. Any one may naturally ask where does the transition take place? It is manifest, when looking at the extremes,—that is, on comparing the phrases used in the first part of the

* They are given at full in my "Lectures on the Real Presence," pp. 40, *seq.*

discourse, and those in the second, that the same subject is not continued, — where then are we to find the point of separation? Now, all the most accurate commentators place it at the 43d verse of the 24th chapter, and I will just read to you the preceding verse, and one or two of those that follow. "Watch ye therefore, because ye know not at what hour your Lord will come. But this know ye, that if the good man of the house knew at what hour of the night the thief would come, he would certainly watch, and would not suffer his house to be broken open." You perceive no transition between these verses, and yet these commentators place the transition exactly in the middle of them. So that the same imagery is still continued from one verse to another, and yet it is agreed that a transition takes place from one subject to another, as distinct as the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem, which took place 1800 years ago, is from the end of the world, which may not happen for many centuries. Thus the preliminary objection is removed, that there must be a strong and marked transition, something like a prefatory phrase, to mark the passage from one subject to another.

Now, therefore, on what ground do we say that in the preceding part of the chapter and in the latter, a different topic is treated of? As I have before observed, the question is on a point of fact, and resolves itself into two: first, is there a transition here?—and secondly, is it to the true eating and drinking of the body and blood of Christ? In answer, therefore, to the first, I say, that I believe the first portion of our Saviour's discourse to apply to faith, for this simple reason; that every expression he uses throughout it, is such as was familiar to the Jews, as referring to the subject. For, the ideas of giving bread, and of partaking of food were commonly applied to teaching and receiving instruction; consequently there was no misunderstanding them. Thus, we have it said in the book of Isaiah, "All you that thirst come unto the waters, and you that have no money, make haste, buy and eat. Hearken

diligently to me, and eat that which is good."* "To eat," is here applied to listening unto instruction. Our Saviour quotes Deuteronomy—"Not on bread alone does man live, but on every word that cometh out of the mouth of God."† Again, God used this remarkable figure, when he said, that he should "send forth a famine into the land,—not a famine of bread nor a thirst of water, but of the hearing of the word of God."‡ In like manner, Wisdom is represented as saying, "Come, eat my bread, and drink the wine which I have mingled for you."§ Among the later Jews, Maimonides, and other commentators observe, that whenever the expression is used among the Prophets or in Ecclesiastes, it is always to be understood of doctrine. Therefore, when our Saviour simply addresses the Jews, speaking to them of the food whereof they are to partake, I have no difficulty in supposing that he could be understood by all, as referring to faith in him and his teaching. But in order to contrast these expressions more strongly with those that follow, allow me to notice a peculiarity observable at the 35th verse. Throughout the first part of this chapter, if you read it carefully over, you will not once find our Saviour allude to the idea of eating; he does not once speak of eating "the bread which came down from heaven." On the contrary, in the 35th verse he actually violates the ordinary rhetorical proprieties of language, to avoid this harsh and unnatural figure. In the instances where the figure of food is applied to hearing or believing doctrine; the inspired writers never say, "Come and eat or receive me." But our Saviour does not even speak of eating this figurative bread of his doctrine; and at the same time cautiously escapes from applying the phrase directly to his own person. For, in the 35th verse, Jesus said to them; "I am the bread of life: he that *cometh to me* shall not hunger, and he that *believeth in me* shall not thirst." So that when it would appear requisite to fill up the metaphor by the ideas of eating and drinking, as

* Is. lv. 5, 2. † Mat. iv. 4. ‡ Amos, viii. 11. § Prov. ix. 5.

opposed to hunger and thirst, he carefully avoids them, and substitutes others. And the phrases selected were such as to indicate to the Jews doctrine and belief.

But, supposing that they had not understood them to be so applied, our Saviour is most careful to explain them in that sense. For the Jews made an objection, and murmured at him because he had said that he was the bread which came down from heaven. Their objection referred not so much to his calling himself bread, as to his saying, that he had come from heaven. For their objection is: "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know; how then, sayeth he, I came down from heaven?"* Now then, see how our Saviour answers this objection. He employs no less than seven or eight verses, in removing it. Observing some little difficulty about the expressions which he has been using till now, and having, in verse 35, employed the words, "Coming to him," as equivalent to "believing in him," he from that moment, until the 47th verse, never once returns to the figure of bread or food, or any thing of that sort, to inculcate the necessity or obligation of believing in him, but speaks simply of faith in him, or of its equivalent, coming to him. "Murmur not among yourselves. No man *can come to me* except the Father who hath sent me draw him, and I will raise him up at the last day. Every one that hath heard of the Father, and hath learned, *cometh to me*, not that any man hath seen the Father, but he who is of God he hath seen the Father. Amen, amen, I say to you, *he that believeth in me* hath everlasting life."† So that he is most careful not to return again to the ideas of "eating and drinking." This explains clearly that his conversation, up to this moment, is of faith; and seeing that the expressions were of themselves calculated to convey that meaning, to those who heard them, and finding that Jesus himself so explained them, we conclude that he must have been speaking of faith.

* V. 42. † Vv. 43, 47.

Now, then, let us come to the second part of the discourse. The first portion he closes thus :—" Amen, Amen, I say unto you, he that believeth in me hath everlasting life." We may consider this as a proper epilogue or conclusion. But, from this moment, he begins to use another form of phraseology, which he had carefully avoided in the first part of his discourse, and it only remains to examine, whether it could convey the idea that he was still going on with the same topic, or must have led his hearers necessarily to believe that he was speaking of the real eating of his flesh, and drinking of his blood. This enquiry must be conducted on precisely the same principles. Now, I unhesitatingly assert, that there are differences of language in the words that follow, such as must necessarily have made the impression on his hearers, that is, those who were the true interpreters of his words, that he no longer meant to teach the same, but quite another doctrine.

In the first place, you will observe that our Saviour had previously avoided with care, and even at some sacrifice of the proprieties of speech, any expression, such as " eating the bread of life," much more " eating his own person." He had even abandoned the metaphor entirely, on seeing that some misunderstanding had resulted from using these expressions; and yet now, all on a sudden, he returns to them in a much stronger manner; and he does it in such a way that his hearers could not possibly have conceived from them the same meaning as before. He says,—" I am the living bread which came down from Heaven. If any man eat of this, he shall live for ever; and the bread which I will give, is my flesh, for the life of the world." He goes on afterwards to say,—" Amen, Amen, I say to you, except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye shall not have life in you. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live

by the Father, so he that eateth me, the same also shall live by me."* Now, here are a series of expressions, which, on a simple perusal, appear a much stronger and grosser violation of propriety of speech, if our Saviour meant to be understood figuratively. But, as I before intimated, if, up to this point, our Saviour had evidently given up the figure of eating and drinking, would he have returned to it again, without any necessity? And if, having seen that misunderstanding had before risen from it, he had discontinued it, can we believe that he would resume it, in a still more marked, and strongly characterised form, without some absolute necessity? This necessity could only result from the introduction of a new topic; as, otherwise, he might have persevered in the literal exposition. Here, then, we have one evidence of a transition in the discourse to a new topic; but there are other marked differences.

2dly. In the former part of his discourse, our Saviour always speaks of this bread as given by his Father. He says, "This is the bread which his Father had sent from Heaven and given to the Jews."† In the second portion which I have just read, he no longer speaks of his Father as giving this bread, but says that he himself gives it. The giver is different in the two cases, and we are consequently authorized to suppose that the gift likewise is different.

3rdly. Our Saviour, in the first part of the discourse, speaks of the consequence of this partaking of the bread of life, as consisting in our being brought or drawn unto him, or coming to him.‡ These expressions throughout the New Testament, are applied to faith.§ In a number of passages, where persons are said to be brought to Christ, it is always meant that they are to be brought to faith in him. This is the term always used in the first part of the discourse, and exactly corresponds to our interpretation of it concerning

* Vv. 51-58. † Vv. 32, 33, 39, 40, 43, 44. ‡ Vv. 35, 36, 44, 45.
§ This is fully proved in the "Lectures on the Real Presence," p. 59; which see. See Mat. xi. 28, Lu. vi. 47, Jo. v. 40, vii. 37.

faith. But in the second part, our Saviour never speaks of our being brought to him; but always of our abiding in him, or being incorporated with him, which expressions are always used to denote love and charity.* This phrase occurs in this sense, John xv. 4-9, 1 Jo. ii. 24, iv. 16-17. If, then, we find, in the first part of the discourse, the efficacy attributed to that which Christ inculcated, to be precisely what is ever attributed to faith, we see a strong confirmation that the discourse related to that virtue. But, similarly, when we find the expression changed, and one used which no longer applies to it, but to a totally different virtue, that is, to a union by love with Christ, we are equally authorised in considering a different subject introduced, and some institution alluded to, which is to unite us to Christ, not merely through faith, but still more through love.

These are striking distinctions between the first part of our Lord's discourse and the second: but the most important yet remains to be explained, and will require one or two preliminary remarks. One of the most delicate points in the interpretation of Scripture, is the explanation of figures, tropes, and similes. It is supposed by Protestants, that by eating the flesh of Christ, and drinking his blood, nothing more was meant than a figure or image of believing in him. If this be the case, I might observe, for instance, that if to eat the bread of life simply meant to believe in Christ, it follows that the verb to *eat*, is equivalent to the verb to *believe*. When, therefore, our Saviour speaks of eating his flesh, if eating be equivalent to believing, we must suppose that he meant believing in his flesh, a doctrine quite different, and totally distinct, from the other, and which no one has imagined our Saviour to have here taught. For, if the Jews offended, it was rather by too closely attending to the exterior and material appearances of things, and neglecting their spiritual value; nor can we suppose that our blessed Saviour, standing visibly before them in

* Vv. 57, 58.

the flesh, would take great pains to inculcate a belief in the truth of his corporal existence,—supposing it even to have been then possibly an object of faith.

But to return, I have just remarked, that tropes, and figures, and types, form the most delicate elements of Scriptural phraseology, as, in fact, they do of every language. Although it may appear, at first sight, that nothing is so vague and indefinite in a language as figurative speech, which may be varied without limits, yet is it, in truth, quite the reverse. For there is nothing in which we are less at liberty to vary from ordinary acceptation than in conventional tropical phraseology. So long as we are using terms in their literal sense, there may be some vagueness; but the moment society has fixed on any certain figurative adaptation of words, we are no longer free to depart from it, without risking the most complete misunderstanding of our words. Nothing is easier than to try this assertion by any proverbial expression of ordinary use; but I will content myself with one simple and obvious illustration. We know that mankind, in general have attached the idea of certain characteristic qualities to the names of some animals. Thus, when we say that a man is like a lamb, or like a wolf, we understand precisely, what is meant by the expression used, we know what characteristic it indicates. If we say that a person who is ill, or in pain, suffers like a lamb, we understand the force of the expression—that he is meek and patient under his affliction. If we used it in any different sense, we should necessarily deceive our hearers. Again, we understand by the figure of a lion, a character composed of a certain proportion of strength and prowess, mixed with a degree of generous and noble feeling. By the figure of a tiger, on the other hand, we understand great animal strength, but, at the same time, united with fierceness, cruelty, and brutality. These two animals have many qualities in common; but still, if we say that a man is like, or is a lion, our hearers understand from the ordinary received acceptation of the word, what is meant. But suppose you meant nothing more than that his

limbs were beautifully formed, that he was exceedingly agile; and that his power of leaping, or running, was very great, though these are all properties of the lion, would any body understand you? Would you not deceive your hearers? Most undoubtedly; and more by such a wrong use of an ordinary admitted form of figurative speech, than by any other departure from usual language. And if, in like manner, you called a man of great strength of limb, or agility, a tiger, you would be doing him a positive injustice; you would be guilty of calumny, because his hearers would not depart from the ordinary acceptation of the trope, and would impute ferocity to him.

Thus, therefore, if we can establish that any expression in any language, besides its own simple, obvious, natural, and literal acceptation, had an established and recognized metaphorical one, we have no choice—no right, to establish any meaning between the literal and that figurative one, and we have even no right to create another figurative one, unless we prove that it was in equal use. Now, the term *eating a person's flesh,* besides its sensible carnal meaning, had an established, fixed, invariable, tropical signification, among those whom our Saviour addressed; and therefore, we cannot depart from the literal meaning, or, if we do, it can only be to take, without choice, that figurative one. On this ground do I maintain, that a change of phraseology took place at v. 48; because, after that verse, our Saviour uses expressions which allow no choice between the real partaking of his body and blood, and a settled figurative signification, which no one will for a moment think of adopting. For I say, that whether we examine the phraseology of Scripture, or the language spoken at this day (which is but a dialect of that spoken at the time of our Saviour) in Palestine, where all the customs, manners, and feelings, are hardly one tittle changed since his time, or if we examine the language spoken by himself, we find the expression, to eat the flesh of any person, with a fixed, invariable, signification of doing by thought or deed, but

principally by false and calumnious accusation, a grievous injury to that individual. For instance, we have, in the 27th Psalm, this expression,—" While the wicked draw near against me, to eat my flesh ;"—that is, as all commentators upon it have agreed, to oppress, to vex, to ruin me. Again, in the 19th chapter of Job,—" Why do you persecute me, and are not satisfied with my flesh ;"—that is, with eating my flesh, calumniating and persecuting me by words, which, as I observed, is the most ordinary meaning of the metaphor. In the prophet Micah, again,—" Who also eat the flesh of my people :"—that is, who oppress them, and do them serious injury. In Ecclesiastes, (c. iv.)—" The fool foldeth his arms together, and eats his own flesh ;"—that is, he destroys, ruins, himself. These are the only passages where the phrase occurs in the old Testament, although allusion is made to the same idea in the 14th chapter of Job,—" They have opened their jaws against me,—they have filled themselves with me." In the New Testament, it occurs once or twice. St. James, (v. 3) speaking to the wicked, says,—" Your gold and silver is cankered, and the rust of them shall be for a testimony against you, and shall eat your flesh like fire." These are the only occasions on which the expression occurs in Scripture, except where it is spoken of the very act of really eating human flesh, and in every case it has the fixed and determinate tropical signification, of doing a serious injury or harm, particularly by calumny.

The next way to investigate the meaning of this phrase, is by seeing what force it has with those who have inherited, not only the country, but all the feelings, and most of the opinions, of those among whom our Saviour spoke ; that is, the Arabs, who now occupy the Holy Land. It is acknowledged by all biblical scholars, that their writings, their manners, and customs, and their feelings, form the richest mine for the illustration of Scripture, in consequence of their exact semblance on so many points to what is there described. It is singular that among these men, the most common form of expression to designate calumny, is to say that a person *eats the flesh* of

another. I have collected a number of examples from their native writers, and I will give you one or two. We have, for instance, in the code of Mohammedan law, the Koran, this expression:—"Do not speak ill one of another in his absence. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his brother, when dead? Verily you would abhor it."—That is, equally should you abhor calumny. One of their poets, Nawabig, writes,—"You say that you are fasting, but you are eating the flesh of your brother." In a poetical work, called the Hamasa, we read,—"I am not given to detraction, or to eating the flesh of my neighbour." We have also this idea, in constant allusions in their proverbs and fables.* Thus, it is completely understood by persons conversant with the language, that among the Arabs this phrase has no other meaning than wickedly to calumniate and detract an individual. And observe, that it is not in the words that this idea rests, but in the spirit of the language; for, in every instance which I have given, there is a variety of phrase, a different verb or substantive; so that it is not merely one term always used figuratively, but it is in every instance a varied phrase, so as to prove that the idea is in the mind of the hearer.

In the third place, we come to the language in which our Saviour himself spoke. It is remarkable, that in Syro-Chaldaic there is no expression for to accuse or calumniate, except *to eat a morsel of the person* calumniated; so much so, that in the Syriac version of Scripture, which was made one or two centuries after the time of our Saviour, there is no expression used throughout for the devil, which, in the Greek version, signifies *the accuser*, or calumniator, but the "eater of flesh." Whenever the Jews are said in the Gospel to have accused our Saviour, they are said, in this version, to have eaten a morsel or portion of him. In the Chaldaic parts of Daniel, when he is accused, it is said that the accusers eat a portion of him before the king. I could quote the authority of all the first living writers on the Hebrew, and other oriental languages,

* See texts and references in "Lectures," as above, p. 67, *seqq.*

in proof of these assertions: I need only mention the names of Michaelis, Winer, and Gesenius; all of whom expressly state, in different parts of their works, that the expression is always so used, and can mean nothing else.

Let us now come to the application of this discussion. The Jews, so far as we have any means of ascertaining the signification which they attached to the expression, *eating a person's flesh*, are proved to have given it a definite figurative meaning, in the sense of doing a grievous injury, especially by calumny. According to the natural, necessary rule of interpretation, we have no choice, if we put ourselves in the position of hearers,—if we enter into the minds of those to whom our Saviour spoke,—we have no choice, except between the literal signification and that only figurative one, that prevailed among them. And if any attempt be made to adopt any other figurative meaning, the least for which we have a right to ask, is an equal demonstration, that such figurative application was so generally used among the Jews, as that there was some chance, at least, of its being so understood.

Thus far, therefore, may suffice, on the examination of the phraseology used in our Saviour's discourse. We have found one class of phrases in the first part of the discourse, which could be understood only of faith; we have found in the second, expressions of a totally different character, which no criterion that the Jews possessed could lead them to interpret otherwise than in the literal sense, or in that one figurative sense, from which all must at once recoil.

But there is another ground of proof in our favour,—the expression now used by our Saviour, of drinking his blood, as well as eating his flesh. I have before observed, that no person interested in having his doctrine received by his auditors, can well be supposed to use an illustration of all others odious to them, one which appeared to command something against the most positive and sacred law of God. Now, we may observe two things; first, that the simple drinking of blood, under any circumstances, or in any extremity, was considered

a very great transgression of the law of God; and in the second place, that partaking of human blood was considered still worse,—the greatest curse which God could possibly inflict upon his enemies. Now, I would ask, is it credible that our Saviour, when proposing and recommending to his hearers, one of the most consoling and amiable of all his doctrines, would have voluntarily chosen to conceal it under such a frightful and revolting image? For it is obvious, that, as he had before used the ordinary figure of food to signify belief in him, and in his redemption, if they wished to be saved,—there was nothing to prevent his continuing the same phrase; or, if he chose to depart from the figurative word, can we imagine that he would have selected, of all others, one most likely to convey to his hearers' minds the most disagreeable and painful idea? Such a supposition is at once manifestly repulsive.

Now, with regard to the simple drinking of blood, under any circumstances, the prohibition belongs to the oldest law given to Noah, upon the regeneration of the human race, after the deluge.* But in the law of Moses, we read,—"If any man whosoever, of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who sojourn among them, eat blood, I will set my face against his soul, and will cut him off from among his people."† We find, consequently, that partaking of blood is never mentioned except as a dreadful crime. When the army of Saul had slaughtered the cattle in the blood, it was told to him, that "the people had sinned against the Lord; and he said, ye have transgressed."‡ And in the book of Judith, which, whatever any one's opinion of its canonical authority may be, is at least sufficient to show what the feelings of the Jews were, it is said of the people of Bethulia, that "for drought of water, they are to be counted among the dead; and they have a design even to kill the cattle and drink their blood..... therefore, because they do these things, it is certain they will be given up to destruction."§ Even in cases, then, of the

* Gen. ix. 4. † Lev. vii. 10. ‡ 1 Sam. xiv. 33. § Judith xi. 10-11.

last extremity, it was supposed, that if men proceeded so far as to taste blood, they had no chance of escape, but were sure to be delivered to utter destruction.

But if we come to speak of eating human flesh, or drinking human blood, we find it is never mentioned, except as the final curse which God could inflict on his people, or on their foes.—"Instead of a fountain and ever running river, thou gavest human blood to the unjust."* In the Apocalypse, it is written:—"Thou hast given them blood to drink, for they have deserved it."† And Jeremiah is commanded to prophesy, as a plague which would astonish all men, that the citizens should be obliged to "eat every man the flesh of his friend."‡ With these feelings on the part of the Jews, can you suppose that our Saviour, if he was desirous of proposing to them a doctrine, would have clothed it under such imagery, as was never used by them except to describe a heinous transgression of the divine law, or the denunciation of a signal curse and judgment from God? I am, therefore, warranted in arguing from this again, that such necessity obliged him to use these expressions, as that he could not possibly depart from them, if he wished to propound his doctrine to his hearers; and that he was driven to them, however revolting, because he could not adequately state it in any other words. And this necessity could only be their forming the literal expression of the doctrine proposed.

But, my brethren, hitherto we have been in a manner feeling our way; making use of such criterions, and such means of illustration, as we could collect from other sources; but I now come to the best and surest canon of interpretation. It is not often we have the advantage of having it recorded, in so many words, what was the meaning attached to the words spoken by those who heard them. We are generally obliged to investigate a text, as we have hitherto done, by bringing it into comparison with whatever passages resemble it in other places,—it is seldom we have the hearers' own explanation,—

* Wisd. xi. 7. † Apoc. xvi. 6. ‡ Jer. xix. 8, 9.

and still seldomer that we can arrive at the teacher's declaration of what he meant. These form the surest and most convincing sources of interpretation.

It is evident that the Jews, in the former part of the discourse, when our Saviour spoke of coming down from Heaven, had not understood him, so far, at least, as to call in question his having come down from Heaven. Our Saviour removes that difficulty, and goes on, again and again inculcating the necessity of belief in him. The Jews make no further objection, consequently they are satisfied; and so far as that doctrine went, there was nothing more to be said against it. If we are to understand our Saviour's discourse, in the latter part of the chapter, as only a continuation of the preceding, the Jews could have no new reason to object, because their only doubt about his coming down from Heaven had been removed. How comes it, therefore, that they did not feel satisfied with what came afterwards? It can only be, that they were convinced he had passed into a new subject. After our Saviour had removed their former objection, they had rejoined nothing; but no sooner did he come to the other section of his discourse, than they immediately complained:—no sooner did he say, "and the bread which I will give is my flesh,"—than they instantly murmured and exclaimed, "How *can* this man give us his flesh to eat?" They did not understand it as a continuation of the topic on which he had been previously addressing to them; they felt that the same discourse was not continued; for this was evidently a difficulty grounded on the supposition of a change of subject. Now, what was the difficulty? Manifestly the difficulty, or impossibility, of receiving the doctrine. But if they had thought he still spoke of faith in him, nothing was easier than to understand it. For they had already heard him speak at length on the subject, without complaint. But the very form of expression,—"how *can* this man give us his flesh to eat,"—proves that they believed him now to propose a thing impossible to perform—they could not conceive how it was to be carried

into effect. This could only be if they understood the words in their literal sense. Not only so, but this is agreed on all hands; for we are often upbraided for resembling the men of Capernaum, in taking the expressions addressed to them, in their carnal literal sense: so that they must be considered as agreeing with us in assuming the literal interpretation. So far, therefore, we have every reason to say, that they who, in ordinary circumstances, must be considered the best interpreters of any expression used, agreed that our Saviour's words could convey no meaning to them but the literal one. I say in ordinary circumstances, because, on any occasion, were you to read an account of what had taken place many years ago, and there were expressions so obscure that you did not understand them, and could any one who had been on the spot explain them, and tell you what they meant, you would admit his testimony, and allow that, being a man of those times, he had a right to be considered a competent authority. Therefore, so far as the Jews are concerned, and so far as hearers are the proper judges of the meaning of any expression addressed to them, we have their testimony with us, that our Saviour's expressions in the latter part of the discourse, were such as could not refer to faith, but related to a new doctrine, which appeared to them impossible.

We must not, however, be satisfied with this discovery; for a great and important question here arises. The Jews believed our Saviour's words in the literal sense, even as we do; but the important point is, were they right in doing so, or were they wrong? If they were right in taking our Saviour's words literally, we also are right,—if they were wrong in taking them literally, then we also are wrong. The entire question now hinges on this point,—the ascertaining, if possible, whether the Jews were right, or whether they were wrong, in taking Christ's words in their literal sense. A most accurate criterion by which to discover whether the Jews and ourselves be right or wrong, easily presents itself, and the process of applying it is a very simple one. Let us examine, in the first place, all those passages in the New Testament, where our Saviour's

hearers *wrongly* understood his figurative expressions in a literal sense, and, in consequence of this erroneous interpretation, raised an objection to the doctrine: and we shall see how our Lord acts on such occasions. We will then examine another case; that is, where his hearers take his words literally, and are *right* in doing so; and on that literal interpretation rightly taken, ground objections to the doctrine; and then we shall see how he acts in these cases. Thus we shall draw from our Saviour's method of acting, two rules for ascertaining whether the Jews were right or wrong; we shall see to which class our objection belongs—and we cannot refuse to abide by such a judgment.

In the first place, therefore, we have eight or nine passages in the New Testament where our Lord meant to be taken figuratively, and the Jews wrongly took his words in their crude literal sense, and objected to the doctrine. We find in every instance, without exception, that he corrects them. He explains that he does not mean to be taken literally, but in the figurative sense. The first is that well known passage in the interview with Nicodemus, (John iii.) Our Saviour said to him: "Amen, amen, I say to thee, unless a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus takes this, as the Jews do in our case, literally, and objects; "How can a man be born again when he is old?" He takes the words literally, so as really to mean a repetition of natural birth, and objects to the doctrine as impracticable and absurd. Our Redeemer replies; "Amen, amen, I say to thee, unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." This is manifestly an explanation of the doctrine, teaching him that a person must be born again spiritually, through the agency of water. He does not allow Nicodemus to remain in his mistake, which arose from a misinterpretation of the figurative expression. In the 16th chapter of St. Matthew, 5th verse, "Jesus said to his disciples; take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." The disciples understood him literally, as speaking of the bread used by the Pharisees and

Sadducees, and "thought among themselves, saying, because we have taken no bread." He lets them know that he was speaking figuratively; "Why do you not understand that it was not concerning bread I said to you, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." See how careful he is to correct them, although no great harm could come from this mistaken interpretation. But mark a very special circumstance with regard to this passage. Our Saviour saw that his disciples had misunderstood him, and accordingly, in the 12th chapter of St. Luke, which Doctor Townsend and others admit to contain a much later discourse than the previous one, our Saviour wished to make use of the same image to the crowds assembled: but remembering how he had been on a former occasion misunderstood by his apostles, he is careful to add the explanation. "Beware," he says, "of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy;" thus guarding against the recurrence of that misunderstanding which had previously taken place.

In John iv. 32, Jesus said to his disciples, "I have food to eat which you know not of;" and they asked, "hath any man brought him anything to eat?" Jesus said; "My food is to do the will of Him that sent me." Here again he corrects their mistake, and shows that he is speaking figuratively. In the 11th chapter of St. John, 11th verse, Jesus said to his disciples; "Lazarus, our friend, sleepeth." They here again mistake his meaning; "Lord, if he sleepeth he will do well:" they understood that refreshing sleep would be the means of his recovery; "but Jesus spoke of death, but they thought that he spoke of the repose of sleep. Then, therefore, Jesus said to them plainly: Lazarus is dead." No harm could have ensued from their continuing in their original belief, that Lazarus was likely to recover, as our Saviour intended to raise him from the dead; but he would not allow them to take his figurative words literally, and therefore he plainly said, "Lazarus is dead," showing that he meant the expression figuratively, and not literally. Another instance; when the disci-

ples took literally his expression in the 19th chapter of Matthew, "that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God," he, as usual, corrects them by adding, "that it was a thing impossible to man but not to God." They had taken his words literally, and consequently understood them of an absolute practical impossibility: but he did not mean the figure expressive of impossibility to be pushed so far; and accordingly he rejoins, that only humanly speaking such salvation was impossible, but that with God all things are possible.

In the eighth chapter Jesus says; "Whither I go you cannot come;"—and they said, "Will he kill himself?" But he replied; "You are from below, I am from above,—you are of this world, I am not of this world." That is to say, "I go to the world to which I belong, and you cannot come to it, as you do not belong to it."

In all these cases our Blessed Saviour explains his expressions: and there are three or four other passages of a similar nature, in every one of which he acts in a similar way. We have thus our first canon or rule, based upon the constant analogy of our Lord's conduct. Where an objection is raised against his doctrine, in consequence of his words being misunderstood, and what he meant figuratively being taken literally, he invariably corrects them, and lets his hearers know that he meant them to be taken figuratively. I know but of two passages which can be brought to weaken this rule; one is, where Jesus speaks of his body under the figure of the temple; "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up again." The other is, where the Samaritan woman understanding him to speak of water literally, and he seems not to explain, that he spoke only in figure. Now, if I had sufficient time to enter into an analysis of these two passages, which would occupy a considerable time, I could show you that these two instances are perfectly inapplicable to our case. I ground their rejection on a minute analysis of them, which takes them out of this class, and places them apart quite by

themselves.* But as the instances already cited establish the first rule quite sufficiently, I shall proceed at once to the other class of texts; that is, where objections were brought against Christ's doctrine, grounded upon his hearers taking literally what he so intended, and on that correct interpretation raising an objection.

In the 9th chapter of St. Matthew, our Saviour said to the man sick of the palsy; "Arise, thy sins are forgiven thee." His hearers took these words in the literal sense, when he meant them to be literal, and make an objection to the doctrine. They say—"This man blasphemeth;" that is to say, he has arrogated to himself the power of forgiving sins, which belongs to God. He repeats the expression which has given rise to the difficulty,—he repeats the very words that have given offence; "Which is it easier, to say thy sins are forgiven thee, or to take up thy bed and walk? But that you may know that the son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins...." We see, therefore, in the second place, that when his hearers object to his doctrine, taking it in the literal sense, and being right in so doing, he does not remove the objection, nor soften down the doctrine, but he insists on being believed, and repeats the expression. In the 8th chapter of St. John,—"Abraham, your father, rejoiced to see my day. He saw it and was glad." The Jews take his words literally, as though he meant to say that he was coeval with Abraham, and existed in his time. "Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?" They here again take his words literally, and are correct in doing so, and object to his assertion; and how does he answer them? By repeating the very same proposition,—"Amen, amen, I say to you, before Abraham was made, I am." In the 6th chapter of St. John, in the very discourse under discussion, we have an instance where the Jews say; "Is not this Jesus, whose father and mother we know,—how is it then, that he saith I came down from heaven?" They object to his assertion, and he insists on it,

* See it in "Lectures on the Eucharist," pp. 104-115.

and repeats it again and again, even three times, saying, that he had come down from heaven.

Thus, then, we have two rules for ascertaining, on any occasion, whether the Jews were right or wrong, in taking our Lord's words to the letter;—first, whenever they took them literally, and he meant them figuratively, he invariably explained his meaning, and told them they were wrong in taking literally what he meant to be figurative. Secondly, whenever the Jews understood him rightly in a literal sense, and objected to the doctrine proposed, he repeated the very phrases which had given offence. Now, therefore, apply these rules to our case. The difficulty raised is, "how can this man give us his flesh to eat?" If the words were meant figuratively, Jesus, according to his usual custom, will meet the objection, by stating that he wished to be so understood. Instead of this, he stands to his words, repeats again and again the obnoxious expressions, and requires his hearers to believe them. Hence we must conclude that this passage belongs to the second class, where the Jews were right in taking the different expressions to the letter, and consequently we too are right in so receiving them. Take the three cases together.

THE PROPOSITION.

1. "Unless a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

2. "Abraham, your father, rejoiced to see my day: he saw it and was glad."

3. "And the bread which I will give is my flesh for the life of the world."

THE OBJECTION.

1. "How can a man be born again when he is old?"

2. "Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?"

3. "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"

THE ANSWER.

1. "Amen, amen, I say to thee, unless a man be born again

of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven."

2. "Amen, amen, I say unto you, before Abraham was made, I am."

3. "Amen, amen, I say unto you, unless you eat the flesh of the son of man, and *drink his blood,* ye shall not have life in you."

In the propositions and objections, there is a striking resemblance; but the moment we come to the reply, there is manifest divergence. In the first text a modification is introduced, indicative of a figurative meaning; in the second there is a clear repetition of the hard word, which had not proved palatable. And in the third, does Jesus modify his expressions? Does he say, "Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh *of the son of man in spirit and by faith,* ye shall not have life in you?" Or does he repeat the very expression that has given offence? If he does, this passage belongs to the second class, when the hearers were right in taking his words literally, and objected upon that ground; and, therefore, we must conclude that the hearers of our Saviour, the Jews, were right so in taking these words in their literal sense. If they were right, we also are right, and are warranted in adopting that literal interpretation.

After this argument, I need only proceed in as summary a way as possible, to analyse our Saviour's answer; because I am not content with showing that he merely repeated the phrase, and thereby proving that the Jews were right in their version; but I am anxious to confirm this result, by the manner in which he made his repetition, and by the particular circumstances which give force to his answer.

The doctrine is now embodied into the form of a precept; and you all know that when a command is given, the words should be as literal as possible, that they should be couched in language clearly intelligible. For thus, our Saviour goes on to enjoin this solemn precept, and to add a severe penalty for its neglect. "Unless you eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink his

blood, you shall not have life in you." Here is a portion of eternal life to be lost or gained by every Christian; and can we suppose that our heavenly Master clothed so important a precept under such extraordinary *figurative* language as this? Can we imagine that he laid down a doctrine, the neglect of which involved eternal punishment, in metaphorical phrases of this strange sort? What are we therefore to conclude? That these words are to be taken in the strictest and most literal sense; and this reflection gains further strength, when we consider that it was delivered in a twofold form, as a command, and as a prohibition. "If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever;" and, "except ye eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink his blood, ye shall not have life in you." We have, therefore, the compliance with its promise, the neglect with its penalties, proposed to us. This is precisely the form used by our Saviour in teaching the necessity of the Sacrament of Baptism. "He that believeth and is baptised, shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be condemned." The two cases are parallel, and being precepts, both must be taken in their literal sense.

2. In the second place, our Saviour makes a distinction between the eating of his body and the drinking of his blood; and does so in a very marked and energetic manner; repeating the expressions over and over again. If this be a figure, there is no distinction between its two parts. If it be only descriptive of faith, if only an act of the mind and understanding be here designated, we cannot, by any stretch of fancy, divide it into two acts, characterised by the two bodily operations.

3. Again, Christ subjoins a strong asseveration; "Amen, amen," which is always used when particular weight or emphasis is to be given to words; when they are intended to be taken in their most simple and obvious signification.

4. In the fourth place, we have a qualifying determinating phrase, because it is said, "my flesh is meat *indeed*,"—that is to say, truly and verily, "and my blood is drink indeed." These expressions should certainly go far to exclude the

idea, that it was only figurative meat and drink, of which he spoke. When a person says that a thing is *verily* so, we must understand him, as far as it is possible for language to express it, in a literal signification.

5. It is evident that our Saviour is compelled to use that strong and harsh expression, "he that eateth me," a phrase that sounds somewhat painfully harsh when repeated, however spiritually it be understood. We can hardly conceive that he would, by preference, choose so strong and extraordinary an expression, not only so, but one so much at variance with the preceding part of his discourse, if he had any choice, and if this had not been the literal form of inculcating the precept.

I have given you a very slight and almost superficial analysis of our Saviour's answer. I might have quoted many other passages, had time served, to confirm the result at which we have arrived, and to prove that the Jews were perfectly warranted in literally determining the meaning of our Saviour's expressions. We now come to another interesting incident. The disciples exclaim; "this is a hard saying,"—the meaning of which expression is; "this is a disagreeable, an odious proposition." For it is in this sense that the phrase is used by ancient classical authors. "This is a hard saying, and who can hear it?"—"It is impossible," in other words, "any longer to associate with a man who teaches us such revolting doctrines as these." I ask, would they have spoken thus, had they understood him to be speaking only of believing in him? But what is our Saviour's conduct to the disciples? What is his answer? Why, he allows all to go away, who did not give in their adhesion, and at once believe him on his word; he says not a syllable to prevent their abandoning him, and "they walked no more with him." Can we possibly imagine that, if he had been speaking all the time in figures, and they had misunderstood him, he would permit them to be lost for ever, in consequence of their refusal to believe imaginary doctrines, which he never meant to teach them? For if they left him, on the supposition that they heard intolerable

doctrines, which, indeed, he was not delivering, the fault was not so much theirs; but might seem, in some manner, to fall on him whose unusual and unintelligible expressions had led them into error.

In the second place, what is the conduct of the Apostles? They remain faithful,—they resist the suggestions of natural feeling,—they abandon themselves to his authority without reserve. "To whom shall we go?" they exclaim, "thou hast the words of eternal life." It is manifest that they do not understand him, any more than the rest, but they submit their judgments to him, and he accepts the sacrifice, and acknowledges them for his disciples on this very ground. "Have I not chosen you twelve?"—"Are you not my chosen friends, who will not abandon me, but remain faithful in spite of the difficulties opposed to your conviction?" The doctrine taught, therefore, was one which required a surrender of human reasoning, and a submission, in absolute docility, to the word of Christ. But surely the simple injunction to have faith in him, would not have appeared so difficult to them, and would not have been so relentlessly enforced by their divine Master.

I will now sum up the argument, by a comparative supposition, which will place the two systems in simple contrast. Every action of our Saviour's life may be doubtless considered a true model of what we should practice, and in whatever capacity he acts, he must present the most perfect example which we can try to copy. He is, on this occasion, discharging the office of a teacher, and consequently may be proposed as the purest model of that character. Suppose a bishop of the established Church, on the one hand, and a bishop of the Catholic Church on the other, wished to recommend to the pastors of their respective flocks, the conduct of our Saviour here, as a guide to show them how to act when teaching the doctrines of religion. The one would have, consistently, to speak thus: "When you are teaching your children the doctrine of the Eucharist, lay it down in the strongest literal terms; say, if you please, emphatically, in the words of

the Church Catechism, that, 'the body and blood of Christ are verily and indeed received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper.' Teach your doctrine in these words to your children. If they say to you, as doubtless they will; 'but this is the doctrine of Popery,—this is the Catholic doctrine, we cannot believe in a Real Presence,'—follow the example of our Saviour; repeat the expression again and again; give no explanation, but insist, in the strongest terms, that Christ's flesh and blood must be truly and verily received; and let your scholars fall away and leave you, as teaching untenable opinions: for, by this course you will imitate the example left you by your divine Master." In other words, supposing you wished to give an outline of our Lord's conduct to one who did not believe in his divine mission, you would have to state, that, our blessed Saviour was in the habit of teaching with the greatest meekness and simplicity; that he laid down his doctrines in the most open and candid manner; that when on any occasion his hearers misunderstood him, and took literally what he meant figuratively, he was always accustomed to explain his meaning, to remove the difficulty, and meet every objection; but that, on this occasion alone, he completely departed from this rule. Although his hearers took his words literally, when he was speaking figuratively, he went on repeating the same expressions that had given rise to error, and would not condescend to explain his meaning. You would add, that even with his disciples he would enter into no explanation, but allowed them to depart; and that even his chosen apostles received the same unusual treatment.

But in the Catholic explanation of this chapter, the whole is consistent, from first to last, with the usual conduct and character of our Saviour. We find that he has to teach a doctrine: we believe it to be a promise of the Eucharist; he selects the clearest, most obvious, and literal terms. He expresses it in the most simple and intelligible words. The doctrine is disbelieved as absurd: objections are raised; our Saviour, as on all other similar occasions, goes on repeating the

expressions which have given offence, and insists upon their being received without reserve, thus evincing that he cares not to form a party, or gather around him a multitude of men; but that he wishes all to believe him, whatever his doctrines, and however grating to their feelings. He would not even deign to soften the trial of faith for his disciples, but allowed them to depart the moment they did not receive his words implicitly. Such is our case, perfectly consistent with the character of Christ, while the other runs counter to every thing we read of him in the entire history of his divine mission. Such a line of conduct we could unreservedly recommend to every Catholic teacher.

It may be said that I have had the whole argument my own way; that I have not examined the grounds on which Protestants profess to differ from our explanation of this chapter. I answer, that there can be only one true meaning in these words and phrases; and that, if our interpretation be right, it necessarily excludes their's. And I can insist upon this, that before we are called on to give up our interpretation, they show us that the Jews could have understood our Saviour speaking in their language, in the sense attached to it by others, in direct contradiction to ours. This, I maintain, has not yet been done. I do not consider myself, therefore, bound to go into the examination of other interpretations. I did not lay down a proposition, and then attempt to prove it, but I have proceeded by simple induction. I have given you a mere analysis of the text; I have proved our interpretation, by examining minutely words and phrases; and the result of all this has been, the Catholic interpretation; and, on this ground, do I admit and accept of that interpretation, to the exclusion of all others.

But I do not wish to conceal any thing, or shrink from any arguments or objections that may be made; and I have, therefore, taken considerable pains to look through different divines of the Protestant communion, who have defined their opinions upon this subject of the Eucharist, and to ascertain

what are the grounds,—not on which they object to the Catholic doctrine, but on which they base and build their figurative interpretation. But before touching on them, I hardly need remark, that Sherlock, Jeremy Taylor, and others, interpret this chapter of the Eucharist,—even though they dissent from us as to the nature of Christ's presence in this adorable Sacrament. In confirmation of the line of argument which I have followed, I will refer to the authority of two Protestant divines, among the most learned of modern Germany. Doctor Tittman, in examining this passage, allows that it is quite impossible to argue, that our Saviour was speaking of faith, from any interpretation which the Jews could have put upon it; for no usage of speech could have led them to such an explanation. The other authority to which I beg to refer, is also of a Protestant writer, better known by the biblical scholars of this country. It is Professor Tholuck of Halle, of whose extensive acquaintance with oriental languages, and the philological part of biblical literature, I can speak personally. He says, "It is manifest that a transition takes place in our Saviour's discourse."* I quote these testimonies merely in confirmation of what I have advanced.

To come now to objections against our explanation. I have taken some pains, as I before observed, to discover them; and I have been often surprised to find them so few, and so exceedingly superficial. I will content myself with one divine, who has summed up, in a few pages, what he considers the Protestant ground of interpretation. I allude to the Bishop of St. Asaph, Doctor Beveridge, who has pithily condensed all the reasons why this passage is not to be interpreted of the Eucharist. His arguments, in the main, are the same as others of the same opinion have given; and I will state his objections, and then answer in the words of Bishop Sherlock. The first argument which he gives for not interpreting this chapter of

* Comment. on Jo. vi.

the Eucharist, is, "that the Sacrament was not yet ordained."* Here is the other Bishop's answer:—"Suppose we should understand this eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of man, of feeding on Christ by faith or believing; yet they could understand this no better than the other. It is plain that they did not, and I know not how they should. For to call bare believing in Christ, eating his flesh and drinking his blood, is so remote from all propriety of speaking, and so unknown in all languages, that to this day, those who understand nothing more by it but believing in Christ, are able to give no tolerable account of the reason of the expression."†

To this we may add, that when our Lord inculcated to Nicodemus the necessity of Baptism, that sacrament was not yet instituted; and therefore, in like manner, it is no sound argument to say, that, because the Eucharist was not instituted, he could not speak of it as well. These are sufficient answers to the objection; nor do I think that, even without them, it could be set against the varied line of argument, and the minute analysis of the text which I have given you this evening.

The second and third reasons why this discourse should be taken figuratively, are, that our Saviour says, that those who eat his flesh and drink his blood shall live, and they who eat and drink it not shall die. These are Doctor Beveridge's second and third argument, also much insisted on by Doctor Waterland. The reply to this is very simple—there is always a condition annexed to God's promises. "He that believeth in me hath everlasting life;"—"Except ye eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink his blood, ye shall not have life in you." Does the first mean that nothing more than faith is required for salvation? Is not each one bound to keep the commandments of God? The meaning clearly is,—he who believeth with such conditions, with such a fructifying faith as shall produce good works, shall have everlasting life. Here,

* "Thesaurus theolog." *Lond.* 1710, vol. ii. p. 271.
† "Practical Discourse of Religious Assemblies." *Lond.* 1700, pp. 364-7.

as every where else, a condition is annexed to the precept,—for we must always understand the implied condition, that the duty be well and rightly discharged; and thus, in the present case, eternal life is promised only to those who worthily partake of the blessed Eucharist.

These are, literally, the only arguments brought by this renowned theologian of the English Church in favour of her interpretation. There is one popular argument, however, which I will slightly notice; because, popular as it may be, it is of no solid weight whatever. It is taken from the 64th verse:—"The flesh profiteth nothing; the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and life." Our Lord is here supposed to explain all his former discourse, by saying that the expressions he had used were all to be taken spiritually or figuratively. Upon which supposition I will only make two remarks. First, that the words "flesh" and "spirit," when opposed to one another in the New Testament, never signify the literal and spiritual sense of an expression, but always the natural and the spiritual man, or human nature, as left to its own impulses, and as ennobled and strengthened by grace. If you will read the nine first verses of the eighth chapter of St. Paul to the Romans, you will see the distinction accurately drawn: and, if necessary, this explanation may be confirmed from innumerable other passages. But, secondly, it is unnecessary to take the trouble of quoting, or even reading them, because all modern Protestant commentators agree in this explanation, and allow that nothing can be drawn from that one verse, for setting aside our interpretation. I need only mention the names of Kuinoel, Horne, Bloomfield, and Schleusner, to satisfy you that neither want of learning, nor partiality for our doctrines, has dictated that decision.*

* It having been intimated to me, that several of my audience considered this answer too general, and indicative of a desire to slur over an important difficulty, I took the opportunity, in the following lecture, to return to this subject, and quote the authorities at full; as given in the "Lectures on the Eucharist," pp. 140-144. As the subject of that lecture was thereby necessarily intruded on, the interpolation, if I may so call it, will be omitted in the publication, and the reader who desires full satisfaction may consult the work just referred to.

But there is one Protestant commentator to whom I have appealed, who seems to let out the secret, and display the real ground on which the figurative interpretation of this chapter rests. "Still more," writes Dr. Tholuck, "were it not figurative, it would prove too much, namely, the Catholic doctrine!"† Here is the whole truth; but, my brethren, can such reasoning be for a moment tolerated. The falsehood of the Catholic dogma is assumed in the first instance, and then made the touchstone for the interpretation of texts, on which its truth or falsehood must rest! And this by men who profess to draw their belief from the simple discovery of what is taught in Scripture!

At our next meeting we shall endeavour, with God's help, to enter on the second part of our investigation; the discussion of the words of Institution. In the meantime, I entreat you to ponder and examine carefully the arguments which I have this evening advanced, and try to discover if any where they be assailable. If you find, as I flatter myself you will, that they resist all attempts at confutation, you will be the better prepared for the much stronger proof, which rests upon the simple and solemn words of consecration.

† Comment. p. 131.

Errata in the two preceding Lectures.

Lecture XII, p. 88, line 4 from bottom, for *Vienna* read *Vienne.*
Lecture XIII, p. 118, line 6, for *comment* read *command.*

LECTURE THE FIFTEENTH.

TRANSUBSTANTIATION.

PART II.

MATT. xxvi. 26-28.

'*And while they were at supper, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake, and gave to his disciples, and said; Take ye and eat,* THIS IS MY BODY. *And taking the chalice, he gave thanks, and gave to them, saying; Drink ye all of this, for* THIS IS MY BLOOD *of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many, for the remission of sins.*"

IN my last discourse, regarding the Blessed Eucharist, I entered at length into the examination of the sixth chapter of St. John, which I considered as the promise of the institution of that holy sacrament; and I proved to you, from the expressions there used, and from the whole construction of our Saviour's discourse, and from his conduct both towards those who disbelieved, and towards those who believed his words, that he truly did declare that doctrine on the subject which the Catholic Church yet holds,—that is so say, that he promised some institution to be provided in his Church, whereby men would be completely united to him, being truly made partakers of his adorable body and blood, and so applying to their souls the merits of his blessed passion.

According to my engagement, therefore, I proceed this evening to examine those far more important passages that treat of the institution of this heavenly rite, and see how far we may from them draw the same doctrine as we discovered in the promise. In other words, we shall endeavour to ascertain if Jesus Christ really did institute some sacrament whereby

men might partake of and participate in his blessed body and blood. You have just heard the words of St. Matthew, in which he describes the institution of the Eucharist. You are aware that the same circumstances are related, and very nearly the same words used, by two other evangelists, and also by St. Paul, in his first epistle to the Corinthians. It is not necessary to read over the passages in them all, because it is with reference to words common to all that I have principally to speak this evening.

We have here two forms of consecration, "this is my body, —this is my blood." I own that to construct an argument on these words is more difficult than it was on the sixth chapter of St. John; simply and solely for this reason, that it is impossible to add strength or clearness to the expressions themselves. It is impossible for me, by any commentary or paraphrase that I can make, to render our Saviour's words more explicit, or reduce them to a form more completely expressing the Catholic doctrine than they do of themselves. "This is my body,—this is my blood." The Catholic doctrine teaches that it *was* Christ's body and that it *was* his blood. It would consequently appear as though all we had here to do, were simply and exclusively to rest at once on these words, and leave to others to show reason why we should depart from the literal interpretation which we give them.

Before, however, completely taking up my position, I must make two or three observations on the method in which these texts are popularly handled, for the purpose of overthrowing the Catholic belief. It is evident that the words, simply considered,—if there were no question about any apparent impossibility, and if they related to some other matter,—would be at once literally believed by any one who believes at all in the words of Christ. His reasoning would naturally be, "Christ has declared this doctrine in the simplest terms, and I therefore receive it on his word." There must be a reason, as I will fully prove to you just now, for departing in this case from the ordinary, simple interpretation of the

words, and giving them a tropical meaning. It is for those who say that Christ, by the words "this is my body," meant no more than, "this is the figure of my body," to give us a reason why their interpretation is correct. The words themselves express that it is the body of Christ. Whoever tells me that it is not the body of Christ, but only its figure, must satisfy me how one expression is equivalent to the other. I will prove too, presently, as I just said, that this is necessarily the position in which the controversy is placed; but I cannot resist the desire of exhibiting to you the difficulties in which persons find themselves involved, who wish to establish the identity of the two phrases, and the extremely unphilosophical methods which they consequently follow. I will take, as an illustration, a passage in a sermon delivered a few years ago, in a chapel of this metropolis, forming one of a series of discourses against Catholic doctrines, by select preachers. This is on the doctrine of Transubstantiation, and is directed to prove that it is unscriptural, and ought not to be held. Now hear, I pray you, the reasoning of this preacher on our subject. "We contend that we must understand the words figuratively," —he is speaking of Christ's words in my text,—"because there is no necessity to understand them literally." What sort of a canon of interpretation is here laid down! That no passage of the Scripture is to be taken literally, unless a necessity can be shown for it! that we must on principle take every thing as figurative, till those who chuse the literal interpretation demonstrate that there exists a positive necessity for taking it so! I contend that the obvious rule is to take words literally, unless a necessity be proved for taking them figuratively: and I wish to know how such a rule would stand before those who deny the divinity of Christ, that we are not allowed to take any passage literally, unless a necessity for it be first demonstrated. Therefore, when Christ is called God, or the Son of God, we must first prove a necessity for believing him to be God, before we can be justified in drawing conclusions from the words of those texts themselves!

He proceeds; "and because it was morally impossible for his disciples to have understood him literally." Now this is just what requires proof, because on this point hinges the entire question —it is not a proof itself, but the proposition to be proved. Well, the preacher seems to think so too, and goes on to give a proof in the following words:—"for, let me ask, what is more common, in all languages, than to give to the sign the name of the thing signified? If you saw a portrait, would you not call it by the name of the person it represents, or if you looked on the map at a particular country, would you not describe it by the name of that country?" I ask is this a proof? But still further, let us see what examples he chooses,—"a portrait" —as if there were no difference between taking up a piece of bread, and saying, "this is my body," and pointing at a picture, and saying "this is the king!" As if language and ordinary usage do not give the picture that very name; but more than that, as if it were not the very essence of that object to represent another. What other existence has a portrait, than as a type or representative? does not its very idea suppose its being the resemblance of a person? But, suppose I hold up an ingot of gold without the king's effigy, and said, "this is the king's body," would my audience thereby understand that I meant to institute a symbol of his person, on the ground that had I showed them his effigy on the coin, and said, "this is the king," they would have easily understood me to intimate that it was his portrait? The second instance he gives is "a map;"—what is a map but the representation of a country? What existence has it but so far as it depicts the forms of that country? If it fail to represent it, it is no map, and the expression would be no longer intelligible. But when Christ says of bread, "this is my body," there is no natural connexion or resemblance between the two; there is nothing to tell men that he meant, "this is an emblem of my body." In all such assertions there may be declamation; but there is manifestly no proof; nothing to demonstrate that the Catholic interpretation must be rejected.

I will quote another passage from a writer better known, I mean the author of the "Introduction to the Critical Study of the Scriptures." He says that the Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation is "erected on a *forced* and *literal* construction of our Lord's declaration." The Catholic doctrine is based on a forced and literal interpretation of Scripture! I would ask, where on earth were these two words put in juxtaposition in any argument before?—to call the literal the forced interpretation! I do not believe that in any case, except a controversy on religion an author would have allowed himself to fall into such a proposition. If any of you had a cause before a court, and your counsel were to open it by saying, that the case must be adjudged in favour of his client because the adverse party had nothing in their favour except "a literal and forced construction" of the statute provided for the case, would not the client consider this equivalent to a betrayal of his cause? For, conceding thus much, is literally granting that there is nothing to be said on your side. That any writer should, upon an argument so constructed, condemn the Catholic doctrine, is really extraordinary; it is surely accustoming students in theology, if the Introduction be meant for them, as well as other readers, to very superficial and incorrect reasoning, and ought consequently to be reprobated in severe terms.

These may serve as specimens how far from easy it is to establish grounds even of plausibility, for the rejection of the Catholic doctrine. But there are graver and more solid writers, who satisfactorily admit, that so far as our Lord's expressions go, all is in our favour. I will quote one passage from Paley's 'Evidences of Christianity,' where he is giving proofs that the Gospels were not books merely made up for a certain purpose, but that whatever they relate did really happen. He says: "I think also the difficulties arising from the conciseness of Christ's expression, 'this is my body,' would have been avoided in a made-up story." Why so? I may ask, if nothing is more common than to call signs by the name of things signified, and this was as obvious and intelligible a

figure as calling a picture of the king by his name. He continues: "I allow that the explanation given by Protestants is satisfactory; but it is deduced from a minute comparison of the words in question with forms of expression used in Scripture, and especially by Christ himself on other occasions. No writer would have arbitrarily and unnecessarily cast in his reader's way, a difficulty, which, to say the least, it required research and erudition to clear up."*

Here then it is granted, that to arrive at the Protestant interpretation, requires erudition and research; consequently that it is not the simple, obvious meaning which these words present. When you say, that to establish a construction of a passage, it requires study and learning, I conclude that it is his duty who has chosen that construction to make use of these means; and the burden rests on him of proving his interpretation, not on those who adopt the literal and obvious sense. Therefore, when the explicit, plain, and literal construction of the words is that which we adopt, it becomes the task of those who maintain us to be wrong, and say that the words "this is my body," did not mean that it was the body of Christ, but only its symbol,—I contend, it becomes their duty to prove their figurative interpretation.

Their argument necessarily takes a two-fold form; and reasons must be brought by them to prove,—first, that they are authorized, and secondly that they are compelled to depart from the literal meaning. This is usually attempted by two distinct arguments. First, an attempt is generally made to establish that our Saviour's words may be taken figuratively; that they may be so interpreted as to signify, "this represents my body, this represents my blood," by bringing together a number of passages, in which the verb 'to be,' is used in the sense of *to represent*, and thence concluding that here, in like manner, it may have the same meaning. In the second place, to justify such a departure from the literal sense, it is urged, that by it we encounter so many contradictions, so many gross violations of the law of nature, that, however

* Par. ii. c. iii.

unwilling, we must abandon it, and take the figurative signification. This is the clearest and completest form in which the argumentation can be presented. The author, for instance, whom I quoted just now, after giving us his reason why we are not obliged to take these words literally, inasmuch as there is no necessity for it,—gives us as a further motive for not understanding them so, that the literal meaning leads to direct contradictions, and gross absurdities. These are the two principal heads of objection which I shall have to discuss.

First, then, it is urged that we may take our Saviour's words figuratively, because there are many other passages of Scripture, in which the verb 'to be,' means 'to represent,' and a great many texts of a miscellaneous character are generally thrown together into a confused heap, to establish this point. In order to meet them, it is necessary to classify them: for although there is one general answer which applies to all, yet there are specific replies, which meet each separate class. The person who has given the fullest list of such texts, and, indeed, who has given sufficient to establish this point, if it can be established by such a line of argument, and the person above all others most popularly quoted, is Dr. Adam Clarke, in his Discourse on the Eucharist. He is, in fact, cited or copied by the two authors to whom I have already referred. I will give you all his quotations, only distributing them into classes, so as to simplify my answers.

In the first class I place all those passages of this form: Genesis xli. 26, 27; "And the seven good kine *are* seven years." Daniel, vii. 24; "The ten horns *are* ten kingdoms." Matthew xiii. 38, 39; "The field *is* the world, the good seed *are* the children of the kingdom, the tares *are* the children of the wicked one. The enemy *is* the devil, the harvest *is* the end of the world, the reapers *are* the angels." 1 Cor. x. 4; "The rock was Christ." Gal. iv. 24; "For these *are* the two covenants." Rev. i. 20; "The seven stars *are* the angels of the seven churches." Here, it is said, are a great many

passages, in which the verb 'to be,' means 'to represent;' and this forms the first class of texts.

Secondly, John x. 7; "I am the door." John xv. 1; "I am the true vine."

Thirdly, Gen. xvii. 10; "This is my covenant between thee and me." Which is commonly supposed to mean, this is a representation or image of my covenant.

Fourthly, Exodus xii. 11; "This is the Lord's passover."

Here are four classes of passages. I wish, first of all, to show you, that independantly of the general answer which I shall give to all, or at least of the minuter examination which I shall make of the first class, and which will apply to many at least of the others,—the texts comprised in the three last classes have nothing at all to do with the subject; for the verb 'to be' does not signify in them 'to represent;' and we must consider only those to the purpose, in which it does mean to represent. "I am the door;" "I am the true vine." I ask any one, on reflection, to answer,—does 'to be' mean in these passages 'to represent?' Substitute the latter verb; for if the two be equivalent, the one must fit in the other's place. Compare them with the words, "the rock was Christ." If you say, "the rock represented Christ," the sense is the same, because 'to be' is its equivalent. "I *am* the door;" I *represent* the door,—that is not Christ's meaning. "I am *as* the door, I resemble the door;" that was what he wished to express. These passages consequently must be at once excluded. Because it is evident, that if we substitute the phrase considered equivalent, we produce a totally different sense from what our Saviour intended. Moreover, the answers which I will give to the first class of passages, will apply fully to these; but I consider this as a sufficient specific answer.

Secondly, "This is my covenant between thee and me." Does this mean that circumcision, of which this text speaks, represents, or was the figure of the covenant? Granted for a moment: God clearly explains himself; for he says explicitly

in the next verse, that it is the sign: "And it shall be a sign or token of the covenant." Therefore, if he meant to say that this was a figure of the covenant, he goes on to explain himself afterwards; consequently no mistake could arise from his words. In the second place, circumcision was not only a sign, but the instrument or record of the covenant. Now common usage warrants us in calling by the name of the covenant, the document or articles whereby it is effected. If we hold in our hands a written treaty, we should say, "this is the treaty." But leaving aside these answers, it is easy to prove that the verb here noways means 'represents,' and that there is no allusion to type or figure in the case. This is evident, by comparing this text with every other in which a similar expression occurs. In all, the introductory formula signifies, that what follows is truly a matter of compact or covenant; so that this would be the construction of the entire text: "What follows *is* my covenant between you and me; you shall practice circumcision." Thus, for instance, Is. lix. 21; "This is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; my spirit which is in thee and my words, shall not depart out of thy mouth." Does God there mean, this is the figure of my covenant? Do not the words signify, "what I am going to express is my covenant," so that this is only an introductory or preliminary formula? Another instance, 1 Sam. xi. 2; "In this will I make my covenant with you, in boring out your right eyes." Here again the hard covenant follows the introductory phrase. And this interpretation is further confirmed, by the many passages in which God premises, "this is my statute or command," after which follows the very command or statute. In like manner then, the words, "this is my covenant," no more mean "this represents my covenant," but simply, "what follows is my covenant." The examination of other passages, were there no other consideration, would thus take this out of the class applicable to our controversy; but when we further see, that in the next verse God expressly calls that rite a sign of his covenant, it is plain that the form

of expression is not parallel, as here an explanation is subsequently given, which is not the case with the words of institution.

Thirdly. The fourth class contains the text, "This is the Lord's passover." This is an interesting text, not on account of its own intrinsic worth, but on account of some particular circumstances connected with its first application to this doctrine. It was on this text, and almost exclusively on the strength of this text, that the Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation was rejected; it was on this that Zuinglius, when he attempted to deny it at the time of the Reformation, mainly built; for he found no other text whereon to ground his objection against the words, "this is my body," being literally taken. Now I think I can easily prove to you that the verb "is," has here its literal meaning. As the circumstances of his discovery are curious, I beg leave to relate his own account. Though the narrative weighs greatly in our favour, I feel a repugnance to detail it; it is degrading to humanity and to religion, that anything so discreditable, so debasing, should be recorded by any writer of himself, and I would willingly pass it over were it not that stern justice to the cause I am defending, imperatively demands that I show the grounds on which the Catholic doctrine of the Real Presence was first supposed to be disproved. Zuinglius, therefore, tells us himself—that he was exceedingly anxious to get rid of the Catholic doctrine of the Real Presence, but found a great difficulty in arguing against the natural and obvious signification of these words, "this is my body,—this is my blood"—that he could find nothing in Scripture to warrant him in departing from the literal sense, except passages manifestly relating to parables.

It was on the 13th of April, early in the morning, that the happy revelation occurred. His conscience, he says, urges him to relate the circumstances which he would gladly conceal; for he knows they must expose him to ridicule and obloquy. He found himself in a dream, disputing with one who pressed him close, while he seemed unable to defend his

opinion, till a monitor stood at his side, "I know not," he emphatically adds, "whether he were white or black," who suggested to him this important text. He expounded it next morning, and convinced his hearers that, on the strength of it, the doctrine of the Real Presence was to be abandoned!

Such is the account given us of the first discovery of a text sufficient to reject the Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation, and that text is the one which I have just quoted to you from the 12th chapter of Exodus, 11th verse. "This is the Lord's passover." I waive several considerations which might be drawn from the circumstances in which these words were spoken, of a natural tendency to teach the Israelites that a typical institution was here made, whereas at the Last Supper there was nothing done or said, which could intimate that any such intention existed: also some remarks regarding the phrase itself as intelligible to the Jews, from the custom of calling sacrifices by the name of the object for which they were offered. For, in truth, the text is of no value whatever towards establishing the point that 'to be' signifies 'to represent.'

In fact, one of the most learned of modern Protestant commentators observes, that the construction is such as always signifies, "this is *the day* or *feast* of the Passover, *sacred to* the Lord." The grounds of this translation can hardly be understood, without reference to the original language; in which, as he observes, what is translated by a genitive, "the Lord's," is dative, and in this construction signifies "sacred to the Lord; and then the verb *is* has its own obvious signification; as much as when we say, "this is Sunday," which certainly does not mean, "this represents Sunday." To prove this point, he refers to two or three other passages, where exactly the same form of expression occurs, and shows that it always has a similar meaning. For instance, in Exodus xx. 10, "This is the sabbath of the Lord," the dative form is here used; "This is the sabbath *to* the Lord," meaning the sabbath sacred to him. Now the construction in the original is

precisely the same in both texts: nor is it ever used in the sense of a thing being an emblem or a sign. In another text, (Exod. xxxii. 5) "the festival of the Lord," the same construction occurs, signifying the same; and finally on the 27th verse of the very chapter in question, we have, "this is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover;" that is, according to the original, "the sacrifice of the passover (*sacred*) *to* the Lord." So that from these parallel expressions, where in the original exactly the same construction occurs, he concludes that the verb 'to be' is here literally taken.* Hence, this text affords no aid to the argument which would consider the verb substantive to mean 'represent,' in the words of institution; the interpretation put upon it is incorrect,—and consequently, when Zuinglius learnt it from his monitor as a sufficient ground for rejecting the Catholic doctrine, may we not conclude that it was not a spirit of truth that appeared to him, and that he rejected our doctrine on grounds not tenable, and by attributing to words a meaning which they cannot have?

I have thus first set these passages aside,—because, according to the system I have always followed, I wish my answers to be strictly and individually applicable to each part of the case; although the remarks which I shall make on the first class of passages, where I own that 'to be' means 'to represent,' will apply to almost every one of them.

Well, then, it is argued that the words "this is my body, this is my blood," may be rendered by "this represents my body, this represents my blood," in other words, figuratively, because in certain other passages quoted, it is obvious that the two terms are equivalent. The only way in which the argument can hold, is by supposing that the texts quoted form what is well known by the term *parallel passages*, to the words of institution. In the first instance, I will ask a simple question. In these passages, the verb 'to be,' means 'to represent:' but there are some thousands of passages in Scripture, where the verb 'to be' does *not* mean 'to represent.' I ask

* Rosenmüller in loc.

the reason, why the words of institution are to be detached from these thousand passages, and interpreted by the others? I want some good reason to authorize me in classifying it with these, and not with the others. It is no reason to say, that it is necessary or convenient to take it so; I want some reason why it must be so. Therefore, merely considering the question in this indefinite way, we have a right to ask, why these words should be detached from the multitude of places where 'to be' has its proper signification, and joined to the few that are always to be considered the exception.

But let us join issue a little more closely. What are parallel passages? Are any two passages where the same word occurs to be considered parallel? There must be something more necessary to constitute parallelism. Well, I am willing to take Horne's rule for this source of interpretation. It is briefly this: that when struck with any resemblance between passages, you must not be content with similarity of words; but examine, "whether the passages be sufficiently similar, that is, *not only whether the same word*, but also *the same thing*, answers together."* The rule is translated from another writer, and is more clearly expressed in the original, which says, that we must see "whether both passages contain the *same thing*, and *not only the same word*.† And the commentator on this author makes this remark: "We must therefore hold that similitude *of things*, not of words, constitutes a parallelism."

We have a rule, then, laid down, that two passages are not parallel, or, in other words, that we may not use them to interpret one another, merely because the same word is in them, unless the same thing also occur in both. Let us, therefore, ascertain whether the same thing occurs, as well as the same words, in all the passages of this class. But first, as an illustration of the rule, let me observe that, when in my last discourse I quoted several texts, I not only pointed out the same words in them, but I was careful to prove that the same circumstances occurred,—that is, that our Saviour made use of expressions which were taken literally when he meant

* Vol. ii. p. 531. † Ernesti, p. 61.

to be understood so, that objections were raised, and that he acted precisely in the same manner as in the text under examination; and from this similarity of things, I reasoned, considering the passages as parallel in consequence of it. What is *the thing* in all the passages united in this class, that we may see if it be likewise found in the words of Institution? We may exemplify the rule in these passages themselves. Suppose I wish to illustrate one of them by another, I should say, this text—"The seven kine are seven years," is parallel with "The field is the world," and both of them with the phrase "these are the two covenants;" and I can illustrate them one by another. And why? Because in every one of them the *same thing* exists;—that is to say, in every one of these passages, there is the interpretation of an allegorical teaching—a vision in the one, a parable in the second, and an allegory in the third. I do not put them into one class, because they all contain the verb 'to be,' but because they all contain the same thing—they speak of something mystical and typical, the interpretation of a dream, an allegory, and a parable. Therefore having ascertained that in one of these the verb 'to be' means 'to represent,' I conclude that it has the same sense in the others; and I frame a general rule, that wherever such symbolical teaching occurs, these verbs are synonymous. When, therefore, you tell me that "this is my body" may mean "this represents my body," because in those passages the same verb or word occurs with this sense, I must, in like manner, ascertain, not only that the word 'to be' is common to the text, but that the same thing is to be found in ours as in them; in other words, that in the forms of institution there was given the *explanation of some symbol*, such as the interpretation of a vision, a parable, or a prophecy. If you show me this, as I can show it in all the others, then I will allow this to be parallel with them.

This similarity of substance will readily be discovered by looking closely into those passages quoted by Dr. Adam Clarke as parallel, which I have placed in this class.—"The seven kine are seven years," Joseph is interpreting the dream

of Pharaoh; "And the ten horns are ten kings," Daniel is receiving the interpretation of his vision; "The field is the world," Our Saviour is interpreting a parable; "The rock was Christ," St. Paul is professedly explaining the symbols of the old law, and tells us that he is doing so, and that he spoke of a spiritual rock; "These are the two covenants," St. Paul again interpreting the allegory upon Agar and Sarah; "The seven stars are the angels of the seven Churches," St. John receiving the explanation of a vision. All these passages belong to one class, because they refer to similar things;—therefore, before I join to them the words "This is my body," you must show me that it enters into the same class by the same circumstance; you must show me that not only the verb "to be," which occurs in a thousand other instances, is there; but that it is used under the same conditions, in a case clearly similar to these by the explanation of allegories or dreams or parables, or any other mystical method of teaching, that you please. Until you have done this, you have no right to consider them all as parallel, or interpret it by them.

But, before finishing this consideration, allow me to observe, that not only, in every one of the instances I have quoted, is it manifest from the context that a parable, a vision, or an allegory, is explained; but the writers themselves tell us that they are going so to interpret. For, in the examples from Genesis, Daniel, and St. Matthew, they say, "This is the interpretation of the dream"—"This is a vision which I saw"—"This is the meaning of the parable which I spoke;"—so that we are expressly told that the speakers are going to interpret. St. Paul to the Galatians is equally careful "which things are *an allegory*, FOR, these are the two covenants." In the words of institution, Our Saviour does not say this is an allegory—he does not give the key to interpret his words as in the other cases. St. Paul to the Corinthians, "All these things were done to them in figure, and they drank from the *spiritual* rock; and the rock" (that is, the *spiritual* rock) "was Christ." In the Apocalypse, it is said to Jehu, "Write down the things

which thou hast seen; the mystery of the seven stars," which, in the language familiar to St. John, signifies the *symbol* of the seven stars. It is after this introduction that he says, "And the seven stars *are* the angels of the seven Churches." So that in every other case, the writer is careful to let us know that he is going to deliver the interpretation of a figurative teaching; I require, therefore, before you compel me to apply these passages to the explanation of the words of institution, that you show me, that a similar instruction is found in them as in those other passages.

But let us try the process of our opponents on another application. In the first verse of the Gospel of John, we have this remarkable expression,—"And the word was God." Now, this has always been considered by believers in the divinity of Christ, as an exceedingly strong text, and all its force lies in that little syllable "was." So strong has it appeared, that in different ways attempts have been made to modify the text,—either by separating it into two, or by reading "the word was of God." What is the use of all this violence, if the word "was" may mean "represents?" If we are justified in giving it that interpretation in other cases, why not do it here? Compare these three texts together, and tell me which most resembles one another.

"The word was God."
"The rock was Christ."
"This is my body."

If in the third of these we may change the verb, because we can do so in the second, what is to prevent our doing it in the first? And instead of the word "was God," why not interpret, "the word represented God?" Suppose any one to reason thus, and still further to strengthen his arguments by saying, —that in 2 Cor. iv. St. Paul tells us, that Christ is "the image of God;" and in Coloss. i. says of him, "who is the image of the invisible God,"—might he not as justly conclude, that Christ being only the image of God according to St. Paul, the words of St. John may be well explained, conformably, as only inti-

mating, that he represented God? No one ever thought of reasoning in this way; and if any person had, he would have been answered, that these words cannot be explained or interpreted by "the rock was Christ" because St. Paul is manifestly explaining an allegory, or using a figurative form of teaching, of which there is no sign in St. John. You would be told that you have no right to interpret the one by the other, merely because in both, the sentence consists of two nouns with a verb between them; for that is a parallelism of words and not of things. You must first show that St. John, in this instance, was teaching in parables, as Matthew, Daniel, and the others whom I have quoted. Until you do this, you have no right to interpret the phrase, "the word was God," as parallel with "the rock was Christ." Just, therefore, in the same way, you have no grounds, no reason, to put the words, "this is my body," which still less resemble, "the rock was Christ," than the text of St. John, into the same class with it, and interpret it as parallel.

I conclude, that we must have some better argument than the simple assertion, that our Saviour spoke the words of institution figuratively, because, in some passages of Scripture, the verb 'to be,' means 'to represent.' It is manifest, that not one of these passages can be said to be a key to them, or that the words of institution can be figuratively interpreted by them, unless you show more than a resemblance in phraseology:—until you prove that the same thing was done in one place as in the others; but whatever is denied to us is thereby conceded to the impugners of Christ's divinity.

Thus far we are authorized in concluding, that the attempt fails to produce passages demonstrative of the Protestant interpretation; for these are the only passages that have been quoted as parallel to the words of institution. I have shown you that they are not parallel, and consequently that they are of no value: they are not adequate to explaining ours, and some other passages must be brought by Biblical interpreters, to justify

them in interpreting, "this is my body," by "this represents my body."

I shall probably be obliged to delay until Sunday next the second portion of the argument—that is the examination of the difficulties in the Catholic interpretation, which are supposed to drive us to the figurative sense; because, before leaving this explanation of words, this examination of phraseology, I must meet one or two objections, which may lead me into some details. I should have kept myself within the bounds of general observation, had it not been for a particular circumstance, which makes it my duty to intrude a little more personally on your notice, than I should otherwise have been inclined to do.

The first difficulty which I have to meet has been repeated again and again, and owes its origin or revival to Dr. Adam Clarke, in his work already referred to, on the Eucharist. This gentleman enjoyed, I believe, a considerable reputation for his acquaintance with oriental languages, at least with that dialect which our Saviour and the apostles spoke. From this language he raised an objection against the Catholic interpretation, which was copied by Mr. Horne, in the very passage I have already referred to, and which has been recopied again and again by almost every writer on this subject. Instead of quoting his words from the book itself, I prefer doing it from a letter, sent to me a few days ago, after this course of instruction had commenced. And this is the circumstance on account of which I think myself justified in coming more personally before you than otherwise I should have been inclined to do. The letter is as follows:—

London, March 4th.

"Rev. Sir,

"I beg most respectfully to invite your attention to the following remarks on the Eucharist by a late divine, well skilled in the oriental and other languages, (Dr.

A. Clarke) and which I think tend very much to weaken that which Roman Catholics advance in defence of transubstantiation.

"'In the Hebrew, Chaldee, and Chaldeo-Syriac languages, there is no term which expresses *to mean, signify,* or *denote,* though both the Greek and Latin abound with them; hence the Hebrews use a figure, and say, *it is,* for *it signifies.* '*The seven kine* ARE *seven years.*' '*The ten horns* ARE *ten kings.*' '*They drank of the spiritual rock which followed them, and the rock* WAS *Christ.*' This Hebrew idiom is followed, though the work is written in Greek: '*the seven stars* ARE *the seven churches,*' besides many other similar instances.

'That our Lord neither spoke in Greek nor Latin on this occasion needs no proof. It was most probably in what was formerly called the *Chaldaic,* now the *Syriac,* that he conversed with his disciples. In Matt. xxvi. 26, 27, the words in the Syriac version are 'honau pagree,' *this is my body,*—'henau demee,' *this is my blood;*' of which forms of speech the Greek is a verbal translation; nor would any man, at the present day, speaking in the same language, use, among the people to whom it was vernacular, other terms than the above, to express, 'this *represents* my body,—this *represents* my blood.'—*Discourse on the Holy Eucharist, by A. Clarke, D.D. London,* 1808."

Here are three distinct assertions; First, that in the Hebrew or Chaldeo-Syriac, there is no word for "to represent;" Secondly, that with the people who spoke the same language as our Saviour did in instituting the Eucharist, it was familiar or common to say, "This is," when they meant to say, "this represents;" Thirdly, that if he meant to express, "this represents my body," he could do it in no other way than by saying, "this is my body." Supposing all this true, it would not be proved that our Saviour did institute a sign or symbol. For though he would have used these expressions in establishing it, yet the same phrase would be as applicable, or rather, would be necessary, for the literal declaration of the thing itself.

The words would be, at most, equivocal, and we should have to look elsewhere for their interpretation.

The writer of the letter concludes in these words:—"I cannot but feel surprised that a doctrine should be so strongly upheld and defended by one who is a professor of Oriental languages, and who has access to the various versions of the Scriptures, and I humbly hope, Sir, that you will be led to see 'the error of your way.'"

I am thankful, exceedingly thankful, to the writer of this letter; in the first place, because he shows an interest regarding myself personally, which must be always a matter of obligation. And also in regard to the doctrines which I am endeavouring to explain, I am thankful, because it gives me reason to see that this objection is still popular,—still known; and that, on the other hand, its confutation is not by any means so public: and on this account I shall venture to enter more fully into the answer than perhaps I should have otherwise done. Now, I am challenged or called on by these words to account how, having acquired some little knowledge of the languages here referred to, I can maintain a doctrine so completely at variance, as Dr. Clarke asserts, with that language, or scriptural version, or literature, to which I have been accustomed. And I answer,—if anything on earth could have attached me more to our interpretation,—if anything could have more strongly rooted me in my belief of the Catholic doctrine, it would have been the little knowledge I have been able to acquire of these pursuits. For I will show you how, far from this assertion of Dr. Adam Clarke's having weakened my faith in the Catholic doctrine, it must, on the contrary, have necessarily confirmed it.

About eight years ago, when more actively employed in the study of these very matters, I saw this passage from Dr. Adam Clarke, as quoted by Mr. Hartwell Horne. According to the principle I had adopted in conducting my enquiries, and in which I hope ever to persevere, I determined to examine it fully and impartially. Here were a series of bold assertions;—that in a certian

language there was not one word that signifies 'to represent;' that it was common to express the idea of representation by the verb 'to be;' and that consequently our Saviour, when he wished to say, "this represents my body," was compelled to say, "this is my body." I determined to look into them as into a simple question of philological literature; to see whether the Syriac was so poor and wretched, as not to afford a single word implying representation. I looked through the dictionaries and lexicons, and I found two or three words, supported by one or two examples, enough to confute the assertion; but still not enough to satisfy my mind. I saw that the only way to ascertain the fact, was to examine the authors who have written in this language; and in a work which I now have in my hand, I published the result of my researches, entitled, "Philological Examination of the objections brought against the literal sense of the phrase in which the Eucharist was instituted, from the Syriac language, containing a specimen of a Syriac dictionary." In other words, simply considering the question as interesting to learned men, I determined to show the imperfection of our means for acquiring that language, and, by a specimen, to lay open the defects of our dictionaries. The specimen consisted of a list of such words as mean "to represent, to denote, to signify, to typify," and are either wanting in the best lexicons, or have not that meaning in them.

What do you think is the number that this list contains, which extends through upwards of thirty or forty pages? In other words, how many expressions does the Syriac language, which was said by Dr. Clarke not to possess one word for "to denote or represent,"—how many do you think it does possess? The English language has only four or five, such as "to denote, to signify, to represent, to typify;" and I think after these, you are arrived pretty nearly at the end of the list. The Greek and Latin have much the same number. I doubt if there be ten in either. How many then does the poor Syriac language present? *Upwards of forty!* Forty

words are here collected, with examples from the most classical authors; hardly one of them without several, some with twenty, thirty, or forty,—a few with nearly a hundred; and in some cases, not one half the examples have been given.

Here then is the first assertion, that in the Syriac language there is not one word for an idea for which it has forty-one! More, I will venture to say, more than any language of the present day can afford.

I dwell on this matter, not merely for the sake of its confutation, but as a general specimen of how easy it is to make bold assertions, relative to subjects not much studied. Thus, any person not acquainted with the language, and knowing Dr. Clarke to have been a learned man, and of course believing him to be honest in his statements, will take it for granted that his positive assertions are accurate, and on his authority reject the Catholic doctrine. Those assertions, however, are most incorrect;* the Syriac has plenty of words,—more than any other, for the purpose required.

The second assertion is, that it is common with persons using that language, to employ the verb 'to be,' for 'to represent.' This point, also, I have, to the best of my ability, examined: and I have no hesitation in denying that it is more common with them than with any other nation, as I can show in a very simple manner. I find, for instance, in the oldest commentator on the Scripture in that language, that these words meaning to represent, are so crowded together, that they will not stand translation. In the writings of St. Ephrem, the oldest in the Syriac language, although he tells us that he is going to interpret, figuratively or symbolically, through all his commentaries, and consequently we are prepared for corresponding language, yet the verb 'to be,' occurs

* A correspondent has requested me to give some of these words, in publishing this lecture, stating that my assertions in the pulpit had been called in question. Were I to do so, I should only give a list of unintelligible sounds. But if any one be inclined to doubt my contradiction of Dr. Clarke's fearless assertion, I beg he will consult the book referred to: "Horæ Syriacæ," *Rome*, 1828, pp. 18-53, of which a copy will be found in the British Museum.

in the sense of 'to represent,' only twice, or at most four times, where words which signify 'to represent,' occur at least sixty times. In his commentary on the Book of Deuteronomy, he uses the verb substantive six times in that sense, but words significative of figure, seventy times; so that the proportion of the two is nearly as six to seventy. In the second place, I find that he avoided this use of the verb 'to be,' in such an extraordinary way, and crowded the other words so thickly, that it was necessary, in some cases, in the Latin translation, to substitute the verb "to be," for them; so that it was easier to use it in that sense in Latin than in Syriac. In the third place, I find that words meaning to represent, came so close together, that in his work, which is in half lines,—the text, occupying one half, and the translation the other half of each page,—so that there are often only three or four words in a line, yet, in eighteen half lines, he uses the words that mean 'to represent,' twelve times. This is in page 254, of vol. i. Page 283, he uses these verbs eleven times in seventeen lines. St. James of Sarug employs them ten times in thirteen lines; and Barhebræus, another commentator, uses them eleven times in as many lines.* So much for the frequency with which, it has been asserted, that these writers use the verb 'to be," for 'to represent.'

The third and more important assertion is, that any person wishing to institute such a rite now-a-days, must compulsorily use this form; that, if he wished to appoint a figure of his body, he would be driven to say, "this is my body." I accepted the challenge in the strictest sense, and determined to verify it, by seeing if this was the case. I found an old Syriac writer, Dionysius Barsalibæus, not a Catholic writer, who uses this expression; "They are called, and are, the body and blood of Jesus Christ in truth, and not figuratively." This passage shows there was a means of expressing the idea of figure. Another passage is from an old writer in Syriac, the original of which has been lost, but which was translated into

* Ibid. p. 56.

Arabic, by David, Archbishop in the ninth or tenth century; and as it is a question of language, the translation will tell sufficiently well how far the assertion be correct. It says, "He gave us his body, blessed be his name, for the remission of our sins . . . he said, 'this is my body,' and he did not say, 'this is a figure of my body,'" Now, supposing the Syriac language had no word to signify 'represent,' how could this writer have expressed in the original, that our Saviour did not tell us "this is the figure of my body?" According to Dr. Clarke's reasoning, that they who speak the language have no alternative, the passage must have run thus, "he did not say, this is my body, but he said, this is my body!" There is still another and stronger passage from St. Maruthas, who wrote 300 years after Christ, and is one of the most venerable fathers of the oriental Church, and it is written in the very language in question. "Besides this, the faithful who came after his time would have been deprived of his body and blood;"—he is giving a reason why Christ instituted the Eucharist. "But now, as often as we approach to the body and blood, and receive them in our hands, we embrace his body, and are made partakers of him; for Christ did not call it a type or figure of his body; but said, verily 'This *is* my body,—this *is* my blood.'"*

So far, therefore, from the writers of these passages believing that our Saviour wished to institute a figure, and that he had no means of using a specific word for that purpose, they expressly tell us that we must believe our Saviour to have instituted a real presence, because, speaking their language, he said, "this is my body," and did not say, "this is the figure of my body."

I appeal to you now, if any knowledge which I may possess of these languages, little though it may be, is any reason for my rejection of a doctrine supported by such rash assertions as these, which a very elementary acquaintance with their source enabled me to confute? Let this serve as a warning

* Pp. 57-60.

not easily to believe general and sweeping assertions, unless very solid proof is brought forward; not to be content with the authority of any learned man, unless he give you clear and strong reasons for his opinion. I have entered more into detail, and come forward more personally than I could have wished, and than I should have done, had it not been for the manner in which I was taunted, however privately, with maintaining doctrines which my own peculiar pursuits should have taught me to reject. "If I have been foolish, it is you who have forced me."

I must not forget to mention one circumstance, in justice to my cause, and perhaps to an individual also. I have said that Mr. Horne had adopted that passage of Dr. Adam Clarke, in which this assertion was made. This transcription was reprinted through the different editions of his work, till the seventh, published in 1834, in which he expunged the passage;* showing, consequently, that he was satisfied with the explanation and the confutation given to the assertion of Dr. Adam Clarke. This was only to be expected from any honest and upright man; but it proves he was satisfied that the assertion which he had until then repeated was incorrect. Dr. Lee, Professor of Oriental Languages at Cambridge, in his Prolegomena to Bagster's Polyglot Bible, acknowledges that his friend, Mr. Horne, was decidedly wrong in making such an assertion. These concessions do not leave the confutation to rest on my individual assertion; they prove it to be acknowledged on the other side that the question is at an end.

The second objection to which I wish to reply, contains a similar misstatement. It has been often said, that the Apostles had a very natural clue to the interpretation of our Saviour's words, by the ceremony or formula ordinarily used in the celebration of the Paschal feast. We are told by many writers, and modern ones particularly, that it was customary at the Jewish passover, for the master of the house to take in his hand a morsel of unleavened bread, and pronounce these

* Vol. ii. p. 449.

words: "This is the bread of affliction which our fathers eat;"—evidently meaning, "this represents the bread which our fathers eat." Consequently, the formula of institution being so similar, we may easily suppose our Saviour to have spoken in the same sense, signifying, "this bread is the figure of my body." In the first place, I deny entirely and completely, that the expression meant, "this is the figure of the bread,"—it meant obviously and naturally, "this is *the sort of* bread which our fathers eat." If any person held a piece of some particular bread in his hand, and said, "this is the bread which they eat in France or in Arabia," would he not be understood to say, "this is *the kind of* bread they eat there," and not "this is the figure of their bread;"—and in the case referred to, is not the natural meaning of the words, "this unleavened bread is the sort of bread which our fathers eat?"

But, in fact, it is not necessary to spend much time in illustrating this reply; for no such formula existed at our Saviour's time. We have, in the first place, among the oldest writings of the Jews, a treatise on the Paschal feast—it is their authoritative book on the subject,—in which is minutely laid down all that is to be done in the celebration of the pasch. Every ceremony is detailed, and a great many foolish and superstitious observances are given, but not a single word of this speech, not the least notice of it,—nowhere is such a ceremony prescribed. This negative argument in the ritual prescribing the forms to be followed, must be considered equivalent to a denial of its being used. There is also another still later treatise on the Pasch, in which there is not a word regarding such a practice. We come at length to Maimonides, eleven or twelve hundred years after Christ, and he is the first writer who gives this formula. He first describes one ceremonial of the pasch, exceedingly detailed, and then concludes, "so did they celebrate the pasch before the destruction of the temple." In this there is not a word of this practice,—it is not hinted at. He proceeds to say,—"at present the Jews celebrate the pasch in the following manner." In this second rite we have that

ceremony; but even then, the words used are not in the form of an address, but are only the beginning of a hymn to be sung after eating the paschal lamb. Thus, the ceremony was not introduced till after the destruction of the temple; or rather, as appears from two older treatises, was not in use seven or eight hundred years after Christ; and consequently, could not have been any guide for the Apostles, towards interpreting our text.

These two objections I have selected, because their answers are not so much within the range of ordinary controversy, and because they have about them an air of learning which easily imposes upon superficial readers. The great body of objections usually urged from Scripture against our interpretation, has been incorporated in my proofs, for it consists chiefly of the texts which I have discussed at length, and proved to be of no service towards overthrowing our belief. Of one or two detached texts, I shall have better opportunity for treating, on Sunday next, when, please God, I shall proceed to finish the Scriptural proofs, and, at the same time, give you the tradition upon this important dogma, thus bringing it, and the entire course, to its conclusion. There is much to say on the various contradictions into which the Protestant system leads its upholders, and of the extravagances into which many of them have fallen. But sufficient has been said to build up the Catholic truth, and this is the most important matter. That error will be ever inconsistent—is but the result of its very nature. Let us only hope, that in its constant shiftings it may catch a glimpse of the truth, and, from the very impulse of its restless character, be led to study it; and by the discontent of its perpetual agitations, be brought to embrace it—in whose profession alone is true peace, and satisfaction, and joy.

LECTURE THE SIXTEENTH.

TRANSUBSTANTIATION.

PART III.

1 COR. x. 16.

"*The cup of benediction which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? And the bread which we break, is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord?*"

WISHING, my brethren, to bring to a conclusion, this evening, the important topic which has occupied us for two successive Sundays, it will be necessary for me to step back for a few moments to bring you to the point at which I left my argument; as the observations which must follow are necessarily the sequel to those which preceded them, and form, indeed, but part of the train of argument which I laid down for myself at the commencement of my last discourse. In stating the position which the Catholic holds, when treating the arguments for his doctrine of the Eucharist, drawn from the words of Institution, I observed that the burthen of proving necessarily lies on those, who maintain that we must depart from the strict and literal meaning of our Saviour's words, and that, contrary to their natural and obvious import, these words must be taken in a symbolical and figurative sense. I, therefore, laid down the line of argument which I conceived to be strongest on the side of our opponents; and it led us into a two-fold investigation: first, whether the expressions in question can possibly be interpreted in their figurative signification; and secondly, whether any reasons exist to justify this less ordinary course, and to force us to a preference of this figurative interpretation.

With regard to the first: adhering strictly to the principle of biblical interpretation which I first laid down, I went in detail through the various passages of Scripture advanced to prove, that the words of Institution may be interpreted figuratively, without going contrary to ordinary forms of speech in the New Testament, and more particularly in our Saviour's discourses. I canvassed them, to show you that it was impossible to establish any such parallelism between our words and the examples quoted, as could give the right to interpret our text by them. This formed the first portion of the enquiry, and occupied your attention during our last Sunday meeting.

The second portion of my task remains; to see what the reasons or motives may be for preferring that figurative and harsh interpretation, even at the expense, if I may say so, of propriety; to investigate whether there be not reasons so strong, as to oblige us to chuse any expedient rather than interpret our Saviour's words in their simple and obvious meaning. I believe I noticed, that this is the argument very generally advanced by writers on this subject, that we must interpret our Saviour's words figuratively, because, otherwise, we are driven into such an ocean of absurdities, that it is impossible to reconcile the doctrine with sound philosophy, or common sense. While on this subject, I may observe, that it is not very easy, even at the outset, and before examining its difficulties, to admit this form of argument. Independently of all that I shall say a little later, regarding these supposed difficulties, the question may be placed in this point of view;—are we to take the Bible simply as it is, and allow it alone to be its own interpreter?—or are we to bring in other extraneous elements to modify that interpretation? If there are certain rules for interpreting the Bible, and if all those rules in any instance converge, to show us that certain words will not, and can not, bear any interpretation but one, I ask, if there can be any means or instrument of interpretation, of sufficient strength to overpower them all? If we admit such a case, do we not reduce to a nullity the entire system of biblical interpretation?

I find, however, that, with reflecting men, or, at least, with those who are considered able divines, on the Protestant side of the question, it has become much more usual than it used to be, to acknowledge that this is not the method in which the text should be examined. They are disposed to allow, that we have no right to consider the apparent impracticability, or impossibility of the doctrine, but must let it stand or fall fairly and solely by the authority of Scripture; and, however the circumstances may be repugnant to our feelings or reason, if proved on grounds of sound interpretation, admit it as taught by God himself. To establish this concession, I will content myself with a single authority, that of one who has been not merely the most persevering, but also (for the expression is not too harsh) one of the most virulent of our adversaries; and who, particularly on this subject of the Eucharist, has taken extraordinary pains to overthrow our belief. Mr. Faber writes in these words, on the subject now under consideration:—

"While arguing upon this subject, or incidentally mentioning it, some persons, I regret to say, have been too copious, in the use of those unseemly words, 'absurdity and impossibility.' To such language, the least objection is its reprehensible want of good manners. A much more serious objection is the tone of presumptuous loftiness which pervades it, and is wholly unbecoming a creature of very narrow faculties. Certainly, God *will* do nothing that is absurd, and *can* do nothing impossible. But it does not, therefore, follow, that our view of things should be always perfectly correct, and free from misapprehension. Contradictions we can easily *fancy*, where, in truth, there are none. Hence, therefore, before we consider any doctrine a contradiction, we must be sure we perfectly understand the nature of the matter propounded in that doctrine: for otherwise, the contradiction may not be *in the matter itself*, but *in our mode of conceiving it.* In regard to myself,—as my consciously finite intellect claims not to be an universal measure of congruities and possibilities,—I deem it to be both

more wise and more decorous, to refrain from assailing the doctrine of Transubstantiation, on the ground of its alleged absurdity, or contradictoriness, or impossibility. By such a mode of attack, we, in reality, quit the field of rational and satisfactory argumentation.

"The doctrine of Transubstantiation, like the doctrine of the Trinity, is a question, not of abstract reasoning, but of pure *evidence*. We believe the revelation of God to be essential and unerring truth. Our business most plainly is, not to discuss the abstract absurdity, and the imagined contradictoriness, of Transubstantiation, but to enquire, according to the best means we possess, whether it be indeed a doctrine of Holy Scripture. If sufficient evidence shall determine such to be the case, we may be sure that the doctrine is neither absurd nor contradictory. I shall ever contend, that the doctrine of Transubstantiation, like the doctrine of the Trinity, is a question of *pure evidence*."*

These observations are extremely sensible; and the comparison which the author makes with another mystery, as I shall shew you later, sufficiently demonstrates it to be correct. However, I do not, of course, mean to shelter myself behind his authority, or that of any other writer; I will not content myself with saying, that sensible and acute, yes, excessively acute reasoners against us, admit that any fancied difficulties or contradictions are not to be weighed against our interpretation; and thence conclude, that having, I trust satisfactorily, examined the allegations on the other side, and proved them insufficient, we cannot, according to the obvious rule of interpretation, depart from the literal sense. I have no such intention, my brethren. On the contrary, I mean to meet these difficulties, but without departing one step from the ground which I have chosen from the beginning. I laid it down as my method and rule of interpretation, that the true meaning of words or texts, is that meaning which the speaker must have known would be affixed to his words by those whom

* "Difficulties of Romanism," *Lond.* 1826, p. 54.

he addressed, and that we are to put ourselves in their situation, and know what means they had for explaining his words, and then interpret according to those means alone. For we are not to suppose that our Saviour spoke sentences, which those who heard him had no means of understanding, but which we alone were afterwards to understand. If, therefore, we wish to ascertain what were their means of interpreting the words in question, we must invest ourselves with the feelings of the Apostles, and make our enquiry in their position.

It is said, then, that we must depart from the literal sense of our Saviour's words, because that literal sense involves an impossibility, or contradiction. The simple enquiry to be made, is, therefore, could the Apostles have reasoned in this manner; or could our Saviour have meant them so to reason? Could they have made the possibility or impossibility of any thing he uttered, be the criterion of its true interpretation? And if he did not intend that for a criterion, which, as you will see, must, if used, have led them astray, it is evident, that by it we must not interpret the text. I beg you to observe, in the first place, that the investigation into possibility or impossibility, when spoken with reference to the Almighty, is philosophically of a much deeper character than we can suppose, not merely ordinary, but positively illiterate and uneducated men, to have been qualified to fathom. What is possible or impossible to God? What is contradictory to his power? Who shall venture to define it, further than what may be the obvious, the first, and simplest principle of contradiction,—the existence and simultaneous non-existence of a thing? But who will pretend to say, that any ordinary mind would be able to measure this perplexed subject, and to reason thus—" the Almighty may, indeed, for instance, change water into wine, but that he cannot change bread into his body." Who that looks on these two propositions, with the eye of an uneducated man, could say that, in his mind, there was such a broad distinction between them, that while he saw one effected by the power of a being believed by him to be omnipotent, he still

held the other to be of a class so widely different, as to venture to pronounce it absolutely impossible? Suppose, again, that such a person had seen our Saviour, or any one else, take into his hands a certain portion of bread, seven or five loaves, and with these very identical loaves, as the Gospel narrative tells us, feeding and satisfying three or five thousand individuals, so that basketsful should remain of the fragments, not creating more substance, but making that which existed suffice for the effects of a much larger quantity, and then were told that the same powerful being could not make a body, or other food, be at the same time in two places; would he, think you, at once be able directly and boldly to pronounce in his mind, that although he had seen the one, although there could be no doubt that the agent was endowed with such superior power to effect it, yet the other belongs philosophically to such a different class of phenomena, that his power was not equal to effecting it? I will not say, that an uneducated man, but, I will assert, the most refined reasoner, or the most profound thinker, if he admitted one of these facts as having been true and proved, could not pretend to say that the other belonged to a different sphere of philosophical laws—he could not reject the one from its contradictions, in spite of the demonstration that the other had been.

Now, such as I have described, were the minds of the apostles, those of illiterate uncultivated men. They had been accustomed to see Christ perform the most extraordinary works—they had seen him walking on the water, his body consequently deprived, for a time, of the usual properties of matter, of that gravity which, according to the laws of nature, should have caused it to sink. They had seen him, by his simple word, command the elements, and even raise the dead to life; they had also witnessed those two miracles to which I have alluded, that of transmuting one substance into another, and that of multiplying a body, or extending it to an immense degree. Can we, then, believe, that with such minds as these, and with such evidences, the apostles were likely to have

words addressed to them by our Saviour, which they were to interpret rightly, only by the reasoning of our opponents,—that is, on the ground of what he asserted being philosophically impossible.

Moreover, we find our Saviour impressed his followers with the idea, that nothing was impossible to him; that he never reproved them so severely as when they doubted his power. "Oh! thou of little faith, why dost thou fear?" He had so completely inspired his followers with this feeling, that when they applied to him for any miracle, they never said, "If thou canst,—if it be in thy power;" it was only his will which they wished to secure; the man with the leprosy accordingly exclaims,—"Lord, *if thou wilt* thou canst make me clean."—"Lord," said Martha, "if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died, but even now I know that *whatever* thou askest of God he will give to thee." To this extent, therefore, had their faith in him been strengthened, as to believe that whatever he asked of God, whatever he willed, that he could effect.

Nor is this all; but our Saviour encouraged this belief to the utmost. How did he answer the man with the leprosy? "*I will*, be thou made clean." "Your cure depends on my will; you were right in appealing to this attribute—the mere act of my volition will effect it." How did he reply to Martha? "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me, and I know that thou hearest me always." He confirmed, therefore, this idea in them, that nothing was impossible to him. Moreover, we hear him commend the faith of the Centurion: "I have not found such faith in Israel!" And why? Because the Centurion believed and asserted that it was not even necessary for our Saviour to be present to perform a miracle. "Amen, amen, I say to you, that I have not found such faith in Israel,"—not such an estimate of my power as this man had formed. Now, therefore again, if such was the conviction of the apostles, and if our Saviour had taken such pains to confirm it in them, that nothing whatever was impossible to him, can you believe for a moment, that he meant them to decide

on the meaning of his words on any occasion, by assuming that their accomplishment was impossible to him?

Furthermore, we find him making this the great test of his false and true disciples; that the first, as we read in the 6th chapter of John, went away from him, remarking,—"this is a hard saying, and who can hear it;" and the second remained faithful, in spite of their not being able to comprehend his doctrine. Wherefore he formally approved of the twelve, saying: "Have I not chosen you twelve?" Although evidently in some darkness and perplexity, they persevered, and remained attached to him; they yielded up their judgment and reason to his authority; "To whom shall we go, for thou hast the words of eternal life?" Again, then, our Saviour had accustomed his apostles to this argument on every occasion; "Although this thing may appear impossible to us, as our divine Master says it, it must be so." Can we believe then, that on this one occasion of the institution of the Eucharist, he made use of expressions, the only key to whose right interpretation was to be precisely the inverse of this their usual argument, namely; "although our divine Master says, 'this is my body and blood,' because the thing is impossible it cannot be so." If our Saviour could not possibly have expected his apostles to reason on the true meaning of his words from any question of the possibility or impossibility of what he seemed to say, if such a consideration cannot have been the key to a right understanding, which they could possibly have thought of using, then of course it cannot be the instrument of interpretation, or the key to their meaning with us; because that only is the true meaning which the apostles attached to his words, and that only is the process of arriving at it, whereby they could and must have reached it.

But, my brethren, as I before hinted, are we safe in at all admitting this principle of contradiction to the law of nature, of apparent violation of philosophical principles, as a means of interpreting Scripture. What, I will ask, becomes of all mystery? Once let go the curb, and where or how will you

stop or check your career? If the clearest words of Scripture are thus to be forced, because as they stand, we conceive them to contain an impossibility, how will you vindicate the Trinity or the Incarnation, each of which is no less at variance with the apparent laws of nature? And after all, what do we know of nature, we who cannot explain the production from its seed of the blade of grass on which we tread; who cannot penetrate the qualities of an atom of air which we inhale? Perplexed in our enquiries after the most simple elements of creation, baffled in every analysis of the most obvious properties of matter, shall we, in our religious contests, make a magic wand of our stunted reason, and boldly describe with it a circle round omnipotence, which it shall not presume to overstep? But until we can be certain that we are perfectly acquainted with all the laws of nature, and what is more, with all the resources of omnipotence, we have no right to reject the clearest assurances of the Son of God, because they happen to be at variance with our established notions.

Again, I ask, what becomes of that very mystery which we observed Faber put in a parallel with that of Transubstantiation, when he commented upon this argument? What becomes of the Trinity? What becomes of the incarnation of our Saviour? What of his birth from a Virgin? And, in short, of every mystery of the Christian religion? Who will pretend to say that he can, by any stretch of his imagination, or of his reason, see how, by possibility, three persons in one God can be but one Godhead? If the contradiction, the apparent contradiction, to the laws of nature, is so easily received, without being understood by us here, is it to be a principle for rejecting another doctrine as clearly laid down in Scripture? And if the doctrine of the Eucharist, which is even more plainly expressed than it, is to be rejected on such a ground, how is it possible for one moment to retain the other? Its very idea appears at first sight repugnant to every law of number; and no philosophical, mathematical, or speculative reasoning, will ever show *how* it possibly can be.

You are content, therefore, to receive this important dogma, shutting your eyes, as you should do, to its incomprehensibility: you are content to believe it, because the revelation of it from God was confirmed by the authority of antiquity; and therefore, if you wish not to be assailed on it by the same form of reasoning and arguments as you use against us, you must renounce this method; and, simply because it comes by revelation from God, receive the Real Presence at once in spite of the apparent contradiction to the senses; for He hath revealed it, who hath the words of eternal life.

It is repeatedly said, that such a miracle as that of the Eucharist, the existence of Christ's body in the way we suppose it to be there, is contrary to all that our senses, or that experience can teach us. Now, suppose that a heathen philosopher had reasoned in that manner, when the mystery of our Saviour's incarnation, the union of God with man, was first proposed to him by the apostles; he would have had a perfect right to disbelieve it on such grounds; for he would have had not merely theory, but the most uninterrupted experience, on his side. He could have said it is a thing that never happened, which we cannot conceive to happen, and consequently, so far as the unanimous testimony of all mankind, to the possibility or impossibility of the doctrine goes, it is perfectly decisive. When, therefore, any mystery is revealed by God, and the observation applies chiefly to those mysteries which have their beginning in time, such as the incarnation, it is evident that up to that time, there must be against it, all the weight of philosophical observation, all the code or canon of laws, called the law of nature, which can be deduced solely from experience or philosophical observation. For, as the law of nature is composed of that code of rules by which experience shows us nature is constantly guided, it is manifest that, experience not having given examples of such a fact, the law of nature must necessarily appear to stand in contradiction to the mystery. The only question is, cannot a mystery be instituted by God? Or cannot it be revealed by him? And

is not that a sufficient modification of the law of nature? And the more so, when it pleases God to make it dependent on a consistent, however supernatural, action?

I would ask, with regard to the sacrament of Baptism, who would say, that, were it to be tried by the law of Nature, or even by the connexion between the spiritual and material world, that rite or sacrament would not stand to all appearance in contradiction with them? Who will pretend to say, that there is any known connexion between those two orders of being, which could prove, or make it even possible, that by the bare action of water applied with certain words to the body, the soul can be purged and cleansed from sin, and placed in a state of grace before God? It is manifest, on the contrary, that our experience in the physical and material world would lead us to conclude that such a thing could not be. But has not God in this case modified the law of Nature? Has he not allowed a moral influence to act under certain circumstances? Has he not been pleased, that the moment that act is performed, certain consequences should flow, as necessarily as the consequence of any physical law must succeed to the act that produces it; has he not bound himself by a covenant, in the same way as in the material world, that when certain laws are brought into action, he shall give them their supernatural effect? And does not the same rule precisely apply here? If he who enacted the law of Nature chooses to make this modification of it—chooses to make certain effects dependent on certain spiritual causes—it no more stands in opposition to it, than other superhuman exceptions to philosophical laws: for both stand exactly on the same strong grounds.

In fact, my brethren, this seems so obvious, that several writers, and not of our religion, agree that on this point it is impossible to assail us; and observe that this doctrine of Transubstantiation does not, as is vulgarly supposed, contradict the senses. One of these I wish most particularly to mention, is the celebrated Leibnitz. He left behind him

a work entitled "A System of Theology," written in the Latin tongue, which was deposited in a public library in Germany, and was not laid before the public until a very few years back; when the manuscript was procured, by the late King of France, and published by M. D'Emery, in the original, with a French translation. Leibnitz, in this work, examines the Catholic doctrine on every point, and compares it with the Protestant; and on this matter, in particular, enters into very subtile and metaphysical reasoning; and the conclusion to which he comes is, that in the Catholic doctrine there is not the smallest opening for assailing it on philosophical principles; and that these form no reasons for departing from the literal interpretation of the words.

Thus, it would appear, that the ground on which it is maintained that we must depart from the literal sense, is untenable —untenable on philosophical grounds, as well as on principles of Biblical interpretation. But besides this mere rejection of the motives whereon the literal sense is abandoned, we have ourselves strong and positive confirmation of it.

1. In the first place, the very words themselves, in which the pronoun is put in a vague form, strongly uphold us. Had our Saviour said, "this bread is my body,—this wine is my blood," there would have been some contradiction,—the apostles might have said, "wine cannot be his blood,—bread cannot be a body;" but when our Saviour uses this indefinite word, we arrive at its meaning only at the conclusion of the sentence, by that which is predicated of it. When we find that in Greek there is a discrepancy of gender between that pronoun and the word "bread," it is more evident that he wished to define the pronoun, and give it its character, as designating his body and blood; so that, by analysing the words themselves, they give us our meaning positively and essentially.

2. But, this is still further confirmed by the explanations which he adds to it, for persons using vague symbolical language, would be careful not to define too minutely the the object pointed at. Now, our Saviour says, this is my body

which is broken or delivered for you, and this is my blood which is shed;—by the addition of these adjuncts to the thing, by uniting to them what could only be said of his true body and blood, it would appear that he wanted still more to define and identify the objects which he signified.

3. There are considerations likewise drawn from the circumstances in which our Blessed Saviour was placed. Can any of you conceive yourselves, if, with a certain prophetic assurance that in a few more hours you would be taken away from your family and friends, you had called them around you, to make to them your last bequests, and explain what you wished to be performed in remembrance of you for ever, that which was more especially to bind them after your death to your memory, can you imagine yourselves making use of words of their very nature, obviously leading to a totally different meaning from what you had in your mind, or wished to appoint? And suppose that you were gifted with a still greater degree of foresight, and could consequently see what would in future be the result of using these words—how by far the greater part of your children, not believing it possible that you could have any hidden meaning on such an occasion, would determine to take your words quite literally, whence you foresaw the complete defeat or perversion of your wishes; while only a very small number would divine that you had spoken figuratively; do you think that under such circumstances you would choose that phraseology, when it was possible, without the waste of another syllable, explicitly to state the true meaning which you wished them to receive?

4. Again, our Saviour himself on that night seems determined to make his words as plain and simple as he can; and it is impossible to read his last discourse to the apostles, as related by St. John, and not observe how often he was interrupted by them, and mildly, and gently, and lovingly explained himself to them. And not so satisfied, he himself tells them—that he is not going to speak any longer in parables to them; that the

time was come when he would no longer speak to them as their master, but as their friend, as one who wished to umbosom himself completely to them, and make them understand his words; so that even they say, "Behold, now thou speakest plainly, and speakest no proverb."* Under these circumstances can we suppose that he would make use of those exceedingly obscure words, when instituting this last and most beautiful mystery of love, in commemoration of their last meeting here on earth? These are strong corroborations, and all lead us to prefer the literal meaning, as the only one reconcilable with the particular situation in which the words were uttered.

But, my brethren, there are two other passages of Scripture which must not be passed over, although it will not be necessary to dwell very long upon them; they are in the Epistles of St. Paul to the Corinthians. One of them I have chosen as my text; but the other is still more remarkable. In the first, St. Paul asks, "the cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the body of Christ; and the bread which we break, is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord?" In these words the apostle is contrasting the Jewish and heathenish sacrifices and rites with those of the Christians. No doubt but, when he speaks of their actions and sacrifices, it is of eating and drinking really that he treats, for, indeed, he is speaking of realities throughout. When, therefore, he contrasts these with the realities of the Christian institutions, and when he asks if these be not infinitely better and perfecter than what the Jews enjoyed, because our cup is a partaking of the blood of Christ, and our bread was a partaking of the body of the Lord; do not these words imply that there was a contrast, a real contrast, between the two?—that the one was partaken of as really as the other? that if their victims were truly eaten, we also have one that is no less received?

But, on the other text I have a great deal more to remark, for it is one of the strongest passages which we could desire in

* John xvi. 29.

favour of our doctrine. In the following chapter, St. Paul enters at length into the institution of the Last Supper, and he there describes our Saviour's conduct on that occasion exactly as St. Matthew, St. Luke, and St. Mark have done, making use of precisely the same simple words. But then he goes on to draw consequences from this doctrine. He has not left us the bare narrative, as the other sacred penmen have done, but he draws practical conclusions from it, and builds upon it solemn injunctions, accompanied with awful threats. Here, at any rate, we must expect plain and intelligible phraseology; and expressions noways likely to mislead. How, then, does he write?—"He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord." Again; "Whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord."*

Here are two denunciations, founded by St. Paul on the doctrine of the Eucharist. The first is, that whosoever receives unworthily drinks judgment or damnation to himself, because he does not discern the body of the Lord. What is the meaning of discerning the body of Christ? Is is not to distinguish it from ordinary food, to make a difference between it and other things? But if the body of Christ be not really there, how can the offence be considered as directed against the body of Christ? It may be against his dignity or goodness, but surely it is not an offence against his body. But, on the second sentence, it is curious to observe, that, throughout Scripture, the form of speech there used occurs only once besides, in the Epistle of St. James, ii. 10, where it is said, that whoever "transgresses one commandment is guilty of all,"—that is, of a violation or transgression of all the commandments. It is the only passage parallel in construction to this, where the unworthy communicant is said to be guilty, —not of injury, not of crime,—but guilty of the thing against which the crime is committed,—that is, guilty of the body of

* 1 Cor. xi. 27, 29.

Christ. This is a peculiar expression, and perhaps may be illustrated by a similar form in the Roman law, where a man guilty of treason, or an offence against majesty, is simply called "guilty of majesty," (*reus majestatis,*)—that is, of an injury or offence against it. We see here, that the unworthy receiver is guilty of the body, that is, of an offence against the body, of Christ; but, as in the one case, if the majesty were not there, that crime could not be committed, so, likewise, unless the body of our Saviour was here, to be unworthily approached, the abuse of the Eucharist could not be called an offence against it. Nay, rather such a designation would diminish the guilt. For to say that a person offends against Christ himself, or that he offends against God, is a much greater denunciation of guilt, than to say that he offends against the body of Christ, except in cases of actual personal injury. For while the greatest outrage possible would be one against his body, when personally ill-treated, as in the case of the Jews, who buffeted and crucified him; yet, in its absence, it is the weakest mode of describing the offence, when we are to suppose him sitting at the right hand of God, and, consequently, not to be approached by man.

Now, looking at all the Scripture texts on the Eucharist, conjointly, there is an observation which can hardly fail to strike any considerate and reflecting mind. We bring to bear on it four distinct classes of texts. First, we have a long discourse delivered by our Saviour under particular circumstances, a considerable time before his passion. Others suppose him to have, throughout it, treated of faith, or the necessity of believing in him. Yet, through a certain part of that discourse, he studiously avoids any expression which could possibly lead his hearers to understand him in that sense, but again and again uses phrases, which naturally bring all who heard him to believe that it was necessary to eat his flesh and drink his blood—to receive his body; and he allowed the crowd to murmur, and his disciples to fall away, and his Apostles to remain in darkness, without explaining away their difficulties.

Let us allow that, for once, our Saviour spoke and acted so; we come, secondly, to another quite different occasion. It is no longer the obstinate Jews, or unsteady disciples, whom he addresses; he is alone with his chosen twelve. He no longer wishes to speak of faith, as all agree; he wishes, according to Protestants, to institute a symbol commemorative of his passion; and, most extraordinarily, he uses words, conveying precisely the same ideas, as on the other occasion, when speaking of quite another subject, having no reference at all to that institution. And all this is related by several of the Evangelists, without comment, in nearly the same words; they evidently consider it a most important institution;—but still we receive not a hint from one of them that the words are to be understood figuratively.

We come, in the third place, to St. Paul, where he wishes, in the words of my text, to prove that this commemorative rite of the Christians is superior to the sacrifices eaten by the Jews and heathens. Once more, although there is not the slightest necessity for such marked expressions, but he might have used the words *symbol,* or *figure,* or *emblem,*—although writing on a totally different occasion, and addressing a different people, he falls into the same extraordinary phraseology, he makes use of precisely the same words, and speaks as if the real body and blood of Christ were partaken of.

He goes on to reprove the bad use of this rite. At least, on this fourth occasion, there is room to illustrate it in a different manner,—opportunity enough to describe its true character; but once more he returns to the same unusual phrases, of Christ's body and blood being received, and tells us that those who partake of it unworthily are guilty of an outrage on that body. Now, is it not strange, that on these four different occasions, our Saviour, and his Apostles, explaining different doctrines—speaking to different assemblies, under totally different circumstances,—should all concur in using these words in a figurative meaning, and not let one syllable slip as a key or guide to the true interpretation of their doctrine? Is it even possible to suppose, that our Saviour, discoursing in the 6th chap-

ter of John, and St. Paul writing to the Corinthians,—though treating of different subjects, under varied circumstances,—should have adopted similar, figurative, and most unusual language? But take the simple interpretation which the Catholic does, and from first to last there is not the slightest difficulty; there may be some struggle against the senses or feelings—it may appear new, strange, and perhaps unnatural to you; but so far as biblical interpretation goes, so far as the fair principles for examining God's word are concerned, all is consistent from first to last. You believe the expressions to be literal throughout, and you believe the very same topic to be treated in every one of these passages; and consequently, you have harmony and analogy from first to last on your side. Whereas, on the other hand, you must find different explanations of the same imagery and phraseology on those various occasions; and you are driven to the miserable expedient of chusing some little word or phrase in a corner of the narrative, and persuading yourself that it overthrows all the obvious consequences of the narrative itself, and balances the clear evidence of a connected and consistent proof.

To give an instance of this process:—it is said that, in the case under consideration, we still find the names "bread and wine" applied to the elements after consecration: and that, consequently, all that long line of argument which I have gone through is worth nothing; this one fact overthrows it all. Why, we Catholics call it bread and wine after it has been consecrated; and will any man thence argue, that we do not believe a change to have taken place in the elements? These names, then, may be employed, and yet the doctrine which we hold be maintained. In the 9th chapter of St. John, our Saviour performs the cure of a man that was blind; he restores him perfectly to sight; and there is a long altercation between him and the Jews on the subject, which beautifully demonstrates the miracle. The blind man is called in, and questioned again and again, as to whether he had been blind; they bring forward his parents and friends to identify him;

they all testify that the man was born blind; and that Jesus, by a miracle, had cured him. But reason in the same way here as in our case. Verse 17, we read, "They say again to the *blind man;*"—he is called blind after the miracle is said to have been wrought; therefore, the whole of the reasoning based on that chapter is worth nothing; the fact of his being still called blind, proves that no change had taken place! Precisely this reasoning is used against our doctrine; all the clear, express, incontestible, expressions of our Saviour to the Apostles are of no value, because, after the consecration, he still calls the elements bread and wine! We have a similar instance in the case of Moses, when his rod was changed into a serpent; and yet it continued to be called a rod; so that we are to suppose that no such change had been made! But it is the usage, the common method in all language, when such a change occurs, to continue the original name. It is said, in the narration of the miracle at the marriage feast, "when, therefore, the master of the feast had tasted *the water* made wine." It could not be both water and wine; it should have been called simply wine, but it is called "water made wine," thus preserving the name which it had before. These examples are sufficient to show that such expressions as these must not be taken by any sincere enquirer, as the ground of interpretation for the entire passage, nor made to outweigh the complicated difficulties that attend its being taken figuratively.

We naturally must desire, on a question like this, to ascertain the sentiments of antiquity. Now, in examining the opinions of the early Church on this subject, we meet with a most serious difficulty, resulting from the circumstance which I made use of on a former occasion, as a strong corroboration of the Catholic rule of faith; that is, the discipline of the secret, whereby converts were not admitted to a knowledge of the principal mysteries of Christianity until after they had been baptised. The chief practical mystery of which they were kept in ignorance, was the belief concerning the Eucharist. It was the principle, as I observed on that occasion, among

the early Christians, to preserve inviolable secrecy regarding what passed in that most important portion of the service or liturgy of the Church. For instance, there is a distinction made by old writers between the Mass of the Catechumens, and the Mass of the faithful. The Mass of the Catechumens was that part to which they were admitted, and the Mass of the faithful was that portion from which the Catechumens were excluded. Consequently they, and still less the heathens, knew nothing of what was practised in the Church during the solemnization of the mysteries. This is manifest from innumerable passages, especially where the fathers speak of the Eucharist. Nothing is more common than to find such expressions as these: "What I am now saying or writing is for the initiated,"—"the faithful know what I mean." "If," says one of them, "you ask a Catechumen does he believe in Jesus Christ, he makes the sign of the cross, as a token of his belief in Christ's incarnation and death for us; but if you ask him, have you eaten the flesh of Christ, and drank his blood, he knows not what you mean." We find this extraordinary passage in St. Epiphanius, when wishing to allude to the Eucharist:—"What were the words which our Saviour used at his Last Supper? He took into his hand a certain thing, and he said, it is so and so." Thus, he avoids making use of words which would expose the belief of the Christians. Origen expressly says, that any one who betrays these mysteries is worse than a murderer; St. Augustine, St. Ambrose, and others, affirm that they are traitors to their religion who do so. The consequence was, as Tertullian observes, that the heathens knew nothing whatever of what was done in the Church; and when they charged the Christians with various horrible crimes, as if there perpetrated, these contented themselves with asking, how they could pretend to know any thing about mysteries to which they were not admitted, and of which such pains were taken that they should know nothing.

This authority sufficiently proves, that this discipline was not of later introduction, as some have pretended, but had

been received, as early writers tells us, from the time of the Apostles. For, it would have been vain later to attempt concealment, if all had been open at the beginning. We have a remarkable illustration of this discipline in St. John Chrysostome. In a letter to Pope Julius, he describes a tumult in the Church of Constantinople, in which he says, "they spilled the blood of Christ." He speaks plainly, because writing a private letter to one of the initiated. Not so Palladius, when relating the same circumstance; for he says, they spilled "the symbols known to the initiated;" he was writing the life of the saint, which was to go abroad to the world, and was careful, consequently, to avoid communicating the mysteries to the uninitiated. There is another instance in the life of St. Athanasius, who was summoned before a court for breaking a chalice; and the Council held at Alexandria in 360, expressed a horror of the Arians, for having brought the mysteries of the Church before the world through this accusation. The same feeling is still more strongly expressed, in a letter from the Pope to him, written in the name of a Council held at Rome. He says,—"We could not believe, when we heard that such a thing as the cup in which the blood of Christ is administered, had been mentioned before the profane and uninitiated; and until we saw the account of the trial, we did not think such a crime possible."*

This feeling and practice, as you cannot fail to observe, must necessarily throw a considerable veil over what is said in early times on the Eucharist; and it is only where accident enables us to pry under it, that we are really able to see what the doctrine of those ages was. The means by which we discover it are various. The first is, through the calumnies invented by the enemies of Christianity. We find it asserted by several old writers, and among them by Tertullian, the oldest Father of the Latin Church, that one of the most common calumnies against the Christians, was, that in their as-

* See my friend Dr. Döllinger's learned treatise, "Die Lehre von der Eucharistie."

semblies, or sacred meetings, they murdered a child, and, dipping bread in its blood, partook of it. He alludes to this charge repeatedly. St. Justin Martyr tells us, that when he was a heathen, he had constantly heard this of the Christians. Origen, likewise, mentions it, as do most writers who have refuted the accusations of Jews and heathens against the Christians. In what way could this calumny have arisen; this fiction, that they dipped bread in the blood of an infant, and eat it,—if they simply partook of bread and wine? Did it not imply that something more had transpired among the heathens, and that the body and blood of our Saviour was said to be partaken of on these occasions? Does not the calumny itself insinuate as much?

Secondly, we gain additional light by the manner in which these calumnies are met. Suppose that the belief of the ancient Christians had been that of Protestants; what was more practicable than to refute these accusations? "We do no such thing as you imagine," would have been the reply, "nothing that can even give rise to the charge. We do no more than partake of a little bread and wine, as a commemorative rite of our Lord's passion. Come in, if you please, and see." Would not this have been the simplest plan of confutation? Instead of it, however, they meet the charge in two ways, both very different. In the first place, by not answering it at all; by avoiding the subject, because they would have been obliged to lay open their doctrines, and expose them to the ridicule, the outrage, and the blasphemy of the heathens. Although there would have been nothing at all to fear from the disclosure, had they merely believed in a commemorative rite, their belief was manifestly such as they durst not disclose; they knew to what obloquy the confession of their doctrine would expose them, and consequently, they avoided touching on this subject. A remarkable instance we have in the case of the Martyr Blandina, commended by St. Irenæus. I have not the passage here; but he tells us, that the heathen servants of some Christians having been put to the rack, to make them

reveal their masters' belief, they affirmed, after some time, that, in their mysteries, the Christians partook of flesh and blood. Blandina was presently charged with this guilt, and was put to the torture, to make her confess. But, the historian says, she "most wisely and prudently" answered:—"How can you think we can be guilty of such a crime; we who, from a spirit of mortification, abstain from eating ordinary flesh?" Now, suppose the imputed doctrine had been not at all akin to reality, what was easier than to say,—"We believe no doctrine that bears a resemblance to this frightful imputation; we partake of a little bread and wine, as a bond of union, and a commemoration of our Saviour's passion. It is simple bread and wine, and we believe it to be nothing more." She, however, is praised for her wisdom and exceeding prudence, because she did not deny the charge, at the same time that she met the odious and unnatural imputation it contained. The very silence and reserve, then, of the Christians, in answering the charges of the heathens, compared with the accusations themselves, allow us to discover, with tolerable certainty, what was their belief.

However, in the second place, occasionally an apologist did venture to remove this veil a little for the heathens. St. Justin thought it better, from the peculiar circumstance of his addressing his apology to prudent and philosophical men, like the Antonines, to explain what the real belief of the Christians was in this regard. How does he make his explanation? Remember, that the plainer he spoke the truth, the better he would serve his cause, if the Christian Eucharist was only a commemorative rite. Listen, now, to his explanation of the Christian belief, when wishing to deprive it of all its disagreeable features,—when wishing to remove prejudices and to conciliate. He says; "Our prayers being finished, we embrace one another with the kiss of peace;" a ceremony yet observed in the Catholic mass. "Then to him who presides over the brethren, is presented bread, and wine tempered with water; having received which, he gives glory to the Father of all things in the name

of the Son and the Holy Ghost, and returns thanks in many prayers, that he has been deemed worthy of these gifts. This food we call the Eucharist, of which they alone are allowed to partake, who believe the doctrines taught by us, and have been regenerated by water for the remission of sin, and who live as Christ ordained. *Nor do we take these gifts, as common bread and common drink;* but as Jesus Christ, our Saviour, made man by the word of God, took flesh and blood for our salvation; in the same manner, we have been taught, that the food which has been blessed by the prayer of the words which he spoke, and by which our blood and flesh, in the change, are nourished, *is the flesh and blood of that Jesus incarnate.*"* You see here how he lays open his doctrine in the concisest and simplest manner possible; telling us, that the Eucharist is the body and blood of Christ.

But, besides writers placed in the circumstances I have described, there is fortunately another class who have come down to us, into whom we must be naturally most disposed to look for simple information; those who expound for the first time to the newly baptised, what they have to believe on this subject. It was natural that in explaining to them what they were to believe, they should use the simplest language, and define the dogma precisely as they wished it to be believed, Another class again is composed of those, whose homilies or sermons are addressed exclusively to the initiated. These two classes afford abundant proofs, besides which there are many passages scattered casually through the writings of others.

In the first instance I will give a few of those expressly addressed to the newly baptised. The most remarkable of these addresses are those of St. Cyril of Jerusalem, for we have a whole series of his catachetical discourses. In one of them he warns his hearers to be careful not to communicate what he teaches them to heathens or to the unbaptised, unless they are about to be baptised. Thus he addresses them; "The

* Apol. i. Hagæ Comitum. 1742. pp. 82, 83.

bread and wine, which, before the invocation of the adorable Trinity, were nothing but bread and wine, become, after this invocation, *the body and blood of Christ.*"*— "The Eucharistic bread, after the invocation of the Holy Spirit, *is no longer common bread, but the body of Christ.*"† This is the clear doctrine, most simply expressed. In another place he says; "The doctrine of the blessed Paul alone is sufficient to give certain proofs of the truth of the divine mysteries; and you being deemed worthy of them, are become one body and one blood with Christ." After giving an account of the institution in the words of St. Paul, he draws this conclusion: "As then Christ, speaking of the bread, declared and said, *this is my body, who shall dare to doubt it?* And, as speaking of the wine, he positively assured us, and said, *this is my blood, who shall doubt it and say, that it is not his blood?*"‡ Again: "Jesus Christ, in Cana of Galilee, once changed water into wine by his will only; and shall we think him less worthy of credit, when he changes wine into blood? Invited to an earthly marriage, he wrought this miracle; and shall we hesitate to confess, that he has given to his children his body to eat, and his blood to drink? Wherefore, with all confidence, let us take the body and blood of Christ. For, in the type of bread, his body is given to thee, and in the type of wine, his blood is given: that so being made partakers of the body and blood of Christ, you may become one body and one blood with him. Thus, the body and blood of Christ being distributed in our members, we become *Christofori*, that is, we carry Christ with us; and thus, as St. Peter says, 'we are made partakers of the divine nature;'"§ In another place he expresses himself in even stronger terms; "For as the bread is the nourishment which is proper to the body; so the Word is the nourishment which is proper to the soul. Wherefore I conjure you, my brethren, not to

* Catech. Mystag. 1, n. vii. p. 308. † Ibid. Catech. 111, n. iii. p. 316.
‡ Ibid. iv. n. 1, p. 319. § Ibid. n. ii. iii. p. 320.

consider them any more as common bread and wine, since they are the body and blood of Jesus Christ according to his words; and although your sense might suggest that to you, let faith confirm you. Judge not of the thing by your taste, but by faith assure yourself, without the least doubt, that you are honoured with the body and blood of Christ. This knowing, and of this being assured, that what appears to be bread, is not bread, though it be taken for bread by the taste, but is the body of Christ; and that which appears to be wine, is not the wine, though the taste will have it so, but is the blood of Christ."* Could the Catholic dogma of transubstantiation be laid down, by any possibility, in terms more marked and explicit than these?

Such, then, were the terms in which the new Christians were initiated and instructed; such is the dogma laid down in elementary catechetical discourses on the subject of the Eucharist.

St. Gregory of Nyssa, is another of these catechetical instructors. Hear him teaching the Christians regarding their new belief. "When this salutary medicine is within us, it repels, by its contrary quality, the poison we had received. But what is this medicine? No other than that body, which was shown to be more powerful than death, and was the beginning of our life; and which could not otherwise enter into our bodies, than by eating and drinking. Now, we must consider, how it can be, that one body, which so constantly, through the whole world, is distributed to so many thousands of the faithful, can be whole in each receiver, and itself remain whole." The very difficulty made to the Catholic doctrine nowadays. Hear his answer; "The body of Christ, by the inhabitation of *the Word* of God, was transmuted into a divine dignity: and so I now believe, that the bread, sanctified by *the Word* of God, is transmuted into the body of *the Word* of God. This bread, as the apostle says, *is sanctified by the Word of God*,

* Catech. Myst. n. iv. v. vi. ix. p. 329, 321, 322.

and prayer, not that, as food, it passes into his body, but that it is instantly changed into the body of Christ, agreeably to what he said, *This is my body*. And therefore does the divine Word commix itself with the weak nature of man, that, by partaking of the divinity, our humanity may be exalted. By the dispensation of his grace, he enters, by his flesh, into the breasts of the faithful, commixed and contempered with their bodies, that, by being united to that which is immortal, man may partake of incorruption."* In this passage we have a word equivalent to transubstantiation, transmuting or changing one substance into another.† On another occasion he says; "It is by virtue of the benediction that *the nature of the visible species is changed into his body*."—"The bread also is, at first, common bread; but when it has been sanctified, it is called and made the body of Christ."‡

A distinguished writer of the second class, that is, one who exclusively addresses the initiated, is St. John Chrysostom. Than his homilies to the people of Antioch, nothing possibly can be desired stronger, in demonstration of the Catholic belief. In fact, I hardly know where to begin, or where I shall close my extracts from him. I will take them, therefore, without choice. "Let us, then," he says, "touch the hem of his garment; rather let us, if we be so disposed, possess him entire. For his body now lies before us, not to be touched only, but to *be eaten and to satiate us*. And if they who touched his garment, drew so much virtue from it, how much more shall we draw, who *possess him whole?* Believe, therefore, that the supper, at which he sat, is now celebrated; for there is no difference between the two. This is not performed by a man, and that by Christ. Both are by him. When, therefore, thou seest the Priest presenting the body to thee, think not that it is his hand, but the hand of Christ that is stretched towards thee."§ Again; "Let us believe God in every thing,

* Orat. Catech. c. xxxvii. T. ii. p. 534-7. † Μεταποιεισθαι.
‡ Orat. in Bapt. Christi, T. ii. p. 802.
§ Homil. l. in cap. xiv. Matt. T. vii. p. 516, 517.

and not gainsay him, although what is said may seem contrary to our reason and our sight. Let his word overpower both. Thus let us do in mysteries, not looking only on the things that lie before us, but holding fast his words; for his word cannot deceive; but our *sense is very easily deceived.* That never failed; this often. Since then his word says: *This is my body;* let us assent, and believe, and view it with the eyes of our understanding." In another place; "Who," he asks, "Will give us of his flesh that we may be filled? (Job xxxi. 31.) This, Christ has done—not only allowing himself to be seen, but to be touched too, and to be eaten, and teeth to pierce his flesh, and all to be filled with the love of him. Parents often give their children to be nourished by others: not so, I, says Christ; but I nourish you with my flesh, and I place myself before you. I was willing to become your brother; for the sake of you, I took flesh and blood; and *again I deliver to you that flesh and blood,* by which I became so related."*—"What sayest thou, O blessed Paul? Willing to impress awe on the hearer, and making mention of the tremendous mysteries, thou callest them the cup of benediction, (1 Cor. x. 16) that terrible and tremendous cup. That which is in the cup, is *that which flowed from his side,* and we partake of it. It is not of the altar, but of Christ himself that we partake; let us, therefore, approach to him with all reverence and purity; and when thou beholdest the body lying before thee, say to thyself: By this body, I am no longer earth and ashes,—*This is that very body which bled, which was pierced by the lance.*"†—"He that was present at the Last Supper, is the same that is now present, and consecrates our feast. For it is not man who makes the things lying on the altar become the body and blood of Christ; but that Christ who was crucified for us. The Priest stands performing his office, and pronouncing these words,—but the power and grace are the power and grace of God. He says,

* Homil. xlvi. alias xlv. in Ioan. T. viii. p. 272-3.
† Homil. xxiv. in 1 Ep. ad Cor. T. x. pp. 212, 213, 214, 217.

'*this is my body,*' and these words effect the change of the things offered."*—"As many as partake of this body, as many as taste of this blood, think ye it nothing different from that which sits above, and is adored by angels."† One more short passage from him will suffice: he says—"Wonderful! The table is spread with mysteries; the Lamb of God is slain for thee; and the spiritual blood flows from the sacred table. The spiritual fire comes down from heaven; the blood in the chalice is drawn from the spotless side for thy purification. Thinkest thou, that thou seest bread? that thou seest wine? that these things pass off as other foods do? *Far be it from thee to think so.* But as wax brought near to the fire loses its former substance, which no longer remains; so do thou thus conclude, that the mysteries (the bread and wine) are consumed by the substance of the body. Wherefore, approaching to them, think not that you receive the divine body from a man, but fire from the hand of the Seraphim."‡

These are a few examples out of a great many more from the fathers, expressly instructing the faithful without reserve; and see what language they hold! the fact is, that beginning from the earliest times in the Church, we have texts without end, expressing the same belief, sometimes casually mentioned, at other times, although more closely veiled, betraying what their doctrine was. For instance, St. Irenæus says; "This pure oblation, the Church alone makes. The Jews make it not, for their hands are stained with blood; and they received not the Word that is offered to God. Nor do the assemblies of heretics make it; for how can these prove, that the bread, over which the words of thanksgiving have been pronounced, *is the body of their Lord,* and the cup *his blood,* while they do not admit that he is the Son, that is, the Word, of the Creator of the world."§ Here is a casual passage of a writer

* Homil. i. de Prodit. Judæ. T. ii. p. 384.
† Homil. iii. in c. 1, ad Ephes. T. xi. p. 21.
‡ Homil. ix. de Pœnit. T. ii. pp. 349, 350.
§ Adv. Hær. Lib. iv. c. xviii. p. 251.

speaking of quite another subject,—when talking of those who deprive themselves of the benefits of redemption, by not believing in Christ. In the following centuries, the authorities are absolutely overpowering. I will content myself with one or two that seem particularly striking. St. Augustine again and again speaks most strongly of this doctrine, as the following extracts will show. "When, committing to us his body, he said; *This is my body*, Christ was held in his own hands. He bore that body in his hands."—"How was he borne in his hands?" he asks in the next sermon on the same Psalm,—"because when *he gave his own body and blood*, he took into his hands *what the faithful know;* and he bore himself in a certain manner, when he said, *This is my body.*"* Again: "We receive with a faithful heart and mouth the mediator of God and Man, the Man Christ Jesus, who has given us *his body to eat, and his blood to drink;* although it may appear more horrible *to eat the flesh of a man*, than to destroy it, and *to drink human blood*, than to spill it."† I will conclude with a splendid testimony of the Oriental Church. It is that of St. Isaac, priest of Antioch, in the fifth century, who writes in these glowing terms; "I saw the vessel mingled, and, for wine, *full of blood; and the body*, in lieu of bread, *placed on the table.* I saw the blood and shuddered: I saw the body, and was awed with fear. *Faith whispered to me; eat, and be silent; drink, child, and enquire not.* She showed me the body slain, of which placing a portion on my lips, she said gently: Reflect, what thou eatest. She held out to me a reed, directing me to write. I took the reed; I wrote; I pronounced: *This is the body of my God.* Taking then the cup, I drank. And what I had said of the body, that I now say of the cup; *This is the blood of my Saviour.*"‡

I will conclude my quotations with the sentiments of another eminent father, which have been brought to light within the

* In Psal. xiv. T. iv. p. 335.
† Contra Adv. Legis. et Proph. L. ii. c. ix. T. viii, p. 599.
‡ Serm. de Fide. Bibl. Orient. T. 1. p. 220. *Romæ*, 1719.

last few years. The passage is remarkable in itself, from the strong confirmation it gives our belief. It is, moreover, a proof how little we have to fear from the discovery of any new writings of the fathers; how much, on the contrary, we should desire to possess them all, because there is no instance of their being recovered, in which they have not done us some good. St. Amphilochius, bishop of Iconium, was the bosom friend of St. Basil, St. Gregory Nazianzen, and St. Jerome, who speak of him as one of the most learned and holy men of their time. Of this father we possess only a few detached fragments, but the little we have is worthy of the fame which he enjoyed. These few remnants contained nothing on the Eucharist, and never even glanced at the subject. Four or five years ago were published, for the first time, the acts of a council held at Constantinople, in 1166, on the text, "The Father is greater than I." The bishops there assembled, collected a great many passages from the fathers to illustrate these words; and among the rest, one from St. Amphilochius, of which we previously possessed a fragment. The remaining portion, thus recovered, contains a powerful testimony in favour of our doctrine. As it has not yet found its way into popular works, I beg to quote it at length. The writer is asserting the equality of the Father and Son. But, as our Saviour had said, that the Father is greater than he, while on another occasion, he tells us that they are one; St. Amphilochius endeavours to reconcile the two assertions by a series of antitheses, which show how, in some respects, the Father is equal, and in others superior. This is the entire passage: "The Father, therefore is greater than he who goeth unto him, not greater than he who is always in him. And that I may speak compendiously; He (the Father) is greater, and yet equal: greater than he who asked 'how many loaves have ye;' equal to him who satisfied the whole multitude with five loaves: greater than he who asked, 'where have ye laid Lazarus;' equal to him who raised Lazarus by his word: greater than

he who said, 'who toucheth me;' equal to him who dried up the inexhaustible flux of the hæmorrhoissa: greater than he who slumbered in the vessel; equal to him who chid the sea: greater than he who was judged by Pilate; equal to him who freeth the world from judgment: greater than he who was buffeted, and was crucified with thieves; equal to him who justified the thief freecost: greater than he who was stripped of his raiment: equal to him who clothes the soul: greater than he to whom vinegar was given to drink; *equal to him who giveth us his own blood to drink:* greater than he whose temple was dissolved; equal to him, who, after its dissolution, raised up his own temple: greater than the former, equal to the latter."* As the proof, then, that Christ and the Father are equal, this Saint alleges that Christ gave us his own blood to drink. Now, if he had believed him to present us nothing more than a symbol of his blood, would that be a proof of his divinity, or that the Father and he were equal? Is it of the same character as justifying the sinner freecost, as clothing the soul with grace, freeing the world from judgment, and forgiving the penitent thief, or raising himself to life? Can the mere institution of a symbol be ranked on an equality with these works of supreme power? And yet St. Amphilochius brings it among the last of his examples of miracles, as one of the strongest proof of Christ's equality to the Father: and we must consequently understand it to have been in his estimation a miracle of the highest order. Nothing but a belief in the Real Presence can justify such an argument; and this would be completely demonstrated did time allow me to enter into further reflection on the text.† Here we have a testimony recently discovered; see how completely it accords with the doctrine which we maintain.

I have presented you with a very limited view of the argu-

* "Scriptorum vet. nova Collectio." *Rome*, 1231, vol. iv. p. 9.

† See the account of this text communicated to the "Catholic Magazine," vol. iv. 1833, p. 284 *seq.*

ment from tradition; because I have chiefly contented myself with selecting those few fathers who have expressly treated on the Eucharist, and have consequently spoken without reserve, for the instruction of the faithful.

That there must be passages of considerable obscurity in their writings, the circumstances before detailed will lead us to expect; of such instances advantage has, of course, been taken to weaken the authority of tradition in our favour, but I hesitate not to assert that, in every case, ingenuity has been baffled, and Catholic theologians have fully vindicated our interpretation of their words. There are two branches of this evidence, however, which I almost fear I may be taxed with injustice to my cause, if I completely overlook.

The first consists of the ancient liturgies or formularies of worship in the ancient Church, Latin, Greek, and Oriental; in every one of which the Real Presence, or Transubstantiation, is most clearly recorded. They all speak of the body and blood of Jesus Christ being truly and really present; and, what is far more important, they pray to God that the bread and wine may be changed or transmuted into that body and blood.* This language is so uniform, that the learned Grotius observed, it must be allowed to have come down from the Apostles, and, consequently, "ought not to have been changed."

The second class of documents, which I must not totally omit, is closely allied to the first. For among the liturgies are those of many sects separated from our communion for upwards of a thousand years; and yet on this point we perfectly agree. But in addition to these standing monuments of their belief, I can boldly invite you to look into their confessions of faith, or into the writings of their respective doctors; and you will find the very same doctrine taught.

* See the testimony of these Liturgies, as given by the R. R. Dr. Poynter, in his "Christianity," or in the "Faith of Catholics," 2d ed. pp. 190, *seqq.*

Ask the Greek, who sits, like Jeremiah, among the ruins of his former empire, to what dogma of his faith he clings with most affection, as his support in his oppression, and his comfort in his degradation? and he will reply, that from his belief in this mystery, as clearly attested in the confessions of faith subscribed by his patriarchs and archbishops, he has derived his most feeling confidence and relief. Ask the Nestorian, separated since the fifth century from the communion of our Church, and secluded for ages from the rest of the world, in the uttermost bounds of India, what made his forefathers hail with such friendly interest, and regard as brothers, the first Europeans who visited them in their unknown retirement, and he will show you the published letter of his pastors, attesting that it was their consolation to find men from Portugal, a country far off, of whose existence they had never heard, celebrating the same sacrifice, with the same belief, as themselves. Ask the swarthy Monophysite of Abyssinia, in whose geography and history the name of Rome probably had not a place before modern times, what is the first mystery among the thin and shrivelled remains of Christianity which have continued to hold their roots in his scorched and barren land? and he replies, in the confession of faith written by the hand of one of his kings, that the first and noblest of his sacraments is that of the body and blood of his Lord. In a word, travel over the whole of Asia and Africa, where one remnant of Christianity yet exists, ask all the scattered tribes of the desert, all the fierce hordes of the mountains, or the more instructed inhabitants of the city, what are the points on which they agree relating to the Redeemer of the world, and his divine and human nature; and you find them at variance, and ready to combat together on the most important dogmas concerning it; but the point round which all will rally, the principle on which all will argue, as admitted equally by all, is, that their Redeemer, both in his divine and human nature, is really present in the sacrament at the altar. To this mystery all recur, as a common

neutral ground, whereon to defend their respective tenets. And can this dogma have come from any source but the fountain head of Christianity; since, even when it thus flows through such broken cisterns, it appears every where in the same purity, and maintains its course with the same strength? When we find this column of faith, standing almost alone amidst the ruins and fragments of Christianity, wherever we meet them, and always of the same materials and proportions, always in the same integrity, must we not conclude that it formed a substantial and most valued ornament of the holy fabric, wherever the Apostles erected it, and that it is a sure emblem and representative of that pillar of truth, on which the Apostle of the Gentiles orders us to lean?

In concluding this subject, I beg to make a few reflections on the beautiful manner in which the doctrine of the Eucharist is connected with the system of truth which formed the topic of my earlier discourses. You have seen how this most adorable sacrament contains the real body and blood of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who is, consequently, therein present, so as to be the real food of the soul; and necessarily the source and means of conveying to it that grace whereof he is the author. Now, what were the wants of human nature which our blessed Saviour came peculiarly to supply? The fall of our first parents affected their posterity in a two-fold manner. In the first place, having eaten of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, they were, in punishment, blinded in their understandings, and left a prey to error, uncertainty, and diversity of opinion: and this curse was entailed on the understandings of all their posterity. At the same time, they were driven away from the tree of life, from that tree which was intended for their nourishment and ours, to give perpetual vigour to that happy state, and nourish it in a virtuous immortality. No sooner was this lost, than the soul sank in dignity and power, all its faculties and moral feelings became corrupted; and vice and depravity ensued from the irreparable loss.

We find this two-fold want, of intellectual light and moral life, so completely felt in every period of the world's history, that it is impossible to doubt it formed the vital injury which man had undergone. We see, on the one hand, mankind seeking on every side for knowledge, not merely in vain speculations, or more profound philosophies; not merely by consulting nature through her works, or unravelling those clues of reasoning which seemed to guide them through the labyrinths of their own minds; but in ways which show how they felt the want of a superior and supernatural enlightenment, by recourse to various kinds of superstition, to vain oracles and auguries, and other fond and foolish fancies, supposed to give them some communion with heaven, or produce some glimmering spark of internal light and mysterious knowledge.

But besides this striving after a superior light, there was ever a longing after a principle that could regenerate the human heart, and bring it closer into communion with the Deity, as of old in the normal state, wherein it was created. From what other feeling could the custom have arisen, of partaking of sacrifices offered up to the Gods of paganism? Did not the very act imply, that the victim having become the property of the god, and, as it were his food, men were thereby brought into his society or hospitality, and so associated with him, as to acquire a right to his protection and friendship? But in some, there was a resemblance still more marked to the paschal feast of the New Law. In the Persian rites of Mithra, in some of the sacrifices of India, and of the North, of China, and of America, the resemblance is so great, as to have excited a suspicion that they may have arisen from a corrupted imitation of Christianity.* But the mind of the philosopher, without entering into any subtle disquisition, is content to see recorded, in all such institutions, the want, felt by the

* See the Abbé Gerbet's treatise, "Le dogme générateur de la piété Catholique."

human soul, of some regenerating, invigorating principle, of some living and quickening food, fraught with grace from above, which could bring it into communion with the God that gave it.

If our blessed Saviour came on earth, to restore poor man once more to the happy state from which he fell, so far as was consistent with the impaired state of his intellectual and moral faculties; if he came to satisfy all the just cravings of humanity after what is good and holy, we may expect to find in his holy religion, and in the Church—his earthly paradise—institutions fully adequate to these great ends. And such the Catholic believes to be the case.

First, he hath planted in it a tree of knowledge, as a beacon on the top of mountains, towards which all nations may flow, from which are darted rays of bright and cheering light to the benighted nations of the earth, and under whose shadow repose, and on whose wholesome fruits are fed, they who have been brought beneath its shelter. For, we believe,—and my first discourses were directed to prove it—that in the Church of God is an infallible and enduring authority to teach, appointed and guaranteed by Christ himself.

And beside it, he has placed the tree of life, in the life-giving institution of which we last have treated, a perpetual memorial of the benefits of redemption, bearing that sweetest food of salvation, which weighed down with its blessing the tree of Golgotha; lasting and immortal as the plant of knowledge beside which it stands. Here we partake of a victim, which truly unites and incorporates us with God, and gives us a pledge of his friendship and love, and supplies a never-failing source of benediction and grace.

But they who sit daily round the same table, are the children of the same house; and hence is this holy institution a bond of union between the professors of the one faith. For, see how perfectly the two institutions harmonize together, and are absolutely necessary to one another. The one preserves us in

religious *unity*, whereby our understandings and minds are brought into perfect accord through *faith*, the same in all; the other keeps us in *communion*, in affectionate connexion, as members of one body. The very name which the participation of this sacred banquet has received amongst us, designates this its quality. And in this manner, as the one great principle may be called the mind or intellect of God's Church, which directs and governs its entire frame, this blessed sacrament may well be designated its heart, in which lies treasured an unfailing fountain of holiest affection, that flows unceasingly to its furtherest extremity, in a warm stream of invigorating and spiritualizing vitality.

This influence of our belief in the Real Presence upon every part of our practical religion, is too manifest to need any illustration. Why do we, when it is in our power, and why did our forefathers before us, erect sumptuous churches, and lavish on them all the riches of earth, but that we believe them to be the real tabernacles wherein the Emmanuel, the "God with us," really dwells? Why is our worship conducted with such pomp and solemnity, save that we perform it as a personal service on the incarnate word of God? Why are the gates of our churches, in Catholic countries, open all day, and why do men enter at all hours to whisper a prayer, or prostrate themselves in adoration, but from the conviction that God is there more intimately present than elsewhere, through this glorious mystery? The practice of confession, and consequently of repentance, is closely connected, as Lord Fitzwilliam has observed,* with this belief. For it is the necessity of approaching to the sacred table with a clean heart, that mainly enforces its practice; and the sinner in repentance is urged to the painful purgation, by the promised refreshment of the celestial banquet.

The sacred character which the Catholic priest possesses in the estimation of his flock, the power of blessing with which

* "Letters of Atticus."

he seems invested, are but the results of that familiarity with which, in the holy mysteries, he is allowed to approach his Lord. The celibacy to which the clergy bind themselves is but a practical expression of that sentiment which the Church entertains of the unvarying purity of conduct and thought wherewith the altar should be approached. In this manner does the sacrament of the Eucharist form the very soul and essence of all practical religion among Catholics. But it has a much sublimer destiny to fulfil.

I observed, in an early portion of my discourses, that the Church of Christ holds a middle state, between one that is past, and one that is yet to come. I showed you how the former, which hath passed away, by its form and constitution, threw much light upon our present dispensation, whereof it was the shadow.* But our state, too, must in its turn reflect some of the brightness of our future destiny, even as the mountains and the sky receive a glow of promise, ere the sun hath risen in the fulness of his splendour.

And what is the essence of that blessed state but love or charity, in which, as in a cloudless atmosphere, the spirits made perfect breathe, and move, and live? Through it they are brought so near unto God as to see him face to face, and feed upon his unsating glory; through it their affections are blended together, till each partakes of the other's happiness. And how could this universal love be so well represented here below, as by a sacrament like this, which, suited, by its mysterious veils to our corporeal existence, and having the root of its efficacy in a common faith—the proper virtue of our present dispensation—brings us into the closest union with God, of which we can be conceived capable here below, and knits us together in a bond of inspearable love?

But, my brethren, before concluding, there is one view of the doctrine under consideration more painful indeed, and fruitful in awful reflections. I mean the balance to be struck

* See Lect. iv. vol. i. p. 92.

between the conflicting beliefs of Catholics and Protestants, and the stakes which we have respectively cast upon them.

On our side, I own that we have risked all our happiness and all our best possession here below. We have placed beside our doctrine the strongest effort of our faith, the utmost sacrifice of individual judgment, the completest renunciation of human pride and self-sufficiency, which are ever ready to rebel against the simple words of revelation. And not so content, we have cast into the scale the fastest anchor of our hope; considering this as the surest channel of God's mercy to us, as the means of individual sanctification, as the instrument of personal and local consecration, as the brightest comfort of our dying hour, the foretaste and harbinger of eternal glory. And as if these stakes were not of sufficient weight, we have thrown in the brightest links of golden charity, feeling that in this blessed sacrament, we are the most closely drawn to God, and the most intimately united in affection with our Saviour Christ Jesus.

All this have we placed on our belief; but if, to suppose an impossibility, we could be proved in error, it would at most be shown that we had believed too implicitly in the meaning of God's words; that we had flattered ourselves too easily, that he possessed resources of power in manifesting his goodness towards man, beyond the reach of our small intellects and paltry speculations; that, in truth, we had measured his love more lovingly than prudently, and had formed a sublimer, though a less accurate estimate of its power, than others had done; in fine, that we had been too simple-hearted and childlike in abandoning our reason into his hands, because he had the words of eternal life.

But then, if our faith be right, ponder well what infinitely heavier stakes have been ventured on the other side. For, on its supposed falsehood have been risked words of contumely and scorn, of railing and most awful blasphemy! The holy sacrament has been repeatedly profaned, and its adoration

mocked at as idolatrous, and its priests reviled as seducers, and the very belief in it considered abundant ground for exclusion from political and social benefits! And if what I have advanced, have been well proved, then are those who believe not with us, living in the neglect of a sovereign command, a neglect to which is attached a fearful penalty. "Unless ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye shall not have life in you."

And what conclusion can we draw from this balance of our respective dangers, but the necessity incumbent on all who are in the latter condition, to try this important dogma to its foundation, and fully ascertain the ground on which they stand?

But it is time that I should close this Lecture, and with it the entire course. We have now, my brethren, for many evenings stood here opposed face to face, and it is probable that many of us will not thus meet again, till we stand together before the judgment-seat of Christ. Days, weeks, months, and years will pass, as heretofore, quickly away; may they be with you all many and happy,—but still the end will come, and it will not be long before we are again confronted. Let us then make a reckoning of what we shall mutually have to answer. And first bear with me, for a few moments, while I speak of myself.

What will it profit me in that day, if, while I have been addressing you, I have been uttering aught but my firmest and surest convictions? What shall I have gained, if I shall be proved to have sought only to enmesh you in the toils of captious reasoning and wily sophistry, and not rather to have been desirous of captivating your souls to the truth, as it is in Christ Jesus? Nay, what satisfaction could it be to me even now, did I feel a suspicion that I have been misleading you, instead of using my efforts to guide you to what my conscience tells me is the only true path of salvation: if, all this time, besides the feeling of degradation and self-reproach, which such

conduct must have inspired, I had felt, as I must have done, the awful conviction, that the arm of God was stretched over my head, and challenged by every word I uttered, to strike and crush me as a lying prophet, and a deceiver in his name? Nor is ours the religion which confers wealth, and dignity, and honour upon its willing ministers, or that can hold out any nominal equivalent for our only true reward.

But, if on the one hand, I am fully satisfied, not merely that no doctrine, but that not a single argument has been advanced by me, of which I have not the most entire conviction, and if I flatter myself, as I feelingly do, that you too are satisfied in this respect, I have a right to demand from you a corresponding return, and it is simply this. Allow not any slight impression which my words have made, to pass heedlessly away. If any one shall have felt his previous system of faith in even its smallest parts shaken, let it be but a reason with him to try the security of the entire building. If some small cloud shall appear to have cast a shadow over the serenity of his former conviction; oh! let him not scorn or neglect it: for it may be like that which the prophet commanded his servant to watch from Carmel,—rich with blessing, and fertility, and refreshment, to the soul that thirsts for truth.*

No one, I am sure, who looks at the religious divisions of this country, can, for a moment, suppose that it represents the proper state of Christ's Church on earth. It is certain, that for ages unity of belief reigned amongst us, and so should it be once more. There is no doubt but individual reflection, if sincerely and perseveringly pursued, will bring all back, in steady convergence towards the point of unity; and therefore I entreat, that if any little light shall have been now shed upon any of your minds, if a view of religion have been presented to you, of which before you had no idea, I entreat that it be not cast away, but followed with diligence and gratitude, till full satisfaction shall have been received.

* 3 Reg. xviii. 44.

Far be it from me to fancy that anything which I have said, can of itself be worthy of so glorious a blessing. I have but scattered a little seed, and it is God alone that can give the increase. It is not on those effects, for which I am grateful to your indulgence, and on which till my dying hour I must dwell with delight,—it is not on the patience and kindness with which you have so often listened to me under trying circumstances, in such numbers, and at such an hour, that I presume to rest my hopes and augury of some good effect. No, it is on the confidence which the interest exhibited gives me, that you have abstracted from me individually, and fixed your thoughts and attention upon the cause which I represent. Had I come before you as a champion, armed to fight against the antagonists of our faith, I might have been anxious to appear personally strong and well appointed; but the course which I have chosen needed not much prowess; a burning lamp will shine as brightly in the hands of a child, as if uplifted by a giant's arm. I have endeavoured simply to hold before you the light of Catholic truth; and to him that kindled it be all the glory!

To thee, O eternal fountain of all knowledge, I turn to obtain grace upon these lessons, and efficacy for these wishes. If "my speech and my preaching have not been in the persuasive words of human wisdom,"* it is thy word at least which I have endeavoured to declare. Remember, then, thy promise. For thou hast said; "as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and return no more thither, but soak the earth, and water it, and make it to spring, and give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be: it shall not return to me void, but shall prosper in the things for which I sent it."† Prosper it then now: may it fall upon a good soil, and bring forth fruit a hundredfold. Remove prejudice, ignorance, and pride from the hearts of all who have listened to it, and give them a meek and teachable

* 1 Cor. ii. 4. † Is. lv. 10, 11.

spirit; and strength to follow and to discover, if they know them not, the doctrines of thy saving truth. Hear, on their behalf, the last prayers of thy well-beloved Son Jesus, when he said: "And not only for them do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in me, that they all may be one, as thou Father in me and I in thee; that they may also be one in us."* Yes; may they all be one by the profssion of the same faith: may they be one in the same hope, by the practice of thy holy law; that so we may hereafter all be one in perfect charity, in the possession of thy eternal kingdom. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

* Jo. xvii. 20, 21.

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