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From

HOLY COMMUNION

to the

BLESSED TRINITY

M. V. BERNADOT, O.P.

Translated by

DOM FRANCIS IZARD, O.S.B.

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

IN France this small work by the Reverend Father Bernadot O.P.: treating of the relation between Holy Communion and the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity in the soul, has had a large circulation. We may hope in consequence that it has effected considerable good, by making its readers realize more fully and deeply one of the most consoling and helpful doctrines of our Faith, e.g., the indwelling not only of the Holy Ghost, but of the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity in the souls of all those in a state of sanctifying grace.

This great fact is realized by comparatively few lay Catholics, and, may we not also say, insufficiently inculcated from our pulpits? All the saints have insisted that progress in holiness depends on a growing realization of the Divine Presence. "All sins are committed," says St. Teresa, "because we do not think of God as really present, but imagine Him as very far off." St. Francis of Sales remarks: "Most of the failures of good people in the discharge

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B. J. ...

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of their duty come to pass because they do not keep themselves sufficiently in the Presence of God." This Presence of God we should try and realize, is not only that of His creative and conserving action, which is common to all beings, but the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity in the souls of each of us provided we are free from mortal sin. This mode of God's Presence is frequently referred to by St. John in both his gospel and first epistle, and in the epistles of St. Paul; in fact to read St. Paul keeping this fact in view seems to reveal his epistles in a new light.

What each of us should try and do is to cultivate by frequent acts of our will the realization of this indwelling presence of the Blessed Trinity, as the Carmelite Sister Elizabeth of the Trinity wrote: "To attain to the ideal life of the soul we must live in the supernatural, realizing that God is in our inmost being; then nothing is commonplace, not even the most ordinary actions, for one does not live in them but above them." Thus we may hope to arrive at that "familiaritas stupenda nimis" — "wonderful companionship" of which the author of the Imitation speaks. (Book II, Ch. I.)

DOM FRANCIS IZARD, O.S.B.,

Abbaye de St. Benoît,

Maredsous.

CONTENTS

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------|---|
| Translator's Preface | v |
| Preface | i |
| Foreword. <i>The Mystery of Christ</i> | 5 |

I

EUCCHARISTIC UNION

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| I. Above all Jesus gives Himself to us by Communion | 15 |
| II. Communion gives us Jesus in His entirety | 17 |
| III. Communion gives us the Three Divine Persons | 19 |
| IV. Communion associates us with the inner life of the Blessed Trinity | 22 |

II

THE PERMANENCE OF THE EUCCHARISTIC UNION

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| I. <i>Our union with the Sacred Humanity of Jesus</i> | 31 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----|

- (1) Our union with the Sacred Humanity in virtue of His merits and love.
- (2) Our union with the Sacred Humanity in virtue of His vital action.
- (3) Our union with the Sacred Humanity in the Eucharist.
- (4) The intimacy of this union.

II. *Our union with the Holy Trinity* . . . 46

- (1) The permanence of the Blessed Trinity in the communicant.
- (2) The divine circumincession in the soul.

III

TO MAINTAIN AND PERFECT UNION

I. *To maintain union* . . . 55

- (1) Our model.
- (2) Recollection a necessary condition for the life of union.
- (3) Union during work.
 - (a) Our exemplar.
 - (b) Intentions for work.
 - (c) How to work.
- (4) Union in temptation.
- (5) Union in bodily suffering.
- (6) Union in grief of heart.
- (7) Union in desolation of soul.

(8) Union in joy.

- (a) The source of joy.
- (b) To live in joy.

II. *To perfect union* . . . 94

- (1) Repetition of acts of desire.
- (2) Repetition of acts of love.
- (3) The Invisible Divine Missions.

IV

THE END OF THE EUCHARISTIC UNION

I. *Adopted sons in Jesus Christ* . . . 107

- (1) Our supernatural vocation and the Trinity
- (2) Communion and our supernatural vocation.

II. *The glory of the Holy Trinity* . . . 117

- (1) The final goal of Creation.
- (2) The unique Liturgy.

PREFACE

At the present time, by the grace of God, there are many souls who receive Holy Communion daily.

Although they are thoroughly good, love Our Lord, and approach with the intention that the Church desires, yet experience teaches that they do not derive the profit they should do from this frequent reception of the Sacrament.

What is wanting? The reason is that they do not sufficiently grasp the Eucharistic Mystery, and the marvellous realities of Holy Communion. This little book is addressed to these Christians "of good will" in the hope that it may give them more intellectual light, and so more help. We wish to aid them in increasing and strengthening their spirituality, and the crowning devotion of the spiritual life is devotion to the Blessed Trinity.

In order to lead others to holiness, to those states of prayer so pleasing to God, and so profitable to the Church, it is necessary not only to stimulate their affections, but above all to enlighten

their intellects. When this happens in the case of those desiring spiritual progress, it often inspires greater renunciation, for Truth, touching a soul, illuminates and sets it on fire with love.

Preachers make a great mistake in thinking that these supreme dogmas of our Faith should be reserved for an intellectual élite; if they act thus they are quite unwittingly drying up the streams of sanctity, for Truth is the source of all love, all devotion. They forget that at Baptism a special "instinct for God," the germ of the gifts of wisdom and understanding was implanted in the soul, thereby rendering simple souls, sometimes even little children, capable of grasping and spiritually enjoying these great truths. Surely it is good to make God known as He has manifested and revealed Himself.

It is hoped that these pages may further the desire of the great Apostle St. Paul, which was to form Christians "rooted and founded in charity, comprehending with all the Saints what is the breadth, and length, and height, and depth: knowing also the charity of God which surpasseth all understanding that they may be filled unto all the fulness of God" (Eph. iii. 17 19).

With filial affection we consecrate this little book to our Blessed Lady, the divine Mother,

Seat of Wisdom, invoking at the same time St. Catherine of Siena.

O Mary, Temple of the Trinity! Hearth of the divine fire! Mother of mercy, who enshrined Jesus the source of life.

O Mary, in whom was written the Word, who gave us the doctrine of life, explain and reveal Him to us. Show us the power and goodness of the Father, the wisdom of the Word, the charity of the Holy Spirit.

PRAYER OF ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA

O Holy Spirit come into my heart, by thy power draw me to thyself and grant me charity with fear.

Keep me O Christ from every evil thought, warm and kindle me with thy sweetest love so that every suffering may seem light to me.

My heavenly Father help me this day in every action and trouble for the love of Christ.

FOREWORD

I am the Way : walk in Me.

I am the Truth : contemplate Me.

I am the Life : live by Me.

THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST

GOD COMMUNICATES THE DIVINE LIFE TO THE

SACRED HUMANITY OF CHRIST

God is the ocean of Life. This life which is at the same time Light and Love has a burning desire to diffuse and bestow itself.

From all eternity the Father gives Himself to the Son, together the Father and the Son give themselves to the Holy Ghost, communicating to Him Their One Divinity.

Eternally also by His ineffable bounty and compassion, God resolved to bestow His holy and beatific life on His rational creatures, to manifest His Word, to give His Spirit, and thus to communicate His nature by intellectual light and love. Before, however, bestowing Himself on His creatures, the infinite life gave itself in all its

plenitude to Him who was "the firstborn of every creature" (Coloss. i. 15). For the Sacred Humanity of Christ in virtue of its union with the person of the Word, received a participation of the infinite as far as was possible for a created nature. The plenitude of the Divine Life poured itself forth on Him, because God willed that in Him "all fulness should dwell" (Coloss. i. 19). "We have seen Him full of grace and truth" (John i. 14). Placed at the summit of creation, introduced into the adorable Trinity, Jesus partakes without limit of that Life which inundating His heart and soul, saturated as it were His intelligence and affections, in such a manner that Christ Himself becomes an Ocean of Life.

JESUS COMMUNICATES TO US THE DIVINE LIFE

If Jesus is above all, He is not isolated by that fact. God in the magnificence of His love predestined Him to be "the firstborn amongst many brethren" (Rom. viii. 29), of a body of which we are members. "He is the head of the body the Church" (Coloss. i. 18). Now Christ wishes to make His brethren share in what He has received. The Life which was poured out by the adorable Trinity on the sacred Humanity extends and diffuses itself. From the

head it extends into the members: this life which filled Christ to the utmost, expands and flows into the body formed by the faithful, so that we in our turn communicate in that intimate life of the Three Divine Persons, in their Light and in their Love.

More than any other mystery, it was this wonderful diffusion of Supernatural life which made St. Paul praise the glory of His grace (Eph. i. 6), and drew from him those moving words of gratitude and thanks (cf. Eph., Coloss., Phil.). The great apostle never ceased preaching what he termed "The Mystery of Christ . . . a mystery which hath been hidden from ages and generations but now is manifested to His Saints: that is to say Christ in you" (cf. Coloss. i. 26, 27).

The complete Christ is formed as it were of Jesus and the Church, Jesus is so intimately united to the faithful that they form but one body animated by the same life circulating in the head and the members; for Jesus pours it forth on us, and makes it ours. "I am the Vine, you are the branches" (John xv. 5). The stem and the branches are one same being, nourished and acting together, producing the same fruits because fed by the same sap. In the same way Jesus and the faithful are united in one body. Jesus en-

joyed the plenitude of this Divine Life ; the Light which illuminates, and the Love which inflames were the supreme delight of His Humanity ; He circulates this life in us His members in such a way, that in Jesus, in us, in His Soul, in our souls, in His Heart and ours, there is the same life, the same grace, the same communication of love to the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit.

DWELLING IN JESUS

Remain closely united to Christ. These words sum up not only the whole Christian life, but also all sanctity.

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. He that abideth in Me, and I in him the same beareth much fruit : for without Me you can do nothing (John xv. 4, 5).

This then is the great need : to dwell in Jesus. To live in Jesus, sums up and facilitates everything, places the Christian in regular correspondence and communication with God, helps him to realize his vocation which may be fully expressed in these few brief words : by Jesus to enter into relations of intimacy with God our Father in the Holy Spirit, who is subsistent and eternal Love.

HOW ARE WE TO UNITE WITH GOD AND DWELL IN HIM ?

It is Baptism which first makes us enter into Christ. *Baptism incorporates us with Christ* says St. Thomas. From Him the plenitude of life, grace and virtue flows into us : it is natural that the life of the head should descend into its members. "*Of His fulness have we all received*" (John i. 16).

Confirmation strengthens, develops, and perfects the supernatural union, which was given us at Baptism. "*We have all been made to drink in one Spirit*" (I. Cor. xii. 13), it leads to perfection our spiritual growth, making us capable of acting manfully in the spiritual order, so that we can defend the faith received in Baptism openly and courageously. "This Sacrament," says St. Thomas, "augments and perfects our spiritual life in all that regards external combats against the enemies of Christ, but it is the work of the Eucharist to perfect man and unite him intimately with God" (Sum. Theol. iii. 79, 1, ad 1).

Our union then with Christ commenced at Baptism, was strengthened by Confirmation, and is perfected at the moment of Communion.

It must be noted that Baptism and Confirma-

tion are received once only, and alas! we can lose the grace they have enriched us with. This life of grace is always exposed to the danger of losing its vitality: it is certain it suffers loss from our daily frailties. Being thus enfeebled each day, will it not end by finally disappearing? No. To restore it Our Lord has instituted the Sacrament of the Altar the most marvellous of all: the Sacrament in which all the rest receive their consummation and crown.

Its end is twofold to lead us to perfection, and to maintain our union with Christ. Above all it is the Sacrament of Life, for it is a food that we can receive every day, a *living bread* (John vi. 51) expressly instituted to give us eternal life, *the very Life of God Himself*. This living bread does for our supernatural life, all that material bread can do for our bodies, it restores, augments, renews and gladdens.

To Communion by the Incarnation and Redemption, is a summary of the whole mystery of Christ. From the sublime heights of the Blessed Trinity, the Incarnate Word descended to man in the Eucharist; by the Eucharist, man mounts up to his last end, the Holy and Adorable Trinity.

From the Trinity to Communion: such was the route Christ traversed to accomplish His task of diffusing His Divine Life, the path made by

Divine Love in descending to man whom He wished to save.

From Communion to the Trinity: is the ascent by which man, purified and strengthened by the company of Christ, enters into the participation of his infinite reward. This is the ascending way of human love to God, to God Who draws the human heart by the inexhaustible felicity of the Beatific Vision.

“ Let us give thanks to God the Father Who hath made us worthy to be partakers of the lot of the Saints in light; Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love. . . .

“ He is the image of the invisible God the first-born of every creature. For in Him were all things created in heaven and on earth, things visible, and invisible . . . All things were created by Him and in Him. He is before all and by Him all things subsist.

“ He is the head of the body, the Church: the beginnings, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He may hold the primacy. For God wished that in Him all fulness should dwell; through Him reconciling all things to Himself, both things on earth and things in heaven, making peace through the blood of His cross.

“ You also were at one time enemies in thoughts and evil works, but now are reconciled through the death of His Son, making you holy, unspotted and blameless before Him, provided that you remain grounded and settled in faith, immovable in hope ” (*cf.* Colos i. 12-23).

I

THE EUCHARISTIC UNION

- 1.—Above all Jesus gives Himself to us by Communion.
- 2.—Communion gives us Jesus in His entirety.
- 3.—Communion gives us the Three Divine Persons.
- 4.—Communion associates us with the very life of the Blessed Trinity.

I

THE EUCHARISTIC UNION

I.—ABOVE ALL JESUS GIVES HIMSELF TO US BY COMMUNION.

In our everyday life it is by Holy Communion that we are specially united with Christ. The great means for us to enrich ourselves with the Divine Life is to eat *the Bread of Life*.

A wonderful union is established at that moment. Even the most intimate unions of the world cannot be compared to it. To find an analogy we must ascend with St. John Chrysostom to the union of the two natures in Christ and say that Communion unites us to Jesus as His Sacred Humanity is united to the Word.

Assuredly the life of Jesus and our life remain distinct, just as His Nature and Soul do from ours. He establishes however an incomparable union of love.

To give an idea of this *unification of Christ*

and man (Council of Florence), the Fathers of the Church make use of some wonderful comparisons. "Throw melted wax into melted wax," said St. Cyril of Jerusalem, "and the one interpenetrates the other perfectly. In like manner when the body and blood of Christ are received, the union is such that Christ is in the recipient and he in Christ. . . . We have the same body, and the same blood." St. Cyprian writes "Our union with Christ unifies affections and wills."

Practically at the moment of Communion, Jesus is so completely in our hearts and in our souls, that our thoughts and affections may be said to be His also. At first they are in Him, then He communicates them to us according to the measure of our love. If a soul has only a little love, Jesus is forced to accommodate Himself to the narrow limits of that soul and to restrain His gifts. To the communicant, however, who is detached both from himself and creatures, who gives himself unreservedly with a pure heart, Jesus in exchange gives Himself as only God is able to do. An interchange of life is established, a communication of gifts, a unity of love which defies human description. The soul permeated by Jesus becomes as it were fruitful soil germinating both flowers

and fruits. It conceives wondrous thoughts, makes burning acts of love. Can these be said to be ours? Yes, for they spring from our intelligence and affections, but inasmuch as we are united with Christ they are common to us and Him. Together we adore, love, give thanks; together we give ourselves to our Father in heaven. His love and ours, His thoughts and ours intermingle: like two grains of incense burnt together in the same thurible, they exhale one perfume towards heaven.

"O Divine Word as your Father from all eternity is in you, wholly in you, as you are wholly in Him; so, also, O my Jesus, fill me with yourself that by the intimate permeation of all that is mine, I may be one with you." M. OLLIER.

II.—COMMUNION GIVES US JESUS IN HIS ENTIRETY.

At the moment of Communion we are really in possession of *Life Itself*. We have within us the Incarnate Word, with all He is, with all He does. Jesus, God, and man; all the treasures of His Divinity, all the graces of His Humanity; what St. Paul terms "*the unsearchable riches of Christ*" (Eph. iii. 8).

Jesus is with us as man.

Communion pours into us the heavenly and glorified life of His Humanity, His Heart, His Soul. In the heavens this sight fills the angels with joy. Some Saints on earth have also seen the glorified Humanity of Jesus in vision. "It was a beauty human language could not express," said Blessed Angela of Foligno, the remembrance caused "an immense joy, a sublime light, an unspeakable and continual delight, a delight to which all others are but dross."

Yet this glorified body, animated by a heart an abyss of love, by a soul ineffably beautiful, radiating light, life, grace, peace and joy, the very sanctuary and paradise of God, becomes our banquet.

Jesus comes to us as God.

This is the very crown, the culminating point of the divine generosity. "*Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them unto the end* (John xiii. 1) even to the extreme limit, the ultimate capacity of love. We communicate then in the divine life of Jesus, in His life as the Word, as the only Son of the Father.

But He Himself said: "*I live by the Father*" (John vi. 58). From all eternity, the Father gives to the Son that life which is His own. He gives it entirely without measure, with such generosity of love that though remaining distinct,

they form but one Divinity, with the same life, the same plenitude of love, joy and peace. Yet it is this Life that we receive.

"O uncreated God! O God so lovingly incarnate! man has eaten Your flesh and drunk Your blood, that he may be one with You through endless ages."

B. ANGELA OF FOLIGNO.

III.—COMMUNION GIVES US THE THREE DIVINE PERSONS.

The Word comes to us. But He does not come alone. "*I am in the Father and the Father in me*" (John xiv. 10). What a consoling truth, that where Jesus is His Father is also: "*He that sent Me is with Me and He hath not left Me alone. . . . The Father abideth in Me*" (John viii. 29, xiv. 10). But where the Father and the Son are present there also is the Holy Ghost. Consequently the adorable Trinity dwells in the heart of each communicant. Jesus Himself has said so. "*If anyone love Me . . . My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and will make Our abode with him*" (John xiv. 23).

Our soul becomes a sanctuary filled with ineffable wonders, for the Three Divine Persons

do not remain inactive in the communicant, the Father generates there, the Son, and the Father and Son together breathe forth the Holy Ghost.

The Father eternally expresses a Word, similar to, and equal to Himself, by this essential and living Word He completely manifests Himself. On seeing this Word, His Image, Light, Thought Glory, the counterpart of Himself, equivalent splendour of all His perfections, living mirror of His Being, fruit of His affection, the Father loves Him with a love that is illimitable. The Word also returns an infinite love, in all respects equal to that of His Father. This living, subsistent, unique and mutual love, this embrace, this ineffable kiss consummates them in the unity of the Holy Spirit. This is the great mystery whose contemplation inundates the angels with glory, happiness and beauty. These marvellous intelligences who understand at one glance all the mysteries of created things, fix their gaze eternally on the Three Divine Persons, without exhausting, without satiating their desire for this mystery. Their untiring glance always discovers within the abyss of the Divine Life, new perfections which they contemplate with ravishment, and hymn with delight.

This mystery is brought to us at Communion. Whilst at all times "*we are the temples*

of the living God" (II. Cor. vi. 16), for as St. Thomas says "By sanctifying grace, the entire Trinity is the guest of our souls"; yet this is, if possible, more true at the moment of Communion because then Jesus comes to us as the *Bread of Life*, to bestow expressly upon us that life which He derives from His Father: *He who eats of this Bread shall live.*

But how will he live? "*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*" (John vi. 58).

The soul of the communicant becomes as it were the heaven of the Blessed Trinity. In my soul as in heaven, the Father utters His Word, generates His Son, and in so doing gives Him to me "*Thou art My Son, this day I have begotten Thee . . . Thou art My beloved Son: in Thee I am well pleased*" (Ps. ii. 7; Luke iii. 22). In my soul the Father and Son now exchange Their mutual love, are held in equal embrace, and Their love, breathing forth like a flame, is the Holy Spirit.

"O eternal God, O almighty Father, O ardent flame of Love! You have manifested Your grandeur and bounty, in the gift bestowed. You the Infinite, the eternal Trinity, have given Your-

self completely to man. To bestow this gift You descended into the stable of our humanity, which had become the haunt of animals, that is to say of mortal sins. . . .

"O eternal Trinity, our supreme love, and true light, enlighten us. You, Who are Wisdom itself, grant us wisdom. You, Who are Omnipotent, give us strength. Dispel our darkness we beseech You, that we may know You perfectly, Who art Truth itself, and follow You in simplicity and sincerity of heart."

ST. CATHARINE OF SIENA.

IV.—COMMUNION ASSOCIATES US WITH THE
INNER LIFE OF THE BLESSED TRINITY.

By this life which is given me, I am a participant of the marvellous interchange of love of the Three Divine Persons.

Jesus makes me realize His love for His Father, makes me penetrate into His Heart, shows me His Soul burning with love for God, with Him and by Him I love His Father Who is mine also.

He teaches me to adore, praise, love, surrender myself, to repeat with Him "*Behold, I come to do Thy will O my God . . . Into Thy hands I commend my spirit* (Ps. xxxix. 8, 9 ; xxx. 6). Jesus Himself asks His Father that I may be admitted into the mystery of the love of "The Three."

"Father, I pray for them also . . . that they may be one in Us" (John xvii. 20, 21).

The Father in His turn associates us with His tender affection for His Son. "No man can come to Me," said Jesus, "except the Father draw him" (John vi. 44). He adds "My Father hath loved Me" (John xv. 9), and with what a love! A love which cannot be described, a limitless love. Yet Jesus demands and obtains my participation in this surpassing tenderness, "Father, may the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me be in them" (John xvii. 26)

Led to the Father by Jesus, to Jesus by the Father, I am immersed as it were in the Holy Spirit, the eternal and mutual love of both Father and Son.

It is in the Holy Spirit, that You, Father, lead me to Jesus, it is in the Holy Spirit that You, Jesus, conduct me to Your Father.

The Holy Ghost is Your Gift, because He is Your union, Your consummation, the seal of Your unity, He is also my union, my consummation, the seal of my unity with You. "*He teaches me all things*" (John xiv. 26). He perfects His work by giving me everything. In drawing You, O Jesus, He draws me to the Father. With You, O Father, in drawing You, He draws me to Jesus. He attracts, possesses me, makes me one

with You. It is by means of the Holy Ghost that the supreme prayer of Jesus, the adorable master, is realized: "*Holy Father, I pray for all those who believe in me: that they may all be one, as Thou Father in Me and I in Thee; that they also may be one in Us. . . . And the glory which Thou hast given Me, I have given to them, that they may be one as We also are one. I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one: that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them as Thou hast also loved Me*" (John xvii. 21-23).

God said to Blessed Angela of Foligno, "If anyone wishes to possess Me in his soul, I will not withdraw from him. If anyone wishes to see Me, I will give him the vision of My face. If anyone wishes to converse with Me, we will talk together with great joy."

"O Trinity! Eternal Trinity! O Fire, O abyss of Love! Would it not have sufficed to create us after Your own image and likeness, making us reborn through grace, by the Blood of Your Son? Was it still necessary that You should give the Holy Trinity itself as food for our souls? Yet Your love willed this, O Eternal Trinity! You gave us not only Your Word through the Redemption and in the Eucharist, but Yourself

in Your fulness of love for Your creature. In very truth the soul possesses You Who art Supreme Goodness."

ST. CATHARINE OF SIENA.

If St. Thomas could write that Grace, "Is the commencement of eternal beatitude," how much more can this be said of the Eucharistic Union. Jesus Himself said, "*He who eats of this bread shall live for ever*" (John vi. 52).

The Blessed in heaven, and the Church militant on earth receiving the same God partake of the same life. It is true that the Blessed have the vision of God, whilst we only possess Him by faith. But Communion like vision gives Him to us immediately and completely, without other obstacle than that of our frailties and tepidity. If our faith were sufficiently strong to eliminate this indifference, sufficiently ardent to remove every obstacle, and thus to prepare for the Host the same reception that the purifying process of purgatory effects for eternal life, the results would be almost the same. Filled with the Eucharistic life by Communion, even those here on earth would be transformed in God as are the elect in heaven.

Does it not almost seem as if God had been seized by some divine impatience, and could not wait

for the hour which should give us the beatific vision? Love has hastened to contract that union which should last eternally. He has made Himself Bread, made Himself Wine, and says to us, "*I am the food of great souls: grow and eat, for you will not change Me into yourself as does bodily food, but you will be changed into Me*" (St. Augustine's Confessions). . . . *Come, my friends, eat and drink, be inebriated, my dearly beloved*" (Cantic. v. 1).

"O Jesus Christ creator and creature. True God and true man. True flesh and blood. O ineffable union, meeting of immensities. O my Lord I go from Your humanity to Your divinity, from Your divinity to Your humanity, I go and I return. In contemplation the soul encounters the ineffable divinity carrying in itself all treasures, all knowledge. O imperishable treasure! O divinity! You are the source from whom I draw these nourishing delights, the source of all I am able to tell, of all I am unable to express. I see the most precious soul of Jesus endowed with all virtues, all the gifts of the Holy Spirit, a most holy oblation, an oblation without stain. I see that body the price of our redemption. I see the blood, from which I draw life and salvation. I see also that which I am unable to

express. Here truly, under these veils, is He whom the Dominations adore, He before Whom the Powers and Angels tremble. If only our eyes were opened as are theirs, what prodigies would be worked in us, at the approach of this Mystery, what adoration, what humility."

BLESSED ANGELA OF FOLIGNO

II

THE PERMANENCE OF THE
EUCCHARISTIC UNION

I.—UNION WITH THE SACRED HUMANITY OF JESUS.

1. Our union with the Sacred Humanity in virtue of His merits and love.
2. Our union with the Sacred Humanity in virtue of His vital action.
3. Our union with the Sacred Humanity in the Eucharist.
4. The intimacy of this union.

II.—THE UNION WITH THE MOST HOLY TRINITY.

1. The abiding presence of the Blessed Trinity.
2. The divine circumcession in our souls.

II

THE PERMANENCE OF THE EUCCHARISTIC UNION

THE PERMANENCE OF THE EUCCHARISTIC UNION

Does the Eucharistic Union last ?

Communion is an act, all acts are passing.

Immediately the sacred species are consumed are we then deprived of the presence of Our Lord ? Does this ineffable union last only for some short moments ?

The Church, however, teaches us to desire the permanence of this union, when she puts on our lips at the moment of Communion that wonderful prayer : " O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, who fulfilling the Father's will, with the co-operation of the Holy Ghost, has given life to the world by Thy death : deliver me from all wickedness, and from every evil, for the sake of this Thy Sacred Body and Blood. Make me always cleave to Thy commandments, and let me

not at any time be separated from Thee, who with the same God the Father and the Holy Ghost livest and reignest world without end. Amen."

That I may never be separated from Thee. Surely that is the prayer of every loving soul; for love always desires lasting union. Everything that passes has something unsatisfying about it. The soul that has communicated with fervour, and has entered into the intimacy of the Eucharistic mystery, feels itself enkindled with an ardent desire, an insatiable hunger for the sacred Host. Even though daily Communion brings great joys each morning, yet these do not satisfy the desire; there is a perpetual thirst for Communion, for continuous union with the Eucharistic mystery.

Celestial sweetness unalloyed
Who eat Thee hunger still,
Who drink of Thee still feel a void
Which only Thou canst fill.¹

Is it too much then to think of a continual union with Jesus, a lasting possession of His adorable Humanity.

No, certainly not since the Master Himself both gives and encourages these desires. "*He*

¹ Hymn of Lauds. Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus.

that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, abideth in me and I in him" (John vi. 57).

"O God, my God, I search for Thee at break of day.

My soul hath thirst for thee.

My flesh languisheth.

In this desert land, where no water is.

So I come before thee in thy sanctuary.

To see thy power and glory.

My soul adheres to thee." (Psalm lxxii)

"O God of love, my Saviour, my joy, my delight for eternity. Thou alone canst quench my thirst, and satiate my soul. Yet the more I feed on Thee, the more I hunger, the more I drink at Your source, the more I thirst. Come, then, Lord Jesus, come." ST. GERTRUDE.

I.—OUR UNION WITH THE SACRED HUMANITY.

The permanence of the eucharistic union is both possible and actual. Even when the sacred species are consumed the communicant may remain closely united to the Sacred Humanity of Jesus.

But this union must be properly understood. The Sacred Humanity is in heaven, and in

the tabernacles on our altars. According to its glorious form it is in heaven, according to the eucharistic form in the tabernacles. Such is the teaching of theology. Assuredly once the species are consumed, the Humanity of Christ ceases to be with the communicant according to its eucharistic state. There is no doubt that it would be theologically incorrect to consider the Sacred Humanity as remaining in our hearts as it remains in the Consecrated Host.

However, we are permitted to say that we dwell in permanent union with the Humanity of Our Lord, for if He does not dwell with us by His bodily substance, yet He does so by the outpourings of His love, the contact of His power, by the lights and graces He sends us without ceasing from the tabernacle.

The Eternal Father said to St. Catherine of Siena, "Consider what excellencies the soul receives in this Bread of Life, this nourishment of angels. In receiving this Sacrament, it dwells in Me, and I in it. As the fish is in the sea, the sea in the fish, so am I in the soul and the soul in Me the Ocean of peace. After Communion grace remains; for having received this Bread of Life in the state of grace, the soul retains grace when the accidents of bread are consumed.

"I leave the imprint of my grace, as the soft wax

retains the imprint when the seal is withdrawn. In the same way by virtue of this sacrament the ardour of My divine charity, the loving mercy of the Holy Spirit, the intellectual light of uncreated Wisdom, My only Son, remain behind in the soul" (St. Catherine of Siena. Dialogue 112).

I.—OUR UNION WITH THE SACRED HUMANITY IN VIRTUE OF HIS MERITS AND LOVE.

The Sacred Humanity is always present to us, by the incessant action of His merits, the perpetual raying forth of His love.

Christ, said St. Paul, "*is always living to make intercession for us*" (Hebrews vii. 25). In heaven, in the Blessed Sacrament, He does not cease to plead for us by recalling His merits to His Father, Who is then as it were compelled to help us. He shows that human nature He assumed, which has merited for us, together with the sacred wounds, the signs of His sacrifice. He manifests the ardent desire of His Holy Soul for our salvation, a desire which is more than a prayer, for it is an appeal to His infinite merits, which is immediately granted.

He intercedes for all He has redeemed, for all, as for each in particular, He has a special regard, a special outpouring of His love for everyone,

"I am the good Shepherd . . . The good Shepherd calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them. I know My sheep" (John x. 3, 14). This is not, says St. Thomas, simply knowledge, but a loving recognition, in which the heart takes part as much as the intelligence. Without ceasing Jesus watches me from the depths of the Tabernacle, with a look that penetrates to my inmost being, a glance at the same time attentive and tenderly affectionate. "*The light of thy countenance O Lord is signed upon us*" (Psalm iv. 7). Not a single thought, not an act escapes Jesus. There is not one of my desires, which He does not know better than I do myself. He takes count of all my varying feelings, my needs, my dangers, my aspirations; not simply as a witness, but to give me, by the instrumentality of His glorified Humanity, the graces I need for all these changing states.

At every instant He loves me. And with what a love! Certainly the uncreated Love of the Word is always with us, it is an ineffable blessing to know that it is beyond our power to escape from it. But as man also Jesus loves me. From His tabernacle He pours forth floods of tenderness, enveloping me with love. A love which never lessens; there is never a moment in which I can say, now Jesus does not think of me. Even at

night He watches whilst I sleep. "*The Lord looketh on your way, and the journey that you go*" (Judges xviii. 6), and this with a love which is never discouraged. I often forget and offend, but He continues to bestow His graces. His love aids me continually, it has the tenderness of brother, friend, and spouse, night and day I am under its influence; How precious is this union between the soul and God, flowing unceasingly from the charity of the Sacred Heart.

"The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want.
He maketh me repose in the green pastures,
He leadeth me beside the still waters,
He restoreth my soul. . . .
Though I should walk through the valley of
the shadow of death
I shall fear no evil.
For Thou art with me,
Thy rod and thy staff have comforted me.
Thou hast prepared a table before me against
those that afflict me.
My chalice floweth over."

Psalm xxii.

2.—OUR UNION WITH THE SACRED HUMANITY
IN VIRTUE OF HIS VITAL ACTION.

There is a mode of presence of the Sacred

Humanity, more intimate still : the mysterious presence of His vital action.

"*I am the Life*" (John xiv. 6), said Jesus, and during His ministry on earth, the Sacred Humanity repeatedly manifested its supernatural power : His touch sufficed to perform the greatest miracles.

"*Virtue went out from Him and healed all*" (Luke xi. 19). To-day, far from being lessened this power knows neither obstacle, nor cessation. It energises continually everywhere. Happily each one of us is unable to escape from that action, or as theologians term it from "the contact of His power."

Christ's vital action is the centre of the supernatural universe, the sun which illumines all the spiritual creatures of God, the supernatural atmosphere, without which there would be no life, no light, no security, no relation with God.

The Sacred Humanity placed at the summit of creation, in immediate contact with the Divinity, inundated with the Divine Life, became itself the source of life, the point of departure of the Divine gifts. Life issues as it were in great floods from the Soul and Heart of Jesus, a deluge of light and love, descending like a cataract in varying degrees on all the elect, it fills the children of God in all parts of the earth with light and joy.

Every hour, like the sun casting forth its rays, or some overflowing spring, the Heart of Jesus pours forth an immense and inexhaustible effusion of Grace, which after rejoicing the elect in heaven, spreads itself abroad on earth from the ocean of His Love by the seven rivers of the Sacraments, and a thousand other streams ; thus sanctifying the predestined and bringing to perfection the various virtues of the Christian life.

On Calvary the Sacred Humanity merited life for us, now it dispenses life : "*To every one is given grace according to the measure of the giving of Christ*" (Eph. iv. 7). What are the Sacraments if not the Sacred Humanity employed in sanctifying mankind ?

Even outside the Sacraments, this life is always active and does not cease influencing souls, by interior illuminations, by efficacious impulses. If I am now in a state of grace, the Sacred Humanity is the cause. No supernatural impress arrives except from His Heart, no ray of divine light save from His Soul. Without it I am powerless, *even to say Lord Jesus*. It is the source of all my supernatural activity, of all progress, of all growth in the things of God. From its commencement to its completion my life wells up from this spring. If for one moment the Sacred Humanity of Jesus withdraws, or

deprives me of His light, I fall again into death.
“As the head commands the members,” said the Council of Trent, “as the vine penetrates all its branches with its sap, so every moment Jesus Christ exercises His influence on all the just. He prepares, assists, and crowns all good works, making them agreeable and meritorious before God” (Sess. vi. Can. 16).

“Christus vita vestra : Christ is your life,” said the Apostle ; because, adds St. Thomas, “He is the author and converser of your life : quia ipse est actor vitæ vestræ” (S. Thom. Comm. in Coloss. iii. 4).

“O Eternal Trinity, All Powerful God, we are dead trees, whilst You are the Tree of Life. O infinite God, what a sight to see in Your light the tree of Your creature. O supreme Purity, You gave that tree for branches, the powers of the soul, intelligence, memory, will. And what fruits should these branches bear ? The memory should retain You, the intelligence know You, the will love You.

“When first planted by the gardener, how happy was the condition of this tree. But also, O my God, it is diseased, it now bears poisonous fruit ; a tree of life has become a tree of death.

“But, Eternal Trinity, You love Your creature

even to folly. Impelled by the same love that created it, when evil fruits were produced, because separated from You the life-giver, You saved the dying tree by grafting upon it Your Divinity.

“Life-giving graft, You mingled sweetsap with our bitterness, splendour with darkness, wisdom with folly, life with death, the infinite with the finite.

“After the injury done by Your creature, what made You give life by this union ? Love ! Love alone was the marvellous graft that vanquished death.

“But that did not suffice the flame of Your charity, O Eternal Word ; You would water the tree with Your own Blood, and the warmth of that Blood made it fructify so long as man was united and lived in You. His heart and affections must be bound to You by the cords of obedience and charity, united to the celestial graft, the branches bear fruit. O Infinite Love, what marvels You have worked in Your creatures ! Why will not men water their tree at the fountain of Blood ? Eternal Life is poured out for us poor creatures, yet we ignore, and refuse to profit by it.

I have sinned O my Lord have pity upon me.
Jesus Love ! O Love of Jesus.”

ST. CATHARINE OF SIENA.

3.—OUR UNION WITH THE SACRED HUMANITY
IN THE EUCHARIST.

Where is this Sacred Humanity, the source of my supernatural life? Without doubt in heaven; but in the Blessed Sacrament, He is closer and more accessible to me. He is there living and operating; there precisely that He may be in close contact with me; there to nourish my spiritual life, make me participate in the life of His Heart and Soul. "*I am the bread of life . . . the living bread which came down from heaven. He who eats of this bread hath everlasting life*" (John vi. 48, 51, 55).

It is above all at the moment of Communion that this life overflows into me. But after the sacred species are consumed He dwells in my soul, because the Sacred Humanity continues to make me share in His life by means of His grace. I rest in communication with Him as the branch with the sap of the vine. Is not the union of the sap with the branch a lasting one? Is not the union between the head and the members a real and permanent union? The union of the communicant with the Humanity of Jesus is just as real, permanent and efficacious. Between the soul of the Communicant and the Soul of Christ there is an incessant communication, a flowing and reflowing of life. What matters external

distance, if the life is the same! Yet it is essentially the same life, for it is the same grace which is in the Host and in my soul

"Lord, Thy Almighty Life is not for our destruction, but for our living. Thou remainest ever one and the same in Thyself, but there goes from Thee continually a power and virtue, which by its contact is our strength and good. . . .

"The living God is life-giving. Thou art the Fount and Centre, as well as the Seat of all good. Make me then like Thyself, O my God, since, in spite of myself, such Thou canst make me, such I can be made. . . . Lord I am asking for Thyself, for nothing short of Thee, O my God, Who hast given Thyself wholly to us. Enter into my heart substantially and personally, and fill it with fervour by filling it with Thee. Thou alone canst fill the soul of men; and Thou hast promised to do so. Thou art the living Flame, and ever burnest with love of man, enter into me and set me on fire after Thy pattern and likeness."

CARDINAL NEWMAN.

4.—THE INTIMACY OF THIS UNION.

Nothing that is human and terrestrial can be compared to the closeness of this union, because the Sacred Humanity acts directly upon the soul.

The Angels themselves though they have received marvellous gifts are unable to act immediately upon my intelligence, and move it spontaneously to think and believe, still less have they power to act from within upon my will. It is God alone who can control and move the centres of energy of the soul.

But the Sacred Humanity has received a communication of this divine power, so that not only does it stretch over me the protection of prayer and an infinite tenderness, but exercises its divine efficacy in penetrating to the depths of my soul and will.

The union of husband and wife, of soul and body is not as intimate as the union of my soul with the Sacred Humanity; the reason being that Grace, the fruit of His sacrifice, communicated to me, penetrates the very essence of my soul. As perfume percolates the containing vessel, and the ray the crystal, giving purity and brilliance; like fire permeating iron, warming and enkindling, so Grace from the Eucharist flowing into my soul, possesses, penetrates, fills—in the words of St. Thomas "*transforms and inebriates with God*" (St. Thomas in Joann. cap. VI, lect. 7).

This grace is truly my life, my true life, much more so than the life of my body, or even the

natural life of my soul. It is the me of myself, the soul of my soul, said Contenson. Such, that in its depths, its most intimate centre, my life is the Grace which flows to it each moment from the Host. Jesus said to Blessed Angela of Foligno "*I am closer to your soul, than your soul to itself.*" "*For me to live is Christ*" (Phil. i. 21), cried St. Paul. With the same truth, the same interior joy, we can say: *Life for me is the Eucharist*, for I only repeat the words of the Master Himself, "*He that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me*" (John vi. 58).

"O Lord Jesus, O immense sea, why do You delay receiving this drop of water into Your plenitude? The sole desire of my soul, a desire, as ardent as sweet, is to escape from myself and enter into You. Open for me as place of refuge, Your beloved Heart. Mine exists no longer. It is Yours, Yours, my beloved, who captured and still holds it. From You it derives its life, all worthless as it is You have transformed it in Your divine essence. My soul in its activities lives only for You.

"How ineffable is this union! This intimate familiarity with You is superior to any other mode of life. . . . What joy to breathe the divine peace, the loving tenderness which are in You.

"Oh if I could only obtain here below what I desire . . . to dwell attached to You by an indissoluble union."

ST. GERTRUDE.

II.—OUR UNION WITH THE HOLY TRINITY

It is well to note that ordinarily it is not at the time of Communion that the Holy Trinity commences to dwell within us. This supernatural presence is produced the moment the soul is established in a state of Grace. In speaking of the Eucharistic Union with regard to the Blessed Trinity, we simply wish to say that Communion is the most efficacious means of effecting that sublime work of supernaturalizing the soul. Each time we approach the holy table, it augments the presence of the Three Divine Persons, there is a fresh influx of the Divine Life, in theological language, a new "invisible mission."

I.—THE PERMANENCE OF THE BLESSED TRINITY IN THE COMMUNICANT.

The presence of the Three Divine Persons is not limited like the physical presence of the Sacred Humanity to the integrity of the Eucharistic species. They dwelt in our soul before Communion, and they remain after the Host has

disappeared, but their presence is more intimate, for Communion has increased their influence and efficacy. After Communion the capacity of the soul to receive God is augmented. We will come to Him Who loves us, said Our Lord, I, My Father, and the Holy Spirit, "and will make our abode with him" (John xiv. 23).

The Three do more than visit us, they establish their abode with us. Our soul becomes a heaven, our life a commencement and prelude of the eternal happiness. Our Lord said "The kingdom of God is within you" (Luke xvii. 21). This is why St. Paul could write "The temple of God is holy, which you are." "Your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost" (I. Cor. iii. 17; vi. 19).

In this temple, the Three Divine Persons do not remain inactive. They act unceasingly, each according to His own proper character. The mystery of the Trinity is realized in the activity and love that the Three Persons bear to the soul; the soul being loved differently by each of them, yet with a single love. This love is single, because each time that the Three Persons act exteriorly to themselves, they act as one. At the same time it is a triple effusion of love revealing something of the characteristics proper to each of the Three Persons.

The Father comes as the source of life and peace : the Creator who after producing the creature establishes it in its appropriate surroundings : the Father surrounding His child with goodness, and inexpressible tenderness.

The Word as source of light : the Thought of the Father, His living Word, His image, He unites Himself to my intelligence giving me a supernatural knowledge of the divinity.

The Holy Ghost as source of love. The Love of the Father and the Son, Their mutual embrace, the eternal expression of Their love, the consummation of Their life. He unites Himself to my will to introduce me into the supernatural love of the Father and Son.

“O Eternal Trinity, One God, One in essence, and three in person. You may be compared to a vine with three branches.

“You made man to Your own image and likeness. By the three powers of his soul, he resembles both Your Trinity and Unity.

“By his memory, he resembles and unites himself to the Father, to Whom power is attributed ; by intelligence he unites and resembles the Son Who is wisdom ; by his will he resembles and is in connection with the Holy Ghost, to Whom

mercy is assigned, and Who is the love of the Father and the Son. . . .

“O Eternal God, You are the tranquil ocean, where souls live and are nourished, finding there, repose in union and love.”

ST. CATHARINE OF SIENA.

2.—THE DIVINE CIRCUMCESSION IN OUR SOULS.¹

In the soul of the communicant a wonderful resemblance is produced to the circumceSSION of the Divine Persons.

In God there is no immobility, but an eternal movement, an everlasting circulation of love, for the law of love is to go forth, to bestow itself. The Father would not be God, if He dwelt only within Himself : He gives Himself lovingly to His Son, whom He does not cease to engender. The Son again would not be God, if He did not have a similar relation to the Father. Between them there is an irresistible and mutual attrac-

¹ CircumceSSION is a theological term designating the fact that the Three Persons of the Trinity, mutually dwell one within the other, in such a way that there is between them as it were a reciprocal circulation. An analogous phenomenon between God and the soul is produced by Communion.

tion, a force of love which unites and consummates them in unity. This unity of their mutual love, the subsistent term of the divine life, is the Holy Ghost. But this Love which proceeds from the breathing forth of their mutual and infinite love : this Love, the Holy Spirit which unites Father and Son in an inexpressible transport of joy, communicates to the soul a movement similar to the mutual attraction of Father and Son, permitting the soul to participate in these intimate relations. In heaven this communication is perfect. Without any veil, without the slightest obstacle, the blessed contemplate the Three Divine Persons. With the Father, they admire, love and rejoice in the ravishing splendour of the Word. With the Word they admire, love and rejoice in the infinite perfection of the Father. The Father draws them towards the Son, the Son towards the Father. This eternal movement of love unites them in the Father and Son, consummating them in the unity of the Holy Ghost.

On the earth we have but the commencement of this wonderful joy : yet we have a true participation, for the life of grace here below and that of glory in heaven are one and the same ; grace commencing what glory achieves. There is then already in us something of this wonderful

mystery of the circumcession of the Three Persons. Jesus Himself helps us to realize this " *No one cometh to the Father but by Me.*" . . . " *No man can come to Me except the Father draw him*" (John xiv. 6 ; vi. 44). In other words : You will never go to My Father if you do not enter into the movement of love which unites Me to Him, and you will never come to Me if the Father does not draw you into the love with which He turns to Me, and which is consummated in the unity of the Holy Ghost. The soul then which loves the Three Divine Persons is drawn by the Holy Spirit into that intercommunicating movement of vision and love which constitutes the happiness of God, a happiness which is communicated to the Angels and the Blessed.

Consequently we can say with St. Augustine : " The Saints bear God within them, their soul is a heaven for God inhabits it." And with St. John, "*We have fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ*" (I. John i. 3). Between the Three and ourselves, there is a society, a familiar intercourse, a common life.

"Holy Father receive me into your tender paternity, to the end that having achieved the course in which I have commenced to run for

love of You, I may receive You, my reward, as an eternal heritage.

“Most loving Jesus, receive me into Your loving fraternity. Bear with me the trials and heat of the day. Be my consolation in all my troubles, my companion and guide during the pilgrimage of this life.

“Holy Spirit, Love of God. Receive me into Your loving charity. Be the master, teacher and tender friend of my soul always.”

ST. GERTRUDE.

III

TO MAINTAIN AND PERFECT UNION

I.—TO MAINTAIN UNION.

1. Our model Jesus Christ.
2. Recollection a condition of the life of union.
3. To maintain union in work.
4. To maintain union in temptation.
5. To maintain union in suffering.
6. To maintain union in grief of heart.
7. To maintain union in desolation of the soul.
8. To maintain union in joy.

II.—TO PERFECT UNION.

1. By the repetition of acts of desire.
2. By repeating acts of love.
3. The invisible Divine Missions.

III

TO MAINTAIN AND PERFECT UNION

TO MAINTAIN AND PERFECT UNION.

In order that our soul shall remain united with the Sacred Humanity and the Adorable Trinity it suffices to remain in a state of Grace. Only mortal sin destroys this permanent union. Whether we think of it or not, we are incorporated with Christ and live in Him. The fruits, however, that we derive differ very considerably, they are in proportion to the consciousness or unconsciousness of this union : that is to say, whether we realize or not this Presence of God within us. We may be united to God as the child to his mother whilst he sleeps in her arms ; or we may be united with God as was the beloved Apostle, who at the Last Supper reclined his head on the breast of the Master, and listened to the secrets of His Heart.

Without doubt that first unconscious union is

very precious. But how much more perfect is the second. This only can lead to perfection, to sanctity. We can only draw fully from the infinite resources of Communion and the union it establishes by the constant exercise of our free will, or to use the language of theologians, by making this union more and more actual. We must not content ourselves with a state of grace only, our love must be awake and actuated by the desire to live without ceasing with the Blessed Trinity through Jesus.

This would be relatively easy if our lives could be passed before the Tabernacle, and we were not constantly interrupted by external work and occupations. But this is far from the case with the majority of us. After Communion we have to return to our brethren, often to very absorbing duties. Providence has assigned a definite work for each and it is not for us to turn from it, Christ comes to aid us in its performance, and He wishes we should do our best.

But now a difficulty arises. Ought we to cease contemplating the wonderful mysteries of Communion has established in our souls? Are we to leave God for the services of our neighbour? Yes, we must do so, but we must still try and dwell with God, uniting external work with interior contemplation. In a word we must

lead an active exterior life without diminishing the interior. But how is this to be done? Let us try and explain how our efforts should be directed :

(a) In the first place to maintain union with God in the midst of our occupations and in the changing phases of life ;

(b) Then how to perfect this union.

“Teach me, O Lord, the way of Thy statutes, and I shall keep it unto the end.

Give me understanding that I may keep Thy law, and observe it with my whole heart.

Incline my heart to Thy testimonies. Make me live in Thy way.

Behold I have longed after Thy precepts : quicken me in Thy justice.”

Ps. cxviii

“The knowledge of God! This, O Lord, is the joy of joys. Knowledge precedes, love comes after, love the transformer. He who truly knows, is ardent in love.”

BLESSED ANGELA OF FOLIGNO.

(1).—TO MAINTAIN UNION.

(1).—OUR MODEL.

Here as in all things Jesus is our model. He dwells always with His Father. "*I am in the Father and the Father in Me*" (John xiv. 10). The union of His Soul with the Word, and consequently with the Father "and with the Holy Ghost" was always perfect. Lying on the straw of the manger at Bethlehem, bending over the carpenter's bench at Nazareth, walking along the paths of Judea, or hanging on the Cross, He could always say: *I am in the Father.*

God was constantly in His thoughts, no work or suffering could for an instant turn Him away from God. His soul never ceased contemplating the splendours of the Beatific Vision. All that He saw on earth, He saw in the divine light, estimating and judging according to the eternal thought of His Father: "*As I hear so I judge.*"

... *The things that I speak, even as the Father said unto Me do I speak*" (John v. 30; xii. 50).

Christ's will was always so intimately united to His Father's, that he neither loved, nor did any-

thing save what the Father loved or desired. "*He that sent Me is with Me, and He hath not left Me alone: for I do always the things that please Him*" (John viii. 29). He was united by His love: for His Sacred Heart burnt with a love for His Father which was absolutely pure, entirely disinterested and of the greatest possible intensity. All His thoughts, acts, His whole being resolved itself into a permanent act of ineffable love: "*I love the Father,*" He said (John xiv. 31).

He whom the Jews saw working as a carpenter, traversing the ways as any other, suffering fatigue, hunger, thirst, and pain, was yet always unchangeably peaceful, unutterably happy.

Such is the model for every Christian soul.

"O Jesus living in Mary come and live in us by Your holiness, the plenitude of Your powers, the reality of Your virtues, the perfection of Your ways, overcoming all the power of the enemy by Your spirit to the glory of the Father."

M. OLLIER.

(2).—RECOLLECTION A NECESSARY CONDITION FOR THE LIFE OF UNION.

To live constantly with God, and in God, is the ideal set before the communicant. To

attain this the practice of recollection is a primary necessity.

The soul is recollected when it gathers together all its faculties and enters *into itself to find God there*. The avoidance of useless conversations, of worldly amusements, the practice of silence are the elementary duties of everyone seeking to live a truly Christian life.

To imagine that a pious and a worldly life can co-exist is a dangerous illusion. It is necessary to choose between God and the world.

"I will lead her into solitude, and there I will speak to her heart" (sfr. Osee ii. 14).

But an external silence will not suffice. What can it avail if interior voices make an uproar? It is necessary to establish silence within, that is to say to banish preoccupations, useless thoughts, day-dreams, all the vain work of the imagination which often troubles the soul more than prolonged external conversations. To give free rein to one's imagination, amuse oneself with remembrances of the past, indulge useless thoughts, follow up some purely natural desire, build castles in Spain, worry about the future, all this draws a veil between the soul and God, is an obstacle to perfect union. Unfortunately there are souls who, whilst accomplishing their religious duties and possessing ordinarily the state of grace, yet

lead a mediocre life, draw little fruit from their habitual union with God, and finish perhaps by losing their piety from want of recollection and silence. God is in them, but they do not know how to dwell with Him. The Psalmist said "*My soul is continually in my hands: and I have not forgotten Thy law*" (Psalm xcvi. 109). This is a verse throwing light on that fundamental obligation, the keeping ourselves consciously in the presence of the Blessed Trinity.

The sincere Christian ought to maintain a ceaseless watch over himself, so that he may constantly and continuously govern his interior faculties. The useless play of the imagination causes an enfeeblement of the soul, which weakened, and as it were drawn in different directions, is incapable of giving itself up as it should do to the work of loving God. The result of recollection is to reunite the scattered forces which had been uselessly wasted and dispersed and lead them to God. The soul being re-established in possession of itself, and its unity, can then hold intimate communion with its Guests the Three Divine Persons, who never cease urging it to converse with them. "*Hearken O daughter and see, incline thine ear, forget thy people, and thy father's house, and the King shall greatly desire*

thy beauty. He is thy Lord God and Him thou shalt adore" (Psalm xlv. 11, 12).

Do you wish to listen to God? Keep silence, banish creatures, and turn yourself towards Him. "The Father uttered one word: His Word, His Son, He utters it eternally, in an eternal silence. It is in this silence that the soul hears" (Maxims of St. John of the Cross).

"The law of prayer," said Blessed Angela Foligno, "is one of unity: God requires the entire man, not a part of him. The whole heart must go forth in prayer, if that does not happen nothing is obtained. Realize that God alone is your supreme need, to find Him, to unite all the faculties in Him, is the one thing necessary."

"For the attainment of recollection it is essential to cut away all extravagances, all curiosity, all unnecessary acts and occupations. In a word man must put away all that can divide him."

All should follow the advice of St. Catharine of Siena, who loved to recommend to her disciples the building of an *interior cell*, where they should live with God alone, occupied with the "*One thing necessary*" (Luke x. 42). There each would hold his soul within his hands, and could say with the Spouse in the Canticle seeking the Beloved, "*I knew not*," that is (Cant. vi. 11), I have forgotten everything except God and the

things of God. Or as St. Paul says, "*I count all things to be but loss . . . that I may gain Christ*" (Phil. iii. 8).

"If anyone wishes to arrive at the state of union, it is absolutely necessary that he disengage himself from all things, that he recollects himself interiorly; and within himself, holds before the eyes of his soul nothing but Jesus covered with wounds; then applying himself with all his energy to go by Him, with Him, and in Him as Man to the Godhead, he passes by the wounds of His Humanity to the inmost sanctuary of the Divinity" (Concerning Union with God. Ch. II.).

"O my God, Trinity Whom I adore, help me to entirely forget myself, that peaceably and unchangeably I may establish myself in You, as though my soul was already in eternity. Grant that nothing may trouble my peace or make me part from You my Immutable One, but that each moment I may plunge myself further into Your mysteries."

"Tranquillize my soul. Make it Your heaven, Your abode, the place of Your repose. May I never leave You there alone, but be there with all my faculties, given up in adoring faith to Your creative action."

“O Christ my loved one, crucified by love, I would wish to be the spouse of Your Heart. I desire to glorify You, to die with love for You. But feeling my powerlessness, I ask You to clothe me with Yourself, to identify the movements of my soul with Yours, penetrate me so that my life may be a ray of Your life. Come into me as Adorer, Redeemer, and Saviour.

“O Eternal Word, Word of God, I would pass my life in listening to You. I desire to be such that I may learn all from You. O beloved Star of my soul, let me never be separated from Your light, but grant that by the illumination of Your rays I may travel through the nights, and the desolate spaces of life.

“O consuming Fire, Spirit of Love, come down upon me, make my soul as it were an incarnation of Your Word, supernaturalize me so that I may renew this mystery.

“And You O Father bend down to Your puny creature, see only in her Your well beloved in whom You are ‘well pleased.’

“O my Three, my happiness, my all. Infinite solitude, Immensity where I lose myself. I give myself up to You, bury Yourself in me that I may be buried in You, until in Your light I shall contemplate the abyss of Your grandeurs.”

SISTER ELIZABETH OF THE TRINITY.

(3).—UNION DURING WORK.

(a) OUR EXEMPLAR.

Jesus came upon earth to work. His whole life was filled with the definite accomplishment of an appointed task: “*I am poor and in labours from my youth*” (Psalm lxxxvii. 16). He was devoted to His work, nothing could retain or hinder His accomplishment of it, not even the affection He bore His Holy Mother: “*How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be about my Father’s business*” (Luke ii. 49). He loved His work, and to perform it as He wished He needed a holy freedom.

(b) INTENTION FOR WORK.

Christ’s work was an act of adoration of His heavenly Father, a recognition of His sovereign rights. Before all Jesus wished to serve God, because such is the real duty of every creature. I am in the midst of you as a servant.—“*The Son of man is not come to be ministered to but to minister*” (Matt. xx. 28). His joy and delight were in the divine service. Whatever was the particular work, whether cutting wood with His adopted father, preaching to the crowds, going journeys, or carrying His Cross, His

work was accomplished religiously in a spirit of love and inexpressible humility, with the intention of glorifying God.

Thus at the Last Supper, He could testify to the fulfilment of His task: "*Father, I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do*" (John xvii. 4). He laboured for His Father because He loved Him. Love was always urging Him, consequently when He commenced His great work, the Passion, He could say: "*That the world may know that I love the Father. . . . Arise, let us go hence*" (John xiv. 31).

For Him labour and toil was a work of justice, because in the first place His Sacred Humanity felt bound to spend itself in the service of One Who had endowed Him so richly and so gratuitously, also because He had come here below as redeemer and universal penitent. Having taken our sins upon Him, His task became one of reparation, work was His lot, toil, difficult, troublesome and painful. Again He felt an immense joy in spending Himself without limit, in labouring without relaxation. Work was His food, the joy of His Heart: "*My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, that I may perfect His work*" (John iv. 34).

The Christian ought to "*Have the same*

mind as Christ" (cf. Phil. ii. 5) to unite his intentions with those of the Divine Workman. Before all let us love work because it is the service of God, it should be a duty for us, a work of religion, a sign of humility, of dependence, an acknowledgment of the divine rights of the Creator over His creatures.

We should love the fatigue, the trials that may come during the course of our work, for it is just and fitting that the sinner should expiate his disorders. If Christ the Lamb without stain desires to suffer so much because He was only clothed as it were with our sins, how much more do we who are truly sinners, need the fatigue of work.

(c) HOW TO WORK.

It is essential to realize that in His work, Jesus always dwelt with His Father. It would be erroneous to conclude that Christ when leaving Nazareth for His apostolic life, diminished to any extent His life of prayer. No, His active life never lessened His contemplative life. In the depths of His Soul, there always rested the same deep and permanent love for His Father, which supported Him in the various phases of His life and was the basis of all its mysteries. The time that He gave to His Father during

His private life was more conclusive, but not more abundant. In leaving Nazareth He added fatiguing labours, but did not diminish His interior life. Let us then dwell with God in our work. Suppressing as far as possible the difference between the times of prayer, and the time of work, we can, and should always converse with our interior Guests. "*Whatsoever you do in word or in work, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him*" (Col. iii. 17).

The kind of work matters little : whether we study, do manual work, talk, or eat, we need never cease loving God.

Is it a question of doing good to our neighbour? Let us not quit God, but rather carry God to him. We must bear in mind the fundamental law at the root of all Christian action : apostolic work which does not have its source in prayer is not only unfruitful but often harmful. The active life which develops at the expense of the interior life, is contrary to the will of God. What is given to our neighbour should never diminish what is given to God. Our action should never be separated from prayer, it should be our prayer exteriorising itself which overflows into the souls of our brethren.

If there are some, even with a charitable

intention, who devoting themselves unnecessarily to works incompatible with recollection, are thereby losing their interior life, let them hasten to retrench these works, bearing in mind the words of St. Bernard, "*Maledicta occupatio quæ te retrahit a Deo*" : *Accursed be the occupation which leads us away from God.*

In the Church action is necessary, but still more so prayer and contemplation.

"O Holy Father, by that love wherewith You have rayed upon me the light of Your countenance : grant me to advance continually in all holiness and virtue.

"O Christ ! O Jesus. By that love which urged You to redeem me by Your blood, reclothe me with the purity of Your holy life.

"O Holy Ghost ! Whose power and sanctity are equal, by that love which united me to You at baptism, grant me the power to love You with all my heart, to cleave to You with all my soul, to expend all my energies in serving and loving You, to live only for Your will ; so that at the hour of my death I may be clothed with a stainless garment and fully prepared for the divine nuptials."

ST. GERTRUDE.

(4).—UNION IN TEMPTATION.

Is it more difficult to maintain union in temptation? No, not if we hold firmly to our faith, and realize that at times God "*makes darkness His covert*" (Psalm xvii. 12). He hides Himself in our hearts and permits the devil to approach us, but still He remains within us.

In the life of St. Catharine of Siena there is a helpful incident bearing upon this question. St. Catharine was attacked by terrible temptations against purity. The storm at length passed, Our Lord appeared to her. "O Lord," she cried, "where were You when my heart was filled with such impure thoughts? I was in your heart. Yes Lord You are truth itself, and I bow before You, but how can I believe this, when my heart was filled with such detestable thoughts? But these thoughts, these temptations, did they cause you joy or sorrow, pleasure or pain? Terrible sorrow, terrible pain. Know then my daughter, that you suffered because I was hidden in the midst of your heart. Had I been absent the thoughts that had penetrated there would have given you pleasure, it was my presence which rendered them insupportable to you. I was acting in you, I defended your heart against the enemy. Never have I been closer to you." These divine words show us the course to follow

in temptation, we must hold ourselves closely united to Jesus. When the devil attacks our supernatural life, who is it he attacks if not God Himself? It is Christ in us whom he persecutes and wishes to crucify again. What he essays to extinguish in us is the very life of Christ. The secret of victory then is not to be disturbed, not to repulse directly, or discuss the suggestions of the evil one, but to adhere with all our will to Him Who has already conquered, He will do more than we can do to save the life He has communicated to us. It is more than ever the moment to practise the advice of St. Paul: "*You have received Jesus Christ the Lord, walk ye in Him, rooted and built up in Him, confirmed in the faith*" (Col. ii. 6, 7). He who dwells calmly united to Christ, and trusts in Him will never be vanquished by the demon, "*Because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world*" (I. John iv. 4): "*If armies in camp should stand together against me, my heart shall not fear. If a battle should rise up against me, in this will I be confident. . . . that the Lord will hide me in the secret place of His tabernacle*" (Psalm xxvi. 3, 5). St. Gertrude wrote, "I give thanks to Your protection O adorable and incomprehensible Trinity, for not permitting temptation beyond my powers, although You do

allow this for my advance in virtue. When You see that all our hope is based on You, with unparalleled generosity, You take charge of the conflict, and bearing the brunt Yourself, bestow on us the prize of victory."

St. Teresa after having demanded the grace to remain always united with God, added, "Then I shall only have scorn and disdain for all the demons, for they will be afraid of me. I do not understand those who cry out in fear, the devil! the devil! when we can say God! God!"

Confidence in our interior Guests, procures for us then safety in temptation, for unless the soul itself wills it, no temptation is capable of tearing it away from God. "*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? For in all these things we overcome because of Him that hath loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, . . . nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord*" (Rom. viii. 35, 37, 38, 39).

"The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?

The Lord is the protector of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?

72

Whilst the wicked draw near against me to eat my flesh,

My enemies that trouble me have themselves been weakened and have fallen.

The Lord hath hidden me in His tabernacle in the day of evils.

He hath exalted me upon a rock.

Shall not my soul be subject to God?

For from Him is my salvation.

He is my God and my Saviour.

My protector, I shall be moved no more."

Psalms xxvi, lxi.

(5).—UNION IN BODILY SUFFERING.

Suffering is necessary. It is written of our Master, "*It behoved Christ to suffer*" (Luke xxiv. 46). It is true also of His followers, "*All that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution*" (II. Tim. iii. 12). We must ascend to heaven as Christ ascended Calvary carrying the Cross. "*If any man will follow Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me*" (Mark viii. 34).

It is then essential to know how to suffer.

All suffering is not good, sometimes it is useless, sometimes harmful. Even some good people have a morbid tendency to seek for suffering in itself, to desire, to be pleased with it. They act

73

contrary to the designs of God forgetting that suffering is never an end in itself, but always a means, one of the sources of love. It is the interior disposition of the sufferer that renders suffering holy and meritorious. Suffering is not the work of God, but the result of sin. If love did not penetrate it rendering it fruitful to our fallen nature, it would remain definitely harmful. On Calvary a thief was crucified on each side of Christ, his pangs opened Paradise to one, to the other they were the prelude to eternal suffering.

It is not then a question so much of suffering, but of suffering well, of doing so in conformity with the divine will, of suffering with Christ and as Christ did.

On the royal way of the Cross, we have three stages to pass through, bodily suffering, grief of heart, and desolation of soul.

In the first place in bodily suffering we must follow St. Paul's advice. "*Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing unto God*" (Rom. xii. 1).

Suffering attacks in the first place the body and the lower faculties of the soul, grief properly so called the affections or heart. Suffering is the Christian's primary and elementary participation in the Passion of Christ. At times it may however attain an elevated degree, for there

are some bodily sufferings and infirmities which are very hard for nature to bear, these may both glorify God and be meritorious for the soul.

On the road of bodily suffering Jesus has preceded us, and gone far beyond our capability of following Him. Because He came with Calvary in view, the Holy Spirit specially strengthened His Humanity to bear pain, endowing Him at the same time with an exquisite sensibility so that He should be capable of suffering to excess. The very perfection of His Humanity increased to an extraordinary extent His capacity for suffering. His Passion was a veritable overflowing of torture and pain. Isaias hardly knew how to depict it "*Despised and the most abject of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with infirmity, His look was as it were hidden and despised, whereupon we esteemed Him not.*" . . .

There is no beauty in Him nor comeliness.

The Lord was pleased to bruise Him in infirmity (Isaias liii.).

What must we do then when suffering comes? We must unite ourselves closely to Him Who has suffered so much. This is at the same time the easiest and most helpful method, for we can re-mind ourselves that we are members of Christ and so ought to continue His Passion, participating in both the sufferings and wounds of His

divine body. To-day His glory, which has been purchased at such a price, makes further suffering impossible. He wishes, however, that what His Human Nature cannot support now, should be endured by his mystical body, thus continuing His Passion in us.

More than that does it not seem that He wishes to continue in us now the humiliations of that Passion, just because His perfections prevented His doing so completely? Undoubtedly He suffered during His mortal life as we are incapable of doing, but there were aspects of suffering He was unable to experience, illness for example. What He did not bear Himself, that He bears now in us. He enters our life incorporating Himself with us that we may be able to suffer not only for Him, but with and in Him. Thus we may truly say, "*With Christ I am nailed to the Cross*" (Gal. ii. 19).

All suffering well borne hastens the work of God in us. Nothing is more sanctifying. It gives us an intimate likeness to Jesus, that marvellous work which St. Paul terms "*the formation of Christ in us*" (cfr. Gal. iv. 19). . . . "*Although our outward man is corrupted the inward man is renewed day by day*" (II. Cor. iv. 16). "Each pain," said Mgr. Gay, "is a kiss of the crucifix increasing our likeness to Jesus."

Supported thus shall we not bear the worst sufferings patiently and with a holy joy? "*I abound with joy in my tribulations*" (II. Cor. vii. 4), said St. Paul. "*I am full of joy in my sufferings for I fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh, for His body which is the Church*" (Col. i. 24).

He congratulated as follows those Christians who were specially tried. "*For unto you it is given for Christ, not only to believe in Him but also to suffer for Him*" (Phil. i. 29).¹

Our aim then must be to suffer in the close companionship of Jesus, thus making our own those words of the great Apostle: "*In all things we suffer tribulation, but are not distressed; we are straitened, but are not destitute. We suffer persecution, but are not forsaken; we are cast down, but we perish not. Always bearing about in our body the mortification of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodies. For we who live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake; that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal flesh. . . . For that which is at present momentary and light of our*

¹ Mother Margaret Mary Doëns, suffering from a long and terrible illness, seemed to rejoice in her pain. "One could almost believe that you are enjoying yourself," said one of her sisters. "Yes," she replied, "I am happy because Our Lord does what He pleases with me."

tribulation, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory" (II. Cor. iv. 8-11, 17).

Every suffering may truly bear fruit for eternity.

"O my Lord Jesus, I believe, and by Thy grace will ever believe and hold, and I know that it is true, and will be true to the end of the world, that nothing great is done without sufferings, without humiliation, and that all things are possible by means of it. I believe, O my God, that poverty is better than riches, pain better than pleasure, obscurity and contempt than name, and ignominy and reproach than honour. My Lord I do not ask Thee to bring these trials on me, for I know not if I could face them; but at least, O Lord, whether I be in prosperity or adversity, I will believe that it is as I have said. I will never have faith in riches, rank, power, or reputation. I will never set my heart on worldly success, or on worldly advantages. I will never wish for what men call the prizes of life. I will ever, with Thy grace, make much of those who are despised and neglected, honour the poor, revere the sufferers, and admire and venerate Thy saints and confessors, and take my part with them in spite of the world. And lastly, O my

dear Lord, though I am so very weak that I am not fit to ask for suffering as a gift, and have not strength to do so, at least I will beg of Thee grace to meet suffering well, when Thou in Thy love and wisdom dost bring it upon me. . . . I wish to humble myself in all things, and to be silent when I am ill-used, and to be patient when sorrow or pain is prolonged, and all for the love of Thee and Thy Cross, knowing that in this way I shall gain the promise both of this life and the next."

CARDINAL NEWMAN.

(6).—UNION IN GRIEF OF HEART.

Grief of heart is the second stage. Very different in its causes and mode of action; grief directly attacks the heart: disappointments, weariness, separations, discords, profound sadness. Grief is more trying to nature, at the same time more purifying, because it occasions greater renunciation, thereby producing a higher type of sanctity. We share more fully in the Passion of Christ by grief than by pain. The bodily sufferings of Our Lord were undoubtedly intense, but who can rightly estimate the depths of His grief, the agony of His Heart? Because His Heart was an abyss of love, it was also an abyss of grief. We know the name Isaias applied to

Christ, "*The man of sorrows.*" His earthly life was one long sorrow occasioned by His knowledge, His holiness, and His infinite love. Grief and sorrow, commencing at the Incarnation, reached their climax during His Passion. His was an unutterable martyrdom for thirty-three years, filling to the full His capacity for suffering.

"He lived continually with grief," said Blessed Angela of Foligno. Who ever aspires to perfect union must enter courageously into the grief of Christ, bearing with Him disappointments, slanders, and agony of heart. It was St. Paul's desire "*That I may know Him . . . and the fellowship of His sufferings, and be made conformable to His sufferings*" (Phil. iii. 10).

The believer then whatever his anguish, even though it seems so extreme as to be incapable of any remedy, may yet dwell with God, for always before Him he will find Jesus bearing a like burden, suffering a similar agony, and trials yet more terrible, which He sanctifies and defies. Dwelling thus with Him in grief of heart, he dwells together with Him in love.

"Why art thou sad O my soul, and why dost thou trouble me ?

Hope in God, for I will still praise Him, the salvation of my countenance and my God.

80

Give us help in trouble, for vain is the help of man.

Through God we shall do mightily, and He will bring our enemies to nothing.

The mercies of the Lord I will sing for ever."

Psalms xli, cvii, lxxxviii.

(7).—UNION IN DESOLATION OF SOUL.

At certain times God seems as it were to take part against us, and we endure terrible combats. These desolations that He sends us are the greatest trials of all. They are also the rarest for the greater number of souls are incapable of knowing them. Desolations add as it were the finishing touch to the development of the soul.

Suffering has as its end the satisfaction of the divine justice, at the same time it tests and tries love. Desolations mark the soul with the stamp of perfection and imprint upon it the closest likeness to Christ.

They proceed directly from God. Their source is His infinite sanctity ; their immediate cause the mysterious and awful workings of the Holy Spirit, who desires to make the soul participate in the eternal and sovereign Purity : for this end it is seized, despoiled, broken, abandoned, seized again, plunged into bitterness, tested by a

81

thousand trials until the transformation is complete. It is God Himself who acts thus without intermediary, that He may attain to the secret depths of the soul, penetrating as it were to the very root of the spirit, and into all the intricacies of the heart: "*For the word of God is living and effectual, and more piercing than any two-edged sword; reaching unto the divisions of the soul and spirit, of the joints also and the marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*" (Heb. iv. 12).

At such times everything is painful even the thoughts of graces formerly received, for the Holy Spirit diffuses in the soul a secret and most pure light which manifesting on the one hand the greatness of God, on the other its own misery and nothingness, casts everything else into an intense gloom, destroys all natural consolations, establishes a desolate solitude in the presence of the Most Holy, and plunges the soul in a terrible spiritual darkness, even into a condition of terror and anguish. It is thus that God purifies the soul completely for "*Our God is a consuming fire*" (Heb. xii. 29).

What is to be done then? Free surrender to God and His divine action is the only course, any other would be harmful, not to say impossible. Since it is the Holy Spirit Himself who acts, to

dwell in this purifying desolation is to dwell with God.

Union with Christ in His Passion is then more useful than ever. However great may be the desolation of soul, it can never approach the absolute desolation of Christ's holy soul, when in those terrible hours were wrung from Him the words "*My soul is sorrowful even unto death.*" "*... My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?*" (Matt. xxvi. 38; xxvii. 46), and where one sees God the Father "letting loose against His well beloved Son all the powers of hell, seeming at the same time to withdraw from Him all the protection of heaven" (Bossuet).

In such conditions the union of the soul with Jesus, usually so sweet and consoling, is as it were frozen up, there is no word of consolation. The heart feels absolutely nothing; it is only by faith that it lives. It is in faith that the soul must unite, and in some measure fasten itself on God. Faith is the only refuge, "*the immovable kingdom*" (Heb. xii. 28), of which St. Paul says "*For in faith you stand*" (II. Cor. i. 23).

More than ever the afflicted soul must believe without the slightest wavering in God's "*exceeding charity*" (Eph. ii. 4), imitating Moses whose unshaken faith "*endured as seeing Him that is invisible*" (Heb. xi. 27). The soul must believe

too that God never loved her so much, nor was ever so close to her, as in those moments when He appeared to repulse her. "The more that you think you are abandoned," said Our Lord to Blessed Angela of Foligno, "the more you are beloved and drawn towards Me. . . . O my well beloved, know that in this state, there is between God and yourself the most intimate union." Let us remember then the words of St. John, "*We believe the charity which God hath for us*" (I. John iv. 16).

In these terrible but blessed hours of interior desolation, or rather of supernatural purification, great things are accomplished: Love consummates the union of the soul with God according to His promise: "*I will espouse thee to Me in faith*" (Osee ii. 20). Then the work of purification accomplished, the spouse appears re-clad with strength, purity and joy: "*Who is this that cometh up from the desert, flowing with delights, leaning upon her beloved?*" (Cant. viii. 5).¹

To sum up, in these trials the soul has simply to hold herself firmly united to Jesus, and by the

¹ "What will you do, O spouse of Christ? Do you wish to penetrate that holy and sacred sanctuary where one may see the Son in the Father, and the Father in the Son? Do you wish to dwell with the Adorable Trinity? You can do so IF YOU HAVE FAITH FOR ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE

wounds of His Sacred Humanity she will penetrate to the Divinity.

The soul must be offered up as a holocaust. When she consents, her holocaust is not only united with that of Jesus, but He makes it His own: with Jesus the soul comes before God as one glorious holocaust. Then the whole Trinity regards the soul with pleasure: the Father recognizing in her the features of His Beloved Son, pours out for her His tenderest affection; the Word seeing her follow His Passion accepts her as His spouse; the Holy Ghost loves in her the perfect instrument of His grace for the sanctification of the Church, and makes Himself her inspirer and guide.

Let us not then complain of suffering, but embrace the cross with the same readiness as Jesus, who offered Himself "*a sacrifice to God for an odour of sweetness*" (Eph. v. 2).

"If jealousy could possibly enter into the realm of eternal love," said St. Francis de Sales, "the Angels would envy the sufferings of God for man, and those of man for God."

TO HIM WHO BELIEVES. What will Faith not find for you. It attains the inaccessible, discovers the unknown, embraces the immense. Open your heart for it enshrines the Eternal."

St. Bernard, Serm. 76 in Cant?

Happy the pain, happy the death which permits us to say with the Apostle, "*With Christ I am nailed to the Cross. And I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me. And that I live now in the flesh: I live in the faith of God who loved me, and delivered Himself for me*" (Gal. ii. 19, 20).

"Save me O God: for the waters are come even into my soul.

I stick fast in the mire of the deep; and there is no sure standing.

I am come into the depths of the sea; and a tempest hath overwhelmed me.

I have laboured with crying; my jaws are become hoarse: my eyes have failed, whilst I hope in my God.
Psalm lxxviii.

Bless the Lord O my soul; and let all that is within me bless His holy Name.

Bless the Lord O my soul, and never forget all that He hath done for thee.

Who forgiveth all thy iniquities: who healeth all thy diseases.

Who satisfieth thy desire with good things: thy youth shall be renewed like the eagle's.

For the mercy of the Lord is from eternity, and unto eternity upon them that fear Him."

Psalm cii.

(8).—UNION IN JOY.

It is of great importance to watch over our joys. What is joy, if not the gladness of the soul in the possession of what it loves? The nature of our joy manifests the nature of our love, its purity, the purity of our heart. We must then take great care that our joys do not lead us away from God, by practising the advice given by St. Paul, "*Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus*" (Phil. ii. 5). Rejoice with Jesus, and with Him only at that which would rejoice Him in ourselves or our neighbour.

We should in all things keep ourselves close to God, but especially in our joys and love.

(a) THE SOURCE OF JOY.

Joy comes to us from creatures. Some of these joys are most pleasurable, that of friendship for example. We are not forbidden to enjoy them for they come from God. We should, however, take care that they lead back to God. Let us not love anything outside Him, but love all creatures with Him and as He loves them. Love them in Him. This union with God will make our joys pure and sovereignly free.

But joys such as these are only secondary. The fundamental joy for the Christian is to know that God is. God exists! The Infinite. Es-

essential and necessary being. The cause of all, Truth, Beauty, Goodness, Benevolence, Power, Holiness, Sovereign Purity, Justice, and Love. . . . God exists. He is all that ! He is that eternally, unchangeably, infinitely ! . . . God exists, He knows and loves Himself. He is one, and He is three : He is the Father, Word and Spirit. As Father He opens out His infinite life in His Son, who is His thought and His glory, and these two consummate themselves in the unity of their common Love, the Holy Spirit, the subsistent and eternal term of their mysterious embrace, of their joy, of their infinite happiness. The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost love themselves with a love without measure ; they are happy, infinitely happy, eternally unchangeably happy. . . . And they call us to communicate eternally in their life. To know this is a source of supreme and unending joy for the loving soul. To rejoice that God is God, to rejoice in the joy of God is a sublime and most holy act, it is pure charity. This joy detaches the soul from the miseries of our poor human life to raise it above all, and make it enter into the intimate life of the adorable Trinity, into what St. Paul terms "*the deep things of God*" (I. Cor. ii. 10). It is one of the more divine fruits of the presence and operation of the Holy Ghost in the redeemed

soul. It defies the soul. To this joy all the rest should be referred. This will be easy if we remember that all our joys are, and cannot be anything but a gushing forth from that infinite joy of the Holy Spirit "*who is given to us*" (Rom. v. 5).

The source of all joy is in us : "*He that believeth in Me . . . from his belly shall flow rivers of living water,*" and the Evangelist adds, Jesus said this "*of the Spirit they should receive who believeth in Him*" (John vii. 38, 39). Baptism opened for us this interior source and each Communion augments it. "*The stream of the river maketh the city of God joyful, the Most High hath sanctified His own tabernacle*" (Ps. xlv. 5).

The smallest truth of faith is a world of joy which our heart can constantly taste : "*You believe, and believing shall rejoice with joy unspeakable and glorified*" (I. Peter i. 8), said the Prince of the Apostles, and Isaias adds, "*You shall be like a watered garden and like a fountain of water whose waters shall not fail*" (Isaias lviii. 11).

It depends then on us to live in joy. And what joy ! There are pure and true human joys, but they move only over the surface of the soul ; divine joys penetrate to its very centre. Yes, true joy, essential joy that cannot be taken from us,

wells up from the *presence in us* of the Adorable Trinity. What can really trouble the peace and interrupt the harmony of a soul knowing itself thus enfolded with the divine ?

(b) TO LIVE IN JOY.

Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice (Phil. iv. 4). God has created His children for joy. He has done all that they may live in joy. What is creation, what sanctification, but a happiness either natural or supernatural, an effusion of the divine joy ? What is the Eucharist, if not an inexhaustible source of joy, open in the Church and in each soul ? God wishes that we shall live in joy. Jesus demanded this in His last prayer. "*Holy Father I pray that they may have My joy filled in themselves*" (John xvii. 13).

Sorrow even should be changed and converted into joy. The soul of Christ contained at the same instant, immense joys, and immense sorrows. Its lower portion was plunged in anguish, whilst the summits were penetrated with divine happiness. But joy dominated, it came to dissolve all His sufferings and immolations, for Jesus knew that the heavier these were, the more they glorified God, and prepared a loftier exaltation for His Humanity.

90

Our soul also can be both desolate and joyous ; desolate in its inferior portion which approaches the senses, joyous at those heights which alone govern the will. Even in those sad hours when sorrow alone seems to hold sway, we have within us He who consoles. "*I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete that He may abide with you for ever. The spirit of truth. . . He shall be in you* (John xiv. 16, 17).

Let us dwell in joy, this will be to dwell in the Holy Spirit. We should remember that Holy Communion plunges us in Him whom St. Catharine loved to call "*the ocean of peace,*" "O Eternal God," she cried, "You are the tranquil ocean in which souls live and are nourished. They find their repose in the union of love."

Joy is a worship to give to God. It is the barometer of the soul : its degree indicates the degree of love. In her perpetual difficulties and persecutions, the Church, the sublime type of the soul, never ceases to rejoice. Her liturgy is a fête commencing anew each day. She counts her days by the Feasts ; she marches in sorrow, but with eyes raised to the heavens singing the perfections and love of her Spouse. She lives in joy, a joy free, serene, and strong, the fruit of love.

91

The Christian is a sower of joy, that is why he does great things. For joy is one of the irresistible powers of the world; it pacifies, disarms, conquers, draws to itself. The joyous soul is an apostle, drawing men to God, manifesting what is produced by the presence of God. That is why the Holy Ghost gives the counsel "*Be not sad, for the joy of the Lord is our strength*" (II. Esdras viii. 10).

"Joy and gladness be to You, in my name O God of my life, for the sovereignty of the Trinity, the essential unity of Your substance, the distinction of Your Persons, for their union and intimate relations the source of Your ineffable joy.

"Joy and gladness be to You for Your incomprehensible grandeur, Your unchanging eternity, Your supreme holiness, which excludes all stain, and is the source of all purity, and for Your glorious and perfect happiness. Joy and gladness be to You, for the very pure flesh of Your humanity, by which You have purified me, for Your most sacred soul, for Your divine heart, which was pierced for me even to death.

"Joy and gladness be to You in that true loving heart so filled with solicitude for me, so thirsty in its love for me, that it will never repose until it receives me in itself for eternity.

"Joy and gladness be to You, for the most worthy heart and soul of the glorious Virgin Mary, Your Mother, whom You have given me as Mother in the difficulties of my salvation, and who is always opening for me the treasures of her maternal solicitude.

"Joy and gladness be to You from all Your creatures, which fill the heavens, the earth and the abyss. May they give You that eternal praise, which issuing from You as its source remounts thither again.

"Joy and gladness be to You from my heart and soul, my spirit, my flesh, and from all created beings.

"To You, by Whom, and in Whom are all things, to You be honour and glory for all eternity! Amen."

ST. GERTRUDE.

II.—TO PERFECT UNION.

Union with God by the state of sanctifying grace can exist in many degrees. On the scale of perfection the degrees are almost infinite. The morning Communion establishes in us a union of love which we have tried to describe. Alas ! although this union may be destroyed, yet on the other hand it can always become more perfect. Our efforts throughout the day should strive to augment and perfect this eucharistic union. A very useful means of doing so is by the repetition of acts of love and desire.

I.—REPETITION OF ACTS OF DESIRE.

Daniel was granted a knowledge of the mystery of Christ because he was *a man of desires*. A soul who really desires Jesus cannot help entering deeply into the knowledge and appreciation of His mysteries.

Desire removes obstacles, and opens the door of the soul so that those ravishing words of the Apocalypse are realized. "*Behold I stand at the*

gate and knock. If any man shall hear my voice, and open to me the door, I will come into him and will sup with him, and he with me (Apoc. iii. 20).

Desire dilates the soul, and fits it for the object of its desires : it in some measure approximates it to God. The heavenly Father deigned to say to St. Catharine of Siena, "No virtue can merit eternal life for you if you serve Me in a finite manner, for I the infinite God wish to be served in an infinite manner, and you have nothing approaching the infinite save the desire and transports of your soul." But He said again, "this desire as in the case of all the other virtues is of value only through Christ crucified, my only Son" (St. Catharine of Siena. Dialogue, 4 and 92).

It is most useful to arouse in the soul a longing for Communion. "The perfect exercise of love," said Bossuet, "is to desire without ceasing to receive Jesus Christ. The table is prepared : the guests lack although Jesus calls them."

The life of many of the Saints has been one long and ardent aspiration of their soul towards the eucharistic union. The martyr St. Ignatius wrote to the Romans, "I do not desire the pleasures of this world, but I do desire the bread of God, the bread of heaven, the bread of life, the flesh of Christ the Son of the living God. I

yearn to be incubated with that beverage which is His blood, which lights up in us an incorruptible love, the pledge of eternal life."

St. Catharine of Siena longed night and day after Communion. As soon as it was dawn she hastened to the Church, literally borne there by the desire which gave strength to her exhausted body. She often said to Blessed Raymond in order to express her desire for Communion, "Father, I am very hungry, give my soul its nourishment."

"My heart feels consumed with the desire to love my God," said St. Margaret Mary, "and this gives me an insatiable desire for Communion, and for suffering. . . ." One Good Friday she recounts, having an ardent desire to receive Our Lord, "I said to Him with tears, 'O most loved Jesus, I ardently long for You, and although unable to receive You this day, I do not cease to desire You.' He then came to console me with His sweet presence and said, 'My daughter, your desire has so touched My heart, that if I had not instituted this sacrament of love, I should do it now to render Myself your food. I take such delight in being desired, that as often as the heart forms this wish so often do I regard her with love and draw her to Me.'"

Jesus now repeats from the Tabernacle the

same invitation as when formerly He stood and cried to the crowd under the porticoes of the Temple, "*If any man thirst let him come unto Me and drink*" (John vii. 37), or renewing the invitation of Divine Wisdom, "*Come to Me all ye that desire Me, and be filled with My fruits*" (Ecclesiasticus xxiv. 26).

Let us then strive to arouse in ourselves more frequent and ardent desires so that our soul may be constantly turned towards the Eucharist. We should live in that state of desire and aspiration depicted by the Psalmist, "*I opened my mouth and panted because I longed for Thy commandments*" (Psalm cxviii. 131). This thirst for the divine is one of the precious graces God foretold by the Prophets: "*Behold the days come saith the Lord, and I will send forth a famine into the land: not a famine of bread, nor a thirst of water, but of hearing the word of the Lord*" (Amos viii. 11).

How far may our desires extend? Can we aspire to the more secret mysteries of divine union?

Yes, provided that our desire is humble, and joyously submissive to the will of God.

Without doubt it would be foolish pride, and expose us to the worst illusions if we desired extraordinary favours such as theologians term

the graces "gratis data" (revelations, visions, etc.) but to desire the closest possible union of our soul with God is both legitimate and praiseworthy. "Let Him kiss me with the kiss of His mouth" (Cant. i. 1), cries the spouse of the Canticle, and she speaks for all who, bought and sanctified by grace, aspire to that condition of soul where "he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit" (I. Cor. vi. 17). Who makes the barren soil of our souls bring forth such holy and daring desires? The Holy Spirit Himself. He it is Who orients our soul to God: "For we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself asketh for us with unspeakable groanings:" it is He "whereby we cry Abba, Father" (Rom. viii. 15, 26). A most excellent means both to stimulate and express our desire for God is to call Scripture to our aid, and borrow from it those words which have so often expressed the need for God.

"As the hart panteth after the fountains of water
So my soul panteth after Thee O God.
My soul hath thirsted after God, the living God
My God it is Thee that I seek.
For Thee my soul hath thirsted.
For Thee my flesh so many ways.
In a desert land where no water is."

Psalms xli and lxxii.

2.—REPETITION OF ACTS OF LOVE.

St. John wrote "God is love" (I. John iv. 8). We can also say Jesus is love, and we should be able to add, the Christian is love. Within the Adorable Trinity, the life of the Word is to love His Father, then to flow again with an immense love towards Him, rendering Him all He has received.

On the earth love was also His life. The Word became incarnate for love of His Father, to reveal Him to us, to win us for Him. Love both made Him man and nailed Him to the Cross. At the base of all His mysteries, of all His works and sufferings, there is the love of His Father: "I live by the Father" (John vi. 58). The same love which has made Him become bread for us, retains Him in the silence of the Tabernacle. What does He do in the impenetrable silence of the Host? Above all, He loves His Father. The communicant who seeks to live like Jesus, will in the first place love God. He will love Him as the first commandment exacts: *with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his strength*. Without doubt it is impossible for weak human nature to formulate continually definite acts of love. But we can with God's grace so multiply them that they dominate the action of our other faculties,

thereby exercising on our life an influence becoming constantly closer and more penetrating.

It is so easy to make an act of charity. A simple movement of the heart suffices. The humblest action, the least sacrifice can be transformed into an act of love. "All that is done for love is love," said St. Francis of Sales, "work fatigue, and even death are love when they are undergone for love." Père Lacordaire tells us, "the love of God is the supreme act of the soul, the highest action of man." "The smallest act of pure love," adds St. John of the Cross, "has more value in God's eyes than all the other acts united."

"There is nothing in the world so real, so substantial, as the love of God. In comparison with this great reality all the rest is a vain shadow, everything else is empty and will soon vanish. An act of love is a complete work, its effects are more powerful, more important than the effects and consequences of all other acts. Death itself cannot equal it in grandeur. And yet what constitutes an act of love? A simple movement of the heart which with the rapidity of lightning penetrates the heavens. Such acts may be multiplied beyond all calculation, even in the midst of the most distracting occupations. Far from being enfeebled by repetition they derive

from it a new intensity, an unknown power. At the same time they exact no effort, it is even a pleasure for us to formulate them" (Faber).

"Those who desire to love ardently," said St. Francis de Sales, "will soon love with ardour. Let us then not cease to love." "Ah! if I had a thousand hearts to love with," cried St. Margaret Mary, "that would not be too much." St. Paul tells us that love is not only the end of the commandments, but also "*the fulfilling of the law*" (Rom. xiii. 10). Just as love gives God to the creature, love gives the creature to God, and achieves their union. Love makes them one, after having thrown them together, love makes them rest there: "*He that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him*" (I. John iv. 16).

"It is of the greatest importance," said St. John of the Cross, "that the soul exercises itself much in love, so that accomplishing its course rapidly it is not arrested here below, but soon arrives to see God face to face."

"The assiduous exercise of love," he said again, "is a great thing. The soul arrives at perfection, and the consummation of love cannot be long delayed whether in this life or the next without seeing the face of God" (Spiritual maxims).

“ My God, my love. You are all mine, and I am all Yours. Fill me with love that I may taste in my inmost heart how sweet it is to love, to be dissolved, absorbed by love.

“ May love ravish me, and raise me above myself by its transports. May I chant the canticle of love. May I follow Thee my Best Beloved to the heights of Thy glory.

“ May all the strength of my soul be expended in praising and loving Thee. May I love Thee more than myself, myself only for Thee. May I love in Thee all that love Thee truly, as the law of love ordains that shines forth from Thee.” (Imitation, Book III, ch. V.)

(3).—THE INVISIBLE DIVINE MISSIONS.

Here is a truth capable of arousing the soul to great desires, and inspiring an intense love.

We know that Theology considers the Invisible Divine Missions as amongst the profound mysteries of religion. They are new divine outpourings, fresh illuminations that the Word communicates to our intelligence, renewed impulses of love with which the Holy Spirit fills our wills. They resemble and are an extension of the eternal processions of the Son and the Holy Ghost.

Each time that a soul by its fervour and

generosity makes new progress in the love of God, and merits a new grace, the Father sends to this soul the Word and the Holy Ghost, Who bring new rights to the divine intimacy. And as the Three Persons are inseparable, the Father comes without being sent. The Three Persons inundate the soul with a new influx of life, and a new relation is established, more personal, real and intimate than that of the moment previously. This adorable mystery can be reproduced at each moment, and at each increase of love, there is an invisible visit of “The Three.” Every moment then that the soul increases its charity, the adorable Trinity flows into it bringing fresh floods of light and love. To what height might not the soul ascend by means of these mysterious elevations?

O Christian ! *If thou didst but know the gift of God !* (cfr. John iv. 10).

“ O Trinity ! Most high, most clement and bountiful God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, One God, I hope in You.

“ Instruct, direct, sustain me.

“ O Father ! by Your infinite power, fill and fix in my memory holy and divine thoughts.

“ O Son ! By Your eternal Wisdom enlighten my understanding, grant me knowledge of Your sovereign truth, and of my own nothingness.

O Holy Spirit ! Who art the love of the Father and the Son ! by Your incomprehensible goodness unite my will to Yours and enkindle it with the flame of Your charity.

“ O my Lord and my God ! My beginning, my end, O Essence sovereignly simple, tranquil, and lovable. O abyss of sweetness and all delights ! O most loved light and supreme good of my soul ! Inexpressible ocean of joy. Perfect plenitude of all good. My God and my all, what will it be when I shall possess You ?

“ You are my unique and unalterable good.

“ I seek You alone.

“ I desire and search but for You.

“ Lord draw me to Thyself.

“ I knock, O Lord, open to me. Open to one forsaken who implores You.

“ Plunge me in the abyss of Your Divinity.

“ Make me one sole spirit with You, so that I may possess *within me* Your treasures.”

BLESSED ALBERT THE GREAT.

IV

THE END OF THE EUCHARISTIC UNION

I.—ADOPTED SONS IN JESUS CHRIST.

1. Our supernatural vocation and the Trinity.
2. Communion and our supernatural vocation.

II.—THE GLORY OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY.

1. The supreme end of creation.
2. The unique Liturgy.

IV

THE END OF THE EUCHARISTIC UNION

I.—ADOPTED SONS IN JESUS CHRIST.

I.—OUR SUPERNATURAL VOCATION AND THE TRINITY.

“Blessed be the God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . Who hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and unspotted in His sight in charity” (Eph. i. 3, 4). God has then concerned Himself with us from all eternity. The Father thought of us, and this thought was at the same time a volition. He uttered in the case of each of us a word which created us, expresses us, contains our temporal and eternal life, ordained what we should become, the place we should occupy, the perfection we should realize, and the glory we ought to attain. The Father, interpreting His sovereign thought with relation to us, pro-

nounced this word, when He fixed our supernatural vocation. This word is the supreme law, and outline of our existence, and indicates in what measure we shall enter into the divine creative plan.

Outside this thought the Father does not know us with a knowledge of love. He occupies Himself with us, giving us grace, giving Himself, only as far as we move in the light of His thought, by the realization of which we enter into the divine order of eternal realities.

Our fundamental duty then reduces itself to this, the accomplishment of the will of our heavenly Father; living according to the word He has pronounced about us, accepting in advance all that this word contains whether of joy or sorrow, in short submitting ourselves lovingly to all His demands as they are manifested in our daily life. But what is this mysterious thought? Who said this word? St. Paul replies: "*Those He foreknew He also predestined to be made conformable to the image of His Son*" (Rom. viii. 29). God's will is that we shall enter into the mystery of Christ; the word He pronounces over us expresses the manner and measure in which we should reproduce Jesus for the glory of our heavenly Father: "*In His charity He hath predestinated us unto the adoption of children*

through Jesus Christ . . . unto the praise of the glory of His grace (Eph. i. 4, 5, 6).

Such is our supernatural vocation; to be conformed to Jesus, live like Jesus, become Jesus.

The incarnate Word is the unique and universal ideal which all those predestinated by love should represent and manifest: seculars, priests, religious, virgins or married, for all there is but one example, Jesus Christ Himself, whom they are bound to imitate under penalty of being excluded from the realm of grace. The measure of their perfection, of their supernatural fecundity will correspond exactly to the measure of their adherence to Jesus, and their faithful resemblance to Him: "*Neither is there salvation in any other*" (Acts iv. 12).

In what measure ought I to reproduce this? I do not know. That is the very mysterious secret of eternal predestination. But certainly I ought to reproduce it. I ought without ceasing to look at Jesus. imitate Jesus, become Jesus.

How can one accomplish so sublime a vocation? By grace and the co-operation of the Holy Spirit. "*Abiding with you for ever*" (John xiv. 16), the Holy Spirit makes Himself the executor of the designs of the Father, the artisan of man's deification, which the Father traced on the model of the Word Incarnate. *Digitus*

paternae dexteræ sings the Church: *You, O creative Spirit, are the finger of God the Father* (Hymn, *Veni Creator*). As the painter or sculptor by his handiwork expresses the ideal he has conceived, so the Heavenly Father to translate His thought, inscribes and graves in us His image the Word, by means of the Holy Ghost.

The first work of this creative and sanctifying Spirit in us, is to transform us into the resemblance of the Son of God, and to make us live in conformity with our divine filiation: "*For whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For you have not received the spirit of bondage again in fear, but you have received the spirit of the adoption of sons, whereby we cry Abba Father. For the Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit that we are the sons of God*" (Rom. viii. 14-17).

The Spirit of Truth, will illumine in our soul the eternal thought of the Father. He will make it clearer, more precise, more attractive, by revealing Jesus in us: "*When He the Spirit of Truth is come He will teach you all truth: . . . He will glorify Me*" (John xvi. 13, 14).

Being the consummation and the consecration of all things, He continues to impress in our soul that adorable thought of the Father which is Jesus. He fixes it, makes it permanent, and if

we wish irrevocable. This was the mystery that David contemplated when he sang, "*The light of Thy countenance, O Lord, is signed upon us*" (Psalm iv. 7), for the likeness of the Lord, His splendour, His Glory, is the Word.

Afterwards, because He is the Spirit of Life, the author of supernatural life, He realizes the Thought of the Father, stimulates us to realize a close resemblance to Christ, and aids us "*Until we all meet into a perfect man, unto the measure of the age of the fulness of Christ . . . until Christ be formed in us*" (Eph. iv. 13; Gal. iv. 19).

Finally being personally love, He establishes between us and the Trinity relations of love, and a constant tendency to union. He attracts the Trinity towards us, and us towards the Trinity. He is the constant appeal, the living attraction, the irresistible impulse which draws us to Jesus, so much so that in the measure that the soul abandons itself to the thought of the Father effected by the Holy Spirit, the union becomes closer and closer, and as the Father is in the Son, and the Son in the Father, so the soul is in Christ, and Christ is in the soul, the two "*made perfect in one*" (John xvii. 23) according to the prayer at the Last Supper.

Then man ransomed and sanctified may present himself confidently before the Heavenly Father

and say to Him, "Behold me O God, and look on the face of Thy Christ" (Psalms lxxxiii, 10).

"O Eternal Trinity! You are an unfathomable sea, wherein the more I plunge the more I find You, and the more I find You the more I seek You again. Of You it can never be said: it is enough. The soul which satiates itself in Your depths still desires You unceasingly, because it still hungers for You. Eternal Trinity the soul always wishes by Your light to see light. As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so my soul longs to depart from the darksome prison of the body to see You in verity. . . .

"O Eternal Divinity! Ocean without limit. Could You do more than give me Yourself? You are the ever burning fire which is never extinguished. You are the fire which consumes in itself all the self love of the soul: You are the fire which melts and lights, and by whose light You have made known to me the truth. You are the light of all lights. . . .

"O supreme and infinite Good! Good beyond all others. Source of happiness. Incomprehensible Good! Inestimable Good! Beauty surpassing all beauty. Wisdom beyond all wisdom. Wisdom itself. You the bread of angels, in the ardour of love, give Yourself

112

to man. You are the vestment which covers all nudity, the nourishment whose sweetness rejoices all who hunger. For You are sweet without the slightest shadow of bitterness.

"O Eternal Trinity, show me the way of supreme perfection, that I may serve You in the light, not in the darkness, and be a mirror of pure and holy life, renouncing this miserable existence, where so far I have served You in darkness

"Reclothe me, Eternal Trinity, reclothe me with Yourself, so that I may pass this mortal life in true obedience, and in the light of that holy faith with which You have inebriated my soul."

ST. CATHARINE OF SIENA.

2.—COMMUNION AND OUR SUPERNATURAL VOCATION.

Communion makes us enter into this mystery of our predestination and sanctification. When we communicate, the whole of this mystery passes into us to remain there. The Father is in us to communicate His Thought, and to reveal to us His Word; the Holy Spirit to abide in us. And if our fervour corresponds to God's good will, each Communion enlightened by faith, makes a more intimate communication in the interior of our soul, fixes in us a new resemblance to Jesus, gravated by the Holy Spirit.

113

"*In one Spirit we have all been made to drink*" (I. Cor. xii. 13), said St. Paul. Communion in fact gives us not only the flesh of Jesus, but also His Spirit which flows into us like a most pure blood, doing for our souls what blood does for our bodies. The Holy Spirit is the source of life. As He directed the human nature in Jesus from the first to the last day of His life inspiring both His thought and His love, so He makes Himself our master, presiding at the supernatural transformation in us. In Jesus and in the communicant there is the same Spirit of Life, the same Principle of activity. Provided that the communicant is docile to His inspirations there will soon be a perfect assimilation, for the same grace should produce the same virtues, the same Spirit enkindle the same acts. Thus we see the Saints acquire such a resemblance to Jesus, that they make with Him but one heart and soul. They see all things as Jesus; judge like Him, have the same desires, the same will, the same love. *Cor Pauli, Cor Christi*, said St. John Chrysostom: the heart of Paul is the heart of Christ. Has not the Apostle himself also said: "*I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me*" (Gal. ii. 20). "Christ takes the place of my soul," said St. Macaire, and St. Catharine of Genoa: "I have neither heart nor soul, my heart and soul are those of Jesus Christ."

In the case of St. Catharine of Siena, this mystery of transformation took place in circumstances manifesting the singular tenderness of Our Lord: "One day," recounts the Blessed Raymond, "that she repeated with fervour the words of the Prophet, '*Create a clean heart in me, O God, and renew a right spirit within me*' (Psalm l. 12), she asked Our Lord that He would take away her heart, and her own will. Then she thought she saw her eternal Spouse come to her as usual, but He opened the left side, took her heart and departed. The impression of this vision was so vivid that St. Catharine said to the confessor that she seemed to have no longer a heart in her body. . . . Some time afterwards Our Lord appeared to her bearing in His sacred hands a human heart ruddy and resplendent. . . . He approached, opened again her left side, and introduced there the heart He had held in His hands: 'My beloved daughter,' He said, 'just as the other day I took away your heart, so now I have replaced it by My own, which will make you live eternally.'"

An analogous incident is narrated in the life of St. Margaret Mary: "The Friday of the octave of Corpus Christi," she tells us, "after Communion, my Jesus said to me 'My daughter, I have come to you to substitute My soul for

yours, My heart and My spirit in place of yours, so that you may henceforth love only by and for Me.' This grace had such effect that nothing has subsequently been able to trouble the peace of my soul, and my heart has no power except to love God only."

Such is the end of Communion, a fusion of heart and soul. It is true that both these incidents narrated contained facts of the miraculous order. But putting these on one side, Communion should produce in us a similar transformation. It should be our aim to lose our own proper life and substitute for it the life of Christ, Who declared: "*As I live by the Father, so He that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me*" (John vi. 58). To sum up, Communion has but one end, to make us other Christs, other sons of God.

"O all powerful and eternal Trinity! O sweet and ineffable Charity, who would not be inflamed by so much love? What heart could refuse expending all for You?"

"O abyss of charity. You are so intensely attached to Your creatures that it would almost seem You cannot live without them! Yet You are God, having no need of us. Since You are unchangeable, our well-being adds nothing to

116

Your greatness. Our wickedness causes You no harm since You are the sovereign and eternal Goodness. What is it that inspires You with such compassion? It is love. For You have no obligation toward us, no need for us. What draws You then, O infinite God, to me Your puny creature? It is nothing else than Yourself, Fire of Love! Love always, Love alone has impelled and still impels Your tenderness towards Your creatures, filling them with infinite graces and priceless gifts. O Supreme Benevolence, You alone are supremely good! You have given us the Word, Your Son, to live with us, in touch with such corruption, such darkness. What is the cause of this gift? Love! for You loved us before we even were.

"O Eternal Magnificence! O Immensity of Goodness! You abased Yourself, becoming little, that man might become great. On whichever side I turn, I find only the abyss and fire of Your charity."

ST. CATHARINE OF SIENA.

II.—THE GLORY OF THE HOLY TRINITY.

I.—THE FINAL GOAL OF CREATION.

We can go further in the knowledge of our supernatural vocation, and ask why God wished

I

117

that we should become the adopted sons of Jesus Christ.

Certainly it is for our happiness, His love as gratuitous as it is immense was not content with drawing us from nothing, He wished also to make us happy, to carry us even to the summit of happiness by granting that unheard-of gift, a participation of His nature and a communication of His life.

However the good of the creature cannot be the last end of the divine operations. This end is the magnificent manifestation of the divine attributes, in particular God's goodness; and the perfect glorification of the Holy Trinity.

In rendering me happy, God wished to glorify Himself: He wishes to be glorified in my happiness.

Ultimately it is for Himself, for His glory that God has made us His adopted children. Our divine filiation then must be completed in the love and praise of God; "*We also are called by lot being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things according to the counsel of His will. That we may be unto the praise of His glory*" (Eph. i. 11, 12). For God because He is God, "*hath made all things for Himself*" (Prov. xvi. 4). It is incumbent then that all beings, and our own happiness, shall be

referred to God and render Him homage. To glorify God is the essential and primordial work of the creature as long as it exists. That fact should dominate everything. It is "*the justice*" mentioned by Our Lord in the beatitudes for which we should "*hunger and thirst*" (Matt. v. 6). To glorify God was both the primary cause of the Incarnation and the principal work of the Sacred Humanity during His life, as now also, in the Blessed Sacrament. Christ came to save us, but still more to adore and praise His Father: He came to render us happy, but above all to fulfil those duties of religion for which God had waited from the creation of the world. Christ's internal life was an incessant adoration. If He worked, preached, performed miracles, suffered and died, it was all for the glory of His Father. He was burning with the desire to render Him glory, as though by an interior flame, which devoured and left no repose to His soul athirst for justice and love.

"I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized: and how am I straitened until it be accomplished" (Luke xii. 50). This baptism was the effusion of Blood which would restore to God the glory of the Creation.

"With desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with you before I suffer" (Luke xxii. 15). This

Pasch was the offering up of the Host, of Himself, as a holocaust of glory.

"*I thirst*" (John xix. 28), He said at the moment of His death. This thirst was the inexpressible need of His Heart to witness His love for His Father. A thirst that the sacrifice of Calvary could not assuage, since He instituted the Eucharist to renew the effusion of His blood, to universalize it, and prolong it during the centuries.

Christ's life and death had an aim which dominated all His actions: this was in the first place to give God the most complete homage He could receive, and then to raise up in the world souls who would unite themselves to His love and sacrifice, rendering glory with Him, and thus being "*those true adorers in spirit and in truth whom the Father seeketh to adore Him*" (John iv. 23).

"Blessed be the God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath blessed us with spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: As He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and unspotted in His sight in charity.

"Who hath predestinated us unto the adoption of children through Jesus Christ unto Himself

according to the purpose of His will: Unto the praise of the glory of His grace. . . .

"In whom we also are called by lot, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him Who worketh all things according to the counsel of His will. That we may be unto the praise of His glory. . . . For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, of Whom all paternity in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you according to the riches of His glory to be strengthened by His Spirit, with might unto the inward man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that being rooted and founded in charity, you may be able to comprehend with all the saints, what is the breadth, and length, and height and depth, to know also the charity of Christ which surpasseth all knowledge, that you may be filled unto all the fulness of God.

"Now to Him who is able to do all things more abundantly than we desire or understand, according to the power that worketh in us; to Him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations world without end. Amen."

ST. PAUL (Eph. i. 3, 5, 6, 11, 12; iii. 14-21).

2.—THE UNIQUE LITURGY.

Finally Christ came amongst us to accomplish a work of praise, a liturgical work.

He accomplishes it still, for as the Word incarnate, Jesus is Priest, "*The Apostle and High Priest of our confession*" (Heb. iii. 1).

He will accomplish it eternally, for the Priesthood was His fundamental state, that which was essential in Him: "*He hath an everlasting Priesthood*" (Heb. vii. 24). The Father said of Him: "*Thou art a Priest for ever*" (Psalm cix. 4).

Thus we see Him in heaven and on earth presiding at the unique Liturgy. In one of the most sublime visions of the Apocalypse, St. John shows us our Pontiff exercising His Priesthood in the assembly of the elect, in the centre of the redeemed creation, in the midst of the throne even where God is seated. The sevenfold spirit reposes on Him, and inspires His Priesthood. He is erect as one who sacrifices. He is immolated as the universal victim. He renders glory to Him: "*Who was, Who is, and Who is to come*" (Apoc. iv. 8). And all the dwellers in heaven unite themselves to the Lamb to render homage to Him for whom the Lamb immolates Himself: "*Thou art worthy O Lord Our God to receive glory and honour and power*

because Thou hast created all things. . . . Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty (Apoc., iv. 11, 8). They adore, prostrate, and cast their crowns before the throne to testify that their victory and their glory come alone from the Saviour. But the elect also turn themselves towards the Lamb, who receives the praise which is His due. Whilst He exercises His supreme Priesthood, they prostrate before Him, and with one accord intone the *new canticle* of all the redeemed: "*The Lamb that was slain is worthy to receive power and divinity, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and benediction*" (Apoc. v. 12).

Such are the grand lines of the Liturgy which develops in all its splendour in the heavens under the presidency of Jesus, the Universal Pontiff, and under the breath of the Holy Spirit, "*by whom the Lamb offers Himself to God as an unspotted Host*" (cfr. Heb. ix. 14). But it is exactly the same Liturgy which is reproduced amongst us at the Altar: the same Priest, the same Victim, the same immolation, the same end to be attained. It is only the exterior form which differs, the Church triumphant celebrates the Sacrifice unveiled, whilst the Church militant celebrates it in faith. But there is only one Liturgy. Every hour a sanctified hymn of praise

mounts from the whole world towards the throne of the Most High, to bless, exalt and glorify the Lamb who immolates Himself, numberless voices from the immense multitude of the redeemed on earth and in heaven; but all these voices form one magnificent chorus, having a single object of praise, together they celebrate the unique Liturgy. The reason that Jesus offered His sacrifice on Calvary and prolongs it perpetually in the Eucharist, is that the *praise of glory* may perpetually ascend towards God.

Such is also the final goal of communion.

Jesus desires that the Liturgy, the praise which unfolds itself before the throne of God, and on the altar as perfectly one, shall be reproduced in the soul of the communicant.

He comes into us to impel us to enter into that great movement of praise of which He is the Chief and the Pontiff. He said one day to St. Margaret Mary, "I come to you as the sovereign Sacrificer." Every baptized person is a consecrated temple, a place destined for the service of praise: "*For the temple of God is holy which you are*" (I. Cor. iii. 17). In this temple is the all powerful God, to whom sacrifice is offered, the Adorable Trinity: "*We will come to Him and make our abode with Him*" (John xiv. 23).

Holy Communion introduces there the victim,

the Lamb immolates Himself afresh, and comes to offer Himself and unite His sacrifice to the soul that receives Him, for He wishes that with Him "*we present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing unto God*" (Rom. xii. 1). "The Christian soul," said Origen, "is a permanent altar where the sacrifice perpetuates itself day and night." This sacrifice ought not to be a passing incident, but a permanency, for the Lamb Who was immolated dwells in us even after the dissolution of the sacred species according to the promise He made, that "*by Him we may offer the sacrifice of praise always to God, that is to say the fruit of lips confessing to His name*" (Heb. xiii. 15). Communion permits the soul to celebrate in its sanctuary the sacrifice that the Church triumphant and the Church militant never cease to offer to God: the same Victim offers Himself there to the same God for the same praise.

Nothing is wanting, neither the incense, nor the harmony of harps of the celebrated vision of St. John. The prayer of the soul elevates itself around the sacrifice as an odour of sweetness saying to the Lord that "*the spouse goeth up as a pillar of smoke exhaling myrrh and frankincense*" (cfr Cant. iii. 6).

The sound of the harps, is the harmony from

our acts of love, of all those desires, of all those varying affections which burst forth from the heart under the inspiration of the Spirit. A sublime harmony, a veritable echo of the *New Canticle* of the choirs of the elect, when all the powers of soul and body like the cords of a lyre are harmonized by purity and penitence. "Then," said the Heavenly Father to St. Catherine of Siena, "that soul chants a beautiful song, accompanying it on an instrument the cords of which have been so well fashioned by prudence that they form together a holy harmony to the glory and honour of My name. This harmony is produced by the great chords the powers of the soul, and the smaller chords the senses of the body. All My saints have captured souls with these harmonies. The first to sound them was my well beloved Word, when clothed with your humanity and uniting it to the Divinity, He played on the Cross that ineffable strain that won the love of the human race."

Thus in heaven, on the altar, and in the soul is celebrated the same eternal Liturgy.

In the proportion that this praise develops in us, our sanctification advances. When the soul sustained by perfect charity united with intelligence and love to the sacrifice of the Lamb reaches that stage in which it is not deterred by

anything from its task of praise, when it celebrates without ceasing that interior cult, it has reached perfection on this earth, it lives in the shadows of faith as the blessed in the eternal vision, and its interior life becomes, said Blessed Albert the Great, "the prelude and commencement of the life of heaven."

"O Holy Trinity from whose depths flow forth in eternal splendour the living Divinity, Love and Wisdom.

"O Father, unique source of power: You who are Essential Wisdom, in Whom goodness wells up unceasingly, Whose love is ardent as the fire, Whose holiness is impelled to extend itself to created being, Whose goodness displays itself in all creation, to You be praise, honour and glory. To You thanksgiving, power and light, this is the fervent desire of my heart.

"O Word, tall cedar of Lebanon, Who in sovereign majesty stretched the boughs of Your Divinity above the Cherubim; yet it pleased You to descend to the depths of this vale of tears and seek a humble stem of hyssop to unite to Yourself by a firm bond, making it Your spouse in infinite love. O Holy Spirit. God of Love, the essential link by love of the Blessed Trinity, You repose and take Your delights amongst the

children of men in holy chastity, which by Your strength and Your example flourishes here below like a rose amongst thorns.

“ Holy Spirit. Love ! Love ! Tell me what road conducts to that delightful abode ; tell me where I shall find the path of life leading to those meadows fertilized by the divine dew, that thirsting souls may slake their thirst. O Love, You alone know the road that conducts to life and truth. In You is accomplished that alliance full of delights which unites the Divine Persons of the Holy Trinity. By You, O Holy Spirit, are poured out on us the most precious gifts. From You proceed those fertilized seeds producing life-giving fruits. From You emanates the sweet honey of those delights which are concerned only with God. By You descend on us those fertilizing streams of divine blessing, those precious gifts of the Spirit so rare, alas ! in our land. O Son of God. Love ! Love ! prepare for me the route that leads to You, the path of love. Draw me to Yourself with chaste affection, so that I may follow wherever You lead, even to those heights where You reign and command in the sovereign majesty of Your Divine Essence, to that abode where You bestow the treasures of Your affection. . . . Whilst waiting, O Jesus, O Love, keep me in this vale of misery

in the shadow of Your love. And after the tedium of this exile preserved from all stain, conduct and make me enter Your sanctuary, giving me a place in the ranks of that virginal multitude. There I shall quench my thirst at the living waters of Your divine tenderness, there I shall be sated in the joy of Your sweet love. Amen ! Amen ! May such be the cry of every being.”

SAINT GERTRUDE.