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THE VOICE
OF MY PRAYER



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THE VOICE OF MY PRAYER

*Short Meditations for Sundays
and Holy Days*

BY

SHIRLEY C. HUGHSON

*Mission Priest of the Order
of the Holy Cross*



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THE VOICE OF MY PRAYER.

The First Sunday in Advent.

Almighty God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal, through him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, now and ever. Amen.

I. On the first day of the Church Year, we recognize that our Religion involves two things: (1) Casting away the works of darkness, and (2) putting on the armour of light. We must indeed break with our sinful habits, but this is not enough. Ours is not a merely negative religion. We must do something positive in the way of performing the works of Christ which will be our armour against all the darts of Satan. What definite thing shall I do for God on this first day of the Church's Year?

II. We are to do this for the love of Him who came at His first Advent "to visit us in great humility." This done, we shall be able to join His train when at His second Advent, "He shall come again in His glorious majesty to judge both the quick and dead." The ambition of every truly Christian soul is ever to be like Christ. In this life He came *in great humility*. If I am, in this life, meek and humble as He was, then shall I have a good hope of being like Him in His glory hereafter.

III. When will He come? We speak of His Coming as though it were some remote event to be realized in some far-off age. But He may be nigh, even at the doors. Is my lamp trimmed and burning, awaiting my Lord's coming? Am I one of those blessed servants whom the Lord, when He comes, will find watching?

The Second Sunday in Advent.

Blessed Lord, who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning; Grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of thy holy Word, we may embrace, and ever hold fast, the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

I. The only thing in life that, in the last analysis, is important, is the soul's prepara-

tion for the Lord's coming. Whatever we can read or learn that will help us in that, is of paramount importance; all other knowledge is vain and passing. How am I using the knowledge I am daily acquiring—of books, of people, of what is going on about me? Am I using it to learn more of God and His love, more of the awfulness of the sin I am to avoid?

II. There are many sources of knowledge, and all can be turned to my eternal advantage, but that which I gain from the Bible is beyond any comparison the most important. The Bible was written for the purpose of teaching me how to prepare for the great Day of the Lord. Do I hear, read, mark, learn, and, above all, inwardly digest its precious truth, that I might grow more and more in the way of eternal life?

III. We must not read Scripture only that we might store our minds with information, but that we might be filled with "patience and comfort of His Holy Word." We must pray as well as read. "Pray much and read little," that is, linger over the blessed page, asking the Holy Spirit to inspire you that you might find a message for your heart. Then will you be able (1) to *embrace*, and (2) *ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life.*

The Third Sunday in Advent.

O Lord Jesus Christ, who at thy first coming didst send thy messenger to prepare thy way before thee; Grant that the ministers and stewards of thy mysteries may likewise so prepare and make ready thy way, by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, that at thy second coming to judge the world we may be found an acceptable people in thy sight, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Spirit ever, one God, world without end. Amen.

I. We are reminded to-day of St. John Baptist, and his first mission, and we pray that the ministry of the Church might, in our time, exercise a ministry like his. But the collect prays for all the people of God, and if our day needs a ministry like that of the Baptist, is it not because many of the people are like those of his time? Am I regarding the living voice of the Church to-day as a personal call to me to "flee from the wrath to come?"

II. I shall fail to hear the voice of the Church as I should, unless I realize my liability to become subject to the wrath of God. Sin will make me subject to His wrath. Is there unrepented sin in my life? What habit of sin is fettering my soul? Let me think on this, and then hear the loving warning of God, crying, "Repent ye!"

III. The purpose of the Church's call is now, as it was then, to "turn the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just." Only

a foolish and unwise heart is disobedient to God. The wise ones who are in His sight justified, are the ones who obey His word. Disobedience to Him is the essence of folly, for it can only work out into eternal loss and woe. Does my daily life show me to be among God's wise ones?

The Fourth Sunday in Advent.

O Lord, raise up, we pray thee, thy power, and come among us, and with great might succour us; that whereas through our sins and wickedness, we are sore let and hindered in running the race that is set before us, thy bountiful grace and mercy may speedily help and deliver us; through the satisfaction of thy Son our Lord, to whom with thee and the Holy Ghost be honour and glory, world without end. Amen.

I. During the previous Sundays in Advent, we have been addressing God in regard to our preparation for the second Coming. Now, however, the soul seems to break away with holy impatience from that which may be very far off. She wants her Lord *now*. She needs Him, and cries out for Him as the hart for the waterbrooks: "O Lord, raise up, we pray thee, thy power, and come among us!" Do I really long for Him? Will I make a place for Him in my heart, crying, "Even so, come Lord Jesus!"

II. The soul knows that her sins are re-

sponsible for her being sore let and hindered in running the race that is set before her, and weary and sick of heart she longs for Him as a little child for a father's strong arms, beseeching that He will "with great might succour her." The feet of Jesus will not be slow to answer such a summons. Swiftly will He come with His great heart full of loving tenderness, and take her in His strong and everlasting arms.

III. If the heart's cry be sincere, our loving God will with "bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us." There will be no long tarrying. He will come to us, and in the power of His indwelling strength and comfort, give us sweetness and joy everlasting.

Christmas Day.

(DECEMBER 25.)

Almighty God, who hast given us thy only begotten Son to take our nature upon him, and as at this time to be born of a pure virgin; Grant that we being regenerate, and made thy children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit; through the same our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the same Spirit, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

I. First of all, on this happy day, we recall the love of the Father, who hath "given us His only-begotten Son." This is an echo of our Lord's words to Nicodemus: "God so

loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son." It was the *world* He loved, the rebellious world whose age-long sin had grieved but could not quench the Father's love. My sins must come before me this day, and the Christmas joy must find its chief note in the thought of the pardoning love that takes them all away.

II. God's love and man's sin stand ever side by side. In this life of constant temptation and so frequent failure, the thought of either must always remind us of the other. Have you sinned against Him? Then rejoice this Christmas morning that His love is ready to cleanse your sin-stained heart. Does your spirit thrill with the consciousness of this love as you kneel at His manger-throne? Then let that love keep you from again wounding the little Jesus by your sin.

III. All this can be done only by remembering the truth the collect teaches. We are regenerate, born anew, and are His children by adoption and grace, but this is not enough. A babe may have a safe and healthy birth, but life will soon go out if it be not fed and nourished. So must we "daily be renewed by His Holy Spirit"; we must be fed with Holy Communion; washed by Absolution; our souls made strong by exercise in fighting temptations and and doing what God asks.

Saint Stephen's Day.

(DECEMBER 26.)

Grant, O Lord, that in all our sufferings here upon earth for the testimony of thy truth, we may stedfastly look up to heaven, and by faith behold the glory that shall be revealed; and, being filled with the Holy Ghost, may learn to love and bless our persecutors by the example of thy first Martyr Saint Stephen, who prayed for his murderers to thee, O blessed Jesus, who standest at the right hand of God to succour all those who suffer for thee, our only Mediator and Advocate. Amen.

I. We are told repeatedly in Scripture that we are to suffer with Christ if we are to be glorified with Him. I have had my share of crosses, perhaps, but what have I suffered *for the testimony of His truth?* What instance can I recall of my braving the ridicule of others for our Lord's sake? Did I have the courage to refuse to laugh at that irreverent jest, or, instead of bearing my testimony for God, did I keep silence and let men think I too cared naught for His honour?

II. If I bear not my witness, how can I look up to heaven, and by faith behold the glory that shall be revealed? That glory will consist of the reward He will give to those who confess Him before men (St. Matt. x. 32). Let me always so speak and act that men, when they see me, will take note of me that I have been with Jesus.

III. But the life of loyalty to Jesus Christ will incite Satan to stir up persecution against us. It may not be like what St. Stephen suffered, but the petty spite of the world will give us the same opportunity he had to gain glorious blessings by praying for those who spitefully use us. His example and mine is our Lord "who when He was reviled, reviled not again, when He suffered, He threatened not."

Saint John the Evangelist's Day.

(DECEMBER 27.)

Merciful Lord, we beseech thee to cast thy bright beams of light upon thy Church, that it being instructed by the doctrine of thy blessed Apostle and Evangelist St. John, may so walk in the light of thy truth, that it may at length attain to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. The wonders of the Holy Gospel lie before us on the pages of St. John, but we shall have no power to be instructed by him unless our minds, so darkened by sin, be enlightened by the bright beams of the Holy Ghost. Every sin causes darkness of understanding. I sometimes wonder why the Church's teaching in the Bible or in the Creeds is hard to understand. Is it because my soul is dark with some hidden sin?

II. God has so constituted the human

soul that there is no limit to the divine light with which it can be glorified. Every prayer or good deed, every aspiration of the heart heavenward, is like throwing wider the windows that the blessed light might penetrate within, bringing warmth and strength and joy. Let me resolve frequently this day to lift up my heart to Him that He, the Light of the world, might fill me more and more.

III. In the original version of this Collect, the conclusion read, "that it might at length attain *to the light* of everlasting life." We are to walk in the light of divine truth here in order that we may attain the everlasting light there. And as the Christian life here must be one of continual progress (for it is written, "The path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day"), so in heaven there will be a never-ending progress; through all eternity the soul being ever more gloriously illuminated, and understanding ever more clearly the mysteries of the truth and beauty of our God.

The Innocents' Day.

(DECEMBER 28.)

O Almighty God, who out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast ordained strength, and madest infants to glorify thee by their deaths; Mortify and kill all vices in us, and so strengthen us by thy grace, that by the innocency of our lives, and constancy of our faith even unto death, we may glorify thy holy Name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. On this day the Church bids the soul take courage. What if we are full of weakness, and in the face of difficulties feel affrighted at the thought of past failures, cannot He who out of the mouths of babes and sucklings ordained strength overcome also our weakness for His glory? If the thought of my weakness makes me trust in Him, then will God's strength be made perfect in me.

II. The Innocents glorified God *by their deaths*, by what the world would call failure, being cut off in the beginning of their career. Their mothers doubtless had ambitions that they should glorify the God of their fathers by becoming great in Israel, and mourned the untimely end of their offspring. But God knew better and the Church for all time rejoices in the glory their deaths and seeming failure gave to Him. If I cleave steadfastly to the right, failure of plans and death of earthly hopes will glorify God more than the highest

success achieved at the sacrifice of the smallest point of principle.

III. If we would glorify His Name, it must be (1) *by the innocency of our lives* which can only be attained by allowing the Holy Spirit *to mortify and kill all vices in us*, checking by our wills the rising of every sinful impulse, and struggling to break every evil habit; and (2), by the *constancy of our faith*, which can remain *firm* under disappointment and trials only when *strengthened by His grace*. New grace comes from Him every time I pray, or devoutly read His Word; with each Sacrament I receive, with every loving submission to the Will of God.

The Sunday After Christmas.*

O God, who makest us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of thine only Son, Jesus Christ; Grant that as we joyfully receive him for our Redeemer, so we may with sure confidence behold him when he shall come to be our Judge, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

I. The Church on Christmas strikes the dominant note of all our holy religion,—that of joy. All the world is glad to-day, but why? The only true Christian gladness is that which

* There is no separate Collect for this Sunday, so the second one for Christmas Day is used.

comes from the remembrance of the birth of the little Child of the Manger. The riotous, wicked joy of the world shames and dishonours God, but the deep, still, heart-joy that thrills us when we think how much He loves us, is what makes this feast one of the most blessed of the year.

II. By joyfully receiving Him for our Redeemer, we mean that realizing our sins and the need of a Saviour, we allow Him to do His work of salvation in our souls, knowing that only through Him can we be saved. Suppose we were cut off from salvation! The bare thought is terrifying, and it is quite possible for us to be cut off by wilful sin. But Jesus comes to save and defend, and we hail Him with joy as the shipwrecked mariner hails him who comes to deliver him from death.

III. Though so full of joy, the Collect sounds, too, a note of solemn warning. He came as a little Child in the Manger; He shall one day come again "to be our judge." I can "with sure confidence behold Him" then only in so far as I now joyfully receive Him for my Redeemer. Am I in reality receiving Him thus? Am I allowing Him to break the chains of my habitual sin, or do the habits continue without any real effort on my part to leave them off?

The Circumcision of Christ.

Almighty God, who madest thy blessed Son to be circumcised, and obedient to the law for man; Grant us the true circumcision of the Spirit; that, our hearts, and all our members, being mortified from all worldly and carnal lusts, we may in all things obey thy blessed will; through the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. The first thought of the year is that of obedient service to God as set forth in the example of our Lord. The prayer for the first day of the year reminds us that life is a service; every soul is under either the service of God, or that of Satan. Self-will is the mark of the Satanic service. Do I find it in my life? Which service will be mine during the coming year?

II. We pray for the true circumcision of the Spirit, that "our hearts and all our members" might be mortified. First, the heart; for if the heart be right towards God all else will follow. It is naturally our joy to serve those we love. The measure of my love for Him will be found in the joy with which I obey Him.

III. We pray that we might do two things, (1) mortify all worldly and carnal lusts, and (2) in all things obey His blessed will. It is not enough to fight against sin; that must always be followed by the bringing into our lives the Christian virtues which are all in-

cluded in a life of obedience. Note, too, how thorough must be God's service. We must mortify *all* lusts, and obey *in all things*. Am I definitely trying to cultivate a loving sweetness of disposition, a humble patience, and a generous yielding to others? What am I holding back in my service of my Lord as I begin this new year?

The Second Sunday after Christmas.*

Almighty God, who madest thy blessed Son to be circumcised, and obedient to the law for man; Grant us the true circumcision of the Spirit; that, our hearts, and all our members, being mortified from all worldly and carnal lusts, we may in all things obey thy blessed will; through the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. Circumcision was the sign of a covenant between God and man. Circumcision of spirit implies a like covenant. A covenant is a contract binding both parties. Consider God's condescension in binding Himself by an agreement with me. He gives me rights, as it were, against Himself, and allows me, if I do my part, an appeal to His justice, to secure these rights. What must I do *to-day* to fulfil my part of the contract He makes with me?

* The Collect for the Circumcision is appointed for this Sunday.

II. God brought me into the new and eternal covenant at my Baptism. Many a time have I broken my agreement by sin, and yet again and again does He renew the covenant with me in His love and tenderness. Does not the thought of His longsuffering make me ashamed to violate the covenant again?

III. How am I to keep my covenant with Him? So often have I tried and my own strength has failed me. I must resolve to cut off my sins, and carry out my resolution *in His strength*. I must pray, I must be on guard, I must repent when I fail, and above all, there must be no discouragement at falls. "The saints are the sinners who kept on trying." Whatever failure I may have had, if when the Lord comes I am still found trying, all will be well with me for eternity.

The Epiphany.

O God, who by the leading of a star didst manifest thy only-begotten Son to the Gentiles; Mercifully grant that we, who know thee now by faith, may after this life have the fruition of thy glorious Godhead; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. The shepherds were called to Bethlehem by a vision of Angels but the wise men had only the leading of a star, whose light failed them at the most critical moment. To the

first He gave a call they could not doubt, to go only a little way to find their Saviour; to the others He gave the flickering light of a star by which they were to pursue their long journey for many days.

II. Consider the fortitude the wise men displayed. When the star vanished, their faith only reached out after truth more boldly; and even when they were conducted by its returning light to the Infant Messiah, they saw only a Baby shivering with cold in a manger, the child of an unknown maiden from a despised town. Yet they never doubted that He was the Messiah King, and worshipping Him they presented the gifts they had prepared. They had no external assurance that would appeal to their reason, and yet "not having seen they rejoiced with joy unspeakable."

III. If we strive to exercise such a faith, in the end we shall have "the fruition of His glorious Godhead." When God does not seem to make our way plain before us, does the thought arise that He is testing us as He did the Gentiles? and are we reminded that those who are severely tested are the ones whom great honour awaits?

The First Sunday after the Epiphany.

O Lord, we beseech thee mercifully to receive the prayers of thy people who call upon thee; and grant that they may both perceive and know what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil the same; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. We here first recall the attitude necessary to prayer, and throw ourselves on the divine mercy. In prayer there must be the cry of a heart realizing its own need and helplessness, and turning to the all-loving One. When our prayers are not answered, it is too often because we have prayed carelessly or selfishly, not throwing ourselves on God in humility and trust.

II. Thus humbly appealing to the divine mercy we ask that we may both *perceive* and *know* what things we ought to do. We ask not only that we might see God's will for us, but that there might be such an illumination of the spirit that we might have a real knowledge and understanding of the deeper meaning of His will. Not that we are to bring it before the tribunal of our own judgment, and having approved it, follow it; but that by the Spirit we might see clearly that will in its true relation to all things, and understand that it would be against reason to have any will save His.

III. We may "perceive and know," and

still fail. Often we know the right and yet pursue the wrong; therefore we ask further that we may have *grace* and *power* to fulfil His will. We may have perfect knowledge of His will, but "without Me," He says, "ye can do nothing." Seek consciously to rely on Him even in the smallest things.

The Second Sunday after the Epiphany.

Almighty and everlasting God, who dost govern all things in heaven and earth; Mercifully hear the supplications of thy people, and grant us thy peace all the days of our life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. This is preeminently a prayer for peace, and so is rightly addressed to Him "Who dost govern all things in heaven and earth." In order that peace may be had there must be a governing and restraining power. Our hearts are full of contending forces, good and evil, and there is no peace because there is in us no intelligent restraining hand. The first step toward true peace is to realize this weakness. Then will our hearts turn to God who alone can calm the struggle within by expelling the evil and strengthening the good.

II. Realizing our weakness we can then pray, "Grant us Thy peace all the days of our life." We ask no spurious peace, no drugging of the soul with the world's narcotics, but *His*

peace. He has promised His peace, "My peace I give unto you." When He restrains and coordinates all our faculties, and everything is brought to its proper relation, perfect peace will arise. A peace which is only the quieting of a confused mass of opposing elements cannot endure. True peace can only come from Him who is "the author of peace."

III. "Peace is the tranquility of order." It arises from everything being in the right place, and working according to the law of its own being. This God brings about by His presence within us, but if it is to endure "all the days of our life," we have to contribute to the maintenance of it by humbly yielding our wills to Him daily in the little details of life.

The Third Sunday after the Epiphany.

Almighty and everlasting God, mercifully look upon our infirmities, and in all our dangers and necessities stretch forth thy right hand to help and defend us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. We are praying to-day to be saved from ourselves, to be delivered from that inherent weakness of our nature which leads to so much sin. Though infirmity of the soul is not in itself sin yet we cannot be indifferent to it, because it is, on the one hand the result of past sin, and also the constant occasion of

further sin. So with penitent hearts we call to Him "Who knows whereof we are made, who remembers we are but dust."

II. Though infirmity is not sin, yet the contemplation of it should always be with an act of contrition, for, in all likelihood, we ourselves are responsible for most of our infirmities. I am weak now because I have sinned in the past, and I will be still weaker in the future if I yield now.

III. We here pray in respect to all our *dangers* and *necessities*. How manifold are the dangers! So often the things that seem good are but lurking snares of Satan; and he can turn the best things to an evil purpose. Then our necessities; we are ignorant of what we need, and know not what we should ask for as we ought. "Lord, teach us to pray." In all these things we ask Him to *help* and *defend* us—first, to help us in the good we are trying to do; second, to defend us from the attacks of evil.

The Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany.

O God, who knowest us to be set in the midst of so many and great dangers, that by reason of the frailty of our nature we cannot always stand upright; Grant to us such strength and protection as may support us in all dangers, and carry us through all temptations; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

I. God's knowledge of our dangers and our frailty gives us hope, for He is a loving Father, tenderly watching over His children in their weakness. So we appeal to His knowledge and His love, and our appeal implies a confession of dependence on Him. In substance we are saying to Him, "I know Thy will that I should always stand upright; I have no power of myself to help myself; undertake for me." It is a solemn responsibility to speak thus to God.

II. Then we ask two things, *strength* and *protection*. First, that we ourselves, our own faculties, our mind, heart, and will may have infused into them the strength of our Lord's Humanity, that through Him we might conquer. Secondly, we ask His protection. We need to be defended without as well as fortified within. How sweet the thought of the divine protection: "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms."

III. And so strengthened within and

fenced without, He will "support us in all our dangers." Let the cry of my heart be: "I will fear no evil for Thou art with me" (Ps. xxiii. 4). And He "will carry us through all temptations," for "He Himself having suffered, being tempted, is able to succour them that are tempted."

The Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany.

O Lord, we beseech thee to keep thy Church and household continually in thy true religion; that they who do lean only upon the hope of thy heavenly grace may evermore be defended by thy mighty power; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. The first thought is the dependence of the Church on God to preserve it in true religion. The word "Church" here does not mean the Body of Christ, but the individual souls composing it on earth. Of course, we know from our Lord's promise that the gates of hell can never prevail against the Catholic Church. As an organism she can never be other than in "true religion," for she is infallible. So this prayer is one for ourselves and our brethren. We pray that we may never backslide; that our Christian course be one continual advance.

II. We plead for this in order that we "may evermore be defended by Thy mighty power." It is not possible for those who do

not commit themselves to the keeping of God to find His power a defense because it is impossible, omnipotent though it be, for it to operate upon any but a willing heart.

III. The collect implies one other condition, that they who look for the defense of His mighty power must “lean *only* upon the hope of Thy heavenly grace.” Those who put their trust in worldly help, or in self, who think they will get on well enough because of worldly wealth or talent, can hope for no help from God.

The Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany.

O God, whose blessed Son was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil, and make us the sons of God, and heirs of eternal life; Grant us, we beseech thee, that having this hope, we may purify ourselves, even as he is pure; that when he shall appear again with power and great glory, we may be made like unto him in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where with thee, O Father, and thee, O Holy Ghost, he liveth and reigneth, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

I. The purpose of Christ's manifestation was to “destroy the works of the devil,” and so to make us sons of God, and fellow-heirs of His glory. But this work, while completed so far as His part goes, is not accomplished in us until we by our response, have laid hold of His salvation. “He created us without our

wills, He does not save us without our wills." In the greater work of salvation He honours us by making us co-workers with Him.

II. We pass on to ask for grace to do our part, which is that, having this hope (*i.e.*, that He will thus make us heirs with Him), we purify ourselves according to the model of His own purity. Only the pure in heart shall see God, and this vision is our ultimate hope. Every time we reject a temptation, or put away sin, we advance in the likeness of His purity.

III. All His work in us and our work for Him, look forward to His second Coming "with power and great glory." If when He comes there is found in us any real likeness to Him, then shall we be borne up with Him into His kingdom. Am I daily seeking to purify myself of something that conscience tells me is unlike Him?

Septuagesima.

O Lord, we beseech thee favourably to hear the prayers of thy people; that we, who are justly punished for our offences, may be mercifully delivered by thy goodness, for the glory of thy Name; through Jesus Christ our Saviour, Who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

I. To-day we turn our faces towards Calvary, and as we turn from the mysteries of

the Nativity to those of the Passion, the first thought is of our sins. We begin, as it were, with a cry from a penitential litany, "Favourably hear the prayers of Thy people," for should He turn from us, we should be desolate indeed.

II. But we are never to think of our sins without at the same moment thinking of the divine love and mercy. Each sin is paralleled with an offer of mercy on His part. If Lent is to teach us the sad story of man's sin and helplessness, it is also to teach us the glorious truth of God's mercy and power. So let us meditate not on our sins alone, but also on the love which is waiting to pardon and cleanse.

III. If the double lesson of human sin and divine love be learned, we shall then see how our deliverance is to be "for the glory of Thy Name." O wonderful mystery of divine condescension that God should condition His glory by our deliverance from sin! He would not have His image dishonoured by falling forever into the power of Satan. So I must work and pray; rooting out every evil trace, crushing every sin in its inception that I may both be delivered from sin, and also be able to honour my Father's name.

Sexagesima.

O Lord God, Who seest that we put not our trust in anything that we do; Mercifully grant that by thy power we may be defended against all adversity; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. We call God to witness to a fact that must be a primary one in every Christian life: "Who seest that we put not our trust in anything that we do." Is this what God really sees in my daily walk? Or is the saying of these words a mockery of Him? But let us not fear to say this prayer as though it were condemning ourselves. God does not expect perfection in this life. If we earnestly desire to trust Him only, He will fulfil it for us in the end.

II. So trusting in Him only, we ask "that we may be defended against all adversity." There is only one real adversity—sin. All else that men call evil can bring nothing but good if met in a Christian spirit. Sin alone can injure us. Am I realizing that the little daily falls are the infusion of a hellish virus, which in the end will slay my soul?

III. God's power to defend us against the adversity of sin does not operate externally to us, but in and through our own human faculties. We must bring our wills into conformity with His. Then the divine will, work-

ing by means of our wills as instruments, will oppose itself to sin, and crush in our lives all that would vex or injure.

Quinquagesima.

O Lord, who hast taught us that all our doings without charity are nothing worth; Send thy Holy Ghost, and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before thee. Grant this for thine only Son Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

I. On the Sunday before Lent we are taught to pray for love. We may be sorry for our sins, but without love it will be the sorrow of the world that worketh death. Love can only come through the Holy Ghost, and He employs the Sacraments as the means of shedding abroad His love in our hearts. The first great gift of love came in Baptism. It is renewed and increased with every Sacrament, with every prayer. Am I regular at the Sacraments, careful and prayerful in my preparation? If so, divine love is flowing in a steady stream into my soul.

II. How can I tell if this "most excellent gift" is really mine? St. Paul in the Epistle for to-day shows us how to examine ourselves. Am I patient and kind to others? Am I envious? Do I think much of myself? Do I seek my own, always demanding my rights?

Am I easily provoked? Am I quick to think evil of others? Glad to hear of others' faults? The answers to these questions will show the strength of love within.

III. But we all have to accuse ourselves of these failings. Is this a sign that there is no love present? Not at all. If I am honestly seeking to overcome these faults, love is present, and though now it be weak yet the struggle will strengthen it, and in the end, love will conquer. Seek to think, to speak, to do, the loving thing toward God and man, and all else that is pleasing to Him will follow, for "love is the fulfilling of the law."

Ash Wednesday.

Almighty and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all those who are penitent; Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we worthily lamenting our sins, and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. On the first day of Lent, the Church's first word of prayer teaches us of divine love—"Who hatest nothing that Thou hast made." The expression is a confession of guilt, for why should it refer to God's mercy at all, if it were not that our consciences by sin are accused? So in the same breath we confess our

sins, and protest our faith in that love that "forgives the sins of all those who are penitent." This attitude will win for us pardon and life, if we persevere in it to the end.

II. Then we offer our first Lenten petition: "Create and make in us new and contrite hearts." This has in it true humility. We are powerless even to sorrow for our sins unless He of His favour gives us a new heart. And what a marvel it is! "Create," we ask, for it is a new creation of His omnipotence. There is nothing in me out of which can be formed a contrite heart. He makes it out of nothing, His omnipotence obeying the behest of His love.

III. So with such a heart we can do our part toward undoing the evil of our past by "worthily lamenting our sin, and acknowledging our wretchedness." So the mutual action of God and man is complete: He having bestowed on us the contrite heart which He will not despise; we having acknowledged and lamented our sin; the result will be sure and happy, and we will obtain "perfect remission and forgiveness."

The First Sunday in Lent.

O Lord, who for our sake didst fast forty days and forty nights; Give us grace to use such abstinence, that, our flesh being subdued to the Spirit, we may ever obey thy godly motions in righteousness, and true holiness, to thy honour and glory, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God world without end. Amen.

I. One of the great results of the Incarnation is that now God never asks us to do anything for Him which did not find a place in the earthly life of His divine Son. So as we start on our Lenten fast we know that He felt the pangs of hunger, and the hardship of self-denial, so that all we do is done in union with Him. Let us remember this whenever the flesh cries out against the Spirit; let us hear His voice saying:

“Well I know thy trouble,
O my servant true;
Thou art very weary,
I was weary too.”

II. We pray that we may use such a degree of abstinence that our flesh may be subdued to the Spirit—that is to the Holy Spirit. Two great powers are contending within us: self-will and the Holy Spirit. Give Self the rein, and it will soon run away with us. Give place to the Holy Ghost, and Self will be disciplined so that we will be able to use it for God’s glory instead of being

enslaved by it. Which do I act upon more frequently, my own will, or God's will?

III. But we do not keep Lent merely for the sake of denying self. This is not an object in itself. The final object is that we "may ever obey Thy godly motions," that is, by preventing selfishness having its way, we may be so under the rule of the Spirit that with the least motion of His will, we shall spring up to respond with an obedience that is prompt, easy, and sweet.

The Second Sunday in Lent.

Almighty God, who seest that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves; Keep us both outwardly in our bodies, and inwardly in our souls; that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. The address to God here suggests the truth that while we have "no power of ourselves to help ourselves," we have *power from God to help ourselves*. Salvation is impossible without God and His grace, but it is equally impossible without our coöperation with that grace. When God died on the Cross He secured our salvation for us once for all, but we by our own acts must lay hold of that salvation. He does not make us His sons regardless of our wills, but "as many as re-

ceived Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God.”

II. The petition of the Collect asks definitely and separately for blessings for body and soul. One is as important as the other. We speak often of “saving our souls.” We should think just as carefully of the body. One cannot be saved without the other, and it is more important to guard the body because it is the chief channel of sin. Most sin enters through seeing, through hearing, through speaking. It is indeed difficult for us to imagine how we could sin without the body. On the other hand, our salvation came through the Sacrifice of the Human Body which God the Son took, and we are told that the salvation of the world will not be culminated until “the redemption of our body” (Rom. viii. 23). Let me not despise or neglect my body. It is heir of eternal life equally with my soul.

III. The last petition is a significant one: that we may be defended “from all evil thoughts which may assault and *hurt* the soul.” We are reminded that not all evil thoughts *hurt* the soul. They may assault us desperately and persistently, but if we fight against them, and refuse our consent to them, they help rather than hurt, for such battles are the spiritual exercises by which God’s soldiers are trained.

The Third Sunday in Lent.

We beseech thee, Almighty God, look upon the hearty desires of thy humble servants, and stretch forth the right hand of thy Majesty, to be our defence against all our enemies; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. We are here pleading with God, not on the ground of what we have done, but on that of our "hearty desires." The earnest desire of a loving heart is what God regards, even though we be unable through our weakness to fulfil that desire. If we have honestly tried and our failure is through no fault of ours, God credits us with what we have sought to do. So St. Augustine says, "The desire of perfection is perfection"; that is, if I long for Him and His service with a *sincere* and *persevering* longing, in the end God will make me perfect.

II. This thought is a great comfort, and so wonderful is it that it scarcely seems credible. Yet it must be true. Our Lord commands, "Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." He is never unreasonable, and this would be so if it were not that all He requires of me is to do what I can, and to leave the rest with Him.

III. So trusting to this, we ask Him to "stretch forth the right hand of His Majesty to be our defence." He will protect and nourish us with a Father's loving care; He will

accept our blundering efforts; He will unite the little we can do with the perfect work of His Son our Lord, thus making it perfect, for that which is made one with perfection becomes itself perfection; and that perfect work will be credited to us.

The Fourth Sunday in Lent.

Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that we, who for our evil deeds do worthily deserve to be punished, by the comfort of thy grace may mercifully be relieved; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

I. As the solemn progress of Lent advances, the soul, drawing nearer to Calvary with her Lord, is overwhelmed with a deeper sense of unworthiness. This Collect is a cry from the depths. In one sentence it is a confession of sin and an acknowledgment of the justice of God's judgments. If our realization of this is deep, what must be His realization who has been so deeply dishonoured by our evil deeds! And how rich is that mercy which forgetting its own dishonour, thinks only of our misery and longs only to help us.

II. Thus confessing our sins and unworthiness, we ask that "by the comfort of Thy grace we may mercifully be relieved." We must take the word *comfort* not in its popular sense, but in its original meaning,

to *strengthen*. The true lover of Christ does not ask merely to be soothed. He longs to have the strength that will enable him to revenge himself upon Satan. He asks not so much the soothing grace as the grace that will nerve him to face the adversary, and by trampling him down, make some reparation to our Lord for the dishonour past defeats caused Him.

III. By such comfort we pray that we "may mercifully be relieved," for the true relief is not from the burden of the battle, but from the burden of sin. The soldier who in a moment of weakness has dishonoured his flag, is not relieved by being granted a pardon. To a generous heart that would but add to the crushing sense of unworthiness. He demands an opportunity to show his love for his flag by fighting for it again. Let the soldiers of Christ not repine if the goodness of God grants them a like relief.

The Fifth Sunday in Lent.

We beseech thee, Almighty God, mercifully to look upon thy people; that by thy great goodness they may be governed and preserved evermore, both in body and soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. "Mercifully look upon Thy people." There are no richer promises in Holy Scripture than those given to faithful souls who by

their obedience have become worthy to be called God's people. Their honour He guards as His own. And yet it was to "His own" that He came, "and His own received Him not." Am I better than they? Am I living worthy of the honour of being one of His people?

II. "Look upon thy people." If He but look, that will suffice. When St. Peter denied Him, the Lord "turned and looked on Peter," "and he went out and wept bitterly." O that He might look on us with His loving gaze when we sin; then will our hearts be broken and contrite; then will He not despise our penitence.

III. So by the power of a look we are "governed and preserved evermore." If we can but realize that His eye is ever on us in love, and that He grieves when we sin, we shall by that thought be restrained from evil and preserved for His kingdom. He has said, "I will guide thee with Mine eye." If we give ourselves to this loving guidance, then too will come to pass that further promise which He gives when He says, "and after that receive thee with glory."

The Sunday Next Before Easter.

Almighty and everlasting God, who, of thy tender love towards mankind, hast sent thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, to take upon him our flesh, and to suffer death upon the cross, that all mankind should follow the example of his great humility; Mercifully grant, that we may both follow the example of his patience, and also be made partakers of his resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. The thought of the divine love deepens as we approach the Passion. We remind ourselves that it was His "tender love towards mankind" that wrought the great work of the Incarnation and Redemption; it was God's love to sinners that caused Him to send His Son to die on the Cross. "God so loved the world,"—the world lying in wickedness,— "that He gave His only begotten Son to the end that all that believe in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

II. Dwelling upon His tender love and all it has wrought that we might follow the example of His great humility, let us ask ourselves at the beginning of Holy Week, am I really striving to follow Him, and if not, do I realize then that so far as I am concerned all the tremendous work of Good Friday, was a vain and futile thing? Is it nothing to us that we should be recorded in the records of heaven, and,—dread thought,—in the records

of hell, as despising Jesus Christ, His Love and His work?

III. What is the example He offers? "When He was reviled, He reviled not again"; I, too, must be patient, as He was patient, with my daily crosses and annoyances. But in His love, He does not ask me only to follow His patience, He would also make me partaker of His Resurrection. This is the great end. Am I by my patience becoming ever more worthy to rise with Him?

Monday Before Easter.

Almighty and everlasting God, who of thy tender love towards mankind, hast sent thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, to take upon him our flesh, and to suffer death upon the cross, that all mankind should follow the example of his great humility; Mercifully grant, that we may both follow the example of his patience, and also be made partakers of his resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. Let us consider the love of the Passion, —"Thy tender love towards mankind." The love of God is not a stern love. A father may love his children very really and yet there may be no tenderness toward them. Not so with our Father. Hear His voice, full of all pleading gentleness: "Son, give Me thine heart"; "I have loved thee with an everlasting love"; and of my soul He says: "I will allure her and

bring her into the wilderness, and will speak comfortably unto her.”

II. There are those who think of the Father as stern and relentless, and of the Son as loving and tender, staying the Father's wrathful hand from chastising us. But they do not know our God. Our Lord did nothing without His Father. There was no pang of love in His all-loving Heart that did not thrill also in the Father's bosom.

III. Meditate on the long-suffering love God has for us. “He loved me and gave Himself for me,” and yet I daily forget and violate His love. Yet it never tires. His mercies “are new every morning” and “His compassions fail not” (Lam. iii. 22, 23). When I think of His generous love upon the cross, and the unwearied tenderness with which He follows me, and never gives me up, it would seem that very shame would drive me to His feet in heart-broken penitence.

Tuesday Before Easter.

Almighty and everlasting God, who, of thy tender love towards mankind, hast sent thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, to take upon him our flesh, and to suffer death upon the cross, that all mankind should follow the example of his great humility; Mercifully grant, that we may both follow the example of his patience, and also be

made partakers of his resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

I. The Passion is to us “the example of His great humility.” The chief lesson He has to teach is humility. “Learn of Me,” He says, “for I am meek and lowly in heart.” Have I learned this of Him? Am I patient under disappointment or rebuke? Or do anger and pride flame within my heart, and burst forth in bitter words, or fill my soul with thoughts of hate?

II. It would be impossible to imagine our Lord hanging on the cross, replying in bitter revilings to the taunts of those who passed by. We shrink with horror from such a picture; to let it rest for a minute in our minds, would, we feel, be blasphemy. But are we who are members of His Body, flesh of His flesh, and bone of His bones, who have “the mind of Christ” who dwells in us and we in Him—are we humble as He was on the Cross?

III. The only way to become humble is to use His grace so that we can by our wills force ourselves to be patient under humiliations. It will be hard but no harder than it was for Him. The world hates the virtue of meekness, but without it we cannot become like our Lord.

Wednesday Before Easter.

Almighty and everlasting God, who, of thy tender love towards mankind, hast sent thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, to take upon him our flesh, and to suffer death upon the cross, that all mankind should follow the example of his great humility; Mercifully grant that we may both follow the example of his patience, and also be made partakers of his resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. Not only did our Lord show forth infinite love and humility on the Cross, but He also gave us, "the example of His patience." No virtue can avail us in the long run unless patience be combined with it. The persevering soul must be the patient soul, full of the charity which "endureth all things." The zeal of a resentful, impatient spirit quickly burns out, and leaves it in the darkness of sin.

II. Our Lord's patience with His enemies was based on His expectation of their reformation. How gloriously was His long-suffering with them rewarded! Before half-a-year had passed, "a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith" (Acts vi. 7), the very men who had sought His life, giving in their allegiance to the Church. My influence for good in the world is small. Would it not be greater if I were gentler and more patient with those I seek to lead?

III. Consider how patience, in its various

aspects, is ranked in Holy Scripture. It is the virtue that is declared to have a "perfect work" (James i. 4); St. John mentions it especially as a bond of brotherhood in Christ (Rev. i. 9); in the Revelation, three out of the seven Churches of Asia are commended for their patience; our Lord spoke of it as the virtue necessary to bringing forth fruit that will remain (St. Luke viii. 15); and repeatedly it is named by the Holy Spirit as an essential characteristic of our Saviour (2 Thess. iii. 5; Rev. 1, 9; Rev. 3, 10). Surely such a virtue is worthy of strenuous cultivation.

Thursday Before Easter.

Almighty and everlasting God, who, of thy tender love towards mankind, hast sent thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, to take upon him our flesh, and to suffer death upon the cross, that all mankind should follow the example of his great humility; Mercifully grant that we may both follow the example of his patience, and also be made partakers of his resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. Through the gathering shadows of the Passion there shines a ray of the glory that shall be revealed. We have thought of suffering love, of humility under insult, of patience under wrong. We are to follow Christ in all these, that we might be made partakers of His Resurrection, and the Holy Spirit declares that "our light affliction, which is but for a

moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." We suffer little, we gain all. Surely the reward is worth the price.

II. On this day the divine love instituted the Blessed Eucharist, in which we receive the risen, ascended and glorified Body of our Lord. Thus even before the time, we are made partakers, in the Holy Communion, of His Resurrection. His love could not wait; He must give Himself to us now to encourage us with this foretaste of the glory of the Vision and banquet of heaven.

III. All this has He done, because He wants my love. Am I giving it to Him? Are my daily words and acts influenced by the love I have for Him? To-morrow we shall stand beside the Cross; let us go to Calvary crying in our hearts, "Jesus, I love Thee, and I want to love Thee more!"

Good Friday.

Almighty God, we beseech thee graciously to behold this thy family, for which our Lord Jesus Christ was contented to be betrayed, and given up into the hands of wicked men, and to suffer death upon the cross, who now liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost ever, one God, world without end. Amen.

Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified; Receive our supplications and pray-

ers, which we offer before thee for all estates of men in thy Holy Church, that every member of the same, in his vocation and ministry, may truly and godly serve thee; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

O Merciful God, who hast made all men, and hatest nothing that thou hast made, nor desirest the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live; Have mercy upon all Jews, Turks, Infidels and Heretics; and take from them all ignorance, hardness of heart, and contempt of thy Word; and so fetch them home, blessed Lord, to thy flock, that they may be saved among the remnant of the true Israelites, and be made one fold under one shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.

I. The Church gives us these collects for Good Friday, representing three aspects of the all-embracing love of Jesus on the Cross. The first collect repeats the petition of two Sundays previous, that God would look upon His people. But here in the midst of the Passion the depth of the divine tenderness is more apparent. We no more ask that He look upon His *people*, but upon His *family*; and so great was the divine love for His family that for it the eternal Son was contented to be betrayed and to suffer death on the Cross. Note the word *contented*. Its meaning is, being *filled full*. Life was never so real and full and rounded out to our Lord as when He was giving up Himself for love of us. Is life fullest

and richest to me when I am engaged in some unselfish work, sacrificing my own will for love of God?

II. In the next collect the divine love is seen to extend still further out not only for His *family*, those who are close to Him in actual faith and love, but for all estates of men in His Holy Church; for, whether they be faithful or not, all are dear to the Heart of the Crucified. The thought here presented to us as we stand by the Cross, startles us. We pray that "every member of the same *in his vocation and ministry* may truly and godly serve Thee." We think of vocation applying only to special states of life, but every member of Christ has his divinely appointed vocation. Am I carrying out my vocation day by day in a faithful service to Him?

III. But our Lord died not only for His own family, not only for every member of His Church, faithful or unfaithful, but even for those who neither know Him nor wish to know Him. So with somewhat of His own love, we pray for "mercy upon all Jews, Turks, Infidels and Heretics." To fetch is not to call or to send for, but it is personally to go after and bring back. Thus do we pray our Lord to go after those who know Him not, and like the Good Shepherd fetch them home to His Father's house.

Easter Even.

Grant, O Lord, that as we are baptized into the death of thy blessed Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, so by continual mortifying our corrupt affections, we may be buried with him; and that through the grave, and gate of death, we may pass to our joyful resurrection; for his merits, who died and was buried, and rose again for us, thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

I. Having looked upon His death yesterday, to-day we recall that we are baptized into His death. We have really died with Christ a death unto sin. This was not our own act. We were passive under the mighty grace of Baptism as the power of regeneration flowed into us and made us new men by uniting us with His Body. Am I making this a reality? Am I dying daily to some sin? Baptism will be only for my greater condemnation if I am not laying hold of its real benefits.

II. Mine must not only be a dying with Christ once for all in Baptism, but the continual mortification (i. e., putting to death), of my corrupt affections. When a body is buried it means that there is absolutely no further hope that there is life in it. When we are buried with Christ it should mean that Satan can have no further hope of ever reviving the life of sin in us. Am I by my failing to mortify my corrupt affections holding out the hope to Satan that he might yet be able to revive his power in me?

III. A true and continual death unto sin is the gate of eternal life. If the solemnities of yesterday and to-day are the pledge of my daily death unto sin, those of to-morrow will be the pledge of my joyful resurrection. There can be no real resurrection unless there has been a real death; no rising to immortal life unless there is a real slaying of sin wherever it shows itself.

Easter Day.

Almighty God, who through thine only begotten Son Jesus Christ hast overcome death, and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life; We humbly beseech thee that, as by thy special grace preventing us thou dost put into our minds good desires, so by thy continual help we may bring the same to good effect; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost ever, one God, world without end. Amen.

I. We to-day appeal to God in virtue of the greatest work He has ever done for man, namely the overcoming of death. This morning He broke the bonds of death and rose to His joyful Resurrection. But He did not will to be alone in this joy. He desires to have His loved ones with Him: "Where I am, there also shall my servant be." So by death He has overcome death, and opened unto *us* the gate of everlasting life. Let me resolve this day to do some definite act of kindness to another to

show God that I am thankful for His goodness to me.

II. Christ by His death and Resurrection, has finished His part of the work of redemption. The rest depends on how earnestly we lay hold of His salvation. Am I cooperating with Him, "striving to enter in at the strait gate," earnest, deeply serious, day by day about my religion? Or am I drifting aimlessly along, hoping that somehow in the end it will come out right?

III. I cannot keep this great feast better than by firmly resolving to make each day of my life an Easter, a time of death unto sin, and rising again to righteousness. By the daily conquest of some temptation, by daily acts of love, I can go on from strength to strength, and this will mean for me the resurrection of the just, a corresponding progress from glory to glory in the Kingdom of God.

Monday in Easter Week.*

O God, who for our redemption didst give thine only-begotten Son to the death of the Cross, and by his glorious resurrection hast delivered us from the power of our enemy; Grant us so to die daily from sin, that we may evermore live with him in the joy of his resurrection; through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

* This day having no special collect, the second for Easter-day is here used.

I. We are here reminded that there could have been no Easter without Good Friday, no Resurrection without the Cross and Passion. We are called to follow our Lord in the same path. If we would be glorified with Him, we must suffer with Him. Let me resolve to think of the first little annoyance which comes to-day as a part of the preparation God has ordained that I might be made ready to share His glory.

II. By His Resurrection He has "delivered us from the power of our enemy." And what a great power is that! Of myself I should have no means of keeping myself out of Satan's snare, but it is not of myself that I am fighting. By His glorious Resurrection Christ has conquered Satan, and if I do His will, on the battle-field of my heart He will crush Satan again as He did on the Cross.

III. But to lay hold of this deliverance, I must "die daily from sin." Because Lent is over does not mean that I can rest from effort. The self-denial and devotion of Lent are *more than useless* if they do not lift me to a permanently higher plane of Christian living. The Lent just ended may be my last. Let me this day in the power of my Lenten grace strike a blow at some besetting sin, that I might combine the strength that comes from victory with the joy of Easter-tide.

Tuesday in Easter Week.

Almighty God, who through thine only-begotten Son Jesus Christ hast overcome death, and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life; We humbly beseech thee that, as by thy special grace preventing us thou dost put into our minds good desires, so by thy continual help we may bring the same to good effect; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost ever, one God, world without end. Amen.

I. Now that Christ has finished His work, and wrought so great a salvation, it remains for us to lay hold of it; but nevertheless without Him we can do nothing. We cannot turn to God, save "by His special grace preventing us," and by His "putting into our minds good desires." How humble must the thought of my own worthlessness make me! How grateful the thought of the tender goodness of our God!

II. His grace does indeed prevent us, it goes before, it is on every side. A thousand daily opportunities are offered whereby we may become the more united to Him. Everything can be used as a means of gaining spiritual strength;—the smallest routine duty, the little temptations that beset me, every occasion for a kindly smile or word. God has prepared them all in His love to give me opportunities for added graces. Is my heart so cold as not to respond magnanimously to such a love?

III. But this does not complete the working of His love. Not only is His grace on every hand, not only does He put into our minds desires for what is good and holy, but He gives us *His continual help* that we might *bring them to good effect*. The last and best effect will be the resurrection of the just; that will be the crowning reward for a faithful life of warfare against Satan. To what sin shall I die this day in loving memorial of His glorious Resurrection?

The First Sunday after Easter.

Almighty Father, who hast given thine only Son to die for our sins, and to rise again for our justification; Grant us so to put away the leaven of malice and wickedness, that we may always serve thee in pureness of living and truth; through the merits of the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. The enthusiasm of the Easter gladness is now beginning to settle down into a permanent quality in our hearts. The first glow of festival joy never endures, but if the glow has arisen from real kindling of a new fire within, then when the first flush is past, it will leave a depth of burning love that many waters will not quench. We look back now to the Resurrection and reflect that He "rose again for our justification." But I must lay hold on this

justification. I must work out my own salvation with fear and trembling.

II. His service is to be a practical "putting away the leaven of malice and wickedness," the definite breaking off of sinful habits. Sin is never inactive within me. At every moment it is either on the increase or decrease. If not constantly checked, like leaven it will spread and fill my whole life with corruption and poison.

III. The practical "putting away the leaven of malice and wickedness" will be the bringing in of "pureness of living and truth." Note the opposition between *leaven* and *pureness*. My soul is made for God, and if I sweep out the corrupt leaven His pureness will immediately and naturally flow in, and possess all my being. If this Easter-tide is to mean anything to me, it must mark a permanent increase in this pureness of living and truth, bringing something more than a passing and evanescent grace gained only to be frittered away in the coming conflicts of the succeeding weeks.

The Second Sunday after Easter.

Almighty God, who hast given thine only Son to be unto us both a sacrifice for sin, and also an ensample of godly life; Give us grace that we may always most thankfully receive that his inestimable benefit, and also daily endeavour our-

selves to follow the blessed steps of his most holy life; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. God sent His Son not only to be “a Sacrifice for sin,” i. e., to take away our past sins, but also to be “an ensample of godly life.” Small gain would it be to us to have our sins taken away if we were not taught how henceforth to avoid sin. He has set me the example. Is there a conscious effort to model my daily life on His?

II. The first petition is for a thankful heart. Without His Sacrifice we would have gone through life either in a blind and giddy whirl of earthly follies, or walking along a path of black despair. But now life is full of light and hope. Are we realizing more and more that this salvation is indeed an “inestimable benefit?” If we are, then day by day life will be full of thankful love.

III. The thankful life is the persevering life. We are to show our gratitude by doing His will, by daily endeavoring to follow His blessed steps. There must be a genuine, honest endeavor. God does not demand much of us, but He does demand that we make a real effort *daily* to follow the “ensample of godly life” His Son has left us.

The Third Sunday after Easter.

Almighty God, who showest to them that are in error the light of thy truth, to the intent that they may return into the way of righteousness; Grant unto all those who are admitted into the fellowship of Christ's religion, that they may avoid those things that are contrary to their profession, and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same; through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

I. We have all fallen into error, but it is a part of Faith to hold that God gives to everyone enough light to bring him back into "the way of righteousness." Am I using the light that comes to me with every Sacrament, every prayer, every reading of my Bible, every sermon I hear, so that each day I am walking more really in the way of righteousness? Wherein am I practically better because of my last Communion?

II. The two petitions in the collect cover all Christian obligations. First, we must avoid everything contrary to our profession as Christians; not only sin, but every occasion that may lead to sin. Every companion I have, every book I read, every amusement in which I indulge, which may lead me to sin, is contrary to my Christian profession, and must be avoided.

III. We also ask for grace to follow all such things as are agreeable to our profession. This means a systematic, positive work of

bringing good and holy thoughts, words and deeds into our daily life. We are not only to "eschew evil," but to "seek good," to seek it earnestly, not merely waiting for chance opportunities for loving words and actions to present themselves.

The Fourth Sunday after Easter.

O Almighty God, who alone canst order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men; Grant unto thy people, that they may love the thing which thou commandest, and desire that which thou dost promise; that so, among the sundry and manifold changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed, where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. God alone can bring order and tranquility of the chaos of our unruly wills and affections. But first, it is necessary for me to give up my will to Him. He will not force my will even in response to prayer. If I, by the power of His grace, bring my will into obedience to Him in the little things of daily life, then will my affections be set on Him, and more and more shall I be able to obey Him because of my love for Him.

II. The first petition is that we "may love the thing which Thou commandest." God's commands are always for our good, and we naturally love those things which will benefit us. If we understand, then, that His love

lays His commands on us only that we might be helped, we should soon learn to love His law as being that which alone can work our good in time and eternity.

III. The desire we are to have for the things He promises must be a deep, passionate desire, even "as the hart desireth the water-brooks." Real desire brings real effort, and real effort after that which God has prepared for us can never fail of success; and such success will be nothing less than the attainment of those true joys which can be found only in His Kingdom. Do I really desire the good things He promises? Am I really striving diligently after them?

The Fifth Sunday after Easter.

O Lord, from whom all good things do come; Grant to us thy humble servants, that by thy holy inspiration we may think those things that are good, and by thy merciful guiding may perform the same; through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

I. Let us first ask, by what means do all good things come from God? They come "by His holy inspiration." This speaks to us of the Holy Ghost, whose work is to inspire our hearts with the desire for these good things, as we thought last Sunday. Am I listening for His voice? When there is an impulse in my heart towards what is good, do I *always* follow

it, remembering that such an impulse is the voice of the Holy Ghost, His holy inspiration?

II. The first effect of His holy inspiration is to cause us to "think those things that are good." We are to bring every thought into captivity to Him, seeking to let no suggestion rest in our minds which we could not imagine our Lord entertaining. Guard well thy thoughts. Most of our sins are sins of thought.

III. Thought expresses itself in words and actions. If I think only what is good and pure, my words and deeds will be good and pure in God's sight. His merciful guiding will then lead me to the performance of my intentions, and resolutions, and my life will daily grow more like the perfect life of my Saviour.

Ascension Day.

Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that like as we do believe thy only-begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ to have ascended into the heavens; so we may also in heart and mind thither ascend, and with him continually dwell, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

I. This collect bases everything on Faith. "Like as we do believe," are our words. We believe He is in the heaven of heavens, the first of our race to come to that blessed place;

that He is interceding for us; that He is preparing a place for us; that He sends thence to us the gifts of the Holy Ghost. With what joy of heart should we realize these truths at this feast! With our Ascended Lord doing these great things for us, how sure and glorious a salvation is ours!

II. Acting on our faith in His heavenly work for us, we must in heart and mind thither ascend. "Hearts in heaven," must be the Christian motto. I shall be able to live by such a motto if my treasure is there, "for where my treasure is, there will my heart be also." Is He the chief treasure I long for, He who has said, "I am thy exceeding great reward?"

III. I must not only ascend with my Lord, but I must "with Him *continually* dwell," that is, without interruption. Anything else but heaven unfits me for the heavenly companionship. Sin takes my heart from heaven, and I am not to think I can easily return when I have deliberately wandered away. So I must strenuously resist even the slightest approach to sin.

Sunday after Ascension Day.

O God the King of glory, who hast exalted thine only Son Jesus Christ with great triumph unto thy kingdom in heaven; We beseech thee leave us not comfortless; but send to us thine

Holy Ghost to comfort us, and exalt us unto the same place whither our Saviour Christ is gone before, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

I. The exaltation of our Lord to heaven was the ground of the Apostles' hope during these days between the Ascension and Pentecost. They had seen their Lord go into heaven with great triumph. They knew His promise could not fail. He had ascended on high to receive gifts for men. So they waited and longed and prayed. We are waiting on God. His gifts are promised us. Are we longing and praying? Are our hearts athirst for God? Only the hearts that hunger and thirst can be filled.

II. "Leave us not comfortless." It is the cry of a longing heart, but a cry that has no tone of doubt. He said, "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you;" so we hope with a supernatural hope. Human hope is full of doubt. We say, "Oh, I hope so;" and the very tone of voice implies doubt. But the true Christian knows not doubt, for his hope is the steadfast expectation of those things which are sure to come to pass. The great question for me is, Am I a *true* Christian?

III. Our final hope is to be exalted with Him. Then there will be no more possibility of falling from Him; no more sin; no more

fear; no more anxiety; but perfect rest and peace in the bosom of our God. How glorious is the Christian hope! Is it not worth waiting for, is it not worth suffering for?

Whitsunday.

O God, who as at this time didst teach the hearts of thy faithful people, by sending to them the light of thy Holy Spirit; Grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort; through the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour, who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the same Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.

I. On Pentecost, the Church's birthday, God the Holy Ghost taught the hearts of His faithful people. We are apt to think of the work of teaching as being directed to the mind, but it is not so in spiritual things. Unless our hearts are first instructed in love and humility, our minds can never become wise unto salvation, whatever earthly wisdom we may acquire. Hear the words of our Lord, "*Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.*"

II. Think of the kind of people whose hearts God taught. They were *faithful*, that is, trustworthy, people. God trusted them to teach rightly the truth by word and example. How loyal they were to the trust! Men heard them, and cried, "What shall we do?" Men

saw their behaviour, and “took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus” (Acts iv. 13). Is it so with me? My name of Christian is either an honour or a dishonour to God, according as I am true or false to Him in my daily life.

III. They were faithful also in that they steadfastly believed what our Lord had promised. They waited, and though the days went by, their fervour was not cooled, because He who had given them the promise of the Father could not lie. Satan often tempts me to be discouraged, and to yield to this temptation is equal to declaring that I believe not the word God has spoken, saying, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”

Monday in Whitsun-Week.

O God, who as at this time didst teach the hearts of thy faithful people, by sending to them the light of thy Holy Spirit; Grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort; through the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour, who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the same Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.

I. Let us consider some of the marks of the faithfulness of the little company in the upper room on Pentecost. (1) They all continued in prayer. They did not weary day nor night through these ten days in supplicat-

ing their heavenly Father. How marvellously did He answer them "when the day of Pentecost was fully come." We weary of prayer in a short half-hour, and then wonder that prayer seems unanswered. We set times and seasons for God, forgetting that He will surely answer, but not till His own time be fully come.

II. They showed their faithfulness (2) by a loving unity of spirit. Twice we are told that they continued in prayer *with one accord*. Love smooths out all differences. We are always very patient with the shortcomings of those we love. If I find myself critical and impatient with my brethren, it means a want of love, and when love is wanting the soul can have no Pentecost, for there the blessed comfort of the Spirit cannot come.

III. Thirdly, their faithfulness is shown by the patience of their waiting. They persevered and were ready to persevere many days more. The Apostle promises a rich harvest of blessing to those who "faint not." Do I faint in my waiting on God, and for the comfort He has promised, or do I tarry the Lord's leisure, sure that His love can never fail me?

Tuesday in Whitsun-Week.

O God, who as at this time didst teach the hearts of thy faithful people, by sending to them the light of thy Holy Spirit; Grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort; through the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour, who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the same Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.

I. We received the Holy Ghost when we were baptized, but our further instruction depends on our response to His calls. Every slightest impulse of my heart toward what is good and holy in His call. Do I answer promptly, and do His bidding; or do I slothfully delay, or even deliberately refuse and quench the Spirit's voice?

II. The heart that will not hearken, cannot be taught. God teaches nothing but by the Holy Ghost. Let my motto be, "I will hearken what the Lord God will say concerning me." To hearken and do, is my only hope of becoming wise unto salvation, for, as in school, each little lesson must be learned as a preparation for the next.

III. We ask two definite things for ourselves: (1) A right judgment, and (2) as following upon that, the joy of His holy comfort. We may have, by nature, a poor judgment in earthly things, but if we listen constantly for

His voice we shall, in things spiritual, have more and more a judgment that will not err, because it will be directed by God Himself. He will tell us what to say and do, and what greater joy can there be than the consciousness that we are daily becoming less liable to make a wrong decision in the things that are eternally important.

Trinity Sunday.

Almighty and everlasting God, who hast given unto us thy servants grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of the Divine Majesty to worship the Unity; We beseech thee that thou wouldest keep us stedfast in this faith, and evermore defend us from all adversities, who livest and reignest, one God, world without end. Amen.

I. No human mind can fathom the mystery that there are three Persons in the one God, but by yielding up our hearts "as little children," as our Lord tells us, He will give us the grace and power to believe, and believing, to worship the Adorable Trinity in spirit and in truth. This belief and worship must be constantly practised if it is to be deepened. I must turn often to my heavenly Father; I must love and trust my Redeemer; I must talk familiarly with the Holy Ghost, whose work is to sanctify me more and more. Am I doing this daily?

II. Only one condition is necessary to God's keeping us steadfast in this faith. That is that we trust in Him in all things. When temptation comes, if we lose heart and think there is no use to try, we are failing to trust His strength. If in times of trouble we cry out against our lot, it means that we think God is not dealing with us as a loving Father should. These failures undermine our faith, and bring in the end spiritual coldness and death.

III. St. John says: "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." No adversity can overcome us, no temptation ensnare us if we know our faith and act on it daily. If I have a true and living faith in the power and love of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, then I know that in the end all must come right. The world may contend against me, but I know with an absolute and joyful certainty that "we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

The First Sunday after Trinity.

O God, the strength of all those who put their trust in thee; Mercifully accept our prayers; and because, through the weakness of our mortal nature, we can do no good thing without thee, grant us the help of thy grace, that in keeping thy commandments we may please thee, both in

*will and deed; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.*

I. In the beginning of this Collect we accept the condition God lays upon us: if we are to have His strength we must trust in Him; and His strength will be exerted in our behalf only in proportion as we trust in Him; as we say in the *Te Deum*: "Let Thy mercy be upon us, *as our trust is in Thee.*" So it depends on me how far divine omnipotence is to be put forth to help me in the day of adversity.

II. The chief need I have of divine aid, however, is in living a righteous life, for "we can do no good thing without Thee." We are thus reminded of two great facts which must never be forgotten: first, our inability to do good of ourselves; and, second, God's ability and willingness to help us. Of ourselves, we can do nothing; but "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

III. Lastly, we are reminded of the purpose we have in view: namely, that of pleasing Him, "both in will and deed," that is, both in our desires and in what we actually accomplish. But the two things, "will" and "deed," are mentioned distinctly because actual results are not what God demands of His children. We may not be able to develop our plans into deeds, but if we will to please Him, all will be well.

The Second Sunday after Trinity.

O Lord, who never failest to help and govern those whom thou dost bring up in thy stedfast fear and love; Keep us, we beseech thee, under the protection of thy good providence, and make us to have a perpetual fear and love of thy holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. The Collect is an echo of the divine promise, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." To whom is He speaking? To those who have allowed themselves to be taught in the school of "stedfast fear and love." Have I a holy fear of God? Not a cringing fear, but an instinctive shrinking horror at the thought of offending one who loves me so deeply? Holy fear does not mean being afraid of our loving God, but being afraid of doing anything that would wound or dishonour Him.

II. Holy fear and love are linked together. We fear to offend God because we love Him so much. To be afraid of Him as of one who might hurt us, is a great dishonour to Him, for while confessing Him we are then attributing to Him qualities which no loving father could possess. Do I always remember how tender my loving, heavenly Father's heart is towards me, His poor, erring child?

III. So, realizing what true fear and love for our Father are, and their necessity in our hearts, we ask Him to keep us in "a perpetual fear and love" of His Holy Name. This is a prayer for final perseverance.

The Third Sunday after Trinity.

O Lord, we beseech thee mercifully to hear us; and grant that we, to whom thou hast given an hearty desire to pray, may, by thy mighty aid, be defended and comforted in all dangers and adversities; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. We are never to forget that power to pray is a gift from God. "We know not what we should pray for as we ought." The disciples' petition, "Lord, teach us to pray," must be ever in our hearts. We repine at the languidness of our prayers and at our constant distraction. Is it not too often our own fault, because we do not ask for help in this most difficult of exercises?

II. If we have *a hearty desire to pray*, there will be a real effort to pray. We always try earnestly for those things which we heartily desire. If there is a want of hearty effort in our prayers, it means that there is a want of hearty desire to draw near to God. Rouse up by God's help, the true desire, and the effort will follow; and God never allows one to fail who really tries.

III. What is real prayer? It is intercourse with God, either speaking to Him or in the silence of our hearts, listening to His voice. Prayer is not to be a constant request to him to supply our too-often selfish desires. If we can say, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant

heareth," it will be an acceptable prayer that will bring its blessing.

The Fourth Sunday after Trinity.

O God, the protector of all that trust in thee, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy; Increase and multiply upon us thy mercy; that, thou being our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we finally lose not the things eternal. Grant this O heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake our Lord. Amen.

I. We address God to-day as "*the protector of all that trust in Thee.*" We are here taught how much depends on our attitude. Anxiety of heart over the common burdens and responsibilities of life means that I am not trusting these things in His hands in such a way as to be able to claim Him as my protector.

II. Strength is the first thing necessary if I would conquer sin. Holiness is the result in my own character of winning spiritual victories. His protection is the guarantee of my being strong and holy, and unless I trust Him I cannot have His protection. Thus am I taught the paramount importance of trust in God.

III. We ask Him to be our Ruler and Guide. To submit to the rule and guidance of another requires the humility which is glad to

give up one's own will. Thus humbly accepting whatever He sends, our life will be filled with the best and wisest things, and we shall be able to use everything temporal as such a means of further grace that we shall not lose the eternal blessings which are prepared for us.

The Fifth Sunday after Trinity.

Grant, O Lord, we beseech thee, that the course of this world may be so peaceably ordered by thy governance, that thy Church may joyfully serve thee in all godly quietness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. The Church on earth is ever militant, and must ever be in the battle, but the divine love condescends to human infirmity, and grants us periods of outward peace as a preparation for further conflict. So we pray that the Church may now have times of godly quietness. But if we would have the enemy and the avenger thus stilled, we must be faithful soldiers in the hour of battle.

II. A true peace can come only after the battle. We long for relief from the seige of temptation, but have we fought bravely and well? If not, how can we ask for peace? The soldier who has done nothing for his King, cannot appeal to Him for relief from the struggle. Such a prayer would be a shame to him.

III. Peace faithfully won, brings, as the

Collect implies, joy and godly quietness. The peace He gives is not an enervating relaxation from strife. It involves no cessation of service, but a continued and happy service, a foretaste of the joy they have who have entered upon the rest that remaineth for the people of God, but who nevertheless rest not day nor night from His perfect service.

The Sixth Sunday after Trinity.

O God, who hast prepared for those who love thee such good things as pass man's understanding; Pour into our hearts such love toward thee, that we, loving thee above all things, may obtain thy promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. The good things God has prepared for those who love Him, belong to this life as well as to the life to come. If we love Him, what joy do we have in the consciousness of His protecting love, what deep peace from the thought of leaning on the everlasting arms! And in the next life, these same blessings will be intensified a thousand-fold, and we shall rejoice then in the joy that can never be taken from us.

II. In the fall man lost the power of loving God, and it can now be restored only through God's gift. So we pray, "Pour Thy love into our hearts." The renewal of the power of loving is made in our Baptism, and

after that, we must increase the love within us by constantly exercising it. Thoughts and deeds of love to God and to our fellow-man are the exercises by which our love will be made stronger.

III. But there must be in our hearts no rival to God's love. We must love Him "above all things." This does not, however, mean that we should love none else but Him. We are to be in love and charity with all men, loving them in and for God. If we are thus living the loving life, we shall receive in the end His gracious promises which exceed all that we can desire. Loving words spoken and loving deeds performed will bring us little by little to the life of love.

The Seventh Sunday after Trinity.

Lord of all power and might, who art the author and giver of all good things; Graft in our hearts the love of thy Name, increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and of thy great mercy keep us in the same; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. To-day the Church hails our heavenly Father as "the author and giver of *all good things*." We have here suggested a test, to be constantly applied. All good things come from Him, and nothing can be good that has any other source. Let us question our hearts concerning the things we love best. Are they

from God? Can I think of carrying them with me into His heavenly Presence? If not, then they do not come from God, and are evil things, and are to be cast out of my life.

II. We ask God to “graft in our hearts the love of His Name,”—another form of last Sunday’s petition to pour His love into our hearts, another acknowledgment that without Him we cannot love Him. If His love is grafted in our hearts there will be no lack of increase of true religion. Daily will we increase more and more in His Spirit; more and more watchful and successful will we become in living the life He would live were He in our place. Am I thus watchful?

III. We do not ask that His life be merely superimposed upon ours, but that it may fill us all in all. We ask that we ourselves, our own nature, may be so nourished and permeated with His own goodness, that He may so dwell in us and we in Him, that we can truly say, “I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.”

The Eighth Sunday after Trinity.

O God, whose never failing providence ordereth all things both in heaven and earth; We humbly beseech thee to put away from us all hurtful things, and to give us those things which are profitable for us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. The “never-failing Providence” of God

—what strength lies in the thought! Though clouds and darkness be in my life, His care of me never fails. He cries to my soul in its distress: “I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine; when thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee” (Isaiah xliii. 1, 2).

II. Do I really believe these precious promises? Am I anxious and careful of many things, or do I remember that His Providence ordereth all things? Anxiety is the result of uncertainty, and God’s promises leave no room for uncertainty in the believer’s mind.

III. So, trusting in Him, we ask Him, (1) to put away from us all hurtful things, and (2) to give us those things which are profitable for us. So God’s work in the soul is two-fold, and our coöperation with His Spirit must also be two-fold. The apostle commands not only “Eschew evil” but “Do good.” Merely to keep from sin is not enough; I must also with loving purpose work the works of God.

The Ninth Sunday after Trinity.

Grant to us, Lord, we beseech thee, the spirit to think and do always such things as are right; that we, who cannot do anything that is good without thee, may by thee be enabled to live according to thy will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. Recall some good resolution of past years broken and forgotten. How ready we are in times of enthusiasm to think and plan such things as are right, but the pathway of life is strewn with the wrecks of our shattered plans. So we realize the need of the spirit not only *to think* such things as are right, but to perform them faithfully to the end.

II. This spirit is (1) that of distrust of self, and (2) of trust in God. We fail in our resolutions because we think to carry them out of ourselves. But distrust of self is useless unless there be a corresponding trust in God. Of myself I can do nothing, but trusting in Him, nothing will be beyond me.

III. So with Him strengthening us both to think and to do, "through God we shall do great acts." Let us be brave and generous in what we purpose for Him. The duty may seem hard, but His love and omnipotence inspired it, and "He that hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

Tenth Sunday after Trinity.

Let thy merciful ears, O Lord, be open to the prayers of thy humble servants; and that they may obtain their petitions make them to ask such things as shall please thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. If we are truly God's "humble ser-

vants," our prayers will surely be heard, for humility is the virtue which underlies all righteousness, and we are told that "the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous and His ears are open unto their prayers." Humility can be nurtured only by a patient endurance of the humiliations, great or small, that may come into our daily life.

II. The humble prayer is that which contains no thought of securing our own will, for self-will is the essence of pride. "Not my will but Thine be done," is the prayer-motto of the humble servant of God. The thought of our own ignorance should keep us humble. How often have we prayed for what we desired, and realized later how merciful God was in refusing our foolish request.

III. But though God may not give us what we humbly ask, the value of no faithful prayer is lost. The psalmist speaking of unanswered prayer, says, "My prayer shall turn into mine own bosom." The act of drawing near to God in an humble spirit, will always bring down great graces to us. So we may pray freely, if we only pray humbly, for in any case, a blessing will be ours.

The Eleventh Sunday after Trinity.

O God, who declarest thy almighty power chiefly in showing mercy and pity; Mercifully grant unto us such a measure of thy grace, that we, running the way of thy commandments, may obtain thy gracious promises, and be made partakers of thy heavenly treasure; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. Give man unlimited power, and immediately he begins to tyrannize, but God displays His almighty power "chiefly in showing mercy and pity." Consider his omnipotence in His dealing with us. How seldom has His power been shown in our lives in judgment and rebukes! How rich have been the goodness and mercy that have followed us all the days of our life!

II. The ambition of a generous soul is, not to stumble along in ever-failing weakness, but with strong, swift steps to run the way of God's commandments. He alone can free our feet for the race; so we ask for "such a measure of Thy grace" as will enable us to attain our ambition. His grace can enable me "to mount up with wings as eagles, to run and not be weary."

III. By such a course, we shall be made partakers of the heavenly kingdom. But the treasure which will be our eternal glory must be that which we have laid up for ourselves in heaven by our life of prayer and good works

on earth. Each loving thought, word, or deed, however small, is the laying up in heaven of a precious and eternal treasure.

The Twelfth Sunday after Trinity.

Almighty and everlasting God, who art always more ready to hear than we to pray, and art wont to give more than either we desire or deserve; pour down upon us the abundance of thy mercy; forgiving us those things whereof our conscience is afraid, and giving us those good things which we are not worthy to ask, but through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

I. Meditate on the divine eagerness to hear and answer our prayers. How slow we are to pray; how quickly wearied! How alert God is to hear the least cry from our hearts! Our desire is lukewarm, and yet so richly does He bless us! Because of our sins we deserve naught, and yet His goodness and mercy follow us all our days.

II. Of what is my conscience afraid? I have but one thing to fear—unrepented sin. A sin is unrepented of when I will not give it up. It may be a little thing seemingly, but it bears in it the seed of death. May our good God make me sore afraid at the thought of my habits of sin.

III. The love of God never deals with us according to our deserving. It is the crown

of His love to give us that which we are not worthy even to ask. A broken and contrite heart so wins the divine love that the richest gifts of heaven are not too good for it in God's eyes.

The Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity.

Almighty and merciful God, of whose only gift it cometh that thy faithful people do unto thee true and laudable service; grant, we beseech thee, that we may so faithfully serve thee in this life, that we fail not finally to attain thy heavenly promises; through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. God requires of every soul a service that at the Last Day can be pronounced "True and laudable." Many hearts grow faint as they reflect that the standard they must reach is not a worldly, but a divine one; that this service must be "true and laudable" according to God's estimate of what is right and praiseworthy. Thus does He teach us to realize our helplessness, that we might look to Him only for help.

II. In the face of God's great demand upon us—"be ye perfect"—we must turn to Him "of whose only gift it cometh that Thy faithful people do unto Thee true and laudable service." He will enable us to do all things for Him, and He alone can give this ability. Natural gifts of mind or heart, unless we use

them according to His will, will only be for our greater condemnation since they afford opportunities for His service which we shall be wasting.

III. The service necessary for attaining the "heavenly promises" is that of faithfulness. God trusts me daily to do my work, as being given to me by Him. Am I faithful to the trust? My business, my house-work, my study,—am I remembering that I am God's servant, and the way I do these must be reported to Him and He is to pass on them?

The Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity.

Almighty and everlasting God, give unto us the increase of faith, hope and charity; and, that we may obtain that which thou dost promise, make us to love that which thou dost command; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. The virtues we ask for to-day were given us in Baptism; and they are increased by every prayer or good work done for love of God. To be thus increased they must be exercised. To increase my Faith, I must not worry over difficulties. He is my kind, loving Father; I am His little child. Surely I can trust in Him when "underneath are the everlasting arms."

II. Supernatural hope is not a vague, fitful longing; it is the steadfast expectation of those things which will surely come to pass.

My hope is based on His *love*, His *promises*, His *power*. I know He loves me; He has promised me the good things of His house; and He has the power to fulfil His promises. Truly "I have a good hope because of His word."

III. Charity is the greatest of Christian virtues, which I should exercise towards God and man. The test of love is loyalty. I am always loyal to those I really love. Am I really loyal to God in thought, word, and action? And, for His sake, am I gentle and kind to others, watching for, or better still, making, opportunities to do good to them in at least one little thing each day?

The Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity.

Keep, we beseech thee, O Lord, thy Church with thy perpetual mercy; and, because the frailty of man without thee cannot but fall, keep us ever by thy help from all things hurtful, and lead us to all things profitable to our salvation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. Christ, in His Body the Church, trusts us to finish the work that He "began to do" while on earth. We cannot do His work save through His "perpetual mercy," and His mercy operates in relation to our sins, which are the chief "things hurtful" against which we pray. If I watch and pray, I can put away

sin, and so be able to do all that He asks me to do for Him.

II. "The frailty of man without Thee cannot but fall." How often have we started out with some new and good resolution; our determination was firm; we thought to do much; but we failed. We had said "I will do this," and we forgot to depend on God and to pray for His help. No good thing can be done save in and through Him.

III. We ask Him also "to lead us to all things profitable to our salvation." What things are "profitable to our salvation?" Worldly goods, honours, pleasures? We know better than that. So let us not complain if in answer to this prayer disappointment or suffering come. Out of a patient endurance of these we can coin the true riches and joys of the Kingdom.

The Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity.

O Lord, we beseech thee, let thy continual pity cleanse and defend thy Church; and, because it cannot continue in safety without thy succour, preserve it evermore by thy help and goodness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. We pray for His "continual pity" because we realize our state of misery, resulting from our sin. We are in continual need of His loving mercy and compassion. The

prophet says, "Thy mercies are new every morning," because as God looks on us with each returning day, He sees the ever returning results of the Fall. Cry daily for His "continual pity," and the continual inroads of sin will be checked.

II. We ask first to be *cleansed* by His continual pity. Our continual sin requires continual cleansing, and this cleansing is not possible without continual repentance. Let me say daily from my heart, "God be merciful to me, a sinner," and the Precious Blood will cleanse me daily from all sin.

III. It is not cleansing only, but defense for the future that we require. His *help* will be given us in times of danger and temptation. His own divine quality of *goodness* will be given us so that we shall no longer desire anything sinful. Not only by external succour but by purifying our hearts within, will He preserve us evermore.

The Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity.

Lord, we pray thee, that thy grace may always prevent and follow us, and make us continually to be given to all good works; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. This Collect bears witness to God's goodness under all conditions. (1) His grace *prevents*, i.e., it goes before us. He goes before us and lovingly lays in our path the op-

portunity to gain grace by doing something for Him. How eagerly His love waits to see if we will see it and grasp it. (2) His grace also *follows* us. If we have failed to see the first opportunity, He pursues us with many others, never resting until we have made our own the grace His love has prepared.

II. We ask that we may "*continually* be given *to all* good works." (1) His service cannot be fitful; it must be a *continual* service, corresponding to the *continual* pity which God's love gives us, as we were thinking last Sunday. A steady, regular service is our response to the love He gives us. (2) We must do *all* good works; *i.e.*, everything must be done with the good motive of pleasing God.

III. We ask that we may be *given* to all good works. This means not that we are to do good works occasionally, or from whim, but constantly, and as the result of an inherent tendency of character that exists in us. "One is given to doing this or that," we say, meaning that he does the thing spoken of naturally, easily, and habitually under ordinary circumstances. Can this be said of me regarding the works that please God?

The Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity.

Lord, we beseech thee, grant thy people grace to withstand the temptations of the world, the flesh and the devil; and with pure hearts and minds to follow thee, the only God; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. We are bold to ask for grace against temptation because God has specially promised that we shall not be tempted above that we are able. If we trust in Him, Satan is absolutely powerless against us. How bravely should I meet temptation when I know that victory is completely assured beforehand.

II. We ask not to be saved from temptation but for strength to withstand it. Only through struggle can we grow strong; only through the battle can we win the victory; only in being victorious can we lay hold on eternal life. In this great battle-prayer of the Church we imply our willingness to fight, asking only grace to win the victory unto everlasting life.

III. The divine promise is of escape, not from the temptation, but from sin. Have I faith in this promise? Do I show my faith by turning to God very quickly when I feel temptation drawing near? The promptness with which I turn to Him shows what my faith is.

The Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity.

O God, forasmuch as without thee we are not able to please thee; Mercifully grant that thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. The sole object of our creation is that we might give God pleasure (see Rev. iv. 11), and yet of ourselves we are powerless to please Him. "Apart from Me ye can do nothing," said our Lord. But the Holy Spirit inspires St. Paul to speak in behalf of all Christian souls, crying, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." How can we fail to pray when we reflect on our worthlessness without Him, and on our boundless capacity if He is dwelling in us.

II. We pray, "*Mercifully grant,*" and so we acknowledge our need of His mercy. He teaches us to pray, "Let Thy mercy be upon us as our trust is in Thee," that is, we are to expect His mercy in proportion to our trust; and our trust will be in proportion to our recognizing our weakness, and feeling the need of a strong arm upon which to lean.

III. The Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, is the Agent through whom all grace and blessing come to us, nor can we please God at all save by acting under the guidance of the Holy Ghost. The voice of an enlightened conscience is always the

voice of the Holy Ghost. Follow that voice in all things, and God will be well pleased in you.

The Twentieth Sunday after Trinity.

O Almighty and most merciful God, of thy bountiful goodness keep us, we beseech thee, from all things that may hurt us; that we, being ready both in body and soul, may cheerfully accomplish those things which thou commandest; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. Life is full of the marks of the *bountiful goodness* of God. He pours it forth without measure; it follows me all the days of my life. With this assurance, so constant and unfailing, I can be bold to plead for the protection of the divine goodness, for no hour is without its evidence that the one preëminent desire of the divine Heart is to fill me with such good things as pass man's understanding.

II. Sin is the only thing that can really hurt us, because it is the only thing that can separate us from God. Sorrow and pain, bereavement and death, if met aright, bring us nearer to God, and are therefore loving blessings, though often in disguise. I fear suffering and flee from it; do I fear sin and flee from it as the only thing which in the end can be hurtful either to soul or body?

III. We pray for deliverance that we might be ready to accomplish His will *cheerfully*. Readiness is the preparation which

gives one quickness of action. Consider the attitude of athletes in a race when the word, "Ready!" is given. How they stand, poised on tip-toe, at the next signal to spring forward with all their energy. Is my soul thus ready to spring forward to the doing of "the things which Thou commandest"?

The Twenty-first Sunday after Trinity.

Grant, we beseech thee, merciful Lord, to thy faithful people pardon and peace, that they may be cleansed from all their sins, and serve thee with a quiet mind; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. To-day we plead for God's *faithful people* to be cleansed from sin. It seems a contradiction. If we have been faithful, how is it that we need cleansing? Alas, if we view it thus, then the faithful are indeed minished from the earth. But this is not God's view. Though I have sinned, if I turn to Him *repenting*, He counts me still as among the faithful ones who are deserving of His mercy.

II. The *pardon* we crave involves much more than the taking away of sin and its consequences. It means the restoration of spiritual *beauty* and *strength*—beauty that we might adorn His Kingdom and by our lives make God's service attractive to others; strength, that we might be able to avenge our-

selves in the battle of temptation against Satan, and crush his power out of our lives.

III. Such pardon as this must bring peace of heart. We are no longer anxious, because we know that in the strength of God we can overcome everything. Thus can we "serve Him with a quiet mind." Disquietude implies doubt; but there is no doubt in our minds. Sure of the final outcome, we can pass through darkness and strife, smiling and content; "if God be for us, who can be against us"?

The Twenty-second Sunday after Trinity.

Lord, we beseech thee to keep thy household the Church in continual godliness; that through thy protection it may be free from all adversities, and devoutly given to serve thee in good works, to the glory of thy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. If the Church is to be kept in continual godliness, that is, *God-likeness*, we, its members, must seek that likeness daily by trying to live as our Lord would do were He in our place. If I am not earnestly endeavoring to set Him before me as a pattern I am to follow, then I cannot honestly join this prayer. Resolve to be worthy to pray this prayer.

II. We ask for this God-likeness in the Church in order that "through thy protection it may be free from all adversities." Protec-

tion from the only real adversity—sin—depends upon this likeness in our souls, for that which thus protects is not merely an external care such as God gives to all His creatures, but is the divine power dwelling in us, and working through our minds and hearts and wills. This power can only dwell in me if I try to cultivate a likeness to our Lord.

III. If Christ dwells in me, how mightily will He work in me! If He is within, it will be impossible not to serve Him in good works. Let me each day test the reality of His indwelling presence by examining what I have been thinking, saying and doing, whether it be of God.

The Twenty-third Sunday after Trinity.

O God, our refuge and strength, who art the author of all godliness; Be ready, we beseech thee, to hear the devout prayers of thy Church; and grant that those things which we ask faithfully we may obtain effectually; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. Last Sunday we thought of God-likeness. To-day we learn that He alone is the author of that likeness. I must be like Him to be saved. He alone can give me the power to cultivate this likeness, and the means to be used is prayer. When I find myself failing to think, speak, or act as my conscience tells me He would do were He in exactly my place,

do I quickly turn to God for help? This is the test of my Christian earnestness.

II. But I dare not ask God to hear me unless I pray aright. I must offer *devout* prayers, prayers from a heart *devoted* to Him. This does not mean a lukewarm heart, crying to Him earnestly only in time of trouble, but a heart devoted to Him at all times, in adversity and prosperity, loving and leaning on Jesus in sweet and humble trust.

III. If our hearts are devoted to Him, we will *ask faithfully*, that is, full of faith, "nothing wavering," sure of God's love for us, and certain that, if it be good for us, we will surely obtain our petition. "Not my will but Thine, be done." Thus shall we *obtain effectually*, that is, gain that which will effect most in our lives for God's glory and our good.

The Twenty-fourth Sunday after Trinity.

O Lord, we beseech thee, absolve thy people from their offences; that through thy bountiful goodness we may all be delivered from the bands of those sins, which by our frailty we have committed. Grant this, O heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our blessed Lord and Saviour. Amen.

I. We pray for the divine absolution for one special class of sins to-day, those *which by our frailty we have committed*. How solemn a consideration is our frailty. Our poor, weak

nature, like a dead weight is dragging the soul down. The least relaxation of our vigilance against the evil tendency within, means sin.

II. Satan is the instigator of all sin, but to lay the blame for our sins on him alone would be a shifting of responsibility which would indicate a poor state of penitence, and a slender realization of the greatness of our own fault. Our own carelessness and laxity are responsible for many sins. Satan has little need to tempt a careless soul. It is its own tempter.

III. We are praying for pardon for the sins *which by our frailty we have committed*. How about the sins which by our wilfulness we have committed? Let us not soothe our conscience too much by the thought of our frailty. We are largely responsible for our own weakness, for it has grown out of the wilful sins of the past. The only soothing balm we can safely apply to our conscience is the thought, "A broken and contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise."

The Sunday Next Before Advent.

Stir up, we beseech thee, O Lord, the wills of thy faithful people; that they, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works, may by thee

be plenteously rewarded; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. The will has been called the "royal faculty," because it governs the whole life. But not even in our wills have we any power of ourselves to help ourselves. They must be stirred up by the power of God, and this can only be as the result of prayer. The new Church year lies before us. Let me dedicate my will anew to God, giving it into His keeping that my whole life and work might be for Him.

II. Good works are the result of character. If I have a strong, Christ-like character within, it will infallibly find expression in works for the glory of God. But this character depends on my will. I must, by firmly willing it, do and think and speak according to Christ's example, and so little by little His character, the pure, strong Christian character, will be formed within me.

III. The character being formed by repeated good acts, it will in its turn bring forth good works, for my character becoming like Christ's, it will be the natural thing to work according to the divine will. Then shall I gain that plenteous reward which He has for those who serve Him faithfully.

St. Andrew's Day.

(NOVEMBER 30.)

Almighty God, who didst give such grace unto thy holy Apostle Saint Andrew, that he readily obeyed the calling of thy Son Jesus Christ, and followed him without delay; Grant unto us all, that we, being called by thy holy Word, may forthwith give up ourselves obediently to fulfil thy holy commandments; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. St. Andrew *readily obeyed* and followed our Lord *without delay*. The first characteristic of an acceptable obedience is promptness. The child that gladdens the father's heart is the one who, without lingering or questioning, hastens with happy cheerfulness to fulfil the command. Likewise do we gladden our Heavenly Father's heart by our ready obedience. What a happy thought that we have it in our power to make God's heart glad.

II. How reasonable it is that we should obey promptly. Even sinners will acknowledge, if they stop to think it out, that the service of a loving Father is better than the hard service of self and the world. From even the selfish standpoint it is better, for our Father's service leads to peace of mind in this world, and eternal peace in the world to come.

III. But there is a still higher motive for a ready obedience. Love is always quick to act, it does not wait to reason and argue. If

I love my Heavenly Father I will not loiter in His service. I will spring up with joyful alertness at His least command, because love will spur me on to give myself without delay to Him who has now the fulness of my heart's love.

Saint Thomas the Apostle.

(DECEMBER 21.)

Almighty and everlasting God, who, for the greater confirmation of the faith, didst suffer thy holy Apostle Thomas to be doubtful in thy Son's resurrection; grant us so perfectly, and without all doubt, to believe in thy Son Jesus Christ, that our faith in thy sight may never be reproved. Hear us, O Lord, through the same Jesus Christ; to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, now and for evermore. Amen.

I. There is nothing that God cannot use for His glory and for our good. Even St. Thomas' doubt was used as a means of drawing out a proof of His Resurrection which could never be refuted. Many things that may seem to be misfortunes, God may all the while be using for His glory.

II. The devil tempted St. Thomas to doubt, thinking thus to dishonour our Lord. That which followed his doubt has made the faith of millions of Christians perfect. If I meet my temptations with a heart strong in divine love, they will result in the vanquishing

of Satan, and the glorifying of God through my victory.

III. When St. Thomas believed after having seen, our Lord said to him, "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed." This special beatitude belongs to us. We have not seen Him, but we believe; we cannot see Him in the Blessed Sacrament, yet we believe He is there. Let us not long for signs and wonders, lest we forfeit the greater blessedness of those who have not seen and yet have believed.

The Conversion of St. Paul.

(JANUARY 25.)

O God, who through the preaching of the blessed Apostle Saint Paul, hast caused the light of the gospel to shine throughout the world; Grant, we beseech thee, that we, having his wonderful conversion in remembrance, may show forth our thankfulness unto thee for the same, by following the holy doctrine which he taught; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. The Collect for to-day begins with the praise of God and of the great Apostle who, by lending himself so humbly and perfectly to the divine will became the instrument of this great spread of the Gospel. God's love seeks daily to win its way among men, but it waits till it can find a human instrument. We hinder the free course of divine love by re-

sisting His will; we help it on whenever we cry with converted Saul, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

II. What are the marks of this wonderful conversion which we say we have in remembrance? (1) A desire to know the truth. "Who art Thou, Lord?" (2) A readiness to obey. "What wilt Thou have me to do?" (3) The patience with which, in blindness and suffering, he waited until God chose to reveal His will to him. (4) The humility with which he, the distinguished Pharisee, was ready to receive the ministrations of humble Ananias. (5) The boldness with which he began to live and preach his new-found faith and joy.

III. Remembering these things, we pray that we may show forth our thankfulness by following the holy doctrine St. Paul taught. Gratitude is the test of the Christian life, and we show our gratitude by obedience. The wilful, disobedient soul is the ungrateful soul, and the ungrateful soul is the unconverted soul, and "except ye be converted . . . ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (St. Matt. xviii. 3).

The Purification of St. Mary the Virgin.

(FEBRUARY 2.)

Almighty and ever-living God, we humbly beseech thy Majesty, that as thy only-begotten Son was this day presented in the temple in sub-

stance of our flesh, so we may be presented unto thee with pure and clean hearts, by the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. On this day when our Lord humbled Himself in the temple, we make a point of addressing the "Majesty" of God, because His humiliation in the Incarnation must ever recall the majestic fact that that little Child was God. It was just because He was God that He could afford to assume the weakness of an infant. Those who know their own strength can afford to be humble. Only those who doubt their own power take refuge in pride and arrogance. If I realized that "God is the strength of my life," I would have less difficulty in being meek and lowly.

II. He was presented "in substance of our flesh" as the first fruits of the many brethren He was to bring to perfection in His Body, the Church. Because He was offered, we are to offer ourselves "body, soul and spirit" to God. Do I daily offer myself and all my actions to God? Do I perform my work so that it will be an offering of which I will not be ashamed?

III. Living and working so that we can offer every little thing in our life to God—every thought, every action—we need not fear what the end will be. We will have such "pure and clean hearts" that at the last He will pre-

sent us to our heavenly Father, vouching for us as worthy to share the glory of the eternal kingdom.

Saint Matthias' Day.

(FEBRUARY 24.)

O Almighty God, who into the place of the traitor Judas didst choose thy faithful servant Matthias to be of the number of the twelve Apostles; Grant that thy Church, being always preserved from false Apostles, may be ordered and guided by faithful and true pastors; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. When Judas "by transgression fell," God chose His "faithful servant Matthias" to fill the vacant place. We do not hear of him anywhere until suddenly it is announced that by his faithfulness he has won a place among the Apostles. He was faithful in little, he was rewarded with an apostolic throne. God promises me the great reward that I shall sit "with Him in His throne"; but I must win it by being faithful in all things.

II. The Collect for this feast is a special prayer for the pastors of the Church. This is one of the great Christian duties. We often complain that the life of the Church is not what it ought to be. If we prayed more and criticized less, perhaps there would be less occasion for complaint. It may be a terrible revelation to me at the Judgment to see how

much wrong in the Church I am responsible for because of "the prayers I never prayed."

III. Our prayer is in substance that God would send forth labourers into His harvest. The need for workers was never greater than it is to-day. It is estimated that fifty millions of souls in America are living without God and without hope. Of these an awful procession, nine hundred thousand strong, streams out into the darkness of eternity every year. They are my brethren, and I am my brother's keeper. Have I done anything by prayer or a word in season to help one of these souls to know God? If I have not, what account can I give at the Judgment?

The Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

(MARCH 25.)

We beseech thee, O Lord, pour thy grace into our hearts; that as we have known the Incarnation of thy Son Jesus Christ by the message of an Angel; so by his cross and passion we may be brought unto the glory of his resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. The demands made upon faith by the Christian revelation are so great that we may well cry, "Who is sufficient for these things?" Therefore as we consider the dogma of the Incarnation, we first pray, "Pour Thy grace into our hearts"; for only His grace and presence can give us the power to believe. But

in the power of His grace so strong does faith become, that the Incarnation seems to be no longer a matter of faith, but of knowledge: "We have *known* the Incarnation by the message of an angel."

II. Then we continue our prayer, "So,"—that is, in like manner,* with the same certainty—may we "be brought unto the glory of His resurrection." But there is something that comes between the Incarnation and its glorious consequence, that is "His Cross and Passion." Before He was glorified He suffered. Before we can share His glory, we must endure the cross.

III. The bearing of the Cross was what our Lord referred to when He said He had come to do "the will of His Father and to finish His work." The Father asks us, who are members of Christ's Body, to share this work with Him, but He asks it in love. He longs to bring His banished home again, and only through the Cross can we attain to His perfection. There is no other possible instrument of perfection. It were therefore ingratitude to repine at it, for only by union with His Cross and Passion can we come to "the glory of His resurrection."

Saint Mark's Day.

(APRIL 25.)

O Almighty God, who hast instructed thy holy Church with the heavenly doctrine of thy Evangelist Saint Mark; Give us grace that, being not like children carried away with every blast of vain doctrine, we may be established in the truth of thy holy Gospel; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. The Collect tells us of the true Author of the Gospel teaching. God instructed the Church, using in His divine instruction, the doctrine of St. Mark. He used St. Mark's lips to speak, his brain with which to think, his hand to write the truth, that His Church might be instructed. But in all it was God Himself who was doing the work. He wishes to use me in a similar manner. My daily effort must be to let Him so use my thoughts and words that others may through me learn more of God.

II. St. Mark's doctrine was contained, first, in his preaching. A faithful Evangelist, he preached the word in season, out of season. He preached not only publicly, however, but at all times and places was seeking in his life and conversation, to say a good word for the Lord Jesus. I, too, am called to this special form of ministry. By a simple daily living of the Christ-life I can preach more effectively than can be done in the greatest sermons.

III. St. Mark's greatest preaching, however, is in the written word of his Gospel, which has been handed down through the ages. I cannot write inspired books, but no word that I speak for God, no act I do for Him, if it be inspired by love for Him, can ever fall to the ground. The influence of the smallest action done for God sets in motion a force which will endure as long as eternity lasts.

Saint Philip and Saint James' Day.

(MAY 1.)

O Almighty God, whom truly to know is everlasting life; Grant us perfectly to know thy Son Jesus Christ to be the way, the truth, and the life; that, following the steps of thy holy Apostles, Saint Philip and Saint James, we may stedfastly walk in the way that leadeth to eternal life; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. Think of St. Philip in the upper room asking, "Lord, show us the Father." He desired to see and know Him, "whom truly to know is everlasting life." It is still the cry of loving souls who realize their need of a strong, loving Father. We desire to know Him better; to feel the power of His love, uplifting and restraining, soothing and strengthening.

II. Our Lord replies, "He that hath seen

Me hath seen the Father." Whoso has looked upon the face of Jesus, and found life and love and truth, "hath seen the Father," and knows Him, for our Lord saith, "I and My Father are one." Look to Jesus, trust Him in every little perplexity, put your hand in His to be guided by Him, and the knowledge of the Father will be yours unto life eternal.

III. We ask that we might perfectly know "Jesus Christ to be the way, the truth, and the life," in order that we might "stedfastly walk in the way that leadeth to eternal life," for as Thomas A'Kempis says: "Without the way there is no going, without the truth there is no knowing, without the life there is no living." To walk in His steps may not seem easy at first but with it will come a fuller dawning of the truth, and at the last the perfection of life eternal.

Saint Barnabas the Apostle.

(JUNE 11.)

O Lord God Almighty, who didst endue thy holy Apostle Barnabas with singular gifts of the Holy Ghost; Leave us not, we beseech thee, destitute of thy manifold gifts, nor yet of grace to use them alway to thy honour and glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. St. Barnabas was endued "with singular gifts of the Holy Ghost," because "he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of

faith." God delights to give the best gifts to those who with fullest faith give themselves to Him. If I believe in Him with all my heart, and trust Him, and follow quickly every suggestion His Spirit makes to my conscience, I too will have His best and richest gifts of grace.

II. The first petition is very pleasing to God, for it is a bold one, indicating a strong confidence in His loving generosity. We ask not for spiritual gifts few in number or limited in range, but for "manifold gifts," that is, gifts many and great. This prayer implies a willingness to do for God those things which require a great spiritual equipment. It is a prayer worthy to be connected with the feast of the great soul who literally left all and followed **Christ** (See Acts iv. 36, 37).

III. The courage and generosity of the soul that would adventure high things for God are further implied in the petition that we might "use them alway to Thy honour and glory." To ask for and accept great gifts is a great responsibility, and God has the right to expect great zeal and devotion of us. But let us not shrink from the responsibility. Trust Him with the faith of St. Barnabas, for "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

Saint John Baptist's Day.

(JUNE 24.)

Almighty God, by whose providence thy servant John Baptist was wonderfully born, and sent to prepare the way of thy Son our Saviour, by preaching repentance; Make us so to follow his doctrine and holy life, that we may truly repent according to his preaching; and after his example constantly speak the truth, boldly rebuke vice, and patiently suffer for the truth's sake; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. St. John Baptist not only preached repentance, but (though sanctified from his mother's womb), he lived a penitential life. How different was he in his humility in the obscurity of the wilderness, from us in our pride and self-assertiveness. And when our Lord came, his humble willingness to step aside and give place to Him, illustrates the lesson of humility which this day teaches.

II. We ask that we might follow (1) his doctrine, and (2) his holy life. First, his doctrine in order that we might truly repent. Real sorrow for sin is shown by amendment. Let me look back on the past month. What special effort have I made during that time to conquer some special habit of sin?

III. The works of the holy life we pray for are mentioned in the Collect. (1) Speaking the truth, preaching Jesus in my daily life that men may see how sweet and happy a

thing it is to be a real Christian. (2) Boldly rebuking vice. I must begin by rebuking sin in myself, stamping out evil habits; then can I with strong hands help others. (3) Suffering for the truth's sake. The temptations of Satan, the misunderstanding of friends because of the way we feel called to serve God, all these are the sufferings we must endure for the truth's sake.

Saint Peter's Day.

(JUNE 29.)

O Almighty God, who by thy Son Jesus Christ didst give to thy Apostle Saint Peter many excellent gifts, and commandedst him earnestly to feed thy flock; Make, we beseech thee, all Bishops and Pastors diligently to preach thy holy Word, and the people obediently to follow the same, that they may receive the crown of everlasting glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. When St. Peter was called he was an ignorant peasant fisherman, one of the last men the world would have chosen. Yet of him it is said that he received "many excellent gifts." Thus does God choose "the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty." He has chosen me to do something for Him in my life, not because I am fit, but because He loves me. And He will do the work in me if I give Him my heart daily. "He does not choose what is fit, but He fits what He chooses."

II. When St. Peter heard the words, "Follow Me," and left all to follow Jesus, he did not know that it was the first step in his preparation to be a prince of the Heavenly Kingdom. I know not what place God has for me, but I must answer promptly the little daily calls, if I would not lose my place, and disappoint the loving Father who calls me.

III. Consider with what deep earnestness our Lord commanded St. Peter to feed His lambs. It is not only those who are called to the priesthood who are to feed Christ's flock. Are there no little lambs about me, dear to the Heart of the Good Shepherd, that I can help? The sheep are scattered on the hills, they are wandering far, the wolves of sin are fierce—can I not save one for the Master's fold? A little word spoken in season, one appeal to some little child's heart to love Jesus more—who can tell what great things these might be in the Kingdom?

Saint James the Apostle.

(JULY 25.)

Grant, O merciful God, that as thine holy Apostle Saint James, leaving his father and all that he had, without delay was obedient unto the calling of thy Son Jesus Christ, and followed him; so we, forsaking all worldly and carnal affections, may be evermore ready to follow thy

holy commandments; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. This is the Collect of obedience and vocation. St. James was called not only to do God's service in the ordinary walks of life, but to leave "his father and all that he had," and follow Jesus. He was among the first to make the response which brought him the reward of a hundred-fold in this life and in the world to come life everlasting, and he made it "without delay." Oh, happy soul, so swift to follow Jesus! Alas, how many hear His voice, and hearken not. They have their part in the things of this world; what will be their reward in the life to come?

II. It was not easy to respond, but St. James' love was not looking for something easy. He did not stop to hear Satan's argument in favor of waiting. We fail in our obedience because we make God wait until we have respectfully considered the devil's persuasion to stay where we are instead of answering the divine call.

III. If St. James forsook what was good that he might receive that which was better, can I not forsake "all worldly and carnal affections," and that which is wholly evil? Two vocations are offered me,—one to heaven and one to hell; two voices are calling,—that of Satan, and the loving voice of Jesus. What answer shall I make?

The Transfiguration of Christ.

(AUGUST 6.)

O God, who on the mount didst reveal to chosen witnesses thine only-begotten Son wonderfully transfigured, in raiment white and glistering; Mercifully grant that we, being delivered from the disquietude of this world, may be permitted to behold the King in his beauty, who with thee, O Father, and thee, O Holy Ghost, liveth and reigneth, one God, world without end. Amen.

I. Consider that our Lord's Transfiguration took place "as He prayed." So the power of prayer alone can transfigure our lives and change even the cares and trials and temptations, into things which will reflect in themselves the divine glory. Prayer and trust will make the darkest path a shining way that leads to God.

II. His earthly Transfiguration was revealed to those who were faithful in their following of Him. To those who have learned the secret of the joy and glory of His service through faithful perseverance, He shows Himself daily in the glory of His love and goodness. To all others, "He has no beauty that they should desire Him." Is He to me the chiefest among ten thousand and altogether lovely?

III. We pray "that we being delivered from the disquietude of this world, may be

permitted to behold the King in His beauty." This is not only a prayer for the final vision of Him in His glory, but that also in this life we might have that peace that comes to those whose souls are stayed on Him. It is the peace that arises from the certainty of our Christian hope as compared with the inquietude and feverish restlessness of the worldly heart.

Saint Bartholomew the Apostle.

(AUGUST 24.)

O Almighty and everlasting God, who didst give to thine Apostle Bartholomew grace truly to believe and to preach thy Word; Grant, we beseech thee, unto thy Church, to love that Word which he believed, and both to preach and receive the same; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. St. Bartholomew is another name of St. Nathanael, who at first doubted if any good could come out of Nazareth. The reply was given him, "Come and see." He came, humbly willing to learn, and the first look from the loving eyes of Jesus converted his heart, and elicited from him his great confession of faith. My conversion depends on my humble willingness to learn of Christ.

II. We are told that the Apostle had the grace "*truly to believe and preach.*" It was a service of his whole heart. Nothing was

held back, and men, seeing the earnestness of his faith, believed the word that he preached. The world quickly detects a half-hearted service, and the example of such a service will not lead others to the truth.

III. We pray that His Church may (1) "love the word that he believed," and (2) may both "preach and receive the same." The preaching of the Word is not to be only by the ordained ministry, but by every baptized soul. We are to preach by our words and actions in our daily intercourse with men. What am I doing to show in my life how true and joyful a thing God's service is?

Saint Matthew the Apostle.

(SEPTEMBER 21.)

O Almighty God, who by thy blessed Son didst call Matthew from the receipt of custom to be an Apostle and Evangelist; Grant us grace to forsake all covetous desires, and inordinate love of riches, and to follow the same thy Son Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

I. We pray on this feast to be delivered from *all covetous desires*. It was covetousness that led Matthew to join his country's conquerors in exacting the oppressive taxes. But those who grasp after great riches are not the only covetous souls. If my heart is

discontented and complaining, I am equally a violator of God's Commandment.

II. St. Paul tells us covetousness is idolatry, because the covetous set up in their hearts earthly things as idols. God and Mammon are both constantly making offers to me. One in tender love offers to me the true and eternal riches; the other offers worldly rewards which will soon fade. Which am I choosing, whom am I serving—God or Mammon?

III. The only safety is to follow St. Matthew's example. He recognized the call of God and immediately left all and followed Him. He did not stop to argue the *pros* and *cons* of the call. To argue thus is to put one's self in Satan's attitude. If there is a doubt we cannot solve, let us give God, not self and Satan, the benefit of it. Infinitely better it is to make a mistake of judgment on God's side than on the devil's.

Saint Michael and All Angels.

(SEPTEMBER 29.)

O everlasting God, who hast ordained and constituted the services of Angels and men in a wonderful order; Mercifully grant that, as thy holy Angels always do thee service in heaven, so, by thy appointment, they may succour and defend us on earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. God has ordained the services of His

creatures *in a wonderful order*. Order is the first law of heaven, and until man sinned was the first law of earth. He wishes us to serve Him in a systematic, orderly way. There was no disorder in Eden. Everything was in its proper place, doing its proper work, and all perfectly responsive to the divine will. How I should abhor sin when I reflect that it, and it only, brought into the world all the disorder which makes life a vale of tears.

II. To have a zeal for God for a time, and then to grow lax, is to mock God. My service of Him must be with order and regularity; not according to impulse, but according to a principle of *love* and of *justice* persistently followed; of love, in return for His goodness to me; of justice, because I *owe* it to Him as my Father and Creator.

III. The sin of man dislocated the wonderful order God had instituted in His earthly creation, and ever since, His desire has been to restore that perfection. The angels *always do Him service*, and by His appointment they succour and defend us that we, in union with our Lord and by following His example, may the more speedily attain that restored perfection.

Saint Luke the Evangelist.

(OCTOBER 18.)

Almighty God, who calledst Luke the Physician, whose praise is in the Gospel, to be an Evangelist, and Physician of the soul; May it please thee that, by the wholesome medicines of the doctrine delivered by him, all the diseases of our souls may be healed; through the merits of thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. We know little of St. Luke's life save that he wrote two letters to Theophilus (see St. Luke i. 3 and Acts i. 1), to tell him of Christ. Little did he think when in his zeal for the salvation of a single soul, he wrote those letters, which we call his Gospel and the Acts, that God would use them to give light and immortality to millions of souls in after ages. I never know what may come of the smallest action done for love of God.

II. If God has for our benefit done so great things with St. Luke's work, it behooves each Christian to seek to gain the uttermost he can from "the wholesome medicines of the doctrine delivered by him." I cannot be content to move in a mere groove, but day by day, I must labour to gain more light and knowledge of God from the Blessed Gospel.

III. Every new ray of Bible light that comes is a wholesome doctrine to heal the diseases of my soul. Day by day I should be more perfectly healed from sin and its effects

by learning more of the truths of the Gospel, and by practising them with loving zeal. Resolve to read a few verses of the Bible daily. It is the very Word of God. Meditate on the adoring reverence with which we should approach the divine oracles of Scripture.

Saint Simon and Saint Jude, Apostles.

(OCTOBER 28.)

O Almighty God, who hast built thy Church upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the head corner-stone; Grant us so to be joined together in unity of spirit by their doctrine, that we may be made an holy temple acceptable unto thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I. What a mighty foundation has been laid for the divine Kingdom—the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the head corner-stone! Am I building my life on Him? Are my thoughts, words and actions, the whole course of my life, based upon Him and the principles He declares in the Gospels? If the thought of His love is the mainspring of my life, then am I building upon a Rock, and in time of storm I shall stand fast.

II. He laid the foundation, but St. Luke tells us that in His earthly life “He *began* to do and to teach” (Acts i. 1); and He expects us to carry on His work. I am an instrument that He has chosen for the upbuild-

ing of the Kingdom. Each prayer, each loving act, is a stone I can lay in these eternal walls. By faithfulness to Him I can become a master-builder on the walls of the Heavenly City.

III. But our prayers and loving acts are a part of ourselves, and if they are as stones in the fabric, it means that little by little we are building ourselves into the Kingdom, and becoming holy temples acceptable unto Him, and meet for His indwelling. Let me make sure that nothing defiles my soul or body, lest I thereby defile the temple of the Holy Ghost.

All Saints' Day.

(NOVEMBER 1.)

O Almighty God, who hast knit together thine elect in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical body of thy Son Christ our Lord; Grant us grace so to follow thy blessed Saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those unspeakable joys which thou hast prepared for those who unfeignedly love thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

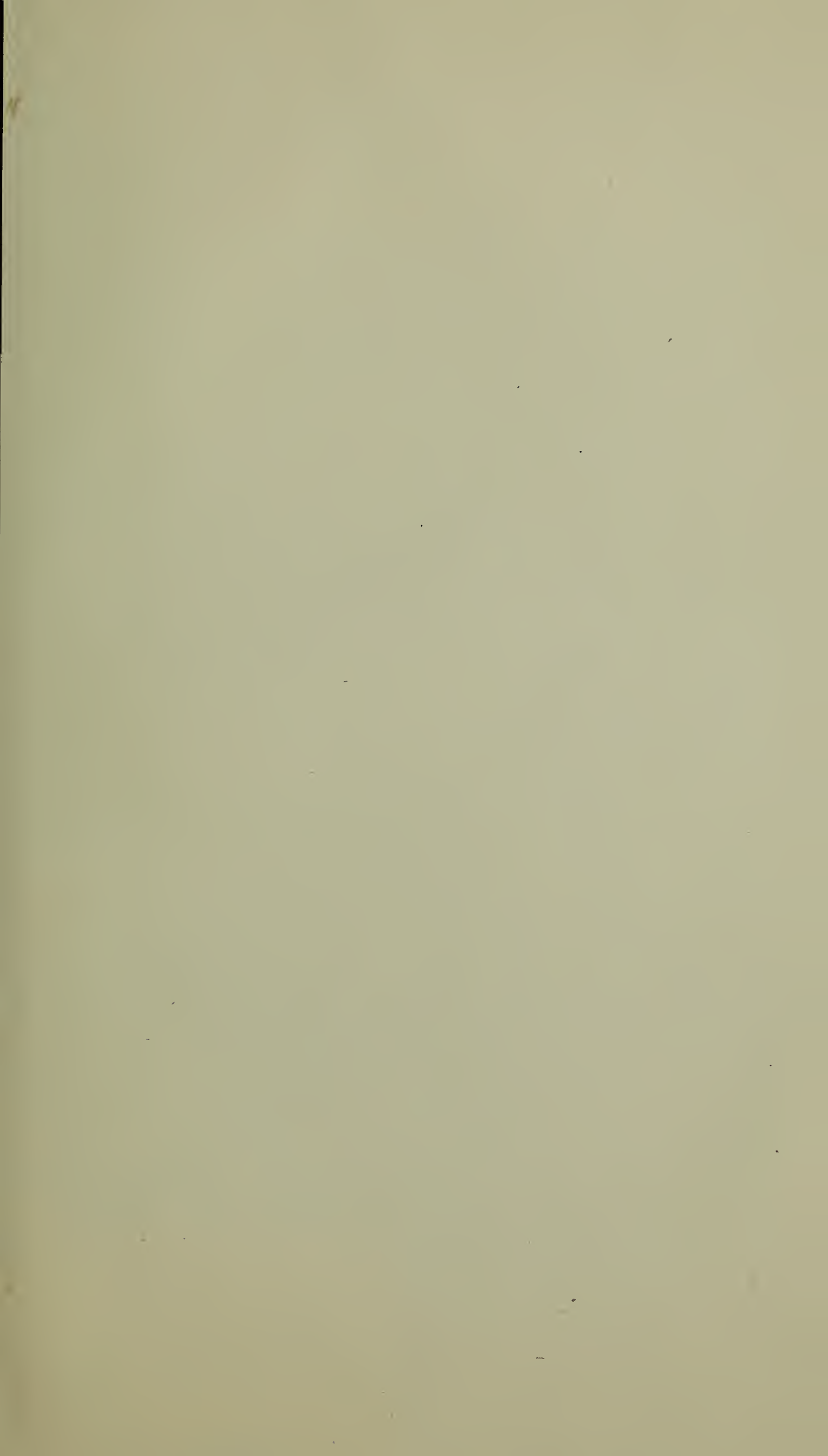
I. We often lose sight of what membership in the Church means, because we do not regard with sufficient literalness what the Holy Ghost says when He calls the Church "the Body of Christ." We and all Christ's members are knit together in one fellowship in His Body. The same divine life that indwelt

St. Peter and St. Paul, St. Francis or St. Vincent, dwells in me, just as the same blood that gives life to my hand, gives also life to my foot.

II. Certain members of my fleshly body may be of more importance than others, but they are not less instinct with life. I occupy a far less important place in "the Church, which is His Body," than the Saints, but that is no reason why I, in my lesser place, should not be as alive and thrilling with the life of God as those who may be His very right hand.

III. Note the meaning of the word *knit*. Two things knit together are not merely bound one to the other by an external tie, however strong, but the very threads that compose the fabric, the warp and the woof, are so interwoven that they become one piece, and cannot be severed without rending and spoiling the whole. So I am knit into the Body of Christ, and so do I rend and dishonour that Sacred Body if I commit mortal sin. But, remaining knit up into that Body, I shall come to those unspeakable joys prepared for those who unfeignedly love Him.

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