

**THE THREEFOLD GIFT OF CHRIST**

The *Instructio sacerdoti* of Brother Bernard

*Edited and Translated by*

A Religious of CSMV

A late thirteenth-century manuscript, formerly ascribed to Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, distinguished for its clear and systematic thinking on ‘the chief mysteries of our religion’.

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THE THREEFOLD GIFT OF CHRIST

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F L E U R D E L Y S S E R I E S

THE THREEFOLD GIFT OF CHRIST

By Brother Bernard

TRANSLATED AND EDITED BY

A Religious of CSMV

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TRANSLATOR’S PREFACE

Great names act like magnets, attracting to themselves material that is not theirs. To-day we see that happening with anecdotes; not every spoonerism, for example, is an authentic utterance of Dr Spooner. In the Middle Ages it happened in literature; Saint Augustine, Saint Anselm, and Saint Bernard, to give but three such names, all then had works that were not theirs ascribed to them.

The little treatise here translated under the title of The Threefold Gift of Christ is a ‘pseudo-Bernard.’ It was ascribed to the saint, because its writer bore his name and had clearly read some of his sermons. But the style is wholly diﬀerent from his, and the thought, centred on the Blessed Sacrament, is clearly later; this ‘Brother Bernard’ must have lived in the late thirteenth century at earliest. [Current thinking situates our ‘Brother Bernard’ in the late twelfth century, approximately.—Ed.] In the Benedictine edition of the *Opera dubia et Sancto Bernardo perperam adscripta* his work is entitled *Instructio sacerdoti de praecipuis mysteriis nostrae religionis*; but the editor tells us that a Cistercian manuscript, to which he had access, calls it *Gemma cruciﬁxi*. The former title is clumsy to translate and rather vague; the latter, though attractive in itself, is not particularly apt, and Brother Bernard is such a clear and systematic thinker that I doubt if either of them is his own. He tells us at the outset exactly what he is setting out to do. A priest friend is baﬄed by the veiling of Christ’s glory in the Blessed Sacrament. Bernard will give him such help as he can over this, but the matter must be seen in relation to the whole scheme of God’s dealings with Man; and he sees that as consisting in our Lord’s gift of Himself to be successively the price of our redemption, our food for the journey, and our reward in heaven. Those are ‘the chief mysteries of our religion’ for him; but as that title might well lead the reader to expect a treatise on the Incarnation, the Atonement, and the Trinity, I have ventured to substitute the title of *The Threefold Gift of Christ*.

Besides making some minor omissions from the text, I have ventured also on another and a greater liberty. At the end of his book, Brother Bernard tries to help us think about the joys of heaven by describing their opposite, the pains of hell. We do well to ponder what reprobation means; but the crude realism of the mediaeval approach to that subject does not commend itself to modern minds. So I have forsaken our rightful author at that point, and substituted part of a sermon by his greater namesake of Clairvaux about the Weight of Glory.

As has been said, this treatise was written for a priest; nevertheless, its message is for the laity as well. For all the faithful are kings and priests unto God by virtue of their membership in Christ; the celebration of the Holy Eucharist is the act of the whole Body; we all ‘touch and handle of the Word of life’ when we communicate. It has been a happy and rewarding experience for myself to rescue this mediaeval author from oblivion; I hope that many others of all estates in the Church may get proﬁt from him too.

*July 1954*

*Wantage, Oxon*

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THE THREEFOLD GIFT OF CHRIST

ADDRESS

From Brother Bernard to the Honoured Priest

I know full well how ardent is your heart’s desire, and how the ﬂame burns in your bones the while you meditate. Urged by that zeal, you have both begged me when we met, and written to me when you were away, to gather a few sparks for you from that great furnace of God’s love, the Word Incarnate; and now a faithful messenger has reinforced your wish by a command.

But who am I, thus to intrude on heaven with my lips? The Scripture says: ‘The beast that shall have touched the mountain shall be stoned,’ and, in another place: ‘Seek not out the things that are above thee,’ and yet again: ‘He that is a searcher of majesty shall be overwhelmed with glory.’1 So I am in a strait betwixt two things: I am not equal to the task you lay on me; and yet I am afraid to say you nay. For I know who says: ‘Let our good work be in our will, for its perfection shall be by the help of God’;2 and charity makes good the weakness of our ignorance.

Receive you, then, some words that I have gleaned from holy writings, some here and some there; and, if you ﬁnd anything sweet therein, anything fragrant or grateful to the palate of a holy heart, I would have you not credit me with it, but rather give the glory to those great perfumers out of whose stores it has been put together.

If I am not mistaken, then, the thing you specially require is this: you want me to declare, from sound authorities and with relevant quotations, how Christ, when veiled and hidden on the altar under the form of bread, none the less abides in inﬁnite and unimaginable glory. You must understand that it is not for a pilgrim to have the understanding of this, but for him who has reached the goal; such knowledge belongs to the celestial citizen, not to the exile in this vale of tears; the victor knows the mystery, he who still ﬁghts does not. Even he, who had been rapt to the third heaven and seen heavenly mysteries, said afterwards: ‘Now we see in a glass, darkly, but then face to face,’ and again: ‘Now I know in part, but then I shall know even as I am known’;3 and who is there who can surpass or even equal him? Nevertheless, we may along with him see in a glass and darkly what we can; and, if we are not able yet to behold God’s glory with unveiled face and look directly on the sun, we can at least try to catch some light from those same rays, through the cloud that for the present intervenes.

Having thus cleared the ground, let us attack our subject, by the grace of God. We shall discuss it brieﬂy in three parts, according to the three gifts that God’s wisdom has foreordained for us from all eternity—or rather, the one gift, thrice given for three diﬀerent purposes. That threefold gift is this:

First, the Son of God gave Himself to die for us, that He might be the price of our redemption.

Second, He gives Himself to us in the Eucharist to be our food for the journey.

Third, He will give Himself to us, as our reward in heaven in the everlasting life.

A flourish

INTRODUCTION

0.1

The Creation of Man

‘Every best gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with Whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.’4

The Scripture rightly speaks of ‘every best gift,’ for the absolute Good is the Giver. As Boethius says: ‘The Maker of all is Good above all good, and every envy is far removed from Him.’ Consider, O Man, what this same Lord has spent on you, what He has expended in advance upon you, lavishly. He created you when you were not; He recreated you when you were lost. He created you to share His blessedness; He recreated you so that, though you had fallen, you should not always be an exile from your native land and disinherited of everlasting bliss. He created you in His own image and likeness; having bestowed on you your natural powers in His image, He further dowered you with gifts of grace according to His likeness, so that you might be a creature supereminent in mind and, having reason, rule the reasonless.

*Although all else that lives bends downwards, looking to the earth,*

*He gave to Man a countenance uplifted, bidding him*

*Behold the heavens, and direct his upright gaze*

*Upon the stars.*5

Your Maker made you thus, O Man, in order that, by always looking up, you might keep Him before your mental sight, and ceaselessly remember whence you came. For, as we said, God made you in His own image and likeness; in His own image, having memory and understanding, the power of judgement, and the other natural gifts; in His own likeness, having innocence and righteousness, and the other gifts of grace; in His own image, having knowledge of the truth, and in His own likeness, loving what is good.

Or you may say that all these put together constitute God’s image in yourself, and that His likeness in you is in your immortality and indivisibility.

Every other creature was created for your sake. The heavens were created for your fatherland, and that you might take pleasure in looking at their beauty. The earth was made to bear its lovely and delicious fruits for you; and the Lord gave you dominion over the birds of heaven, and over the beasts of the ﬁeld, and over the ﬁshes of the sea, that you might rule them all according to your will.

You see, then, what the ‘best gift’ is, the ‘perfect gift’ that comes down from above. What else should God have done for you, that He did not?

0.2

The Fall of Man

Yet, after He had given you this best of gifts, you sinned; and so you went to the worst place. You went from life to death, from incorruption to corruption, from glory to torment, from innocence to guilt, from home to exile, from joy to grief, from blessedness to misery, from peace to tribulation. You, who had been the fellow of the citizens of heaven, became the subject of the evil spirits. You, who had had the power to behold directly the glorious Face of God, on which the angels long to look, were forced by your transgression to behold things vile and shameful; in the prophet’s phrase, you, who ought to live delicately, embraced dunghills.6

Banished from Paradise, moreover, you were thrust down into the vale of tears; and you became therein that wretched wayfarer—or rather, that out-of-the-wayfarer—who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves.7 You fell into the power of devils who left you, wounded in your natural powers and stripped of the gifts of grace, no more than half alive, or rather stricken with the double death of body and of soul.

0.3

The Periods of Human History

Thus, O Man, began the period of your error, of your going astray. For those skilled in such matters discern four periods in human history—the Time of Error, the Time of Recall, the Time of Reconciliation, and the Time of Pilgrimage.

The Time of Error lasted from the Fall of our ﬁrst parents to the time of Abraham, who at the Lord’s command accepted circumcision as the badge of faith, and was the ﬁrst to hear from Him the answering promise of grace, ‘In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.’8 Wherefore the apostle says, ‘The promises were made to Abraham, and to his seed. It says not ‘to seeds,’ as though speaking of many, but as denoting one, “unto thy seed,” which seed is Christ.’9 And Saint Luke, the herald—or rather I should say the gospeller—of that same grace, says of the Incarnation of the Word, ‘The oath which He sware unto our forefather Abraham, that He would give us.’10

The Time of Error is so called, because almost all those who lived in it erred from the truth. With a few exceptions, such as Enoch, who was snatched away lest evil should pervert his mind, and Noah who, together with eight souls, was saved in the ark from drowning in the ﬂood,11 they called not upon God, nor had the fear of Him before their eyes.

The Time of Recall lasted from the time of Abraham until the coming of the Redeemer; and in that time the faith of the Trinity began to ﬂourish. Already in the patriarchs it ﬂowered; in the kings it formed fruit; and in the prophets the fruit of it ripened in the visitation of the Dayspring from on high.

This time is ﬁtly called the Time of Recall, because the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercy and the God of all consolation, was then already thinking thoughts of peace, and not of aﬄiction, towards the human race. Determined to recall the erring sheep, He sent the patriarchs, He gave the Law, He furnished signs and wonders, He aided men with countless beneﬁts; and ﬁnally, because of the exceeding love with which He loved us, He sent His only-begotten Son in the likeness of ﬂesh, but without sin, so that He might cleanse all. And that was verily the time of mercy and the year of kindness.

The Time of Reconciliation began with the Incarnation of the Only-begotten Son, and lasted till the mystery of our redemption was concluded—that is to say, until that Saving Victim had reconciled us to the Father by the sacriﬁce of Himself. To Him assuredly, therefore, the words apply, ‘Behold a great Priest, Who in His days pleased God and was found righteous; and in the time of wrath He was made a reconciliation; there was none found like unto Him.’12 The apostle says with reference to the same, ‘We are ambassadors for Christ; we pray you, be ye reconciled to God.’13 And indeed the word reconciliation ﬁrst had meaning, when man was thus reconciled to God in Christ.

The Time of Pilgrimage extends from the coming of the Holy Spirit until the Consummation of the Age—that is, the End of the World; and it is so called because it was from that moment that the faithful Church began to recognize her pilgrimhood and yearn for her homeland. Hence comes that groan from Saint Paul, the chosen vessel, ‘whilst we are in this world we are pilgrims, absent from the Lord.’ Hence too comes David’s cry, ‘Woe is me, that my sojourning is prolonged!’ But David takes comfort too, for he says, ‘Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.’14 These passages show clearly why this time is reckoned as the Time of Pilgrimage.

1. CHRIST THE PRICE OF OUR REDEMPTION

1.1

His Incarnation and His Infancy

Now that we have distinguished these four periods and explained the reasons for their names, it behoves you, O Man, to contemplate the time of your redemption, to look back and consider in what way you were redeemed.

‘Ye were bought with a price,’ says the apostle; ‘therefore glorify God and carry Him in your bodies.’15 For a wretched and despicable price, a single bite of an apple, you were sold under sin. You were bought, and bought back—that is to say, redeemed—at a great price and one beyond all calculation, the death of the Son of God. Is anything more precious than that price? Does anything transcend all value, as that does? He, by Whom all things were made and without Whom nothing was made, the Sole-begotten of the supreme Father, Who is consubstantial and coeternal with Him, His peer in majesty and His equal in glory, He Who is that Father’s Power and Wisdom and the Same as He in being, He Who is such as that, Who is as great as that, though He was in the form of God emptied Himself and, taking the form of a servant, came down from the Father’s bosom into our vale of tears, and conﬁned Himself in the narrow womb of a girl. The Word, Who was in the beginning with God, became the shortened Word.16

And think how shortened, how immeasurably small and short He then was made! For nine months He endured the irk of the encircling womb; and, when He came forth to the light of day, He wept, as every baby does. He was enwrapped and fettered in such coarse swaddling-bands as suit our wretchedness; and, because His mother was so poor, He was laid to rest in an ill-smelling stable, and in a manger where the brute beasts snuﬀed at Him. Whoever heard of any child born in such penury and need? The Sustainer of all is fed with human milk, and wears soiled swaddling-bands, that you be not soiled by sin; He is circumcised in the ﬂesh, that you may be the same in heart.

1.2

His Baptism and Temptation

Further, He humbles Himself beneath the hands of Saint John His servant, when He comes to be baptized; and He does that, not to wash away any stains from Himself—for He, Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth, entered this world stainless—but that He may sanctify the waters for your beneﬁt and, by the touch of His own pure ﬂesh, invest them with regenerative power to wash away your sins.

After His baptism, to set you an example of holiness and godly living, He goes into the wilderness and fasts there forty days and forty nights, taking no food whatever—a thing of which our human weakness is utterly incapable, for it collapses if its hunger be not daily met. God, therefore, hungering of His own will and power according to the nature He had taken, was tempted by the devil; and, in respect of the temptation to a wrong desire for food, He overcame both patiently and wisely, confounding the Tempter and repelling him.

By this, O Man, He did three things for you. He gave you an example of humility, a pattern of patience, and a model of caution. Be humble when you meet temptation, for the servant is not greater than his Lord. The Lord was tempted; it behoves the servant to be tempted too, for ‘the life of man upon earth is temptation.’17 Again, because the evil spirits tempt subtly and in many diﬀerent ways, the Lord tells Saint Peter that Satan has sought him, to sift him aa wheat. If you are tempted, bear it patiently. For even the Lord, Who could have hurled His tempter into the depths of hell, had He but said the word, endured the trial patiently and overcame it by the exercise of reason. Be cautious also in temptation, lest your tempter disguise himself as an angel of light, and so deceive you with a seeming good, even as he did Eve when he told her, ‘If ye eat of the tree, ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.’

Resist humbly, resist patiently, resist warily. ‘Faithful is the Lord,’ the Scripture says; ‘He will not suﬀer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but even with the temptation will make the way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it.’18 That is a comfortable promise; and a joyful reward is in store for a good runner, and a blessèd crown for him who creditably overcomes.

As I was saying, then, it was for you, O Man, that He was tempted, not for Himself. For you, not for Himself, He overcame; for you He suﬀered hunger, thirst, and weariness. On your account He bore innumerable insults and reproaches, and accepted all the suﬀerings that it behoved Him to endure. Nothing in your experience of need and weakness was lacking in the Lord’s, save only sin. For your sake He wrought salvation in the midst of the earth in divers ways, raising the dead, giving sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf, making the lame to walk, cleansing the lepers, and doing countless other mighty works. He sped through the cities and towns, the streets and the market-squares, preaching the Good News by word and deed, showing the way of life by signs and wonders.

A flourish

1.3

His Passion

And, to give you a further pattern of humility, on the sixth day before His Passion He was pleased to ride into Jerusalem, humbly seated on a mean and lowly ass, and to receive the acclamations of the crowds; that every act of His might be a reading-exercise for you, and His entire life your lesson-book.

He was betrayed by the abandoned traitor Judas, and sold for thirty pieces of silver, like a worthless chattel, that you, who were sold under sin, might ﬁnd redemption. Seated at supper with His blessèd apostles the night before He suﬀered, He gave them His own ﬂesh to eat, and His own blood to drink, and left the selfsame mystery to be performed for you, in remembrance of Him. Then, rising from the supper, He girded Himself with a towel and poured water into a basin; and He, the King of angels, stooped at His lowly servants’ feet, and thought it not unworthy of Himself to touch them with His most pure hands, and wash and wipe therefrom the mire of the streets. And He left you that act as an example, saying: ‘If I, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another’s feet.’

Why, then, O dust and ashes, are you proud? Why, corrupt member that you are, do you exalt yourself above the Head Whom even angels fear?

Thereafter, praying in an agony, He sweated blood from every pore. Then He was taken and arrested, and led before the judge; and, when many false witnesses came out against Him and with many lies accused Him, He was dumb as an innocent lamb that is brought to the sacriﬁce; He opened not His mouth, even as a man that heareth not and in whose mouth are no reproofs.

Then the servants spat in the sweet face of Jesus, and struck and hit Him on the head. Then He was bound to the pillar and scourged, and the knots in the scourges made His ﬂesh all weals and bruises, so that the blood ran down from the wounds to the ground. And after that the thorny crown made His whole head to bleed; and they put a reed into His hand in mockery, and clad Him in a purple robe, gibing at Him as though He were deluded and a fool.

I speak but brieﬂy. It behoves you, Man, to tremble here and shake with fear; you do well if you blanch and beat your breast, and pour out your whole soul in tears, sharing the suﬀerings of the Suﬀerer. For He is led to death, that you may be led from it. Ungodly ruﬃans lead the Lamb to sacriﬁce and make Him hoist the cross on His own shoulders, and bear it to the place of execution. He makes no outcry nor demur at this; He does not question it, He yields to His tormentors.

Consider then, O Man, what your redemption cost, and picture to yourself the nature and the greatness of the price paid for it. That your Redeemer, Creator, and Maker should die to redeem you is not of itself enough; look at the manner of His death, ponder the conditions under which He dies, and then consider what you owe to Him Who dies.

Look at the Righteous One, and see how He is dying. He is stretched out upon the cross, His limbs are racked apart; His back, still bleeding from the cruel scourging, is chafed by the hard wood; His hands and feet are pierced, the nails are driven through them, and the deeper they go, the wider the wounds they make, and the ﬁercer the pain they give. Gall mixed with vinegar is put to His parched lips, and wine mingled with myrrh. The servants of the devil shake their heads, taunting the Suﬀerer; ‘if He be the Son of God,’ they say, ‘let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him!’ And that is as much as to say: ‘Such shame, such punishment has got Him in its grip, He will not rise therefrom.’

Then, O most loving Saviour, Thou dost yield Thy holy soul to death, that Thou mayst bring my dead and wretched soul to life. Yet even then those impious ruﬃans are not satisﬁed; they pierce Thy side with a spear, and make Thy blood, by which we are redeemed, gush out. What will you do, my soul, in face of this? Who will give water to your head and a fountain of tears to your eyes, that you may worthily weep and mourn for the Slain of your people?19 Let your Belovèd be to you as a bundle of myrrh20 as He hangs here in death, and not a bundle only, but a great load of sorrows. Suﬀer with the Suﬀerer, so that you may deserve to be redeemed.21 Be like a dove in the clefts of the rock, in the hollows of the wall; ﬂy through into His hands, ﬂy through into His feet, ﬂy deeper still into His pierced side, leave none of these unsearched, pour out the bitter pain of your compassion, your sharing of His pain, upon His every part.22 Behold, O Man redeemed, the price of your redemption. See of what sort the Victim is, Who for your fault, your fall, is sacriﬁced!

But what necessity was there that He should bear those things? What need had He to shed His blood so often? Five such blood-sheddings are recorded of Him; this little verse that I have made will sum them up:

*Five times, O Christ, Thy blood is shed, and in ﬁve ways:*

*By circumcision, sweat, and scourge, and thorns,*

*And by the ﬁvefold piercing of Thy hands and feet and side.*

How strange it is that He endured those things in order to redeem us men, when He could have done so most eﬀectually by the command of Majesty alone! The need was yours, O Man, not His; be sure of that. The ﬁrst man, when he fell, committed a crime that called for expiation, but without oﬀering a victim he could not expiate it. Man lacked the power, of himself, to oﬀer a pure victim, for sin’s contagion had deﬁled him inwardly. Neither could God, as God, nor yet an angel be the sacriﬁce; for the One was impassible by nature, and the other the same by grace. And the irrational creation was inadequate for such a weighty matter. So God *and* Man must needs become the Victim—God, in that He had the power to eﬀect release, and man, because he had the wherewithal for sacriﬁce; God out of pity, man from need. He then was oﬀered, for with Him is mercy and plenteous redemption. He was oﬀered, because His inestimable love for Man would have it so. He was oﬀered, because He willed it,23 and because Man needed that He should do so.

O Man, what reward will you give to the Lord for all the beneﬁts that He has done to you? He demands love alone; for Him, love only is enough. Why do you not love Him, when He so loves you? ‘We love Him, because He ﬁrst loved us.’ And shall I tell you in what way He loves, and how His love behaves? ‘So God loved the world that He gave His Only-begotten Son.’ ‘God spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all.’ Or let the Son speak for Himself: ‘Greater love hath no man than this,’ He says, ‘that a man lay down his life for his friends.’24

Love then your Lover, O you Man; love Him not only in word and in tongue, but in deed and in truth. Love Him with your whole heart and soul, with all your powers and with your whole mind. Say: ‘I will love Thee, O Lord my Strength, Thou art my ﬁrmament, O Lord, my Refuge, and my Saviour.’25 Indeed Thou art my Saviour, for I was poor and Thou didst free me from the mighty; I was needy and helpless, and Thou didst deliver me from ruin.

A flourish

1.4

Conclusion

You see now what that ‘best gift’ is, of which we spoke at the beginning of this section. It is the gift of which Isaiah says: ‘Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given.’ And in another place we read: ‘How shall not God with Him also give us all things?’26 If He has given Him to us, Who is All in all, undoubtedly with Him He has given us all. If, then, He has been given to us, let us make use of Him Who is thus given to us, and treat Him as our own; let us not give our honour unto others and our years unto the cruel.

Let these remarks upon the ﬁrst of our three themes suﬃce for the present.

2. CHRIST OUR FOOD FOR THE JOURNEY

2.1

His Glory in the Holy Eucharist

He, Who was given to us ﬁrst as our redemption’s price, now gives Himself to us continually to be our daily bread. In the ﬁrst case He was both capable of suﬀering and liable thereto; now He is impassible and crowned with glory and honour. Then He was made a little lower than the angels; now He is exalted far above them, ‘having been made,’ as the apostle says, ‘so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels did the Father ever say: “Thou art My Son: this day have I begotten thee”, or again: “I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to Me a Son”? And again, when He bringeth the ﬁrst Begotten into the world, He saith: “And let all the angels of God worship Him.”’27

This passage, my dear priest of God, treats of the matter about which you wish me to enlighten you somewhat—namely, the splendour which the Incarnate Word possessed, after the manhood which He had assumed was gloriﬁed. I want to comply with your wish, but have no power to do so unless He bestow it, Who gives to all men liberally, and upbraideth not. What, therefore, He shall deign to give me, that I shall not hesitate to write, and it will meet your need.

Consider ﬁrst two passages of Scripture: ‘He dwelleth in light which no man can approach unto,’ and ‘Our God is a consuming ﬁre.’28 Both these are spoken of the Being of God, in which the Father is One with the Son and the Holy Spirit. For in that Trinity ‘none is afore or after other, none is greater or less than another; but the whole three Persons are co-eternal together, and co-equal.’ Wherefore the Son also says: ‘I and the Father are One.’29

If, therefore, They are One, They dwell in the same light whereunto no man may approach; They are the same consuming ﬁre, the same glory, the same power, the same majesty, and the same eternity. So the Son is from the Father, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; and for that reason the apostle calls Him the brightness of the Father’s glory and the express image of His Person. The Son is glorious, therefore, even as the Father is; or rather, Son and Father are the selfsame glory. Are these suﬃcient proof-texts for you about the glory of the Son? Or are you going to tell me that what you really want is passages referring to His glory as both God and Man? For this too, if God’s grace assist us, we will ﬁnd evidence.

First, then, you must not think that the Word’s glory was dimmed by the assumption of manhood into God. God took what was human, but left not the divine; He assumed what He was not, while yet remaining what He was. The angel says to Mary: ‘The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee.’30 That means: ‘The Holy Ghost will work in you the Incarnation of the Word, Who is to be made ﬂesh; He will do so by separating a tiny portion of your ﬂesh, which He will inbreathe with life and link with the Being of God in single Person.’

And there was surely a weighty reason for this overshadowing. The Virgin’s ﬂesh could not have borne the splendour of such majesty, but would have been consumed thereby, had there not been some hiding of it, some overshadowing to protect her from it. When the Lord said to Moses: ‘No man on earth shall behold Me, and live,’ that was as much as to say: ‘As God, I am so glorious that man, while in his mortal ﬂesh, can never see Me without being consumed.’ Therefore, when Moses persisted in begging God to show Himself to him, He said: ‘Stand in a cleft of the rock and, when I pass thereby, thou shalt see My back parts; but thou wilt not be able to behold My Face’;31 and by His Face God means His Godhead here, and by His back parts His humanity. Moses did not, however, see God’s Manhood with his bodily eyes, for that was left for later generations. For instance, it is known that on occasion the glorious ﬂesh of Christ, that is made present on the altar and distributed to the faithful for their food for the journey, glows glorious with the ﬁre of His divinity.32 For as very brilliant purple dyes the whitest wool, converting it entirely into its own hue, and as the soul gives breath and power and life to the whole body, as also ﬁre penetrating iron makes it ﬁery, imparting its own light and heat to it, so that the iron ﬂames and burns and ﬂashes in a manner against its nature; so likewise does God deify the manhood taken into union with Himself, and gloriﬁes together with Himself that which has been exalted above every creature by the omnipotence of purity and the unique prerogative of Deity. The Son bears witness of Himself regarding this; ‘I, the Light, have come into the world,’ He says, ‘and men have loved the darkness rather than the Light.’ And again: ‘I am the Light of the world.’ Saint John puts the same thing clearly when he says: ‘That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.’ Yes, and the Son, praying before His passion to the Father, said: ‘Glorify Thou Me, O Father, with Thine own Self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.’ And the Father said to Him: ‘I have both gloriﬁed, and I will glorify.’33

What could be clearer? What could be plainer? What more manifest?

And now consider what the Gospel tells us of the glory that the God-Man now possesses, as gloriﬁed in His humanity. When the time was at hand for Him to leave this world and go to the Father, He took Saints Peter and John and James and went up Mount Tabor, and there He was transﬁgured before them, and His face did shine as the sun and His garments became white as snow, so as no fuller on earth could make them; and Moses and Elijah appeared along with Him. The three disciples, beholding the glory of His countenance, could not endure its brightness, but were terriﬁed and sorely dismayed, and fell to the ground as though dead.34 And if the Son of God deigned to appear in such dazzling radiance and splendour, and with a glory so unbearable to human sight, before His death, what then must we believe about the glory that is His, now that the Manhood He assumed is gloriﬁed and lifted up above the heaven of heavens, now that He bears the Name that is above every name, so that every knee in heaven and earth and hell bows down to it? What, I say, must we believe of the glory that is His, now that the day of His power has come amid the splendours of the saints, the day wherein His Father heaps upon Him the treasure of joy and gladness, saying: ‘I begat Thee before the morning star’?35 There, in the day of His power, in the day of His eternity, He shines indeed.

Upon that day, moreover, no night falls, no darkness interrupts it, no shadows cut it oﬀ. There He is girt with an abyss of light, a boundless sea of glory. There He shines as the sun shines upon golden shields, and the mountains reﬂect His light. There the saints are enlightened by Him, even as says the prophet: ‘Thou enlightenest wonderfully from the everlasting hills.’36 And in another place we read: ‘Where Thou dost pass, O Lord, is light that never faileth; there the souls of the saints do rest.’ And yet again: ‘Holy is the true light, and passing wonderful, lending radiance to them that endured in the heat of the conﬂict: from Christ they inherit a home of fadeless splendour, wherein they rejoice with gladness unceasing.’37

You see how authentic the evidence is, and how harmonious, in respect of that blessèd and unspeakable glory in which Christ is—or rather, which He is. You see that His glory can neither be lessened, nor increased; for it is inﬁnite, eternal, it transcends all apprehension and outpasses all our thought and deﬁes calculation. ‘Man comes to a deep heart, and God shall be exalted’38 in His glory above all understanding. This glory is always the same; no glory that is rendered adds to it, nor does it suﬀer loss when glory goes from it. The taking of the Manhood into God makes it no less, the glorifying of that Manhood did not make it more. As the prophet truly says: ‘Thou art the Same, and Thy years shall not fail.’

The prophet Habakkuk, moreover, saw this light.39 ‘His brightness shall be as the light,’ he says, ‘and horns in His hands. There is His strength hid. Death shall go before His face,’ thereby showing plainly that, even when His hands were fastened to the cross, and the sun itself was veiling its light lest it should see Christ die, the light of Godhead shone in Him no less. That is why Habakkuk begins by saying: ‘His brightness shall be as the light.’ The Jews, who said so scornfully: ‘We see in Him no comeliness or beauty,’ were blear-eyed when they looked, or rather wholly blind, for blindness fell on Israel at that time. But Habakkuk the prophet had clear eyes; and the people of the Gentiles that was walking in darkness saw a great light, the light arose for them in the land of the shadow of death.

Habakkuk’s witness, then, has made it clear that the passion of Christ’s Manhood did not diminish the glory of His Godhead; nay rather, even as He died He triumphed, conquering death by dying. ‘There is His strength hid.’ A lifeless, wasted, bloodless body hangs upon the cross, the neck is bowed, the head is fallen forward, the face is leaden, and the outstretched hands are fastened to the wood with nails. ‘There is His strength hid,’ there is His strength hidden from the Jews, and the disciples too. It was hidden from the Jews who said: ‘Let us blot Him out of the land of the living, let us condemn Him with a shameful death.’40 It was hidden from the disciples who said: ‘We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel.’41 ‘His brightness shall be as the light, and horns in His hands.’ He faints upon the cross, and shines in heaven; He hangs upon the gibbet, and is glorious in the height.

O holy Habakkuk, how well this splendour shone, enlightening you so many centuries before! The horns of the cross were the horns in His hands, and His hands also were upon the horns of the cross. ‘There was His strength hid,’ but not from hell. There He broke the gates of brass and smote the bars of iron asunder; there He showed His strength; there He, the Stronger, bound the Strong and seized the goods of him who formerly had kept his house in peace.42 There, then, was the cry heard: ‘Who is this King of glory?’, and there the answer rang: ‘The Lord strong and mighty, even the Lord mighty in battle, the Lord of hosts, He is the King of glory!’43

‘Death shall go before His face.’ ‘I will be thy death, O death; O hell, I will be thy destruction.’ Where is thy victory, death, and where thy sting? Death is swallowed up in victory, the Conqueror returns from hell in solemn state.44

‘The devil goes forth before His feet.’ Now is the judgement of this world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out. ‘His splendour shall be as the light,’ to give light to them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death.

The glory of the Word Incarnate, therefore, abides in the gloriﬁed Man; it persists in Him Who sitteth at the right hand of the Father. It grows no less with time, nothing that happens dims it. The Word made ﬂesh is as glorious when He is on the altar as in the height of heaven; He is no less splendid in the hands of the priest than in the Father’s bosom.

2.2

The Dignity of the Priesthood

Make your boast, then, you priest of God Most High, but make it in the Lord. Ponder your dignity, envisage in your mind your high estate, think on your privilege and contemplate your lot. The lot is fallen unto you in a fair ground, indeed, if you do not neglect your heritage. Consider how highly your God has exalted you, how He has set you up above all creatures. Let your prayer be pure, for your voice ﬁnds place in heaven when you duly serve the holy altar and approach thereto to celebrate the most sacred mystery of the heavenly sacriﬁce. At the sound of your voice, at your life-giving word, at your saving petition, the supreme Father, by Whose will all things exist, Whom angels praise unceasingly, for Whom the morning stars all shout for joy, the Father Whose look maketh the earth to tremble and Who alone doeth great wonders, He, I say, the Inﬁnite, commits His most sweet Son into your hands.

The gift of Abel was acceptable to God, but not as this Gift is. The sacriﬁce of Abraham was highly pleasing to Him, but not to this extent. The oﬀering of Melchizedek found favour in His sight, but far less than does this. What says the prophet? ‘Sacriﬁce and meat-oﬀering Thou wouldest not; burnt oﬀerings and sacriﬁce for sin hast Thou not required. Then said I: “Lo, I come!”’45 *He* said ‘I come,’ ‘Who entered once into the holy place, not by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own, having obtained eternal redemption for us.’ All the things that happened to them that were of old were ﬁgures. There was the ﬁgure, here we have the truth; there was the shadow, here now is the light; there cloud, and here clear shining; there the lamb whose sacriﬁce the Law enjoined, and here the innocent Lamb that taketh away the sins of the world.

He Whom you oﬀer, as a priest, Whom your hands handle, Whom your lips receive and take into your body, is the true Son of God; nevertheless that Majesty comes not alone to you. The Son comes to you, but not without the Father. ‘He that sent Me,’ He says, ‘is with Me, and hath not left Me alone.’ The Son comes to you, but not without the Holy Spirit. For what says Saint John? ‘Upon Whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on Him, the same is Christ.’ The Spirit descends upon other men, but He does not always remain. And the whole army of the heavenly citizens is present with Christ too. ‘Thousands of thousands ministered to Him, ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him.’46 For though the angels are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to such as receive the heritage of salvation, they notwithstanding see the Father’s Face and ever stand before that Majesty, upon Whose countenance they desire to look; they never weary of beholding Him, but the more they enjoy that Sight, the more they long for it.

O holy priest, how great, then, is the light with which you are surrounded in the presence of majesty so great, and when in this most solemn rite the Threefold God and the whole company of heaven come to you! What wealth of glory belongs to and is present with the heavenly court in its entirety! Weak as you are, you could not possibly endure such glory, did not the power of the Highest overshadow you.

Be ever mindful, therefore, as I said before, of the peculiar grace you have received from God, a grace not granted to the angels, nor to other men. Bread in your hands becomes the Body of the Sole-begotten Son; wine, at your blessing, His most holy Blood. The angels, who always behold the Face of the Father in heaven, for all that they enjoy complete beatitude and bliss, nevertheless revere the glory of the priesthood, and marvel at the dignity and power and privilege they do not share. . . .

2.3

The Purity of Soul and Body required in a Priest

O chosen generation, royal priesthood, O holy nation and peculiar people,47 show forth the praises of Him Who has called you out of darkness into His marvellous light, and into His unspeakable mystery. You are the light of the world and the salt of the earth. It was said to the Levites of old: ‘Be ye clean, ye that bear the vessels of the Lord’; to you it should be said: ‘Be ye clean, ye that *are* the vessels of the Lord. Glorify and carry God in your own body.’48

God has chosen you for His inheritance. That Body, glorious and gloriﬁed, that once was buried, dead and lifeless, in Jerusalem, is buried now in you. The holy Joseph would not bury it except in a new tomb, wherein never man before was laid, and he was careful to enwrap it in a clean winding-sheet. Alas for you, if you have put Him in a tomb that is not new, or one at any rate that has not been renewed, in a body (I mean) that is not wholly clean from sin, or that has not been puriﬁed by penitence and satisfaction if you have fallen into sin! Alas for you, if you have not wrapped Him in a clean winding-sheet, in a conscience (that is to say) that is wholly purged and shriven from all impurity! There must be no meeting between Christ and Belial in your body; God and idols, light and darkness must not associate in it, sin must not reign in it; for only so will you hallow a worthy resting-place for Christ, a ﬁtting temple for the Holy Ghost. ‘The temple of the Lord is holy,’ the apostle says, ‘which temple ye are.’ And in another place: ‘Know ye not that your bodies are the temples of the Lord, and that the Holy Spirit dwelleth in you?’49 If that is true of anyone possessing charity, it surely is much more so of a priest who pleases God.

Consider further with what loving and assiduous watchfulness the holy angels kept the tomb, after the Body of the Lord was taken thence, alive and gloriﬁed; think of the radiance of form and vesture with which they appeared to the holy women who came to the tomb, seeking the Lord’s Body. Ponder those things; and know beyond all doubt that, if you have worthily handled that same Body of the Lord, that now is glorious and regnant in the heavens and placed in honour at the Father’s right, if you have made your body a clean, new tomb for His, you also will enjoy the angels’ ceaseless care; they will protect your soul, and govern your body, and keep you in all your ways, and they will say to you and to those like you: ‘Ye shall be called the holy of the Lord, the servants of our God.’50

Beware, then, lest you touch that sacriﬁce with guilty hands and heart unclean; for, if you do so, He Himself will say: ‘Touch Me not, for your touch is polluted.’

2.4

The Priest’s Preparation

Always, before you celebrate this mighty mystery, dear priest of God, consider thus:

Saint John the Baptist, who was the Lord’s forerunner, the friend of the Bridegroom, the bridesman of the Bride, a prophet and more than a prophet, he who was hallowed in the womb and justiﬁed in the desert, and was of such outstanding worth and so particularly sanctiﬁed, that man (I say) who was so great in all these ways, nevertheless trembled and feared to touch the holy head of God, and called upon the Saviour rather to baptize him.

Saint Peter, who was appointed by the Lord to keep the keys of the kingdom of heaven, Saint Peter, made shepherd of the sheep by love’s threefold confession and marked out as the prince of the apostles, nevertheless when in peril of shipwreck shrank from the presence of the Lord and cried in fear: ‘Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.’

Saint John, that chosen and most loved apostle, who leaned on the Lord’s bosom at supper, Saint John to whom Christ from the cross committed His mother, the Virgin to a virgin, and to whom heavenly secrets were revealed even while he was yet in mortal ﬂesh, gloried supremely in the fact that he had heard and seen and touched the Body of the Lord. ‘That which was from the beginning,’ he says, ‘which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of life.’51

If, then, those glorious princes of the earth, those noble leaders of the heavenly commonwealth, stood in such awe of touching the Lord’s Body even before It was translated glorious to the heavens, with what great reverence and fear and trembling, then, with what chastity of body and purity of soul does it behove the priest to consecrate, to touch and take that Body, and transfer It to his own, now that It is gloriﬁed and lifted up above all things that are, in the eternal splendour of the Father?

Wherefore, O priest, whoever you may be, if you oﬀer your gift at the altar, if you intend to celebrate that aweful and unutterable mystery, and it come to your mind that your brother has something against you, that great Brother, namely, Who is Himself the Son of God by nature and has given us the power to become the sons of God by grace, and has even deigned to call us so, saying by the prophet: ‘I will declare Thy Name unto My brethren,’ and again after His resurrection: ‘Go, tell My brethren . . .’52—if, I say, that Brother has something against you, if you have oﬀended that Majesty in thought, or word, or deed, if any stain has dimmed the brightness of your innocence, if you are sick in conscience or at the best half-healed, then leave your gift, postpone the celebration of the Mystery, till by contrition and confession, by penance and satisfaction, you have been reconciled with that your Brother. Cleanse your conscience from every single sin. Sit in judgement on yourself, condemn yourself. Let your memory accuse you and your actions bear witness against you, and let the charge against you be the heavier, for that your will consented and you took pleasure in the sin. Take no excuses for yourself: ‘if we would judge ourselves,’ says the apostle, ‘we should not be judged.’53

When, therefore, you have judged yourself, come and oﬀer your gift, and it will please the Lord better than a bullock that hath horns and hoofs. . . . And He Himself will then be your Protector, your Refuge and Salvation; He will say to you: ‘Lo, I am with you all the days, even until the consummation of the age.’54 He will in truth be with you; for He will give Himself to be your daily bread, lest you faint by the way, until such time as He refresh you wholly in your own home-land.

Do, then, as I have said; and, thus prepared, eat of that holy Eucharistic Bread and drink of that blest Cup.

2.5

The Three Ways of Receiving the Body and Blood of Christ

A discerning priest will recognize the fact that there are three ways of receiving this most holy Bread and Cup. First, there is the reception that is both sacramental and spiritual; and that, the true reception, both is holy and confers holiness. Blessèd in itself, it blesses the receiver; a living act, it also is life-giving.

Secondly, there is the reception that is only spiritual; and that most certainly bestows grace, fosters the virtues, and increases merit. And thirdly, there is the reception that is only sacramental; and that is damnable and cause for condemnation; it is hateful to God and separates a soul from Him, and has no blessèd consequence at all.

Every faithful priest who goes to God’s altar, and there duly celebrates the Holy Mystery, ﬁttingly clad in the wedding-garment of charity and being innocent of any mortal sin, receives the Holy Eucharist sacramentally and spiritually; and every believer who receives It from the hand of a priest with the same dispositions receives in the same way, and no less worthily. The priest’s peculiar privilege lies in the fact that he is able to celebrate and receive the Eucharist daily, provided no fault or weakness hinders him; whereas other people are allowed to communicate only at the priest’s hand and at certain times.55

Again, every believer, who is a member of the Church and is living in charity, receives the Sacrament spiritually only; for, though he does not touch It with his lips, he none the less obtains Its virtue for himself—that is to say, forgiveness of his sins and the inpouring of spiritual grace—by means of his faith and union with the Church. And a man receives It sacramentally only, who dares to communicate while persisting in mortal sin; but such a one is fellow to the traitor Judas and, unless he comes to his senses and makes worthy satisfaction to God, it would have been better for him if he had not been born.

Of the ﬁrst kind of reception, that which is both sacramental and spiritual, the Lord says: ‘He that eateth My ﬂesh and drinketh My blood dwelleth in Me, and I in him’; and again: ‘He that eateth Me shall live by Me.’ Of the second, which is spiritual only, He tells us: ‘The ﬂesh proﬁteth nothing, it is the spirit that giveth life’;56 which is as much as to say: ‘If the mere physical reception, apart from grace, is all that you understand, it proﬁts you not at all, but rather does you harm. But the spiritual reception, without the physical, gives you life.’ Of the third kind, which is sacramental only, the apostle says: ‘He that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh judgement for himself, not discerning the Lord’s Body’57—not discerning the diﬀerence, he means, between the Body of the Lord and other foods. The salutary diﬀerence between the Body of the Lord and other foods is this: when we receive those foods, we make them part of our own bodies; but, when we take and eat the Body of the Lord, if we do so worthily we are taken into and made part of His Body, or rather, we pass over whole into God. For he that is joined unto God is one spirit with Him.

Happy the wayfarer who is refreshed with such Food for his pilgrimage as this; for it will lead him safely all the way back to his native land.

The ﬁrst mode of reception, therefore, belongs to priests who reverence their oﬃce and fulﬁl it worthily; and the faithful communicate as the priests ordain. For they hold the keys of the Sacrament; they are the true mediators between God and man; they are the Church’s voice and instrument; they oﬀer God the supplications of the people, and bring them back His mercies. O how faithful is He that promiseth, how true in all His words, how generous in His gifts! Thou saidst with truth, Lord Jesus, ‘Lo, I am with you all the days, even until the consummation of the age,’ and the Scripture also says with truth: ‘The Word is nigh thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart.’58 The Word, Who was in the beginning with God, deigns at the end of the age to be also with man, in the mouth of man and in his heart. What could be closer? What could be more intimate? He is in your mouth; then let His praise be ever on your lips. He is in your heart; thank Him, therefore, with an unfeigned heart and forget not all His beneﬁts. Do you ask me what these are? He forgives all your sin and heals all your inﬁrmities; He saves your life from destruction and crowns you with mercy and loving-kindness. He satisﬁes your hunger with good things, giving Himself to be your Food for the journey; and He will renew your youth as an eagle’s in the resurrection of the just, when at the last He gives Himself as your reward.59

And that, if He Himself deigns to enable us, shall be the subject of our ﬁnal chapter.

3. CHRIST OUR REWARD IN HEAVEN

3.1

‘Eye hath not seen . . .’

Aristotle says that nothing is certain which cannot be apprehended by the senses. But the truth of God is that ‘eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.’ And Saint John says further that ‘no man hath seen God at any time.’60

What, then, are we to do? If the promised rewards of the everlasting life are such as no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no heart has imagined, if no man has ever seen God, Who is Himself the Light and Reward of the righteous, who then shall dare to talk about such things, seeing they are wholly outside his knowledge and experience? Who will presume to speak of the unspeakable?

This only do I know: the more ineﬀable those glories are, so much the more are they to be desired; and their reality surpasses all desire. . . .

3.2

The Weight of Glory: from a Sermon by Saint Bernard of Clairvaux61

For you, my brethren, who are already on the road to the heavenly kingdom, my sole anxiety is lest you should be daunted by the thought of prolonged life here on earth, and doubt if you can bear its load day after day. But you must remember that, as the apostle says, ‘the suﬀerings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.’62 That is a lovely and inclusive promise. We are not going merely to stand by as gaping lookers-on; the glory is to be revealed not outside us, but *in* us. For we shall see God face to face, not as external to us, but as in us, and as All in all. When He ﬁlls the whole earth with His glory, how much more will He ﬁll the soul! ‘We shall be ﬁlled with the good things of Thy house,’63 the psalmist says. And why do I say that the glory will be not only seen by us, but in us? Because it is in us now, already; but then it will be revealed. For ‘now we are the sons of God; but it doth not yet appear what we shall be.’64

In this life, scarcely any of God’s gifts serve us at will. Some things appear to serve us, but they do so only at the cost of our own toil and after we have ﬁrst served them. Beasts of burden, for instance, give us no help unless we ﬁrst rear and tame and care for them. The earth itself, which should be more our own, does not supply our needs without the sweat of our brow; and even when we cultivate it, it gives us thorns and thistles. And all the other things, if you come to think about it, require from us far more service than they give; not to mention the things that are ready to do us active harm, like ﬁre that burns, water that drowns, and wild beasts that slay. That is the way things are; but all the same the apostle is not lying when he says that ‘all things work together for good for them that love God, to them that are called according to His purpose.’65 You notice that He says they work together for our good, not that they serve our wishes. They serve our proﬁt and salvation, not our desire and will. And these ‘all things’ include even such no-things as vexation and sickness and death—yes, and sin too, for do not even a man’s sins work together for his good, when they make him humbler and more fervent and more careful of his steps?

All these things, therefore, are the ﬁrst fruits of the Spirit and the Kingdom, the foretaste of glory, the beginning of power, and as it were the pledge of the inheritance that our Father is going to give us. ‘But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part will be done away,’66 and all things will be ordered after our desire; for proﬁt and pleasure will then be made inseparably one. And that, assuredly, will be the eternal weight of glory of which the apostle says: ‘Our light aﬄiction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.’67 Go along with you, then, you grumbler who say: ‘It is too long, too diﬃcult, I cannot carry such huge burdens every day!’ The apostle calls his burden light and passing; and you have certainly not had ﬁve scourgings from the Jews of forty stripes save one, as he had; nor have you spent a day and a night in the depth of the sea. You have not laboured more than all, nor—lastly—have you yet resisted unto blood. The suﬀerings of the present are not worthy to be compared with the future glory, because the tribulation is light and passing, and the glory is eternal and an exceeding weight. Why, then, do you worry about how long you may have to live? The time is passing, and the suﬀering with it; but with the glory that rewards the labour it is otherwise. That has no change, no end; it abides for ever, entire and the same. We drink our suﬀering drop by drop, successively in time; but the reward of glory is a river, a ﬂooding river that never ﬂows away.

The apostle speaks of the eternal weight of glory. What we are promised is not a glorious garment, or a glorious house, but *glory*, glory itself. The hope of the righteous is gladness, not merely something glad. Men rejoice in food, and pleasures and riches, and even in vice; but joys like that burn themselves out like a candle, and there is weeping at the end of them. But what God has laid up for us is purest, liquid honey, not honey in the comb; the treasure that He has in store for us is joy and life and glory, pleasure and happiness and gaiety and exultation, in themselves; and all these things are gathered into one, even as Jerusalem is compacted together in one.

And what is this oneness, save that which, as I said just now, the apostle describes by saying that ‘God shall be All in all’?68 This is our reward, our crown, our prize; and God grant us so to run towards it that we may obtain it! A sensible farmer who wants a plentiful harvest never thinks the sowing-time too long, my brethren. And your days are numbered, no less than the hairs of your head, and no moment of your days shall perish either. Having then such a promise, most belovèd, let us not fail nor be weary, neither let us complain that the burden of Christ is heavy, for we have His own word for it that it is light, and His yoke easy too; but rather, in face of every load that we carry to-day, let us consider the eternal weight of glory.

To which glory may the Lord of hosts and King of glory Himself of His mercy bring us; and, in the meanwhile, let us cry to Him with fervent and devout humility:

‘Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us,

but to Thy Name give the glory!’

NOTES

[Throughout this new edition and as appropriate, roman numerals have been replaced with arabic numerals.—Ed.]

Address

1 See Exodus 19:12–13; Ecclesiasticus 3:21; and Proverbs 25:27 Vulg.

2 ‘Bonum [ergo] opus nobis in voluntate sit: nam ex divino adiutorio erit in perfectione.’ I do not know whence this quotation comes. [The source is Saint Gregory the Great, *Homiliae in Evangelia* 21.1.—Ed.]

3 1 Corinthians 13:12.

Introduction

4 Saint James 1:17. The Vulgate has ‘best’ where our versions, following the Greek, have ‘good.’

5 Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1.84–86.

6 See Lamentations 4:5.

7 See Saint Luke 10:25–37.

8 See Genesis 12:1–3.

9 Galatians 3:16.

10 Saint Luke 1:37–38.

11 See Genesis 6:5–9:19.

12 This antiphon is based on Ecclesiasticus 44:17, 20. It occurs in the Oﬃce for a Confessor Bishop.

13 2 Corinthians 5:20.

14 2 Corinthians 5:6; Psalm 119:5 Vulg., cf. 120:5 Eng.; Psalm 119:54.

1. Christ the Price of our Redemption

15 1 Corinthians 6:20 Vulg.

16 Cf. Saint Bernard, *On the Christian Year* (London: A. R. Mowbray, 1954), 30 (in pt. 1, 2. ‘Christmas,’ 2. ‘O Wonderful Condescension . . .’ From *Sermones in Nativitate Domini* 1.1–4).

17 A variant of Job 7:1, which reads in the Vulgate ‘Militia est vita hominis super terram’.

18 1 Corinthians 10:13.

19 See Jeremiah 9:1.

20 Song of Songs 1:13 Eng., cf. 1:12 Vulg.; and cf. Saint Bernard, *On the Song of Songs* (London: A. R. Mowbray, 1952), 130–33 (chap. 16, ‘Of the Fellowship of Christ’s Suﬀerings and the Power of His Resurrection.’ From *Sermones in Cantica Canticorum* 43, 44).

21 ‘Compatere patienti, ut merearis redimi.’ A wonderful summary of Saint Paul’s teaching in Colossians 1:24 and elsewhere.

22 Song of Songs 2:14, and cf. *On the Song of Songs*, 194–97 (28.1. ‘Of the Riches of God’s Mercy in the Open Wounds of Christ’) and John of Fécamp et al., *The Little Book of the Contemplation of Christ* (London: A. R. Mowbray, 1951), 57–60 (chaps. 22. ‘Of the Remembering of the Wounds of Jesus Christ our Lord’ and 23. ‘That the Remembrance of the Death of Christ is an eﬀectual Remedy against all Adversities’). There is clearly a common source behind these last two, but I do not know what it is.

23 Isaiah 53:7 Vulg.

24 1 Saint John 4:19; Saint John 3:16; Romans 8:32; Saint John 15:13.

25 Psalm 18:1–2 Eng.; cf. 17:2–3 Vulg.

26 Isaiah 9:6 and Romans 8:32.

2. Christ our Food for the Journey

27 Hebrews 1:4–6.

28 See 1 Timothy 6:16 and Deuteronomy 4:24.

29 See the ‘Quicunque vult’ and Saint John 10:30.

30 See Saint Luke 1:35, and with what follows cf. *On the Christian Year*, 131–33 (in 2.4.2. ‘On Saint Luke 1:28–38: ‘And the angel,’ etc.’ From *Super Missus est*, homs. 3.2, 4, 5, 9–12, and 4.1–7, 9, 11).

31 See Exodus 33:17–23.

32 ‘Exemplariter quidem cognoscitur, quando gloriosa caro Christi, quae in altari conﬁcitur, et ﬁdelibus in Viaticum distribuitur, igne divini ardoris clariﬁcatur.’ I think the meaning of this sentence must be as I have given it, but am not sure.

33 Cf. Saint John 3:19; 8:12; 1:9; 17:5; and 12:28.

34 See Saint Mark 9:2–6 Eng.; cf. 9:1–5 Vulg.

35 Psalm 109:3 Vulg.; cf. 110:3 Eng.

36 Psalm 75:5 Vulg. Psalm 76:4 Eng. is quite diﬀerent.

37 Cf. Respond for First Vespers in the Common of Many Martyrs and the fourth antiphon at First Vespers for the Feast of All Saints.

38 See Psalm 63:7–8 Vulg. Here again the Eng. Psalm 64 is very diﬀerent.

39 Habakkuk 3:4–5 Vulg. Verse 5 reads in AV: ‘Before Him went *the pestilence*, and *burning coals* went forth at His feet.’ ‘Pestilence’ is the correct rendering of the Hebrew *debher*; and the second word, *resheph*, was a Phoenician name for the sun god Apollo; hence the association with ﬁre. The rendering *diabolus*, the devil, for the pagan deity is Saint Jerome’s. For a fascinating account of the variations of the text of this verse in the Greek versions see Henry Saint John Thackeray [in The Schweich Lectures 1920], *The Septuagint and Jewish Worship: A Study in Origins* (London: Oxford University Press, 1921), 51–54, https://goo.gl/**093g5E**.

40 See Wisdom 2:19–20.

41 Saint Luke 24:21.

42 See Saint Luke 11:21–22.

43 Psalm 24:8–10 Eng.; cf. 23:8–10 Vulg.

44 See Hosea 13:14 and 1 Corinthians 15:54–55.

45 Psalm 40:6–8 Eng.; cf. 39:7–9 Vulg.

46 See Saint John 8:29; 1:33; and Daniel 7:10.

47 See 1 Peter 2:5–10. This passage refers to the Church as a whole, not only to the oﬃcial ministry.

48 See Isaiah 52:11 and 1 Corinthians 6:20 Vulg.

49 See 2 Corinthians 6:15; Romans 6:12; and 1 Corinthians 3:17 and 6:19.

50 Cf. Isaiah 61:6.

51 1 Saint John 1:1.

52 Psalm 22:22 Eng., cf. 21:23 Vulg.; Saint Matthew 28:10.

53 1 Corinthians 11:31.

54 Saint Matthew 28:20.

55 Right down to the sixteenth century the mere fact [*sic*, cf. suggestion, mention] of frequent lay communion was apt to arouse suspicion of extravagance and illuminism, although both Saint Thomas Aquinas and Saint Bonaventure in the thirteenth had regarded it as theoretically desirable. See Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (Westminster [London]: Dacre, 1945), 598.

56 Saint John 6:56–57, 63 Eng.; cf. 6:57–58, 64 Vulg.

57 1 Corinthians 11:29.

58 See Deuteronomy 30:14.

59 See Psalm 103:1–5 Eng.; cf. 102:1–5 Vulg.

3. Christ our Reward in Heaven

60 See Isaiah 64:4; 1 Corinthians 2:9; and Saint John 1:18.

61 Saint Bernard, *Sermones de diversis* 1.4, 6–8.

62 Romans 8:18.

63 Psalm 64:5 Vulg.; cf. 65:4 Eng.

64 See 1 Saint John 3:2.

65 Romans 8:28.

66 1 Corinthians 13:10.

67 2 Corinthians 4:17.

68 1 Corinthians 15:28.

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