

Evening Communion

Contrary to the Teaching and Practice of the Church in All Ages.
With Notes and a Postscript on some points in Mr. Kingdon's Work on "Fasting
Communion."

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PREFACE.

THE following pages are a reprint of an able article which appeared in the *Christian Remembrancer* for April, 1860, and to which Canon Bright has kindly appended some valuable Notes. The only liberty taken with the text has been the substitution of a passage containing a fuller statement, by the same writer, in the *Christian Remembrancer* for January, 1861. The Author of the article has had nothing to do with its republication, beyond giving permission to republish it. It has been reprinted in the fervent hope that its more extended circulation will bring it under the notice of many earnest and thoughtful men, and deter them from adopting, or continuing, a practice so fraught with danger to the souls of men, and which "directly tends," as Bishop Wilberforce remarks, "to the desecration of the highest Rite of our holy religion."

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EVENING COMMUNIONS.

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WITH ADDITIONAL NOTES.

How should we have felt and acted if we had lived during the Arian struggle in Alexandria, or at Constantinople when Nestorius was Patriarch, or in Africa while Donatism was eating out the heart of the Church, or in Nuremberg or Augsburg during the second or third decade of the sixteenth century? Such questions the student of sacred history cannot but put to himself when the momentous character of the Church's past struggles rises importunately before him. But if he raises the question, he does not answer it. He feels that he reads the destinies of the successive champions and generations of the Catholic Church by a light which they never themselves enjoyed. It is not that he sees more clearly than they into the Revelation which was given in its entirety once for all. He is not foolish enough to suppose that theology can be improved upon Baconian principles, or indeed can ever be anything but a strictly deductive science, whose major premises are the utterances of God. But he knows that no age ever comprehends itself; it

must be seen in its results. We are accustomed, in this age of telegrams and newspapers, to the phrase contemporary history. Strictly speaking, the thing is an impossibility. We may, indeed, chronicle contemporary facts; but the combination, the judgment, the analysis of cause and effect, the philosophical treatment, in short, which constitutes history, may be exercised on any era of which we have sufficient records—except our own. History can deal only with the past. The press, indeed, perpetually endeavours to set aside this law, and to anticipate the verdict of another generation upon the events of the passing hour. This attempt belongs to its pseudo-prophetical claims; and it has, of course, and not unfrequently, to submit to rude disappointments. But just as we cannot at once enjoy life and anatomize the body which actually lives; so we cannot at once drink into the life of our day and map out its relation to the past and the future. Real prophecy is always a supernatural gift; it is not a happy quick-sightedness of the natural eye. Even in secular history, there is little chance of successful prediction. In the kingdom of grace, where there are so many forces at work which distance calculation, it is certain that we cannot even philosophise upon the present. We cannot say how we of this day shall appear in the eyes of the next generation of Christians. We cannot calculate the influences, the tone, the moral and spiritual inheritance which we shall bequeath to them. We humbly trust that we shall leave to them entire the faith of the Catholic Church; but that is all. We may indeed feel that we live in a time which may hereafter be seen to have been pregnant with momentous results. Of this we cannot indulge anything beyond conjecture; but we *can* note the symptoms of our day—and we shall note them with the greater care as we learn how little we can do beyond. In Church history especially is it true that ages perpetually hang upon that which to the superficial eye is a triviality. It may be that many of the material efforts of this active age are destined to exercise the least possible influence upon the future of the Church. It may be that upon some of the least observed changes in her practice and discipline there depend results which will change the face of Western Christendom. We do not prophecy; but the possibilities of the present may be argued from the facts of the past.

With these reflections, we invite the attention of our readers to a practice which has only of late appeared among us, but which already threatens in some dioceses to become general. To an ancient Christian, Evening Communion would have looked, to say the least, very startling, and even shocking. The practice, in its modern dress, would have violated some of the deepest instincts of early Christianity. The intense and fervid conservatism, so loyal to that past in which confessors and martyrs had lived and died, and the deep inwrought reverence for Christ's Spiritual Presence traversing the length and breadth of the Church's organism, and centering in the Eucharist as its highest expression and channel, would have been equally set aside by it. That such a practice should have arisen upon the horizon of the Church, backed, too, by episcopal encouragement, would have seemed to the ancients antecedently impossible, or a sure mark of heretical depravity. Yet we, who breathe a religious atmosphere so different from that of the early ages, have lived to witness the upgrowth of this reversal of Catholic tradition almost without protest or even recognition. In 1850 it was feeling its way, here and there, warily and stealthily; in 1860, it is the acknowledged practice of at least fifty churches in the metropolitan diocese. Nor is it advocated only by extreme Low Churchmen. Of course such a practice has particular recommendations for the spirit of Puritanism. Ever wayward and undisciplined, popular Protestantism rejoices to make

lawlessness and disorder a prime condition of its activity. When there is a tradition to be set aside, a time-honoured custom to be trampled on, Puritanism is at its post, stimulated to extraordinary exertions, clamorous, contemptuous, defiant—we had almost said, but it would be scarcely true of Puritanism—original. And in this matter of Evening Communion, it finds allies in quarters alien enough from its characteristic temper, yet not unwilling to join it in an onset upon Ecclesiastical Toryism. Men who would shrink from Exeter Hall and its grotesque platitudes, and whose sense of decency would keep them out of the suburban theatres, have a great opinion, nevertheless, of the superior insight of our day into the needs of the Church, and are glad to have a hand in setting aside prescription, for the mere sake of doing so. And there are others, to whom we would specially address ourselves, who are profoundly impressed by the grave responsibilities which Providence has imposed upon the Church of England, and by the unsatisfactory and inadequate response to those responsibilities which our Church system actually attempts. They are touched with compassion at the sight of the perishing masses; they contrast the select few who kneel before their altars with the multitudes who might be “compelled to come in.” They do not wish to be neglectful of antiquity, but they are not altogether anxious to scan its real mind too narrowly. Is not Apostolical antiquity in favour of Evening Communion? Does Church history yield no precedents? Is there not, further, in the best sense of the term, a practical and utilitarian basis for the practice which might dispose us to make the most of weak evidence, and to strain a point if necessary? Now, it is to these persons, thus arguing, that the following remarks will be addressed. It is our conviction that Scripture not merely affords no real countenance, but implicitly condemns the practice in question; that the ultimate mind of Scripture is to be discovered in sub-apostolical antiquity; and that antiquity is as clearly condemnatory of the practice as it is utterly at issue with the doctrinal tone which could permanently acquiesce in it.

I. It is of course unquestionable that our Lord and Saviour instituted the Blessed Sacrament of His Body and Blood after supper, and in the evening. Mr. Greswell and others descend to particulars, into which we will not follow them, as to the exact hour.¹ Now this general fact is continually appealed to, as forming a serious argument for the new practice. And it is insinuated that the early Church forgot the example of her Lord, in her zeal for the precepts and traditions of His first servants and disciples. Nothing can be less true. In contemplating our Lord’s life, the early Church saw plainly that while, in some respects, His actions were to be imitated closely, literally, and for ever, in others they were peculiar to, and a part of, His Redemptive and incommunicable relation to the human race. To take an example. It is well known that there was in the fourth century a general disposition on the part of converts to Christianity to defer Baptism, with a view to escaping the guilt and responsibility of post-baptismal sin. On the 7th of January, A.D. 381, S. Gregory of Nazianzum directed one of the greatest of his great orations against this tendency in the Metropolitan Church of Constantinople. We see in that discourse the many and ingenious arguments which were advanced by those who wished to delay Baptism as long as possible. Among others, they urged the example of our Blessed Lord. Now, how does S. Gregory reply? Our Lord is not, he says, to be closely followed by Christians in every particular. We fast, as He did. But our Lenten fast differs from His, in

¹ Cf. Greswell, Dissertations, vol. iii. Diss. 41, pp. 170-172.

its occasion and in its object. He then instances the Eucharist. “Christ instituted it in a supper-room, and after supper, and on the day before His Passion. We celebrate it in Christian temples, and before taking supper, and *after His Resurrection*.”² He then enunciates this principle: *oute aperrektai ton ekeinou ta hemetera, oute sunzeuktai chronikos all hoson tupos tis einai ton hemeteron paradothenta, to pante parapleion diapefugen*.³ His Divinity and His Redemptive relations to man would suggest the principle of the inevitable discrepancies between the model and the imitation. The Church alone could rule the details of such discrepancy: and the Holy Ghost, sent down upon her for a purpose no less high than that of guiding her into all truth, would enable her to discharge these lower functions with confidence and accuracy.

This principle has, in fact, been admitted by all Christians; by none more completely than by those who would fiercely denounce it when stated in terms. If the Church “has authority in controversies of faith,” much more has she power “to decree rites and ceremonies.” But she did not at once determine the time of day at which the Eucharist was to be celebrated. SS. Cyprian and Augustine, as we shall see, give reasons for the determination actually and ultimately adopted, and these reasons would have been valid from the first. In point of fact, however, for some few years, the point was not ruled. If with S. Jerome and S. Augustine⁴ we see an Eucharistic celebration at Emmaus, our Lord Himself celebrated in the afternoon of the first Easter Day. There is no ground for supposing that the Apostles consecrated the Eucharist previous to Pentecost. Our Lord’s words to S. Mary Magdalene imply that only *after* the Ascension, the closer intimacy of Communion, the Eucharistic touch, would succeed to that not less awful but more distant reverence due throughout the great forty days to His risen humanity. Pass we on then to the Eucharistic passages in the Acts of the Apostles. These passages, it must be admitted, help us in no material degree towards a solution of the question. The first Christians, we know, assembled daily in the temple, and celebrated the Eucharist at home (κατ’ οἶκον, Acts ii. 46). This celebration was daily (καθ’ ἡμερᾶν). But we have no grounds for saying, with Neander, that it was probably held in the evening, as we can as little conclude positively that it was in the morning. Again, we know nothing of the time of that solemn oblation of the Eucharist (λειτουργουντων δε αυτων, Acts xiii. 2) in the Church of Antioch, at which the Divine Will respecting SS. Paul and Barnabas was supernaturally disclosed, except that we are expressly told that those engaged in the Service were “fasting” at the time. Again, the horology of the celebration at Troas is peculiarly embarrassed. It is very possible that the Apostle’s discourse was continued until midnight on Saturday: the *mia ton sabbaton* having begun at six o’clock in the evening of that day. In this case the Eucharist was celebrated early on Sunday morning, like the *cætus antelucani* of Tertullian. But S. Luke’s account admits of other constructions, and the celebration in question *may* have taken place before the sermon on Saturday or Sunday evening, or even—as some would say—after it on Monday morning.⁵ Further, it seems too doubtful whether the action recorded of S. Paul during his shipwreck was properly sacramental to insist on it for purposes of argument. It, however,

² This expression probable refers to the fact of the celebration being *in the morning*, *after* the hour at which our Lord rose from the grave.

³ S. Greg. Naz. Orat. 40, Opp. Tom, i. p. 715, ed. Bened.

⁴ Hieron. in Epitaph. Pauke ad Eust.: S. August. Libr. 3 de Cons. Evang. c. 25.

⁵ Acts xx. 7.

did certainly take place while the distressed crew were anxiously expecting daylight. (Compare ver. 33 and 39, Acts xxvii.) But there is one passage in the New Testament which seems to guide us towards that solution of the point which was ultimately accepted by the Catholic Church.

The Church of Corinth would seem in its Eucharistic observance to have adhered with more accuracy than the Churches of the Proconsular Asia to the literal reproduction of the order of events on the night of institution. First came the Agape—the representative of the Paschal supper—the natural symbol, as the Eucharist was the supernatural aliment of the charity of the faithful. S. Chrysostom, indeed, expresses his opinion that the Eucharist preceded the Agape; and he is followed by writers like Cardinal Bona, who too eagerly assume an absolute correspondence between the earliest Apostolical Church and the Western Christendom of later centuries.⁶ But S. Augustine, in his letter to Januarius, intimates the opinion stated in the text, and he is followed by commentators like A Lapeyre and Estius, whose aim was exegetical and not liturgical. The uncritical and irreverent error which, in his commentary on this passage of the Corinthians, Dr. Stanley has subserviently borrowed from the rationalizing Lutherans of modern times, whereby the Agape is actually identified with the Eucharistic oblation, has been already exposed in the pages of this Review.⁷ (Note I.) It is certain that from the first they were entirely distinct; and it is observable that in no one of the celebrations recorded in the Acts of the Apostles is there any trace of the Agape as linked to the Eucharistic Service. The question of priority it is difficult to decide upon. If the actual traditions of the Catholic Church be held to settle the question, we must infer that the Eucharist preceded the Agape. If, with Lightfoot and Schöttgen in our hands, we examine the question as illustrated by Jewish antecedents, and our Lord's actual form of procedure, we must rule that the Agape preceded the Eucharist. And to this latter conclusion we decidedly incline. The selfishness and sensuality which S. Paul condemns was exhibited at the Agape; and it must have rendered Communion most painfully sacrilegious, whether we suppose such conduct to have preceded or followed upon the reception of the Sacramental Species. But at the moment of writing, the Apostle was anxious only to bring home to the conscience of the Corinthian Church the sum of its overwhelming guilt. The wealthier members prepared a banquet, which ministered to their appetites, and which they refused to share with their poorer brethren. They thus sacrificed the idea of the Agape—the fraternity and equality of the brethren before God—to the present gratifications of sense. The “hungry” poor looked on. The sated rich left the common table “drunken,” and passed to the Altar of their Lord and Saviour. S. Paul leaves them to the rising consciousness of their guilt. The natural appetites were not to be satisfied at the Agape. If any were hungry, he might eat at home. But this regulation was obviously insufficient to meet the evil. And accordingly, the chapter closes with the pregnant words, “*The rest will I set in order when I come.*”

Τὰ λοιπὰ διατάξομαι. How much ground does that promise actually cover? We can only judge by the event. From the era of the Apostles, if not before, the Agape was severed from the Eucharist. It lived on indeed; it had its uses; it is described at length by Tertullian; its memory is still preserved in the “pain béni” which is distributed at solemn Masses in the Church of France. But another Apostle speaks of the Agape in

⁶ S. Chry. in loc: Bona de Reb. Liturg. vol. i. v. Ed. Turin.

⁷ *Christian Remembrancer*, No. 92, April, 1857, pp. 457, 458.

words which echoed the judgment of S. Paul. The sensual professors of Christianity, whom S. Jude rebukes, are characterized as εν ταις αγαπαις σπιλαδες, συνευωχουμενοι αφσβως (Jude 12). A second result of S. Paul's "visitation" of the Church of Corinth would seem to have been the ultimate prevalence of morning celebrations of the Holy Communion throughout the Church. Nothing less than the authority of Apostles will adequately account for the universality of morning celebrations in all the widely-separated branches of the Church. Nothing less than the fearful scandals of the Corinthian practice—which combined the ordinary physical excitement of a late hour with the evils of indulgence at a previous meal—would most naturally account for the universal abandonment of a traditional usage, which at least might plead literal correspondence with the formal action of our Lord when instituting the Sacrament. Is it too much to say, that we are asked by the partisans of the modern innovation to ignore the experience and to reverse the decision of the Apostles themselves?

II. No independent witness to the existence and character of apostolic Christianity has attracted more notice than that afforded by the Epistle of Pliny to the Emperor Trajan. Familiar as we may be with it as quoted by Gibbon or by Paley, we probably are less than fully alive to the exceeding value of this document. Mr. Clinton places it in A.D. 104.⁸ It was penned then at a date when as yet the voice of the Beloved Apostle had scarcely died away in the Churches of the Lesser Asia. It exhibits the Bride of Christ as she had grown up under that Apostle's eye, and had received his parting blessing. The words are too precious to be forgotten: our readers will pardon us for quoting them at length. Pliny has been telling his master that he found particular difficulties in dealing with the Christians who were at that time brought into the Courts of his Proconsulate. He declined the investigation of such cases whenever it was possible to do so. But he held that obstinate and inflexible adherence to opinion was of itself a punishable offence. Christians who were also Roman citizens were to be sent to Rome. With the others the Proconsul dealt mainly by threats, and on the spot. He tells us that he put two deaconesses to the torture: he felt that something must be done, as already the masses of the people were in particular districts of his province embracing the new religion, and the worship of the gods was generally neglected. Where conversions had been so general, the repressive measures of the Roman authorities, although not singularly severe, naturally produced several apostasies; and it is to the depositions of the unhappy apostates that we are indebted for one of our clearest insights into the practice of the sub-apostolic Church.

"Adfirmabant autem hanc fuisse summam vel culpas sure vel erroris, quod essent soliti *stato die ante lucem convenire*, carmenque Christo quasi Deo diceve secum invicem, seque *sacramento* non in scelus aliquod obstringere, sed ne furta, ne latrocinia, ne adulteria committerent, ne fidem fallerent, ne depositum appellati abnegarent: quibus peractis morem sibi discedendi fuisse, rursusque ad capiendum cibum, promiscuum tamen et innoxium," &c.—*Plin. Epist. Lib. ad Traj. ep. 96, p. 231, ed. Keil.*

Such was the statement. From friends and foes it has attracted an attention which has been denied to the gymnasium and theatre at Nicæa, or to the cost and construction of the aqueduct at Nicomedia, or to the rising importance of commercial Byzantium, or to the reports of the doings of the Parthian or other frontier-powers, which formed the staple

⁸ *Fasti Romani*, vol. i. p. 91, ad ann. 104.

of the correspondence to which it belongs. To us, this famous passage appears conclusive as to the separation of the Holy Eucharist, alluded to under the word “sacramentum,” and celebrated “ante lucem,” from the Agape—the “cibus promiscuus et innoxius”—which was held later in the day. Mosheim indeed, Neander, and others, think that “probably” the⁹ Lord’s Supper (‘by which term they mean the Eucharist) was celebrated together with the “social meal” in the evening.¹⁰ The question turns partly upon the meaning of the word “sacramentum” (Note II.) Did the apostates use this word in the ordinary and classical, or in the ecclesiastical sense? We think the latter. What other word *could* they have employed in speaking of the Eucharist to a heathen Roman magistrate? Its spiritual, mystical value he would have been unable even to comprehend; he characterises the statements of the tortured deaconesses as “superstitio prava, immodica.” As a Roman he would be familiar with the idea of obligation, and that one aspect of the Eucharist accordingly it was which was intelligible to the Latin world, that thus early appropriated to it the name “sacramentum.” Whatever else it might be, it was to the Christian Church what their oath of fidelity was to the legionaries of the empire. This conclusion is fortified by a consideration to which Neander himself shall bear his testimony. For he observed that “in Justin Martyr we find the celebration of the Supper entirely separated from those feasts of brotherly love, if, indeed, the latter still continued to exist in the churches which Justin had in view.”¹¹ Nothing is more certain. In S. Justin the Eucharist is spoken of in terms which show what was the real mind of the sub-apostolic Church. We “do not receive it,” he says, “as common bread, or common wine; we have been taught that the Food, over which thanksgiving has been made by the prayer of the word which is from Him is the Flesh and Blood of Him, the Incarnate Jesus.” S. Justin, then, does not agree with Dr. Stanley and Neander in regarding the most awful Service of the Church as part of an “evening social meal.” With him it follows, upon reading “the memoirs of the Apostles, and the writings of the Prophets,” and upon a sermon from “him who presides,” and upon “prayers and thanksgivings.” Our readers will remember that more might be quoted from S. Justin to the same effect. Neander, and such as he, are compelled to suppose a total revolution in the mind of the Church on the subject of the Eucharist between 100 A.D. and 133 A.D. For S. Justin was converted in A.D. 133, and martyred in A.D. 165. He tells us that he exactly repeated what he had been taught. In less than thirty years, then, according to Neander, the adjunct of an evening meal had been transformed into a separated, awful Mystery. It had become the highest and most emphatic act of Christian worship—so utterly dissociated from the Agape that the latter is never once alluded to in the pages of Justin. Is this conceivable? Conceivable, indeed, it is, if the more destructive rationalism of the Tubingen school be true, and the Divinity of our Saviour, together with the Gospel which so conspicuously enshrines it, was elaborated in the middle of the second century of our era. From this conclusion Neander would recoil; but his own method of dealing with the doctrine of the Eucharist is not less violent than that of those who apply the self-same principle to the doctrine of our Lord’s Godhead.

⁹ The Coptic Canons certainly identified the “Supper” with the Agape—a noticeable point for those who, like Baron Bunsen, imagine these canons to witness in favour of modern theories. (Cf. Apostolic Constitutions in Coptic ed. by Archdeacon Tattam, pp. 68-70. London, 1848.)

¹⁰ Neander, Church Hist. i. p. 443.

¹¹ Church Hist. ut supr.

The truth is that Pliny records the time, as S. Justin records the circumstances and rationale of the Eucharistic Oblation. While S. John yet lived and wrote, it would seem to have been the great Morning Service of the Church—and distinct from the later Agape. Indirect testimony to the same effect might be inferred from what we know respecting the practice of the heretic Marcus, who, as described by S. Irenæus,¹² appears to have parodied the practice and doctrine of the Catholic Church. This is confirmed by testimonies taken from the close of the second century. According to Cave, Tertullian was converted in A.D. 185; the Oxford translators of his works are probably right in placing that event ten years later—in 106 A.D. Now there are at least three passages in his writings which go to prove that the practice of the Church was in his days what it had been in Pliny's. In his well-known allusion to the “Stations”—a military term, by the bye, which, like “sacramentum,” had passed into the metaphorical phraseology of the Church¹³—he contends that the scruple, “quod statio solvenda sit accepto Corpore Domini,” was unnecessary.¹⁴ Of this more hereafter: suffice it to observe that, with Tertullian, a late Eucharist is an exceptional practice, and implies a long previous fast, if partaken of (Notes III., IV.) In another treatise¹⁵ he is discussing the practical daily difficulties of a Christian lady who is married to a heathen husband—as must have been in his day the case in thousands of families throughout the empire. He inquires whether the husband will not accuse his wife of magical practices when she crosses herself, or when she rises to pray at midnight. He adds—“Non sciet maritus quid secreto ante omnem cibum gustes?” Now Gieseler and Oehler quote De Orat. c. xiv. as proving the unquestioned practice of Eucharistic reservation, and *imply* that “ante omnem cibum” must be taken in the sense of “before every meal.” Is it conceivable that the Church would have allowed a lay member to carry home enough of the Consecrated Species for such very frequent reception? Is there any ancient authority which affords serious support to such a translation? We have observed other instances of the endeavour to represent the practice of the ancient Church as absolutely removed from possibility of imitation, when, in fact, it coincides with that of religious people among ourselves. Those who have found difficulty in attending an early Celebration while staying at the house of unsympathising or irreligious acquaintances, will best understand and construe the phrase of Tertullian, who witnesses emphatically to the practice of the Church to receive the Eucharist fasting, and, as a general consequence, to receive it *early*. The words simply mean that she received the Eucharist “before all other food”—it may be before leaving her chamber, when her husband would take note of the practice. Lastly, in his treatise De Corona, Tertullian is arguing very characteristically for the necessity and force of ecclesiastical tradition. After enlarging on the elements which it had contributed to the Baptismal Service of the Church of the second century, he adds—“Eucharistiæ sacramentum, et in tempore victus, et omnibus mandatum a Domino, *etiam antelucanis cætibus*, nec de aliorum manu quam præsentium sumimus.”¹⁶ What is the force of “etiam” in this passage? Does it mean that the Eucharist was received “horis etiam extra antelucanas,” as in his note on the passage Oehler appears to intimate? Or does it not, in accordance with

¹² I. 13, 2 qu. by Dr. Pusey, Real Presence, p. 325.

¹³ Cf. Lactant. Div. Inst. vii. 27.

¹⁴ De Orat. c. 19.

¹⁵ Ad Ux. c. 5.

¹⁶ De Cor. c. 3.

the genius and direction of the entire argument, merely point to the apparent contrast between the practice of our Lord and that of the Church of the second century, without implying anything whatever as to celebrations of the Eucharist at other times? That this last is Tertullian's real meaning we shall show from S. Cyprian just as we have already illustrated Pliny from S. Justin Martyr. S. Cyprian was converted in A.D. 246, consecrated Bishop of Carthage in A.D. 248, and martyred in 258. During his whole episcopate he seems to have been favoured with revelations of the Divine Will; but he is not less remembered as the strenuous champion and assertor of ecclesiastical tradition. S. Cyprian may be fairly taken to represent the generation which inherited the traditions of the generation of Tertullian. Let us open his Epistle to Cæcilius. In that Epistle he is arguing against the Aquarii, who, as our readers will remember, and as the name implies, "offered" only water, instead of the mixed chalice, at their celebration of the Eucharist. S. Cyprian insinuates that they dreaded discovery in the bitter persecution which, under Decius, desolated the Church of Africa. If a man communicated in the morning from a mixed chalice, it was possible that "*per saporem vini redoleat sanguinem Christi.*"¹⁷ What was this but to be ashamed of the Son of Man before men: How could they anticipate < martyrdom who shrank from confessing themselves communicants? The Aquarii seem to have met these grave considerations by a very questionable expedient. If they used only water in the morning, they "offered the mixed chalice after supper." They pleaded our Lord's practice in justification of this custom.

In reply S. Cyprian observed that there were obvious reasons for the time selected by our Lord, which do not generally apply. It was right, in His case, "*ut horâ ipsâ sacrificii ostenderet occasum et vesperam mundi.*" Even as the Paschal Lamb was slain in the evening, the Redeemer of the world was, in instituting the Blessed Eucharist, to lift up His hands for an evening sacrifice. But His resurrection obliges His disciples to a different observance: they celebrate it in the early morning. The Aquarii, then, could not make the practice of the Church, in respect of the time of the celebration, a valid pretext for mutilating the matter of the Sacrament. The practice of the Church was justified by the difference between Christ and Christians. The Aquarii were breaking a positive and very plain command.

It is so far from clear that the evening meetings, at which the Aquarii used wine, were in any sense a celebration of the Eucharist, that the contrary appears certainly demonstrable. It was a kind of private Agape rite, or perhaps an offering up to God of the wine of the "mixed cup," which they were about to drink at their ordinary supper, and which appears to have been welcomed by the Aquarii as a stopgap for the consciences of those who were unsatisfied with the mere use of water at the Altar in the morning. That in fact it was not the Eucharist seems to be implied by S. Cyprian's phrase, "*Sacramenti veritatem,*" and is proved by the marked contrast of the expression "*Dominicum celebrare*" in the following clause. But why, we would ask, did the Aquarii pretend to celebrate in the morning at all, when they were afraid to use anything but water? There is only one answer to this question. So strong and so definite was the tradition of the Church, that to celebrate without the essential matter of the Sacrament in the morning appeared to these men a less evil than no morning celebration at all, or than an evening celebration. When indeed, at last, they were driven to plead that, in order to celebrate the Eucharist with all its essential elements, they must (after our Lord's example) do so after

¹⁷ S. Cyp. Ep. 63, 12.

supper, they were told that “we celebrate in the morning.” S. Cyprian’s reply was (1) that the Church celebrated in the morning, in accordance with the time of our Lord’s Resurrection; and (2) that at this morning celebration as often as celebrated (quotiescunq̄ue) they should use wine as well as water. In saying that S. Cyprian was pleading for a “mixed chalice” “(in which our Church has not thought proper to follow him)” Dr. — is guilty of a slight fallacy. S. Cyprian was not pleading for adding water to wine, but for adding wine to water. Dr. — concludes triumphantly, “There is not the slightest hint in Cyprian’s argument of an obligation to morning celebration exclusively.” We assert, on the contrary, that there is the strongest possible implication of this “obligation to morning celebration exclusively.” The practice of the Church is stated, without comment, as Dr.-----has observed in the parallel case of the Lord’s Day observance during the Ante-Nicene period. This is assuredly the strongest way of implying that that practice was obligatory. It is enough for the members of any society to be informed of its practice. They do not seek, as they would not generally be favoured with, an additional dissertation on the grounds of the obligation.¹⁸

¹⁸ It may be best to relegate a minute discussion on this passage to a note. The practice against which S. Cyprian is writing appears to have existed for some time in portions of the African Church. He attributes the origin of it not to cowardice, but to ignorance and simplicity. After general arguments against it, he states the pleas of those who practised it—I. That it was a custom received from those who preceded them. II. That by means of it they were not discovered to be Christians from the smell of wine early in the day. Then follow two pleas contained in the passage in question. S. Cyprian says:—

“An illâ sibi aliquis contemplatione blanditur, quod etsi mane aqua sola offerri videtur, tamen cum ad cœnandum venimus, mixtum calicem offerimus? Sed cum cœnamus, ad convivium nostrum plebem convocare non possumus, ut sacramenti veritatem fraternitate omni præsente celebremus. At enim non mane, sed post cœnam mixtum calicem obtulit Dominus. Numquid ergo Dominicum post cœnam celebrare debemus, ut sic mixtum calicem frequentandis Dominicis offeramus? Christum offerre oportebat circa vesperam diei, ut horâ ipsâ sacrificii ostenderet occasum et vesperam mundi, sicut in Exodo scriptum est: ‘Et occident illum omne vulgus synagogæ filiorum Israel ad vesperam.’ Et iterum in Psalmis: ‘Allevatio manuum mearum sacrificium vespertinum.’ Nos autem resurrectionem Domini mane celebramus. Et quia Passionis ejus mentionem in sacrificiis omnibus facimus—Passio est enim Domini Sacrificium, quod offerimus—nihil aliud, quam quod Ille fecit, facere debemus. Scriptura enim dicit: quotiescunq̄ue enim ederitis panem istum, et calicem istum biberitis, mortem Domini annuntiabitis, quoadusque veniat.’ Quotiescunq̄ue ergo calicem in commemorationem Domini et passionis ejus offerimus, id, quod constat Dominum facisse, faciamus.”

Here, it will be observed, there are two distinct points advanced by the Aquarians: (a) That they do offer wine (with water) when they come to supper. (b) That the time of the Communion ought to be altered, and the celebration be made after supper. We will add our own translation of the words, marking in veiled commas the allegations of the Aquarii. Only we will premise that the word *Dominicum* is used—(a) of the Lord’s Day; (b) of the Lord’s Feast (the Eucharist); (c) of the Lord’s House. In a well known passage in the treatise. “De Opere et Eleemosynâ,” the word is used of the Eucharist and the Church in two consecutive clauses: “Locuples et dives es, et *Dominicum celebrare* te credis quæ carbonam omnino non respicis: quæ in *Dominicum* sine sacrificio venis; quæ partem de sacrificio, quod pauper obtulit, sumis?” There can be no doubt that in the passage before us “*Dominicum*” means the Eucharist. And Gersdorf notes that “*Dominicis*” means the same, and that *Dominicum celebrare* and *frequentare* are equivalent. The classical use of *frequentare* in the sense of solemnizing, or celebrating, is familiar to scholars. “Does anyone flatter himself with the thought” (this was the third plea) “that although in the morning water only seems to be offered, yet when we come to supper we offer a mixed cup?” “But, when we sup,” S. Cyprian replies, “we cannot call together the people to our banquet, so as to celebrate the *reality of the Sacrament* in the presence of all the brethren.” “But it may be said” (their last argument) “that it was not in the morning, but after supper, that the Lord offered the mixed cup. Ought we not, therefore, to celebrate the Lord’s Feast after supper, that so we may offer the mixed cup in solemnizing the Lord’s Feast?” “It was right” (is the answer of Cyprian) “that Christ should offer towards the eventide, that the very hour of the

“Cum cœnamus, ad convivium nostrum plebem convocare non possumus, ut Sacramenti veritatem fraternitate omni præsentē celebremus.” What can be plainer from such language than *this*—that the only public Celebrations of the Eucharist in the Church of the Cyprianic age were in the morning? Not even the bitter persecution of the Dccian era could induce her bishops to adopt an evening Celebration, although it would have provided in no small degree for the security of her members. Morning Celebrations were the rule, from which Catholic instinct and prescription alike forbade departure. And this surely proves that Tertullian’s language is equally assertory of the self-same practice, unless, indeed, we are to resort to the violent, gratuitous, and utterly unproved hypothesis of a “development”—in plain English, of a revolution in ecclesiastical practice—between the first and the forty-eighth year of the third century of the Christian era.

There remains the classical passage of S. Augustine, with which our readers will be more or less acquainted (Note IV.) About the year 400 A.D., Januarius—of whom we know little, except that he is not to be confounded with either the Catholic or Donatist prelates of that name, who are familiar to the student of S. Augustine—seems to have applied to the great Bishop of Hippo for a solution of several questions touching ecclesiastical usage. Januarius seems to have been distressed by the prevalence of different usages in different portions of the Catholic world—such as would be encountered by a Christian traveller who was loyally attached to the traditions of his native place. Before descending to particulars, S. Augustine lays down some principles as preliminaries, which would rule his decisions. He notes, on the one hand, the simplicity which characterizes the Sacramental Institutions of our Lord and Saviour; on the other, he contends that unwritten traditions, which are observed throughout the Catholic world, must be traced either to the Apostles or to Councils with plenary and world-wide authority (Ep. 54. c. I). The varying customs of different Churches rest on a basis

Sacrifice might shew forth the decline and evening of the world (as it is written in Exodus), ‘and all the congregation of the Children of Israel shall kill it in the evening.’ And again in the Psalms: ‘Let the lifting up of my hand be an evening sacrifice’—*but we celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord in the morning.* And because,” he concludes, “we make mention of His Passion in all our sacrifices (for the Passion of the Lord is the Sacrifice we offer) we ought to do nothing else than what He did. For as the Scripture says, ‘As often as ye eat that bread, and drink that cup, ye do shew the Lord’s Death till He come.’ As often, therefore, as we offer the cup in commemoration of the Lord and His Passion, let us do that which it is certain the Lord did—i.e., offer wine.”

Now we think it will appear very plainly that the mixed cup offered at the “cœna” was not the Eucharist. The language, when we come to sup—“at supper”—seems to suggest the idea of an ordinary meal, and the action is contrasted with “celebrating the reality of the Sacrament in the presence of all the brethren.” But all doubt seems to be removed by the words that follow, where the Aquarii, driven from the subterfuge of “the wine offered at supper,” urge that “the Lord’s Feast, the *Dominicum*, ought to be celebrated after supper.” It seems plain that the cup they offered at supper could not be maintained to be “*a celebratio Domini*” And the answer of S. Cyprian seems most dimply decisive of the point now at issue: “We celebrate in the morning.” The practice of the Church in this matter was so plain and so decided that all further discussion was precluded. Let it be observed that our whole and sole inquiry is: What was the received practice of the Church of S. Cyprian’s time? It is manifest that a celebration in the evening, *post cœnam*, was regarded by him as a practice which could not be permitted; that the suggestion of it was sufficiently answered by the argument, “We have no such custom, neither the Church of God.” “We celebrate in the morning.” And he clenches the whole argument by the command of our Lord, that, *as often as we celebrate, we shew forth His death, and therefore must use the symbol of His Blood.*—(*Christian Remembrancer*, Jan. 1861.)

essentially different. At Rome they keep Saturday as a fast: S. Ambrose had to allay S. Monica's scruples on the score of the opposition of Milan. In some churches there was a practice of communicating daily; in others only on stated days. S. Augustine accepts, in a large sense, the principle of our Article on Church Traditions, as not necessarily in all places one or utterly like; and holds that "the grave and prudent Christian" will invariably accommodate himself "to the usages of the church which he may happen to visit" (c. 2). Now it would seem that a particular practice of the African Churches must have shocked some of the ecclesiastical travellers of the fourth century. On Maundy Thursday those Churches received the Holy Communion only after eating food, and in the evening. S. Augustine remarks almost severely upon the traveller—perhaps Januarius himself—who should contrast this practice of his native Church disparagingly with the different customs that prevailed elsewhere. It was at least an open question—the practice to be observed on that one day. Scripture had left it so. The Church had not then ruled against the African practice. And there was a literal correspondence between that practice and the scene in the Supper-room. "Liquidum apparet," he says, "quando primum acceperunt discipuli Corpus et Sanguinem Domini, non eos accepisse jejunos."

It was, then, in no forgetfulness of what is urged upon us by those who discuss those subjects at the present day, that the great Bishop of Hippo guarded himself in the following terms against the supposition that, in pleading for the liberties of Africa, he forgot what was due, as a rule, to Catholic consent:—"Numquid tamen propterea calumniandum est universæ Ecclesiæ quod *a jejunis semper accipitur*? Ex hoc enim placuit Spiritui Sancto, ut in honorem tanti Sacramenti, in os Christiani prius Dominicum Corpus intraret, quam cæteri cibi, nam *ideo per universum orbem mos iste servatur*."¹⁹

The startling exception proves the rule. The national peculiarity of Africa on one single day is thrown out into the clearest relief by the otherwise invariable practice of the Church of Christ. Like S. Cyprian, S. Augustine contends that our Lord's practice was not in the matter of time to be imitated by His disciples. He left that point to be regulated by His Apostles. He desired to impress upon them the lofty majesty of the mystery, by instituting it upon the very eve of His Passion. Had He said one word to imply that the evening was ever to be the hour of Celebration, it is inconceivable that the Christian world should have, with one consent, set His injunction aside. "Si hoc Ille monuisset ut post cibos alios semper acciperetur, credo quod eum morem nemo variasset." The universal practice is probably to be traced to the unwritten regulations of S. Paul, who after the scandal which arose from the union of the Agape with the Eucharist in the Church of Corinth, "set things in order," by dissociating them, and by introducing the new order of things, which we have already, seen to be that described by Pliny as prevalent in the year of grace 104.

Such is S. Augustine's remarkable statement. Let its full significance be well weighed. We have heard it remarked that S. Augustine is himself responsible for the practice of communicating fasting, and that that practice obtained chiefly through the deference so generally yielded to his great authority. Such a statement is obviously at issue with the facts of the case. Augustine does not recommend an observance: he records one, as already nothing less than œcumenical. And his own famous canon, so tellingly urged in his controversy with the Donatists, that, where there were so many causes calculated to produce diversity, the absolute agreement of the Catholic world in a

¹⁹ S. Aug. Ep. 54 ad Jan. vol. ii. p. 126. Ed. Bened.

doctrine or practice should be accepted as witnessing to its apostolicity, must here be borne carefully in mind. His words may be aptly illustrated by the terms of the twenty-ninth canon of the Third Council of Carthage, which had been passed three years before (in A.D. 397). At that council S. Augustine himself was present; he subscribed its decrees. His language to Januarius is an expansion and justification of the language of the Council. The latter runs thus:—

“Ut Sacramenta altaris non nisi a jejunis hominibus celebrentur, excepto uno die anniversario, quo Cœna Domini celebratur” (Conc. Carth. III. can. 29. Labbe, vol. ii. p. 1171).

In A.D. 692, we find the Trullan Council referring expressly to the Carthaginian canon, and generally prohibiting that exception to Catholic rule which was permitted on Maundy Thursday in Africa (Conc. Trull, can. 29, apud Labbè, tom. vi. p. 1155).

If then S. Ambrose, when expounding Psalm cxviii. (Serm. 8), alludes to evening celebrations of the Eucharist, he must be understood to refer to the late celebrations on the days of the Stations, common in the Latin Churches, and alluded to in Tertullian; or, possibly, more remotely to the African custom on Maundy Thursday (Note VII.) And from S. Chrysostom’s first letter to Innocent, in which he describes the various outrages which preceded that second exile of his, from which he never returned, it would appear probable that at Constantinople—at least in A.D. 404—there was a late celebration on Easter Eve.²⁰ But S. Ambrose specially, and without making any exception, enjoins a strict fast upon the consciences of those who communicated late at Milan: just as the Eastern canons would have enforced it at Constantinople (Note VIII.) The Constantinopolitan practice on Easter Eve, and that of the Latin Church on the Station days, cannot be quoted by those who have so far departed from the spirit and language even of our old Anglican writers as to scout the practice of communicating only when fasting as a superstitious form. *They* cannot quote the practice of the African Churches on one single day in the year; since this practice proves the general absoluteness of the rule which they are anxious so consistently to violate. *They* cannot altogether even appeal to the Egyptian Christians; for the historians who record their irregularity use language concerning it which sufficiently expresses the profound disgust which it excited in the Christian world. The Egyptians in the neighbourhood of Alexandria, and those in the Thebaid, celebrated the Eucharist on Saturday evening. “But they do not,” observes Socrates, “partake of the Mysteries, as is the custom for Christians; for after feasting, and being filled with every description of eatable (παντοιων εδεσμων εμφορηθηναι), when they come to even-tide they partake of the Mysteries.”²¹ If the supposition be correct that Sozomen generally borrows his materials from Socrates, and quietly tones down expressions of opinion, without openly professing to criticise, it is observable that he here rivals Socrates, in the strength of his condemnation of the Egyptian practice. He, like Socrates, alludes to it in a chapter which is a perfect repertorium of Church usages. The Egyptians, he says, ηριστηκοτες ηδη, μυστηριων μετεχουσι. He does not enlarge upon the fulness of bread which Socrates so eagerly describes. Even if no such excess be presupposed, they acted παρα το κοινη πασι νενομισμενον²²—contrary to the universal rule. That was enough.

²⁰ S. Chrys. Opp. iii. p. 619, ed. Gaume. Ep. ad Inn. I.

²¹ Socrates, Hist. Eccl. v. 22, ed. Hussey, vol. ii. p. 632.

²² Sozom. Hist. Eccl. vii. 19, ed. Hussey, vol. ii. p. 744.

It may be said that the dislike to Evening Communion is at bottom connected with the desire to restore the ancient practice of fasting before Communion. If this were so, we should, after all, only be treading in the steps of Bishop Sparrow and many other great English names who might be quoted. But here we will only ask, is nothing to be conceded to the practice and instinct of the ancient and universal Church of God? Are we to fashion our rule by exceptions which she barely tolerated or energetically repudiated? Are we English of the nineteenth century so much wiser and more comprehensive, and deeper, and holier, and more jealous for God's glory and for His truth than they, that we may safely cast to the winds what was treasured up and has been handed down by the saints and doctors of antiquity—a portion of that body of faith and practice which is the heritage of Christendom—as if it were a foolish enactment suited to the stunted and cramped intelligence of a darkened age? The Bishop of ——— may think it consistent with his high position to speak contemptuously of these, the only authorities upon whom he can ultimately rely for a proof of the canon of Sacred Scripture. But the general sense of Churchmen will recoil from such extremes, so condemnatory of the only great school of English divinity; so fatal, if viewed as a concession to the destructive rationalism of the day. And if the ancient Church is to be taken into account, if we are to concede anything, we will not say to its authority but to its sense of propriety, we shall hold our hand ere we be persuaded to abandon our own traditions for the practices of the Protestant Nonconformists, and to adopt or attend, as the case may be, Evening Communion.

III. It will of course be urged, that the real recommendations of the practice lie in its practical utility. This is a practical age. It wants men who feel its wants and can meet them. It can dispense with theorists, even with those whose theories are to them convictions. It will not be hampered by archaeology—no, not by Christian archaeology. It is bent upon progress and improvement. Religion must be practical, like everything else, if it is to hold its own. If what savours of the past be merely ornamental, let it stand: at least, it does no harm. If it cramps or numbs the energies of the living present, it is a cobweb or a fungus: sweep it away. This is the temper of our day; the temper of not a few clergymen, for example, in the diocese of London. We describe what we have not time to criticise on moral ground, although something, we apprehend, might be said to it on that score. But a clergyman thus minded looks out into his parish. There is the small inner circle of a few communicants; there is the larger circle of church-goers, who do not communicate; there is the zone of Dissent, which never enters the walls of the church, or only occasionally; there is the outer circle of all the irreligious, un-praying, unlistening multitude. Towards all of these he has duties. But his chief duty lies towards Church people—his strength is the number of his communicants. This is true in a supernatural sense, which he may be slow to apprehend. But it is true in a moral and social sense, patent and obvious to friend and foe. To increase his communicants—that is the question. It may be that, unhappily, he regards the Holy Sacrament from a Zwinglian or Calvinistic point of view. To the intelligent Churchman, it is the channel of grace—the certain, awful point of contact with the Most Holy. Such a clergyman may view it as the symbol of a certain stratum of Christian attainment, rather than as the well-spring of Christian life. Still he will, if possible, increase his communicants; they represent his central strength, his actual reliable flock; they are the expression of his ministerial success; their inward sanctification, he may think, is a question for their Maker and for themselves; their

number is his concern—pre-eminently his. He will, before all things else, increase that number. He finds that the people have habits and necessities which interfere with their submission to the actual tradition of the Church, as to the time at which the Holy Sacrament may be celebrated. Without hesitation he will alter the time of Celebration. Why should he not do so? He will probably have learnt to consider Scripture as at least doubtful on this point. Antiquity he holds to be purely irrelevant. So forthwith he gives notice that, on the second and fourth Sundays of every month, there will be Afternoon or Evening Communions.

In this statistical age, the temptation to measure spiritual growth by the numbers who attend the ordinances of religion has, it is to be feared, greatly increased upon us. Men live in fear of educational Blue-books and Census-reports. Publication is inevitable; it must be met with the best figures at command. But this process is very deadening both to pastor and people, if unchecked by a keen perception of those supernatural truths and laws which alone afford any true criterion of the real conquests of our Lord in the wide waste of human hearts. Great risk there is of putting forward religious privileges in such a way as to lead to the impression that the great end is only their being accepted, no matter in what spirit. Put them forward, nay, press them on others by all means; but insist, at the same time, upon the abiding guilt of past sin, which is not really repented of; insist upon the necessity for personal strictness and austerity, or at least for a practical self-denying rule of conduct; do not fondle the luxuries and privileges of the religion of Christ, and forget its severities. Years ago this was felt by one (who, alas! has given his talents and his heart to another communion) so keenly, that while to him beyond all others the Church of England owes her revived loyalty to sacramental truth, he hesitated to advise the immediate and general restoration of weekly Communions.²³ Dr. Newman would doubtless admit that *early* Celebrations are more or less free from the dangers he apprehends, since they impose an accompanying act of self-denial: they are out of the reach of mere habit or fashion, and generally speaking they attract only the earnest and the devout. But of the principle of his caution we have great and abiding need to be reminded. Evening Communions are a repudiation of that principle; they offer the highest religious privilege divested of any accompanying self-denial or inconvenience; they offer it to surfeited bodies and to wearied and jaded faculties; they offer it to the excitement of an evening meeting, where the activity of the sensuous organs is apt to be mistaken for spiritual keenness. They may for a time augment the number of communicants at the altar of the Church of England. That they will save and sanctify more souls is a position of the truth of which we are absolutely incredulous (Note XIV.)

If, then, a clergyman's object is indeed purely and solely to increase the number of his communicants, we are fairly unable to argue with him. He is out of our reach, and, sad as it is, must go on his way. But if he is careful for the separate souls committed to his charge he will stay his hand, while we bid him consider whether Evening Communions do not oppose serious barriers to the sanctification of individual Christians, and even whether numbers might not be increased without such a serious departure from the tradition of the Church.

Now the experience of the Christian world is in favour of *early* devotion. "O God, Thou art my God, early will I seek Thee." This is familiar to the experimental

²³ Cf. Sermons on Subjects of the Day, by J. H. Newman. Sermon ix. pp. 133, 134. London: Rivingtons, 2nd edition.

Christian—so familiar that we shall not insist upon it. The soul is clear, fresh, vigorous, and keen in the early morning, unsoiled as yet by the dust and toil, unbroken by the burden and heat of the coming day. The morning is the time which will be chosen for the strongest resolutions and the most persevering intercessions. There are physical reasons doubtless for this; such as recent sleep, and possibly atmospheric conditions which invigorate the powers of the mind through those of the body. There is a sensible sympathy with awakening nature, such as is recognised in the ancient hymnology of the Catholic Church. At any rate, memory, imagination, will, are all more active in the morning than at other times; and it is but reasonable, or, as vulgar writers would say, “common sense,” to devote these quickened powers to the one religious action which outweighs all others in importance and in effect.

It will be said that this may be admitted; and yet those who cannot attend an Early Communion must be provided for. The one class who seem to engage the sympathies of certain clergymen are the servant-maids. They it is whose care demands a reversal of the tradition of the Catholic Church (Note XI.) Now we have every sympathy with an unaffected charity towards the souls of this too-often neglected class. We are well aware that they are unprovided for in many a parish, otherwise well administered. The clergyman cannot interfere with the household arrangements of his wealthier parishioner; and the lady of the house considers the religious training of her servants to be pre-eminently the work of the clergyman. And there is too often a complete absence of Christian feeling as to the nobleness of service—of such, we mean, as is felt by those who learn their ethics at Bethlehem and on Calvary. Some of our readers may recollect a striking passage of Père Lacordaire, in which that great preacher contrasts the condition of the English household servant with that of the “*homme de la maison, le vieillard qui nous avait autrefois tenu sur ses genoux*”—the honoured nurse who lived and died in the feudal chateau of the as yet unrevolutionized and Most Christian kingdom.²⁴ There is an element of truth in this, though there is also an element of unhistorical exaggeration; but if we English are becoming more alive to the fact that “*Jésus Christ a été le premier domestique du monde,*” and to its practical consequences, this is no reason for “Evening Communion.” There are matters in which the Church may rightly defer to national and domestic habits. Wherever it is barely possible, she will naturally do so, that she may better economize her resources for the unequal struggle which she carries on against the dominant maxims, temper, and mind of the world. But there are maxims which she *cannot* accept. There are matters in which she *must* mould the national habit at any cost. Now we are disposed to think that the English habit of lying in bed on Sunday morning is an evil with which the clergy ought to wage unceasing war, as being fatal to the growth of spiritual life. Religious Dissenters feel the truth of this; and we know of English towns where there are prayer-meetings in more than one Dissenting meeting-house at six and seven o’clock a.m., while the parish church is not open until eleven a.m. Do the Dissenting maids-of-all-work never attend those meetings? Is that an impossibility in England which is the rule in Belgium, in France, in Italy? Are English mistresses inveterately opposed to an arrangement which only seems inconvenient because it has never been tried? Are servants who know what the Blessed Sacrament is, and what sort of preparation it demands, likely to grumble at the amount of exertion necessary to their consecration of three-quarters of an hour on Sunday morning? Or if they do so grumble,

²⁴ Lacordaire, *Conferences*, II, p. 73. Ed. Bruxelles.

are they likely to receive Holy Communion in the evening with the true dispositions? We recollect discussing this subject with the vicar of a large town church in the West of England. On Christmas Day he celebrated an afternoon Communion for “the servant-maids.” Very few of that class attended the service. But other persons came who would else have risen in time to come in the morning—they came “reeking from their Christmas dinners.” The vicar did not continue the experiment; and we cannot doubt that his experience has been confirmed in other town-parishes. On the other hand, there are many churches in London where the attendance at Early Communion is such as to justify large expectations on the score of a reformed practice in this matter throughout the country. And if the Church of England is to recover spiritual vigour in a wide sense, Early Communion must be the main cause and chief symbol of such recovery. They are the real remedy for many of our evils. We have had long experience of mid-day Celebrations. Coming at the end of a long service, which succeeds to some hours, it may be, of previous distraction, they intercept and obviate countless spiritual blessings which Early Communion would secure. They approximate to the more offensive mischiefs of afternoon and evening Celebrations. Let it be boldly confessed that the Church should mould the national habits to the true interests of souls, and that our present custom is a real corruption. We do not forget the many cases of age and of weakened health which will always demand such late Celebrations. By all means. But for the young and the strong—for the great majority of communicants—there is no objection to Early Communion, save those of custom and indolence. The earlier and more earnest Evangelicism felt this strongly, and, in some cases which we could name, acted upon it. We have reason to know that there is at this moment a considerable movement among those engaged in trade at the East-end of London to secure a privilege, which in too many cases their less enlightened clergy are slow to concede.

And there are, thank God! churches in which the people have had opportunities for Early Communion, and have been encouraged to make the most of them. We have the highest authority for saying that at S. Barnabas, Pimlico, “the number of poor persons and servants who communicate early is much larger than that of those who avail themselves of the mid-day Celebrations,” when the communicants are more generally members of the upper classes. At S. Matthias, Stoke Newington, there were on Easter Day, 1859, 130 communicants at 5.30 a.m., 38 communicants at 8 a.m., and 200 at half-past 10. On the same day at S. Paul’s, Brighton, there were at a quarter-past 5 a.m., 54 communicants; at half-past 6, 174; at 8 o’clock, 140 and at 11 238; making a total of 606. Somewhat similar statistics might be shown by the clergy of All Saints, Margaret-street, and other well-known churches (Note XII.) Of course it will be said that such churches are abnormal—that they represent, not the territorial area of their actual jurisdiction, but large portions of the metropolis, from which they gather the scattered elements of sympathising Churchmanship. Look then at Wantage, where you have the parochial principle hand-in-hand with the assertion of the Church system. In that old parish church one hundred communicants, gathered almost exclusively from the labouring classes, might have been seen kneeling at the altar to receive from their pastor the Bread of Life at half-past four in the morning of last Ascension Day. Early Communion is the obvious choice of the devotional instinct. They will not of course be frequented when first adopted; but they must be put forward as a leading feature of the revived Church system. They embody its moral and its sacramental significance, they necessitate an act

of self-denial, and they secure the freshest energies of the soul for the altar of God (Note XIII.) It is said sometimes that they huddle away into a corner of the day its most momentous act. This is reasoning which might have objected to the manger at Bethlehem, on the score of its obscurity. When no word has yet been uttered except to God, when no nourishment has yet passed the lips, when the first self-dedication of the waking moment still echoes through the soul, there is the truest welcome, the most genuine adoration, the most tender and soul-constraining recognition of the King of Kings, Who sets up His throne in the heart, as in the world, without observation. Only let a soul have felt this experimentally, and a late Communion will appear to be a disadvantage, an Evening Communion simply intolerable. For, as it seems to us, Evening Communions MUST involve two disastrous consequences. Of these the first is a lowering of the conventional standard of sacramental preparation. Even in cases where the Holy Sacrament is received, say once a month, and then only after a late morning Service, there is a species of consecration of the preceding hours, in families which give weight to religious considerations. The family prayers contain it may be a sacramental allusion. The breakfast-table, if attended, is nevertheless left earlier than usual. There is a restraint in conversation—an eagerness to put serious topics forward. But this tension would not be kept up in such a family, if the Communion were deferred until the evening. Nothing would be left to represent the relaxation and cheerfulness of the Lord's Day, if its most solemn act were postponed until sunset, and the previous hours devoted to incessant preparation. Of course exaggerated demands in religion, as in other matters, provoke exaggerated resistance. The consequence would be a large neglect of any sacramental preparation whatever. People would go to the Holy Sacrament it may be in great numbers, but just as they go to an evening Service. They would carry with them minds which had been traversed by all the worldly associations which are inseparable from five or six o'clock of the evening of Sunday, do what you will. They would take faculties, of which the first and freshest efforts had been offered to others, or had evaporated through weariness, or had become impossible through repletion. (Note XIII. and XIV.) Imagine a worthy squire rising from the wine after dinner to attend Holy Communion in his parish church. We forbear to dwell on the picture; but the case is not an impossibility, and it is certain to annihilate the lingering, indefinite, yet tenacious sense of what is due to their nearest act of approach to God, which still prevails so generally among our people.

And secondly, Evening Communions will tend to lower the popular standard of Eucharistic belief even more than that of Eucharistic preparation. They are intimately allied, we believe, with a Zwinglian propaganda. Even a Calvinist, if intelligent, ought to be afraid of them; for he imagines the faith of the receiver to consecrate as well as to claim the Presence received. He must be therefore anxious that that faith should be lively. A Churchman knows that the promise of Christ standeth sure, resting on a basis happily distinct from his own weakness and vacillation and numbness of spirit, and effecting its behest through the invariable power of an apostolical priesthood. However anxious he may be to make the best use of the gift of Heaven, he is well assured that it is given independently of himself. Not so Calvin. With him faith makes what it touches, and it cannot create unless it be strong, and fresh, and unimpeded. Of course a mere external covenant-act—a symbolic commemoration, involving nothing supernatural, nothing beyond the natural action of the memory, and imagination, and affections— might be

respectably gone through at any time of the day. The question becomes one of social convenience when we descend to this Zwinglian stratum of religious misbelief, and we forbear to follow it. But late Communion, which ought to present difficulties to religious Evangelicals, must seem fatally inconsistent with the belief in that Presence which serious Churchmen seek and find at the altar. And we unhesitatingly predict that when Churchmen are so unhappy as to yield to the present current of popular pressure, their higher, better, fuller, truer belief in the Blessed Sacrament will be subjected to a rude shock, and probably abandoned.

Again, there is a consideration of grave importance, which cannot but occur to thoughtful and religious Christians in a question of this kind. Is it not certain that the general adoption of Evening Communion by members of the Church of England would make the breach between ourselves and the great body of the Western Church practically wider, and the hope of reconciliation more distant than ever? The philosophical student of Church history knows well that with the masses a difference of religious habit or practice avails to separate much more surely than many a weightier difference of belief. For the outward, sensible, tangible differences of practice and of rite impress those to whom the largest diversity of inner conviction seems but as an airy unsubstantial subtlety. Here then we have what would be an outward and evident difference of practice between the Churches—widening the breach more markedly to the popular apprehension than do the Sacramental Articles or the Definitions of Trent. Of course there are those among us to whom such a result would be a recommendation. They have forgotten the burden of our Lord's Prayer in S. John xvii. They have resolved His visible Church into a subjective and ideal conception. They have studied the Apocalypse under the auspices of Dr. Gummig. An insult to the religious mind of the Christendom of France, Italy, Spain, and Austria, is in their eyes a religious grace—nothing more or less. We are not writing for them; we repudiate their first principles as they ours. But intelligent and earnest Churchmen must admit that something, nay, that much, is due to our separated brethren of the West. We inherit a separated position; we did not make it. We are thankful for the undoubted blessings which it assures to us; we are sensible of the greater weakness which it as certainly entails—the paralysis of a divided Christendom, the doubts or scoffs of an unconverted world. In God's name, let this generation beware of deepening the chasm by wanton abandonment of usages and traditions which we hold in common with the Catholic world, and which, once abandoned, will be abandoned for ever. Rome has already, by her definition of the Immaculate Conception in 1854, rendered the hope of a united Church beyond measure more hopeless than it was before. We cannot afford to imitate her policy and share her guilt. But an imperceptible lapse to an uncatholic practice may speedily effect more mischief in the way of traditional division than even the Bull *Ineffabilis*. What would the Latin bishops say to a Communion which made post-prandial reception of the Holy Sacrament almost its rule? The modern rite of Benediction is no real parallel. Doubtless that rite is an expression of the anxiety to sanction by the holiest Presence those evening Services which are seemingly so congenial to the modern world. But it concedes nothing that grossly violates the universal tradition of the Church of the Fathers. It is not a deliberate return to a main feature of the practice of the Church of Corinth, which was condemned by the experience of the Apostolic age, and set aside by the Apostles. How far it may itself be linked to a sacramental conception, which is a “development” of the early faith of the Church, is a question upon which we are not now

able to enter. It does not at any rate sanction Evening Communion, unless an awful and distant reverence be identical with intimate and actual reception of the Sacramental Species.

Here, then, we bring these remarks for the present to a close, premising that they do but touch upon a vast subject, of the importance and extent of which, when viewed in its real bearings, our readers might find it difficult to form an exaggerated estimate.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

I. THE EUCHARIST AND THE AGAPE.

The “exposure” of the error identifying the Holy Communion of Apostolic times with the Agape is to be found in the *Christian Remembrancer* of April, 1856. p. 456, in a review of Mr. (now Dean) Stanley’s work on the Epistles to the Corinthians:—

Mr. (Dr.) Stanley appears to have a special dread of our feeling too much reverence for the Holy Eucharist; and would have us believe that in the Apostolic age the Lord’s Supper (or Eucharist, for he identifies them) was the usual evening banquet, for which thanks were given to God; after which a cup of wine, for which thanks were previously given, was drunk. He speaks of it (p. 238) as a “*social meal* to which the hungry looked forward to satisfying their wants, and when some even indulged in excess;”.....and “a *supper*,.....the regular *substantial* meal of the day;” attended by “festive accompaniments.” He says there was no “administration,” and that the people divided the bread amongst them, helping themselves;²⁵ because it is said “the bread which *we* break!” the *we* being understood to mean all the people.

In taking this view, Mr. (Dr.) Stanley wholly ignores the fact that the Eucharist was celebrated after the pattern of our Lord’s action at the Last Supper. That, accordingly, one person would take, bless, and break and divide the loaf, one would bless the cup. And of this a plain indication is given in the use of the first person, the bread which *we* break; the cup which *we* bless; i.e., the Apostle, and those Presbyters who presided, as opposed to the second person (“as often as ‘ye’ eat,” &c.) which is uniformly adopted throughout the passage where the people are spoken of.

The δεῖπνον is confounded by Mr. (Dr.) Stanley with “the bread and the cup,” He holds that the “eating this bread and drinking this cup,” means only “partaking of this feast” (p. 744); though it is evident that the two were distinct. from what Mr. (Dr.) Stanley himself observes, viz., that it was *one* loaf which was specially broken and eaten as *the* bread, “the sacred loaf, representing, in its compact unity, the harmony of the whole society” (p. 248); a quantity manifestly insufficient for a *banquet* for the whole body of Corinthian Christians. And it is plain that the δεῖπνον was a separate thing from the one loaf divided among them, because the latter implies their being together and sharing it, whereas each ate his own δεῖπνον without waiting for others, and so one was hungry, and another ate and drank to excess. That the bread and cup were not, in S. Paul’s view, such an ordinary meal is demonstrated by his saying, “What, have ye not houses to eat and to drink in?” And again, “If any is hungry, let him eat at home.” It seems quite clear that the one broken loaf was distinct from the meal, from the supper, that is, which each could eat by himself out of his own store; and the blessed cup was also distinct from what they drank at that meal; for, otherwise, how could there be the contrast, a one is hungry, and another is drunken,” out of that which might have been shared alike? Mr. (Dr.) Stanley illustrates his view from the passage in Acts ii. 46, but

²⁵ “The phrase ‘takes before another’ evidently implies that each man helped himself, that there was nothing corresponding to what in later times is called ‘an *administration* of the supper.’ Compare the expressions ‘*we break* the bread,’ in x. 18.”—Vol. i., p. 240.

passes by the proper meaning of *κατ' οἶκον*, "at home," as opposed to "in the Temple:" and in alleging the instance of S. Paul at Troas and the Christian assembly there, he imagines that their meeting in the evening "to break bread" has all the accompaniments of an "ordinary family meal," although, owing to the Apostle's lengthened preaching, the "breaking of bread" was delayed from evening all through the night till morning, which is scarcely compatible with the people having looked forward to it to satisfy their wants by a substantial meal. We leave Dr. Stanley's picturesque description of the banquet and the tapestried room as a mere imagination. The natural exposition of this passage which distinguishes the broken loaf and blessed cup from the Supper, and makes that supper the frugal meal which was eaten rather as a sign of mutual love and unity than "as the regular substantial meal of the day," fits in exactly with the earliest accounts we have of its actual celebration in Pliny, in S. Justin Martyr, and in Tertullian.

On this distinctness between the Eucharistic Feast and the Agape see Archbishop Tillotson, Sermon xxv. He says that when "the feast of charity" was ended they celebrated the Sacrament; at Corinth, "after an irregular" (i.e., ill-regulated) feast, they went to the Sacrament. He explains "not discerning," i Cor. xi. 29, as making no difference in their behaviour between the Sacrament and a common meal.

See Bingham, xv. 7, 7, as to the question whether the Agape preceded or followed the Communion. "That which seems most probable is that they observed no certain rule about this matter, but had their feasts sometimes before, sometimes after the Communion."

S. Ignatius appears to distinguish the Agape from the Communion. Having said, "Let that Eucharist be deemed valid which takes place under the Bishop, or some one appointed by him; where the Bishop appears, let the people be; even as, where Christ Jesus is, there is the Catholic Church," he adds, "It is not lawful apart from the Bishop either to baptize or to make an Agape" (Smyrn. 8). Tertullian's description of the Agape is in Apol. 39: "Our Supper shows its character by its name" (love-feast), &c.

II. THE "SACRAMENTUM" OF THE BITHYNIANS.

Pressensé (*Trois Prem. Siecl.* I. Vol. ii. p. 468) considers the Sacramentum to have consisted in "mutual exhortations," which took place at the early morning Service; while "the Supper" (he means the Holy Communion) followed the Agape in the evening. But on this view, the witnesses examined by Pliny entirely passed over the Communion when describing the religious observances, properly so called, of the Bithynian Church. For there is nothing properly religious in the "innocent evening meal" as described by them. Nor does it seem likely that a mere exchange of exhortations would be spoken of as a "Sacramentum." The deaconesses would "most naturally," as Bishop Wilberforce expresses it (Charge of 1860, p. 14), "when speaking to a heathen, apply the word 'Sacramentum' to the mystery of the Holy Eucharist," or at any rate, we may say, to the Eucharist in that aspect in which it constituted the most powerful of all pledges to moral purity. Bingham distinctly says, "In the beginning of the second century we find the Eucharist was received before," as he has just said, "early in the morning," "and the feast postponed." "Thus," says Bishop Wilberforce, "we trace up an unbroken custom of condemning late Communion to within the period when the voice of the beloved Apostle must have been instructing the Christian Church in the Lesser Asia" (for the

Bithynian Church in A.D. 104 would be guided in such matters by what S. John had taught or practised in the Province of Asia before his death, about A.D. 100). “That the custom of early Communion,” proceeds the Bishop, “should have begun so soon, suggests, for other reasons than its mere antiquity, that it rested upon Apostolical authority. For the Divine institution and the first Celebration were after the evening Paschal meal. How, within so short a period, could such a change have been possible, had it rested upon any lower authority? The probability is strong that the inspired Apostles themselves altered the time of Celebration from the hour of the Paschal Feast to that of the Resurrection of the Lord. And no careful student of the New Testament will doubt that, in the abuses which had crept into the Corinthian Church touching the Holy Eucharist, and in S. Paul’s treatment of them, they found the occasion and the time of the alteration. First, then, I condemn these late Communions because they are a violation of the custom of the Universal Church, which may be traced to the very first century, and which rests most probably on an Apostolical ordinance framed to guard the holy rite from abuse.”

III. TERTULLIAN ON FAST-DAY CELEBRATIONS.

See Tertullian de Oratione, c. 19. “Most people think that on the Station-days” (i.e., Wednesday and Friday, the two fast-days of the week) “they ought not to attend the prayers of the Sacrifices” (i.e., the Holy Eucharist), “because the Station” (i.e., the fast) “would be broken by receiving the Lord’s Body. Does, then, the Eucharist break up a service due to God? Does it not rather bind us to God? Will not your Station be the more solemn if you shall also have ‘stood’ at God’s Altar? When you have received the Lord’s Body and reserved it” (i.e., taken it home for daily communion—see Tert. ad Ux. ii. 5) “both (actions) are saved, the partaking of the Sacrifice and the performance of the duty” (i.e., of the fast).

He means, in other words, “You can go to Celebration on the weekly fast-days without prejudice to the fast.” See Bingham xiii. 9, z, who shows that on these days the Service preceding the Celebration would be very lengthy, the number of psalms and prayers being increased; the Celebration at 3 p.m. would conclude the worship.

On the force of “etiam” in Tertull. de Cor. 3, “Eucharistiæ Sacramentum, et in tempore victus et omnibus mandatum a Domino, etiam antelucanis cœtibus, nec de aliorum manu quam presidentium sumimus,” see note in S. Cyprian’s Works, Lib. Fath., ii. 192. “The force of ‘etiam’ is, doubtless, *even before daylight*, in contrast with the evening.”

It is necessary, though by no means agreeable, to point out a very grave misrepresentation of Tertullian’s words, adopted in some sort by no less a writer than Bingham from no less a writer than Bishop Fell. Bingham is trying to prove that the Aquarii in S. Cyprian’s time had some precedent for their “evening Celebration.” For this purpose he assumes that the after-supper Celebration on Maundy Thursday, sanctioned by the African Church at the close of the fourth century, and the after-supper Celebration on Saturdays, described as an offensive local custom by Socrates, towards the middle of the fifth, were established usages known to Cyprian in the middle of the third. And having stated that “some learned men are of opinion that for the three first ages, though they generally received the Eucharist fasting in the assemblies before day, yet sometimes

they received after supper” (xv. 7, 8), he cites in a note Bishop Fell, who (Cypr. Op. ii. 156) says: “It is certain that the Eucharist, although received in the hours before daylight, was also wont to be distributed in the evening; of which fact Tertullian is an adequate witness, De Coronâ, c. 3: *Eucharistiæ Sacramentum tempore victûs de præidentiam manu sumimus.*”

Here, by omitting some words, Fell has materially altered the purport of the text; in plain English, he has garbled the passage. Tertullian is contending for the Church’s right to ordain ceremonies or observances without express warrant of Scripture (sine ullius Scripturæ instrumento, solius traditionis titulo). Then he writes the sentence fully quoted above, of which the sense is, so far as the time of Communion is concerned, “Our Lord ordained the Eucharist at a meal time; but *we* take it *even* so early as before dawn.” Cf. *Literary Churchman*, May I, 1869.

IV. S. AUGUSTINE ON THE MAUNDY THURSDAY CELEBRATION.

See his 54th Epistle to Januarius, written about A.D. 400 (i.e., seven years after the Council of Hippo had enacted, three after the Council of Carthage had confirmed, the rule that the Eucharist was to be received fasting at all times, save on one day of the year, the anniversary of its institution). Augustine has been saying that in some countries the Oblation is made twice on that day, in the morning and in the evening; but elsewhere only once, “at the end of the day.” Januarius had asked what should be done on that Thursday? Should there be two Celebrations (or, as he says, Oblations)? Should the fast be kept until supper time, and the Celebration be after supper? or should people fast until the Celebration, and then “sicut facere solemus,” sup afterwards? And this is Augustine’s answer: Generally, let everyone do as the Church does where he may be staying. The custom (existing in many places) of celebrating on that Thursday after taking refreshment is not supported by the text, “Likewise also the Cup after supper.” At the first Celebration, no doubt, the disciples were not fasting. Is that a reason for censuring the Universal Church’s observance of always communicating fasting? *Ex hoc enim placuit Spiritui Sancto, ut in honorem tanti Sacramenti, in os Christiani prius Dominicum Corpus intraret quam cæteri cibi: nam ideo per universum orbem mos iste servatur.* Our Saviour had a special reason for giving His disciples His Body and Blood “post cibos.” He desired to impress the Mystery more deeply on their minds by placing it just before His Passion. The arrangement of the subsequent order of celebrating He left to His Apostles; and from i Cor. xi. 20, 34, we may infer that the present universal custom of fasting Communion was ordained by S. Paul. But, proceeds Augustine, some persons have liked to make an exception on the one anniversary of the institution. “Now *I* think it is more seemly to celebrate the Eucharist on that day at such an hour as that one who has fasted may, after the refreshment which is taken at 3 p.m., come to the Oblation. Therefore we compel no one to take his morning meal (prandere) before that Supper of the Lord; but we dare not forbid anyone to do so. But I think that this was arranged for no other reason than that many people, and nearly all people in most places, have been accustomed to bathe on that day. And because some at the same time keep the fast there is a morning Oblation for the sake of those who take the morning meal, because they cannot bear to fast as well as bathe; and in the evening there is an Oblation for the sake of those who fast.” He goes on to say that those who were to be baptised on Easter Eve had

been accustomed to bathe on Maundy Thursday. "And because this was permitted to the postulants for Baptism, many chose to bathe with them, and (so) relax their fast." From this it would seem that S. Augustine wished the evening Communion of Maundy Thursday to be received by persons who had not taken the morning meal, "prandium," but only the slight refreshment at 3 p.m. That is, he would have had them come to that Communion without having taken a full meal. But if they chose to take "prandium," and then to come to the evening Communion, he cannot forbid them. He can only wish that they would communicate at the morning Celebration before the "prandium."

From a survey of this passage, nothing can be more certain than that S. Augustine regarded the rule of "fasting Communion" as (i) observed by the Church Universal, (2) therefore traceable to Apostolic authority, e.g., S. Paul's; and therefore (3) possessing Divine sanction.

V. S. BASIL.

S. Basil attests the acknowledged obligation of the Celebrant to be fasting. 'It is not possible to venture on priestly action (ιερουργιας) without fasting.' De Jejunio, Hom. i. 6.

VI. EGYPTIAN MONKS.

According to Rufinus' narrative of his visits to the Egyptian monks, contained in Rosweyd's *Vitæ Patrum*, and illustrating the habits of Egyptian ascetics in the latter years of S. Athanasius, "Abbot Hor was accustomed non prius corporalem cibum sumere quam spiritalem Christi Communionem acciperet." Further on he says of Apollonius, in almost identical language, "it was his custom that the brethren who were with him did not take food until they had received the Lord's Communion about the ninth hour of the day, and sometimes afterwards so continued" (i.e., took no other food) "until evening," when they "took food," &c. From this it would appear that these monks ordinarily made every day like a "Station-day," fasting until 3 p.m., and then receiving the Eucharist.

VII. S. AMBROSE ON FAST-DAY COMMUNION.

In his 8th sermon on Ps. cxviii. (our Ps. cxix.) S. Ambrose says, "A fast is given out; take care not to neglect it. And if hunger urges you to the daily morning meal" (prandium), "or self-indulgence shrinks from fasting, yet keep yourself the rather for the heavenly banquet. Let not the meal that is made ready constrain you to do without the heavenly Sacrament. Wait a little: the end of the day is not far off; in fact there are very many such days. So that, as soon as the noontide hour is come, you have to come to church, the hymns have to be sung, the Oblation has to be celebrated. Then indeed stand ready, that you may receive what will fortify you, that you may eat the Body of the Lord Jesus The Sacrifice in the evening admonishes you never to forget Christ. You cannot, when you go to bed, forget that Lord to Whom you will have poured forth your prayer at the close of the day, Who will have fed you when you were hungry (esurientem) with the feast of His own Body."

Here the "vesperinum Sacrificium" is clearly an afternoon Celebration on a fast

day; and the communicants have taken no meal beforehand.

VIII. S. CHRYSOSTOM.

Beside the letter to Pope Innocent, in which he describes the outrages done to the Holy Sacrament by ruffianly soldiers, in the evening of the very solemn fast of Holy Saturday, when there was a Celebration prepared for the new-baptised, S. Chrysostom, writing in 404 to Bishop Cyriacus, thus mentions one of the charges that were made against him:—"They say that I gave Communion to some after they had eaten. And if I did this, let my name be blotted out of the book of bishops, and not written in the book of orthodox faith: lo ! if I did anything of the sort, Christ will cast me out of His Kingdom. But if they persist in urging this, and are contentious, let them also pass sentence against the Lord Himself, Who gave the Communion to the Apostles after supper" (Ep. 125).

Here, it is evident (i), that Chrysostom recognized the difference between the rule of fasting Communion and precepts which could claim our Lord's example and express authority; but also (2) that he regarded this rule as strictly binding on his own conscience, being an expression of Church authority, and looked on a breach of it "with the utmost horror." (Milman, *Hist. Chr.* iii. 140.) He was also charged with having "baptised after he had eaten"—a charge explained by the fact that Baptisms were solemnized on Easter Eve, when fasting would be obligatory.

See also his 29th homily on 1 Cor. He is rebuking those who indulge their appetites after Communion:—"Before you receive, you fast, that you may in some way appear worthy of the Communion; but after you have received, when you ought to increase your temperance, you destroy all. And yet it is not the same thing to fast before this and afterwards, for one ought to be temperate in both cases—but especially after having received the Bridegroom; before, that you may become worthy to receive, after, that you may not appear unworthy of what you have received. What, then, you will ask, ought one to fast after receiving? I do not say that, nor do I enforce it. For it would be a very good thing; but I do not constrain you to it. I only exhort you not to indulge yourself insatiably."

This passage (which has been sometimes misunderstood) of course shows that the custom of "fasting Communion" was recognized by the Church people of Antioch, and that Chrysostom distinguished "fasting" from a temperate meal.

In the same homily he says: "He (Paul) called the early meal a supper," in i Cor. xi. 20: supposing the Eucharist to be taken early, and the Agape to follow it.

See another passage, *Hom. ad pop. Ant.* (on the Statues) ix. 2: some would not even come to church, in Lent, to hear sermon after they had eaten: this, says S. Chrysostom, was a mistake.

IX. TIMOTHY, PATRIARCH OF ALEXANDRIA.

This Prelate (A.D. 380-385) gave certain "Regulative Answers" to certain questions proposed to him. The sixteenth question is, "If one who is fasting in order to communicate has, while washing his mouth or while in the bath, involuntarily swallowed water, ought he to communicate?" The answer is:—"Since Satan has found an occasion for hindering him from Communion, he will do this the oftener." See this in Mansi, *Conc.*

iii. 1253. Beveridge, Pand. ii. 169. Timothy's answer probably means (especially when compared with a previous answer of his): "Let him communicate, and so foil Satan." But the question points to a general usage.

X. THE ARMENIAN CHURCH.

A passage from an Armenian set of canons is partially quoted by Mr. Scudamore (Notit. Eucharist, p. 880), as attributed to Isaac the Great, Archbishop of the Armenians, in the fourth century. The rule given is very stringent. According to the Latin translation given by Cardinal Mai (Vet. Script. Nova Coll. x. 280), "If any Presbyter shall be found to have taken food before Mass, let him not dare to approach the Bread of the Mass, else let him be separated from his colleagues. Similarly, the 'principes' who are invited to Agape, must take part in the Divine Office and the Mass; before Mass, let them not dare to take food or drink in their own houses. Anyone who does so must not dare to go to the Bread of the Mass, lest he bring judgment on himself, and disgrace the Holy Feast—for this is self-indulgence. If anyone dares to do so, let the Archpresbyters drive him out: for the Church abhors this impiety." But it is not safe to ascribe these canons, as they stand, to Isaac the Great in the fourth century; for they contain, says Mai, some matter of a later date (ib. p. xxi.)

XI. THE CASE OF HOUSEHOLD SERVANTS.

"The social difficulties of servants in Christian households must be nothing compared with those of Christian slaves in heathen families, or, indeed, with those of the whole body in times of persecution. Yet as it seems, these perils were not esteemed sufficient, even in the bloody Decian persecution, to warrant such a custom" (as that of evening celebration).—Bp. Wilberforce, Charge of 1860, p. i.; See *Literary Churchman*, April 17, 1869.

XII. THE NUMBER OF COMMUNICANTS AT EARLY CELEBRATIONS.

Since the year 1860, when the statistics in the article were given, the early communicants have not only multiplied at these particular churches, but early Celebrations have been adopted at a large and daily increasing number, both in town and country, to the unspeakable comfort and blessing of multitudes of souls in all classes, especially poor persons and servants.

On Easter Day, 1871, the number of communicants at (1) S. Barnabas, Pimlico, was 770; of these 317 went to the Celebration at 5 a.m., 314 to the 7 and 8.45 a.m., besides 120 at the Mission Chapel at the hours of 6 and 7.30 a.m. (2) At S. Matthias, Stoke Newington, the numbers at 5, 7, and 8 a.m. were 190, 76, and 104, and 120 at 11.30. (3) At All Saints', Margaret-street, out of a total of 821 communicants, 138, 191, 237, 52 communicated at four early Celebrations. (4) S. Mary Magdalene, Paddington, 940 persons out of 1,080 communicated early. (5) S. Alban's, Holborn, the number of early communicants was 476; and (6) in the very poor parish of S. Peter's, London Docks, 230 were at the early Celebrations.

On Christmas Day: At (i) the numbers at the early Celebrations at S. Barnabas,

Pimlico, were 296, 138, 85, at the Mission 99—and 115 at 11.30. (2) At the Midnight Service 130 communicated, and 65. 130, 27 at 7, 8, 9 a.m., and 57 at 11.30. (3) At the early Celebrations were 120, 217, 16. 50, and 150 at 11.30. (4) The number of early communicants was 596 out of a total of 728. At S. Barnabas, Oxford, there were 265 at the hours of 6, 7, and 8 a.m.

On Easter Day, 1872, at S. Stephen's, Lewisham, of 523 communicants, 178 communicated at 5.45 a.m. At Holywell, Oxford, on that day, of 193 communicants, 128 communicated before midday. At S. Barnabas, Oxford, of 365 communicants, all but 3 communicated before 10 a.m. At S. Mary Magdalene, Paddington, of 1,108 communicants, 997 communicated early; at 6 a.m. nine-tenths were of the class of servants.

It must be borne in mind that at most of these churches there are early Celebrations on every day, at which household servants and others of the same class can communicate and often gladly do so.

A long list of churches in which there are early Communion, shewing the same results, might be given, did space permit.

XIII. SPIRITUAL ADVANTAGES OF EARLY COMMUNION.

“If it were but a matter of apostolical injunction, it was, I doubt not, a deep and wise instinct of the Church which so early associated this great mystery.....with the first Services of the Lord's Day, that he” (the faithful Christian) “may give to it the freshness of his spirit and the stillness of his soul..... All this must pass surely away if Evening Communion become common. They would come to share in the normal character of the later Services of the Sunday, which, as compared with the earliest, all observant men amongst us would, I believe, admit to be marked by drowsiness in the afternoon, and in the evening either by weariness or excitement.”—Bishop Wilberforce, Charge of 1860, p. 17.

XIV. EVENING COMMUNION NOT CONDUCTIVE TO REVERENCE.

“The introduction of afternoon and evening Celebrations directly tends to the desecration of the highest rite of our holy religion.”—Bishop Wilberforce, 1. c. p. i.i.

See an admirable article in the *Literary Churchman*, May 29, 1869, from which some words may well be cited:—If evening Celebrations become common, “the average British townsman will find the greatest possible encouragement to his unchristian way of spending Sunday” (i.e., by not going to church until the evening). “He will find the highest Christian service going on.....He will be led to feel that, so far as Church ordinances go, he has lost nothing by putting off all religious worship to the end of the day. This is what we are doing when we offer evening Communion. We encourage Sunday desecration.” Further, by means of this practice, “the Lord's Day evening, not the Lord's Day, will become everything.” After further remarks on the danger of offering Holy Communion to the people at a time when it costs them no effort to receive it, the writer dwells on the danger of *so* providing it as to increase unprepared reception. “We believe that the whole movement is an unworthy concession, partly to the laziness of the age, partly to its sensationalism, partly to the hurry of the age, which wants to feel that it

has prompt results to show..... It is but a shortsighted expediency too. Depend upon it. that if you have a host of evening communicants to show, you have not done anything like so much for the Christianizing of your parish as if you had but a fraction of that number of early communicants.....It is not every short cut that brings you safe to your journey's end."

XV. IMPLICIT DISCOURAGEMENT OF EVENING CELEBRATION IN THE PRAYER BOOK.

"When our offices were compiled, no Christian man thought of any other time (than the morning) for the Celebration of the Holy Communion."—Bishop Wilberforce, l. c. p. 16. The Bishop proceeded to cite the Rubrics providing that the Collect for every Sunday "shall be said at the *evening Service next before*: that intending communicants shall signify their names.....at least some time the day before," and that the sermon shall be preached before the offertory, evening sermons being then unknown.

Dean Hook accounts for the early hour at which the consecrators of Archbishop Parker began the Service—between 5 and 6 on a December morning—by the fact that "the Holy Communion was received fasting."—Lives of Archbishops of Cant., vol ix., p. 345.

W. B.

POSTSCRIPT.

“Early Communion, beside its claim on our respect as having been the general custom of the Church in the second and third centuries, has a distinct moral and spiritual advantage, in that it secures the first fruits of the day for the highest of all religious acts. And Early Communion is naturally Fasting Communion, which commends itself to dutiful Churchmen as having been, by the testimony of great Fathers of the fourth century, a general rule of Catholic observance in their time; and which pointedly emphasizes the reverence due to the Holy Eucharist by involving some degree of effort to attend an early Service before breakfast, and by giving precedence, in point of time, to the Sacramental Food before the ordinary food of the day.” This is, in effect, the line taken in Dr. Liddon’s article; and the writer of these Notes is not concerned to controvert the main thesis of Mr. Kingdon’s elaborate work on “Fasting Communion,” “That there is no law or canon binding in England now so as to make those that are unable to follow this custom liable to a charge of mortal sin, as having broken a positive precept” (p. 348; comp. pp. 88, 125). It seems, indeed, impossible to ignore the evils which may spring from a carrying out of the “rigorist” theory on this subject, while so many have no access to any but a midday Communion.

But something may be said in the way of respectful criticism even on those parts of Mr. Kingdon’s book which refer to “canons alleged for Fasting Communion.”

First, as to the Council of Laodicea. John Phymies, a Greek writer of about A.D. 1100, is made much of because he says that before that Council men used to communicate after they had taken the “ariston” (or “prandium”)—i.e., the forenoon meal or luncheon at eleven a.m. or later—and that the Council feared that, on the ground of this custom, the fast of Lent would be broken on Maundy Thursday. But Phymies is a very late authority on such a matter; and the 50th Laodicene Canon neither says nor implies anything about a custom of communicating on that Thursday, *after* a “Maundy” supper: it simply orders that the fast shall not be relaxed on such a day, i.e., by such a meal. Mr. Kingdon says that this Canon extends the prohibition of “the offering of bread” on ordinary weekdays in Lent, in Canon 49, to Maundy Thursday, “*because* of the breach of the Lenten fast implied in the Maundy” (p. 106). But Canon 50 says nothing about this prohibition, nothing about the Eucharist, nothing even about a Maundy; it only implies that some such meal had been usual, but tells us nothing as to its relation to the Eucharist. Balsamon and Zonaras give no support to Mr. Kingdon. But he adds, “That this canon does refer to the taking the ariston before the Communion is seen by the words of the canon being cited by two subsequent Councils, and applied directly and distinctly to the Maundy.” The collection of “capitula” from ancient Councils, confirmed at the second Council of Braga, includes this canon of Laodicea; but Mr. Kingdon admits (p. 70) that the 10th Canon of this Council makes *no mention* of the Maundy (Mansi ix. 841), when enforcing fasting consecration; and he appeals to the sixteenth anathema in the first Council of Braga, condemning the Priscillianists for observing that Thursday “from the third hour, by masses for the dead, *soluto jejunio*” (ib. ix. 776). But this anathema does not mention the Laodicene canon, and certainly refers to something different from the African “Cœna,” to a “breach of fast” as early as 9 a.m. Of the other Council referred to, that in Trullo, something will be said further on.

As to the African Councils, Mr. Kingdon thinks that the disorderly revels called *Lætitia*, held in African churches on Saints'-days, were sometimes, or frequently, previous to Communion, because S. Augustine thought that the Corinthian excesses were so, and because he says, Epist. 22, that the disorders might be further corrected by taking care as to the celebrations for the dead, and the canon framed in consequence implicitly shows that such celebrations had been not unusually after a meal, the "prandium." But as to I Cor. xi. 17, *seq.*, Augustine might come to his conclusion from his own study of the passage (see above, p. 6), and as to the mortuary Eucharists, to regulate them might produce a good effect even if they had been early in the day, although there is reason to think that sometimes they had been after "prandium," which might be a specimen of carelessness and abuse. However, Augustine implies, Ep. 29, that the Eucharist had not usually been celebrated in the afternoons of Saints'-days; he bade the people meet at noon for psalms and Scripture readings, instead of the old *Lætitia*, and tells us that in the afternoon there was such a Service, with a sermon, and the daily vespers—not a word as to the Eucharist. The 28th Canon of the Council of Hippo, in A.D. 393—the year after Augustine, then a priest, had complained about the "*Lætitia*"—appears in Mansi iii. 923. Mr. Kingdon quotes it as beginning, "Ut Sacramenta," and argues that "placuit" must be understood. In the Breviarium of the Hippo Canons, given by Mansi, and by the Ballerini in their appendix to S. Leo, and to which Mr. Kingdon in this passage expressly refers (p. 61), there is no "ut," but simply "Sacramenta altariscelebrentur." The "ut" occurs in the Codex Africanus (Mansi iii. 735), and in the "farrago," as Mr. Kingdon after Van Espen calls it, of the Council of Carthage in 397 (ib. 885). However, suppose it were "Placuit ut;" this does not prove that Fasting Communion, in itself, was prescribed as something new. It was prescribed in connection with an exception as to Maundy Thursday, and with a restrictive rule as to Services for the departed. As to "celebrentur," Mr. Kingdon at p. 66 seems undecided as to whether it refers to the celebrant priests only, and adds, "this argument is unimportant;" yet at p. 58 he lays stress on its referring to the clergy, whom "the bishops could bind absolutely," and later on he repeatedly speaks of "fasting celebration," of "a man being fasting when he celebrated" and says (p. 286) that this canon prohibits the clergy from celebrating, using "celebrating" in its present technical sense. But "celebro" was then used of worshippers in general: in this very context, "Cœna Domini celebratur" cannot refer only to the priests; the 60th African canon uses "celebranda" of the "Pagan convivia;" and S. Augustine, Epist. 29, has "nec sobria quidem celebrasse convivia," and "noluntcelebrare testa sanctorum," &c. (pp. 98, 302). Mr. Kingdon ascribes to a Carthaginian Council of A.D. 419 a certain passage which occurs as part of Canon 47 of the African Code (Mansi iii. 78), and a part of Canon 48 of the third Council of Carthage (ib., 91), according to which Honoratus and Urbanus, bishops deputed from Mauritania Sitipheasis, said, "De sacrificiis inhibendis post prandium, ut a jejunis, sicut justum est, offerantur, et tunc et nunc firmatum (or, confirmatum) est," To connect these words with the clause just preceding, as if the enactment were Nicene, is absurd enough; and the "tunc," as Mr. Kingdon says, clearly refers to the canon of Hippo. But when he dates this speech in 419 (for the Synod then held see Cod. Afric. init., Mansi iii. 699) one must observe that these two prelates appear as deputies to the *third* Council, in 397, according to the preface to its acts (Mansi iii. 733, 915). As Tillemont says, xiii. 302, "On lut encore" (at that Council) "le pouvoir des eveques Honorat et Urbain." To *this* Council the word "nunc" refers, in the speech of the

two bishops, delivered, not twenty-six, but only four, years after the Council of Hippo, and, according to the Ballerini, on August 28, 397, after the Hippo Canons had been read (see Mansi iii. 926, 938). The speech in fact goes on to remark on the disorderly conduct of Bishop Cresconius, which had been noticed at the Council of Hippo (see also Hefele, *Hist. Councils*, s. III and 121). Mr. Kingdon apparently has been misled by taking the speech of Bishop Epigonius, *Cod. Afric.* 34, and “*Quibus insertis*,” *ib.* 47, as belonging to the Council of 419, which framed the Code, whereas they belong to the Council of 397, which confirmed the Canons of Hippo.

Mr. Kingdon lays stress on the 29th Canon of the Council in Trullo. It proves, in his view, that the Laodicene Canon was pointed at a custom of communicating after the previous meal. It does not, he says, “annul the Maundy” considered “as a meal before Communion:” it does not forbid communicating after food on Maundy Thursday (p. 79). Surely it does what is equivalent to this. The African custom permitted Communion after food on that one day. This permission is annulled by the Council in Trullo. Therefore it disallows non-fasting Communion even for that day—i.e., it re-enacts the prohibition absolutely, without admitting exception. True, it refers to the sacredness of Lent, which the exception would infringe. But this is because the day was part of Lent. It allows that the fathers at Carthage might have had “local grounds” for their exception; but it treats those reasons as extinct (Mansi xi. 955). Mr. Kingdon contends that it does not disallow S. Augustine’s suggestion, that Lent might be kept on Maundy Thursday by taking no prandium, and making the three p.m. refection serve as the Maundy feast, to be followed by Communion. But there is not the slightest necessity for supposing this in order to the interpretation of the Trullan Canon. The Greek canonists had no idea of this kind; they say absolutely that the Council orders the ministers of the “holy things” to be fasting on this day, as on other days, the exception allowed by the African Council being set aside. Mr. Kingdon says (p. 295), “If the *jejunus* of the (African) Canon had not been generally interpreted to mean *non pransus*, and the exception not been understood to allow the breach of Lent, the Trullan Council need not have alluded to it.” But the African Canon allowed persons to be *not* “jejuni” when communicating on this one day: it permitted them thus far to relax their Lent; the Trullan Canon forbids this, and Mr. Kingdon owns that it prohibits the Maundy; and there is not a particle of evidence from its text either that it would have tolerated a Communion after the Maundy when there had been no prandium, or that the Laodicene rule, to which it clearly looked back, was directed against a habit of communicating *after* prandium.

An instance of Mr. Kingdon’s hasty inferences is found in his argument that the second Council of Macon rested simply on African rules when ordering Fasting Communion. But it was just as silent about Apostolic tradition when in its 1st Canon it enforced the hallowing of Sunday (Mansi ix. 949).

Let us now look at some passages from the Fathers usually adduced in support of Fasting Communion, and discussed by Mr. Kingdon.

Tertullian’s words, “*ante omnem cibum*,” are rendered by Mr. Kingdon “before every meal.” Bingham renders as above, “before all her other meat” (xv. 4, 13)—i.e., prior to the whole series of meals for the day. So in the Oxford translation, “before all food.” This translation is supported by the preceding words alluding to nocturnal devotions; by the improbability of a large amount of the Consecrated Elements being allowed to be kept for home use, and by the tradition which, as far as extant evidence

informs us, existed in favour of communicating only once a-day in church at the utmost, therefore, surely, not oftener at home. The supposition that the early Christians prefaced each meal with Communion is advocated by Mr. Kingdon on grounds more fanciful than satisfactory (p. 114). Bingham, it should be added, says that in Tertullian's time the communicants were "always fasting" (xv. 7, 8).²⁶

It is granted, however, that Fasting Communion is not *expressly* inculcated, or declared to have been the rule before the fourth century. It is also true that the term "fasting" is capable of a stricter and of a larger sense—e.g., that it is sometimes used for abstinence from some particular kind of food, as when Daniel fasted "by eating no pleasant bread," or from one of the usual meals. But when Mr. Kingdon says, "The most noteworthy example of this use of the word is to be found in S. Luke's account of S. Paul's shipwreck (Acts xxvii. 33), he forgets that the word there is not *νηστευοντες*, but *ασιτοι*. The sense, however, is, as he says, "having taken no regular meals." Mr. Kingdon adduces S. Basil's "Homily on Fasting" as thus employing the word. The fact is, that he there uses it both strictly and laxly. The strict use appears in his references to the forty days' fasting of Moses and Elijah; and this latter reference comes just after the words quoted above. But supposing that, as Mr. Kingdon thinks, Basil in those words referred to a certain amount of self-restraint as to food, in preparation for a Communion-day, nothing is more likely than that such a "fast" on the previous day would be followed up by abstinence from the "mouthful of food," the bread and wine of the *acratisma* or *jentaculum* (p. 125), taken as a "stay-stomach" at rising: the rather that the use of wine would seem to Basil a breach of a religious feast (p. 131). This applies to what is urged by Mr. Kingdon (p. 267) as to some language of S. Chrysostom—that it refers to what we might call a vigil or fasting eve. Mr. Kingdon insists that a man would be properly said to "fast" if he abstained from "prandium," but took his "jentaculum," that the "two or three bits of bread" taken at dawn counted for nothing, and were called a "continuation of fasting"—his authority being not a Christian writer, but Athenæus (p. 129). Now Mr. Kingdon refers to the article in Mr. Smith's *Diet. Antiq. s. v. Cæna*. He does not, however, tell his readers that, according to that article, the jentaculum "does not appear to have been usual except in the case of children, or sick persons, or the luxurious, or labouring men," and "bread formed the substantial part of this early breakfast, to which cheese or dried fruit were sometimes added." Would a strict Churchman of Basil's or Chrysostom's time have been likely to take this first meal and then think that he had not "broken his fast" when he went to the nine a.m. Communion?

The sense of the Patriarch Timothy's "answer" (see above, p. 32) appears to be rightly given by Mr. Kingdon. But he is not justified in his insertion of a "yes" into his version of that answer (see the original in Mansi iii. 1253). Nor can we suppose that one who had a scruple as to a drop of bath-water in the forenoon would have taken, as a matter of course, his jentaculum, as above described, at daybreak (p. 292).

Mr. Kingdon has misunderstood the exhortation of S. Ambrose, quoted from the eighth discourse on Psalm cxviii. According to him, it comes to this: "If you must, on account of appetite, take prandium, you must only be the more careful to communicate;" then, immediately, "*Don't* take prandium." These are not, of course, his words, but this is the upshot of his interpretation, and it would make the great Father childishly

²⁶ See also Tert. de Jejun. 6. "Nature herself will tell us in what state she is wont to present us, before eating and drinking, *rebus duntaxat sensûs agendis quo Divina tractantur.*"

inconsistent. His advice is really all of a piece. “Resist the cravings for prandium, although it is got ready; it would *disqualify you for communicating; differ aliquantulum*, very likely you will be able to communicate early in the afternoon.” So Professor Cheetham, in the new Diet, of Chr. Antiquities, art. “Holy Communion”—“Ambrose, preaching in Lent, begs the faithful to defer eating until after the time of the heavenly banquet; if they had to wait till evening, the time was not so very long: on most days the oblation was at noon” (or soon afterwards).

The word *Synaxis*, as used in S. Chrysostom’s Hom. 9, ad pop. Antioch., means, as the context shows, not Communion (Kingdon, p. 149), but a service characterized by the preaching of God’s Word. (In the “Excerptions of Egbert,” the synaxes mean the canonical hours.) As for the passage, “ὁ μὴ νηστεύων, if he approach with a clear conscience, keeps the Pasch, whether he partakes of the Communion to-day or to-morrow, or on whatever day” (Chrys. in *eos qui Pascha jejulant*, 8.5), it simply means, “he who does not keep Lent,” as the preceding phrase, “fasting year by year,” demonstrates. The famous words in which Chrysostom expresses, as Milman says, his “horror” at being accused of having given Communion to some after they had eaten (see above, p. 31), are not fairly confronted by Mr. Kingdon. He goes off, so to speak, after a side-point, the precise bearing of the Saint’s reference to S. Paul and the jailer’s household. He does not take full account of the fact, that although Chrysostom well knew that Fasting Communion was not according to the circumstances of the first Institution, he yet admitted that if he had neglected that practice he was worthy to be deposed, and to suffer worse. “If I did so, Christ will cast me out of His Kingdom.” The similar disclaimer of having baptized when fasting is explained above (p. 32).

And now for S. Augustine. Mr. Kingdon admits that the passage in his 54th Epistle is “the one most to the purpose” of the advocates of Fasting Communion (p. 361). How does he deal with it? I am constrained to think that his treatment of it is a conspicuous instance of perverse interpretation.

It will be remembered (see above, p. 30) that S. Augustine is dealing with the question, What was to be done as to fasting, as to Communion, and as to the supper, on Maundy Thursday? (By the way, “commonitorium” is not properly a “list of enquiries,” but a letter mentioning certain points.) Then Augustine says, in effect: As to the observances of this particular day, the Church has no uniform rule. It would not be right to trace the custom of communicating on that day after the refectio to the sacred words, “Likewise also the cup after supper.” It would be a better argument to quote, “When they were eating, Jesus took bread.” Clearly, at the first Eucharist, the communicants were not fasting. “But are we then on that account to reproach the Universal Church, quod a jejunis semper accipitur? *Ex hoc enim placuit Spiritu Sancto*” (see above). Now Mr. Kingdon takes “*placuit Spiritui Sancto*” of the decree of the then recent Council of Hippo. He treats this as a point established beyond “doubt.” He pleads that the phrase is one which (in imitation of Acts xv. 28) a Father would naturally use of a Council; and he gives illustrative passages, including Bellarmine’s words on the Council of Jerusalem, which, however, in referring to similar assertions by other Councils, speak of them as “prescribing rules to the Universal Church”—a thing which the Council of Hippo never thought of. And if Augustine had meant to refer to this Council of Hippo, and to the subsequent Council of Carthage which confirmed it, why did he not say so? Mr. Kingdon answers, “This was clearly his manner: a Council was in his mind a last resource a

reserve force to be employed when all else had failed:" in Ep. 29, to his friend Bishop Alypius, he says not a word about the Council of Hippo, which had been held two years before on the very abuse about which he was writing. But it was not necessary that he should tell a bishop about it; and, in fact, he is fond of referring to Councils, and in this case he was not dealing with an antagonist, but with a docile layman—for, as Mr. Kingdon rightly says, Januarius was a layman—who simply wanted to be guided aright; and if the Council was, indeed, as Mr. Kingdon so positively assures us, the thing referred to by Augustine, then he was employing the argument from Conciliar authority, and it was simply necessary to make himself understood in this sense. But this his words were inadequate to do. The inference is that he meant to be understood in another sense. Again, what of the subsequent clause, "For on this ground this custom is observed throughout the whole world"? Mr. Kingdon answers that the "local" Council of Arles, in Augustine's mind, carried with it "the whole world's judgment," and that the second Council of Carthage passed decrees "pro statu Ecclesiae Catholicae." But there is no parallel between the illustrious Council of Arles, so widely revered in the West, and a Synod at Hippo which could not get its own decrees well observed, or a third Council of Carthage, of which Mr. Kingdon says (somewhat too disparagingly) that "we may take for granted" that it was in fact held (p. 287), and "the Catholic Church" in the last canon of the second Council of Carthage clearly meant the whole Church in Africa, opposed to the Donatists; compare Can. 7 (Mansi iii. 694, 697). And more than this; Augustine does not say that the authority which he was referring to *intended* to bind "the whole world," but that "the whole world" *was* then, as a matter of fact, observing a certain custom, and for a certain reason. How could he have made such an assertion, if he had nothing in his mind beyond the exceedingly limited scope of the jurisdiction and influence of one or two African Synods? He must have been thinking of something very different; nor does his context fail to inform us as to what it was.

The "ex hoc" before "placuit" is usually rendered "on this account," "so," or "therefore;" but it is not easy, looking at the sentence, to see what reason is thus referred to for the alleged Divine decision that the Lord's Body should pass the Christian's lips before all other food. It would make better sense to render it, with Mr. Cunningham (Transl. in Clark's series), "from that time," connecting it with the "primum" which marks the time of the first Eucharist, and the "semper" of the clause just preceding it. "For, ever since that earliest period, that first part of the Apostolic age, it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit," &c. But *how* did it, according to Augustine's thought, seem good to Him? Mr. Kingdon has done well to remind us that the phrase was first used of the Apostolic Council; for, in truth, Augustine is here referring to the inspired authority of *the Apostle Paul*. This is the key of the passage. The mere hour of the first Eucharist, he argues, was chosen for temporary reasons: the permanent arrangement of the time for Communion was one of the matters entrusted by Christ to His Apostles, "per quos Ecclesias dispositurus erat." Did any Apostle, then, say anything which pointed to such an arrangement? Yes, we may thus interpret S. Paul's words, where, after bidding the Corinthians, when they assembled to eat, to wait for each other, or, if hungry, to eat at home, "statim subtexit, *Cætera autem, cum venero, ordinabo.*" Then he adds, "*Unde intelligi datur (quia multum erat ut in Epistolâ totum illum agendi ordinem insinuaret quem universa per orbem servat Ecclesia) ab ipso ordinatum esse quod nulla morum*

diversitate variatur.”²⁷ Now the “ipso,” of course, refers to S. Paul: the “ordinatum” is taken from his “ordinabo,” and he did, it is here assumed, “ordain” something, as he promised; and to such “ordaining” Augustine (rightly or wrongly is not now the question) attributes a certain custom, unvaryingly observed, in his own time, by the Churches. What is that custom? Can we doubt that it was “quod a jejunis semper accipitur” ? that nothing should enter the Christian’s mouth before the Lord’s Body?²⁸ *This*, then, he means, is what “seemed good to the Holy Spirit:” for we have good reason to trace an observance so universal among Christians to the authority of S. Paul, which carries with it the authority of the Holy Spirit.

But Mr. Kingdon contends that, since Augustine infers that to be “ordained by Paul” which “nulla morum diversitate variatur,” and since the Maundy Thursday African custom was an exception to Fasting Communion—in that, as Augustine goes on to say, “Some are pleased by a certain probabilis ratio, that on the one fixed day in the year on which the Lord gave the Supper itself it should be allowable, as if for a more striking commemoration, that the Body and Blood of the Lord should be offered and received after food “—therefore, whatever the “unvarying custom” was, it was not Fasting Communion. So confident is Mr. Kingdon on this point, that in his summary of Augustine’s argument he says, “There is no Apostolic rule” “either for or against Fasting Communion: “on the margin of his translation of the passage now before us he says, “The Church, therefore, is not to be blamed for the Maundy” (‘.?.’, for the Maundy before the Eucharist), “since there is no universal, and therefore no Apostolic, rule to the contrary.” But one is prepared for this by finding on the margin of the passage, “But are we then on that account,” &c., this daring summary: “But the Church is not to be blamed for not following this Gospel precedent” (non-fasting Communion) “always.” The rejoinder to Mr. Kingdon is very obvious. First, if the unvarying custom was not Fasting Communion, what was it? Non-tasting Communion it confessedly was not. Augustine had in his eye something which did not vary, some uniform observance; his commentator must give some account of that something. Augustine did not say, as Mr. Kingdon struggles to make him say, “There is no uniformity, therefore no Apostolic tradition: “he says just the reverse. By all rules of grammatical and logical construction, he identifies this uniform custom with Fasting Communion, as if he said, “the Church is not to be blamed for *always* observing Fasting Communion:” (a jejunis semper accipitur). But, secondly, he

²⁷ It is astonishing that Mr. Kingdon, unwarned by the emphatic “statum subtexit,” puts forward in his marginal *résumé* (p. 305), “Let him eat at home,” as if *that* were the point in the text which S. Aug. is dwelling on; and at p. 323 he again neglects the indication that “the other matters” were to be afterwards “set in order” by S. Paul, and that the result, S. Aug. thinks, was—Fasting Communion.

²⁸ Even this Mr. Kingdon explains away: it “need not mean more than *before a meal*,” when men are not fresh from food, *jam refecti*; “there is no allusion whatever to the first food in the day.” According to this, the words might apply to a person who took his prandium freely, but communicated just before his cœna. But then, on Mr. Kingdon’s own showing, he would *not* be “jejunus.” And in the next note, on “pransi aut cœnati,” we are told that S. Aug. “took no heed of any other meals than these two.” Of both of them, or of one or the other? The plain truth is, that Mr. Kingdon is here watering down the force of words evidently chosen to exclude evasion. And although it is a minor point, yet one may observe that, in order to limit the operation of the Canon of Hippo, Mr. Kingdon explains it as referring to the celebrant priest; and then, when he comes to Augustine’s words, he explains them as referring to the Canon of Hippo; but it is manifest that they speak of Fasting *Communion* as binding on all *Christians*. That he is not, after all, quite at ease about the passage may appear by the suggestion, “There may have been some inaccuracy of a copyist” (p. 322)

calls Fasting Communion an uniform practice because it was the general rule,

to which, as far as he knew, there was one solitary exception, described by him as an exception after the description of the general practice, and regarded by him, it is manifest, as not derogating from its generality.

The construction here put on Augustine's words is that which will approve itself to all readers who look at the Epistle for themselves, without bias. It is given, as a matter of course, by Bingham, who puts into Augustine's mouth the statement that S. Paul appointed "this custom of receiving fasting, which now the whole Church observes" (xv. 7. 8). The passage is "conclusive," says Professor Cheetham, "as to the practice of Augustin's own time" (Dict. Chr. Ant. 1. c.)

It is another question whether Augustine's information was sufficiently full and accurate. The arrangement suggested by Theophilus of Alexandria (see Mr. Kingdon, p. 254) for the coincidence of a Sunday and a fast—i.e., "Eat a few dates in the morning because it is Sunday,²⁹ but defer the Celebration till three p.m. because of the fast"—could hardly have been known to him; and he was probably unaware of the custom described (in that invaluable chapter on ritual diversities) by Socrates, —that "Egyptians who live near Alexandria, and those who live in Thebais, communicate on Saturday evenings, not as is usual with Christians, but after having had a good dinner and filled themselves with all sorts of eatables" (see above, p. 17). At p. 109 Mr. Kingdon says, "Socrates records it without blame." Let anyone look at the Greek, and see whether the historian's words are not significant of disgust.³⁰ And when Mr. Kingdon gives the passage at length, he appears to feel some misgiving; for he suggests that "with Christians" may be an interpolation (p. 327). But when he assumes that according to Socrates, "the Egyptians never communicated except after food" (p. 109), he is doubly wrong. Socrates does not speak of all the Egyptians; and he does not include the Sunday Communion in his statement.

Mr. Kingdon frankly admits that Fasting Communion may well be recommended. "The custom is in no way despised." He goes so far as to say, "If persons wish to show their deepening love" (or, as elsewhere, "to offer their self-denial or devotion") "let this be one of their rules"—only let them not despise or condemn "those who do not or cannot fast from the previous midnight" until a forenoon Communion.

But he contends that the reason which once made Fasting Communion necessary has been removed by our modern habits. He assumes all along that the English breakfast on Sundays is a "light" or "slight" meal (p. 87, 122, 125, 126, 146, 374): he tries to identify it practically with the Greek or Roman "mouthful," the "stay-stomach," or *Weckenbrod*; and in the last page of his work he speaks of it, as "the morning draught of tea or coffee, or such like." This assumption contrasts curiously with the ordinary habits of well-to-do Englishmen; and Mr. Kingdon himself admits the greater need of food in our climate than in hot countries (p. 126), and the fact that the heavy meal of "prandium" was two hours before the English luncheon or early dinner (p. 121).

Mr. Kingdon is wholly opposed to *Evening* Communions; "Bishop Wilberforce spoke well and wisely in condemnation of them." They involve "some danger in a mixed

²⁹ Mr. Kingdon seems aware that this, *per se*, tells against his theory, that a "mouthful of food" in the morning would not be deemed inconsistent with a fast.

³⁰ See Scudamore's "Notit. Euchar.," p. 33.

congregation of men having their spiritual faculties clouded by undigested food, and their brain wearied.....and dulled. It is impossible to think that Evening Communion will ever again meet with approbation.” Unfortunately, they do now meet with a great deal of approbation in some sections of the English Church; and this leads one to observe that Mr. Kingdon has overlooked one fact in our present religious condition which would go to prove the great desirableness of Fasting Communion: the conception of “the dignity of that holy mystery” entertained by many Churchpeople is very inferior to that which was inherent in primitive Christianity. Anything which can preserve that “extreme reverence” which, as Mr. Kingdon says (p. 124), must on moral grounds “accompany the act of faithful Communion,” ought to be valued and recommended. And this was Mr. Keble’s line on the subject. Mr. Kingdon dwells repeatedly on his well-known and most equitable remonstrance against the extreme language of “rigorists;” and tells how, about the year 1846, he spoke of Fasting Communion “as ‘a good custom,’ and said nothing more.” He also (p. 353) speaks of “Keble and Neale, if not others of our own day, as disregarding the necessity of ‘this practice of fasting from midnight before Communion.’” But it is a pity that, while he refers in one passage to Sir. J. Coleridge’s “Life of John Keble,” he did not also take notice of the following sentence, with which these pages shall conclude:—*“For many years it had been his custom, whenever he was to celebrate in the course of the day, to eat nothing before”* (Life of Keble, p. 539). W. B.