

The Teaching Church

The Sacrament of The Holy Communion

Fellowship with God and with one another.

We speak of this service as "Holy Communion," and the name is so familiar that we probably seldom pause to think exactly what is meant. Communion or fellowship with God through Jesus Christ, with our fellow worshippers who are members of Christ's body, with the great company of those who have served God faithfully here and are now in Paradise, with Angels and Arch-angels and with all the company of Heaven. It is the fellowship or union of the members of the Church with God, the Supreme Reality, the ground of all existence. We may well ask, "Who is sufficient for these things?"

God Who Seeks

In Father Hebert's writings we notice how frequently he returns to the importance of the statement, "Suffered under Pontius Pilate." The reason for this may be seen in the following passage from "Liturgy and Society." "The Revelation of God is thus proclaimed as in the first place, a fact rather than a doctrine. Christianity is the announcement that God has been incarnated in the flesh and suffered under Pontius Pilate. Christianity, therefore, appeals to history, and every great effort to evade the appeal to history is an evasion of the Gospel of the Incarnation." It is this grasp of the truth of God given to the Church and founded on historical facts which is so necessary for us. The faith is not a summary of human ideals but the response to the facts of the Divine activity. In the days of His flesh our Lord came to call sinners to repentance which is the beginning of the possibility of fellowship with Him. This seeking of man by God, manifested once most vividly in the life of our Lord, which is a matter of history, is now manifested in the life of the worshipping Church. The chief symbol which witnesses to this reality is the Holy

Communion. We come, then, because God has called us and our action is a response.

Action is Fellowship.

Perhaps no word is more bandied about in the Church than this word "fellowship." Too often we attempt to express fellowship by a certain breezy feeling by which we hope to cover differences of aim. But is this fellowship? What do we require of a friend? It seems that we require at least two things. Firstly, there must be community of interest and aim in the most important matters of life. Secondly, there must be mutual understanding of the workings of the mind. We feel pain when we have blundered and mis-read our friend and we suffer when our friend acts in such a way that our confidence in him is strained or even shattered. St. Paul's "My little children, I stand in doubt of you," is the expression of one of the most acute miseries of life. The fellowship of the Eucharist is founded on the reality of God Who seeks. His knowledge is thus stated by St. John, "God is greater than our hearts and knoweth all things." He wills that we should know Him. "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent." Fellowship here quite clearly means response to the Divine activity and can only be manifested in obedient love and service of Him."

Abiding in Fellowship

There is then the means of attaining fellowship with God through Jesus Christ and fellowship with one another. It is not a matter of human ideals but of response to Divine activity manifested in history and continued down the ages in the Church. What is involved? Can fellowship be true and real if it consists of occasional acts which appar-

ently bear no relation to the daily life? Surely this is impossible to believe. If we grasp the real significance of the joy of Holy Communion we must see that we are called into that fellowship to take our part in winning the whole of human life and its activities for our Lord. God is the supreme and rich reality and it is this truth and its corollary of the responsibility of man to God which the world so sadly needs. It is the work of the fellowship of the Church to witness to that faith and need in all departments of life and so we are taught to pray:—

"And we most humbly beseech Thee, O Heavenly Father, so to assist us with Thy grace, that we may continue in that holy fellowship, and do all such good works as Thou hast prepared for us to walk in."

IN THE FRONT LINE

Church Fighting for Christ in Many Fields

HOLY BIBLES IN DEMAND.

CHINA.

Effects of Air-raids.—Miss B. Tobin writes from Kweilin:—Owing to the air-raids, the Government wants as many people as possible to evacuate. A good many have gone, including many of our Christian women. Some leave their children there, and return at intervals for a little church fellowship; our hearts are gladdened by news of village women beginning to learn a little of the "Jesus Way." One began so simply with daily Bible reading and prayer with her children and a simple Grace before meals. Now at least one woman comes regularly to listen to the reading and easy explanation; other come quite often.

One of our women workers has been in another village for some time. She preaches in the marketplace, has over thirty women and children coming for regular teaching (they are reading their sixth book), and has a simple form of service on Sundays.