

LECTURE V

“As Thou didst send Me into the world, even so sent I them into the world.”—JOHN xvii. 18.

WE have followed the work of our Lord in heaven until, in the High-priestly office which He discharges there, we have seen Him sending down His Spirit into the members of His Body; while that Spirit, as the Spirit of His own glorified humanity, enters into the closest possible connexion with what they are, and becomes the pervading element of every department of their life. The work of our Lord, however, is not yet done. It is true that He left the world and went to the Father; that, when the prospect of His departure was immediately before Him, He told His disciples that He would “make request of the Father, and He would give them another Advocate, that He might be with them for ever”;¹ and that, according to His promise, this Advocate now leads them into all the truth, fits them for every duty, and brings to them the enjoyment of every privilege. But in and with the Advocate He Himself also comes. “I will not leave you orphans,” He says; “I come unto you,”²—words in which the use

¹ John xiv. 16.

² John xiv. 18.

of the present tense, "I come," is a sufficient proof that He refers, not to the close of the present dispensation, but to His continuous coming, in the Advocate, thenceforward to the end of time. From the instant of His departure He would come to them, although in a manner not perceptible to the senses; and His coming to wind up the history of the world would rather be the "manifestation of His Presence,"¹ His visible return, when the Church should put off the garments of her widowhood, and clothe herself in nuptial robes to meet the Bridegroom. In the meantime she waits, and lays out for her Lord whatever talents He has committed to her care. In what capacity does she wait or work? In what light are we to regard her during her present pilgrimage?

The answer to these questions depends mainly upon what was said in the last Lecture. The Church exists by means of our Lord's communication to her of that Spirit which is His own Spirit. It follows that what He is His people, according to the measure of their capabilities, must also be. This principle is, indeed, a simple corollary from the fundamental conception of the Church as the Body of Christ; for the Body lives in such close communion with the Head that whatever the Head wills the Body must do. "I am the Vine, ye are the branches,"² is the declaration by our Lord of His people's position in the world; "Abide in Me, and I in you,"³ is His authoritative command; while other words spoken in the same discourse to a similar

¹ 2 Thess. ii. 8; Titus ii. 13.

² John xv. 5.

³ John xv. 4.

effect, and directly connected with what was to follow His departure, show that in all such passages He thinks of Himself as glorified: "*In that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you.*"¹ With the knowledge of ever-deepening experience the disciples shall know that the Son of man whose "going away" seemed to be a separation between Himself and them is still really present with them in His power, and that they are glorified in Him, and He in them. Thus the end of the economy of grace will be attained—the perfect union, in a glory now given though only partially realised, of Father, Son, and all believers in one uninterrupted, unchanging, eternal unity. The true idea of the Church on earth is, therefore, not that of a Body starting from earth and reaching onwards to a heavenly condition to be perfectly attained hereafter. It is rather the idea of a Body starting from heaven, and so exhibiting, amidst the inhabitants and things of time, the graces and privileges already ideally bestowed upon it, that it may lead the world either to come to the light or to condemn itself because it loves the darkness rather than the light, its deeds being evil. It will also follow that the community thus constituted must be the visible Representative of our Lord while He is Himself invisible, and that to it must be committed the work which in personal presence with us He can no longer do. Not, indeed, that we may ever lose sight of the subordination of the members to the Head. To whatever extent the

¹ John xiv. 20.

glorified Lord identifies Himself with those to whom He has given His glory,¹ and however close may be the resemblance between Him and them, He retains His absolute and unequalled pre-eminence. He must always be what He is, "the beginning, the first-born from the dead." He is not glorified with us, but we with Him; He does not grow up in all things into us, but we into Him; and the consummation of our joy is to behold *His* glory which God has given Him.² With Him is the fountain of life, and it is the water which *He* bestows that becomes in us a fountain of springing water, unto eternal life.³

Let us notice very briefly the argument of the fourth Evangelist upon the point. According to the first chapter of his Gospel, the Light of the World, which "was with God, and was God," had from the instant of creation never ceased to shine. More particularly, so shining, it had been "the life of *men*." It had lightened not only God's ancient people in their divinely provided fold, but those "other sheep" which, as we learn at a later point in the same Gospel, were yet to be brought into the one flock of the one Shepherd.⁴ Thus had it been up to the time of the Christian era. Then there was a great development. The light, no longer shining merely as a spiritual influence in the minds of men, reached its culminating point, and assumed its concrete and most powerful reality in the

¹ John xvii. 22.

² Rom. viii. 17; Eph. iv. 15; John xvii. 24.

Théologie Systématique, iv. p. 260.

³ John iv. 14.

⁴ John x. 16.

Grétilat,

Son. That Word who had hitherto been only an unseen light "became flesh, and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of an only begotten from a father), full of grace and truth."¹ The effect of this Incarnation was that, whereas no man had seen God at any time, "The only begotten, which was in the bosom of the Father, He declared Him;"² that is, He came not simply as a spiritual influence from God, but to set Him forth to the eyes of men. Then the Father was "seen" in the Son, and to this manifestation of the Father in Himself our Lord constantly appeals in all His discourses with "The Jews," as the ground upon which they were bound to acknowledge His claims and to believe in Him.³

The same principle must continue to operate. The Father of the spirits of all flesh desires still to make Himself known for our salvation; and, if human nature in its deepest aspects is always the same, He must effect this end in essentially the same way. The special "declaration" of God, however, made by the Divine Word at the time when He became Incarnate could be made by Him to none but the men of His own generation. A record of it might be preserved. Books might be written regarding it. A full and detailed description of what Jesus was while upon earth might be given to mankind. But not in books alone could all that is involved in communion with the Father be so presented to the world as to attract it also into that blessed fellowship. The world needed to see what such fellow-

¹ John i. 14.

² Ver. 18.

³ Comp. Grébillat, iv. p. 457.

ship implied; how it elevated and consecrated and beautified human life; and, in the only sense in which the word ought to be used, brought to it "salvation." This mission, therefore, our Lord entrusted to His Church. "As Thou," He said in His High-priestly prayer, "didst send Me into the world, even so sent I them into the world;" "And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given unto them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected into one; that the world may know that Thou didst send Me, and lovedst them, even as Thou lovedst Me."¹ Hence the words of the disciple whom Jesus loved: "The life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare unto you the life, the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us; that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us: yea, and our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ."² And hence the promise to the Apostles, accompanying their great commission, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth Me; and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me."³ The Body of our Lord, therefore, must represent Himself.

No doubt the Church can never during the days of her pilgrimage execute such a commission to the full. She has not yet realised the ideal perfection which belongs to her. Sin is too often found where there

¹ John xvii. 18, 22, 23.

² 1 John i. 2, 3.

³ John xiii. 20.

ought to be holiness ; disunion where there ought to be unity ; weakness where there ought to be strength ; and, however exalted the spiritual life of the members of the Church may be, they must bear about with them their body of humiliation, until He who is now waited for comes again and fashions it anew, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory.¹ Nevertheless the Church's ideal state supplies to her the standard of her duty, and to approach nearer to it ought to be her constant effort. From Him in whom it is already perfected she draws her measure of that state, to the extent to which she is able at any moment to exhibit it ; and, when she is true to the gift bestowed upon her this measure cannot fail to be a growing one. The fountain to which she is invited is not some small spring opened on the mountain side. It is rather that great gathering of the waters above the firmament, the volume of which can never be diminished, though drawn upon for every want and through every age of the Church's history. Of these waters she first drinks for the nourishment of her own life ; and then, as she passes onward in her course, they are to issue forth from her, in ever more abounding streams, for the fertilisation of widening lands and the refreshment of multiplying peoples. The true conception of the Church, in short, is that she begins in heaven and, in possession of the Spirit of her glorified Head, descends to earth. She does not begin on earth and work her way to heaven.

The principles involved in what has now been said

¹ Phil. iii. 20, 21.

so far from being unreasonable, are in strict conformity with the nature of man and the general providence of God. For, in the first place, it is only natural to think that men will be most successfully appealed to when regard is had to both sides of their nature and not to one side only. He who framed us with bodies as well as souls, with an outward as well as an inward aspect of our being, may be expected to act in religion as He acts in every other sphere of His relations to His creatures. He may therefore be expected to address us by what is visible as well as by what is invisible, by what speaks to the senses as well as by what speaks only to the inner spirit. This principle has been for ever consecrated by the Incarnation, the simple fact that the Father of all deemed the Incarnation of the Son necessary for the redemption of men being itself a sufficient reply to any opposing argument. In the second place, we thus secure the thought of perpetual intervention of God in the religious training of the race similar to that perpetuity of action which marks His dealings in creation and providence. He not only called the world into existence, He constantly intervenes in its behalf. "He commandeth the sun, and it riseth not; and sealeth up the stars;" "He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man."¹ Is it not likely that He will proceed in the same manner in the plan of His grace; and that if, at the beginning of the Christian era, "Holy Spirit" was employed to prepare the Holy Child for birth, the same "Holy Spirit" will be unceasingly

¹ Job ix. 7; Ps. civ. 14.

employed on the same principle, though it may be in another way, in carrying out what was then begun? Nor can it be urged that, even if men stand in need of this visible declaration of the Father, a visible, as distinguished from an invisible, Church is incapable of making it. By the mere fact of its visibility the visible is not despiritualised. Were it so the Incarnation of the Eternal Son would have been impossible. Holy thoughts and devout affections, when embodied in living personalities, are as visible as the countenances of those through whom they exert their power. Without the embodiment they would be lost upon the world, and would fail to fulfil their mission for its good.

Upon these principles, then—principles to be read not only in revelation, but in nature and in man—rests the plea for a visible Church and ordinances, by means of which there shall be continued in the world from age to age both a representation of what Christ as the manifestation of the Father is, and a channel for the conveyance of His grace. As an able though anonymous writer has said—

The origin and cause of all that is done in the Christian Church is the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is a Spirit, essentially invisible. In Him is all life, and grace, and power to bless; He is visible in the God-man Christ Jesus; and only from, and by, and through that God-man, all that is in God for us can come to us; and except through Him that is visible, we can receive nothing from Him who is the invisible. Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God, the symbol of Him who is invisible; the channel, the means, through which all spiritual grace and power come. But for the time being, and during the

period between His first and second advents, He also is invisible to us. He, therefore, has instituted certain images, or symbols, which represent Him in some character or office, or ministry, or act, or operation, or some fact concerning Him. And by means of these Christ ordinarily ministers to His people the grace, power, and blessing of those offices, acts, and operations which they respectively symbolise; and, by the use of them in the manner He has appointed, the faithful obtain that grace and blessing. The material part of our Lord's human nature, in and by which God is imaged and symbolised to us, and through which all grace is ministered to us, is taken from the substance of this earth; and all those symbolic things of which we speak must be of the substance of, and appertaining to, this material creation. . . . The Church cannot omit any of them, cannot change any, cannot substitute anything else in their places; she cannot add to, she cannot take from, any of them, without suffering consequent detriment and loss.¹

From these considerations it follows that whatever function is discharged by our Lord in heaven must be also discharged by His Church on earth. Is he, as glorified, a Prophet? The prophetic office must belong to her. It may, for the sake of order, be distributed through appropriate members; but primarily it belongs to the Church as a whole, the life of Christ in His prophetic office being first her life, and her life then pervading and animating any particular persons through whom the work of prophesying is performed. In like manner is the glorified Redeemer a King? The kingly office must also belong to the Church; and, if it is to be represented in any particular members rather than in the Body as a whole, her life must so penetrate and

¹ *Creation and Redemption*, p. 30.

pervade them that they may be kingly. If it be thus with our Lord's offices as Prophet and King, it cannot be otherwise with that priestly office which is the foundation of both of these. All who allow that our Lord is a Priest in heaven must, upon the principles now laid down, acknowledge the priestliness of the Church on earth.

What has been said might of itself be sufficient to determine the priestly character of the visible Church. But the point is at once so essential to the conception of the Church of Christ, and the object of so much suspicion and dislike, that it may be well to consider the matter from another and more strictly historical side.

No truth is more readily or more universally accepted than that the Old Testament was preparatory to the New, and that the ideas embodied in it, instead of being destroyed by the entrance of the higher dispensation, were taken up, confirmed, extended, heightened, and for ever perfected. Our Lord's own words are decisive on the point: "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil."¹ It is unnecessary to spend time in showing either that the Old Testament dispensation as a whole is here referred to, or that the "law" spoken of includes the law in all its parts—moral, ceremonial, and civil. Upon neither of these points is there any difference of opinion worthy of mention, and we may rest with the most perfect confidence in the assurance that whatever can

¹ Matt. v. 17.

be shown to be a principle of the Old Testament dispensation is accomplished or fulfilled in the dispensation which took its place.

The question, however, still arises, How is the one dispensation accomplished in the other? Is it by the appointment of Christian ordinances, arrangements, and institutions corresponding to those of Israel? or are all the parts of the Jewish economy in the first instance fulfilled in Christ? and only, as fulfilled in Him, and deducible from a consideration of His Person and Work, do the principles embodied in them become binding upon us? The answer to these questions is not difficult. The Jewish dispensation is accomplished in Christ Himself, and its ideas have authority over Christian men, as coming direct from Him, not from Israel.

Thus it is that St. Paul, when treating the subject in its most general form, exclaims, "Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness to every one that believeth"; that, again, he says, "The law hath been our tutor to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith is come, we are no longer under a tutor. For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus;" and that, once more, he explains His own experience in the words, "I through the law died unto the law, that I might live unto God."¹ In these passages, and others of a similar kind, the Apostle's assertion is, that the whole legal dispensation has passed away, not because it has been fulfilled in new and higher institutions, but because it

¹ Rom. x. 4; Gal. iii. 24, ii. 19.

has been fulfilled in Christ. The lesson thus taught in its general form is elsewhere taught by the same Apostle with reference to particular rites of Judaism; as when, writing to the Corinthians, he says, "Wherefore let us keep the feast (or festival) . . . with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."¹ The figure lying at the bottom of his words is that of the Passover, but it is neither to the Jewish Passover nor to the Christian Eucharist that he refers in the word "feast" or "festival." He speaks of the whole Christian life. Because the Lamb slain for believers is, not once a year only but for ever, in the presence of the Father, the Christian life also is not confined to stated seasons, but goes on from year to year, from day to day, from hour to hour. Over the whole of it a festival light is thrown. The Christian passover never ends. We learn what it is, not from Judaism, but from the fulfilment of Judaism in our Lord.

A similar lesson is not less strikingly taught us by the Gospel of St. John. One of the main thoughts pervading that Gospel, and illustrating the truth stated in the Prologue, that "The law was given through Moses; the grace and the truth came through Jesus Christ," is that in Christ Himself we have the fulfilment of all the institutions of the Old Testament. It can hardly be denied that such is the light in which we are to read the miracle of the multiplying of the bread, with the discourses accompanying it, in chap. vi.—there Christ is the fulfilment of the Passover; or that we are to

¹ 1 Cor. v. 8.

read in the same spirit the narrative of our Lord's action in the Temple at Jerusalem, at the feast of Tabernacles, given in chap. vii.—there He is the fulfilment of that closing festival of the Jewish year. Let us pass from these, and take another and still greater institution of Israel, the Sabbath. No Jewish ordinance has either in itself a deeper interest, or can be more plausibly appealed to in order to establish a conclusion different from that now contended for. It appears most natural to think that the Sabbath of the Jewish is fulfilled in the Lord's Day of the Christian Church. Yet that is not the teaching of the fourth Evangelist. He leads us rather to believe that the Sabbath is fulfilled in something wider, deeper, and more glorious than any single day, or any succession, at intervals, of single days. It is fulfilled, like the Passover and Tabernacles, in Christ. The teaching of the incident at the pool of Bethesda, related in the fifth chapter of the Gospel, is conclusive upon this point. He who there heals the impotent man upon the Sabbath, and by doing so rouses in a greater than ordinary degree the opposition of His enemies, presents Himself to us in His conversation with the Jews as Himself the accomplishment of the sacred institution. To the complaint that "He did these things on the Sabbath" He replies, "My Father worketh even until now, and I work"—as much as to say, "Behold in My Father and in Me the right idea of that Sabbath-rest which you show so much eagerness to preserve. My Father's work of love to man and My work of love in Him never know one moment's pause.

By day and by night, through the years, and through the ages, We work on, seeking alike in providence and in grace to heal the wounds inflicted by the children of men upon themselves. In one sense, therefore, We never rest. Yet in another sense We always rest; for Our work is not like your work; and, in the end which We contemplate, and in the spirit in which We accomplish it, We find that uninterrupted rest of which you have only the shadow in the commandment you would now honour and obey. So far from being a violation of that commandment, the works done by Me in My Father's name are its fulfilment. I am always working: I am always resting: My work is rest: My rest is work: and you may behold both the works and the rest in Me."

These illustrations of the principle now contended for must suffice. Every sacred institution of Israel might be adduced for the same purpose; and, whether we had to speak of Pentecost or the Day of Atonement, of the Sabbath year or the year of Jubilee, of the Tabernacle or the Altar of incense, or the Shew-bread, or the Golden Candlestick, it might be shown that their "accomplishment" is to be sought in no single Christian ordinance. All of them are shadows of something higher than any ordinance, even of Him who is the substance of all the ordinances and the life of all the institutions of His people; of Him who is the Author and the Finisher of their faith; and whose own and whose people's life are one. If the principle now spoken of be not admitted, it will hardly be possible to

avoid charging the Church of Christ with remissness and neglect of duty. As a simple matter of fact there are numerous institutions of the Old Testament economy, to which, in her own arrangements, she has nothing to correspond. Nor can it be said that these were less important than the others to which a closer analogy is found in the Christian system. All were equally ordained of God; all expressed definite and distinct ideas; and all were equally obligatory upon Israel. If, therefore, the New Testament Israel is to embody in corresponding outward forms the ideas which, though heightened and extended, have passed over to her from the Ancient Church, she has no right to omit any institution upon which the seal of the Divine approbation was once set. Necessary for the religious life then, the inference would be irresistible that they are not less necessary now. We are not entitled to select from them those only that may gratify our own tastes or suit our own purposes. We must either adopt them all, or be able to show that their "accomplishment" in Christ involves the passing away of some along with the retention of others. This distinction cannot be carried out; and, on the supposition therefore that the institutions of Judaism are fulfilled in corresponding Christian institutions, we ought to find, not an occasional, but a complete parallel between the types of the Jewish Church and the separate fulfilment of these in the Church as she is perfected in Christ.

On the other hand, what has been said does not entitle us to infer either that there are no positive

institutions under the New Testament, or that there may not be a close resemblance between such as existed in Israel and those appointed by the Christian Church for the edification of her members. In point of fact we know that Christians have at least the divinely instituted Sacraments and the Ministry; and, when we remember that the principles of the religious life are in all ages essentially the same, we may expect that the Divine Spirit operating in the Church will guide her to arrangements similar in their nature to those once shaped directly by His hand. What is contended for is simply that the ordinances and institutions of the legal economy are not fulfilled in corresponding ordinances and institutions of the economy of grace. They are fulfilled in Christ. The idea of priesthood, therefore, as one of the most essential principles and fundamental institutions of the Old Testament did not pass away when Jesus came. It was fulfilled in Him, and no Christian denies that He at least abides a Priest for ever.

But if the idea of priesthood was thus fulfilled in Christ it must be fulfilled also in His Church. We cannot separate the Head from the members. The Christian Church does not simply live by Christ: she lives in Him, and He lives in her. By the constant communication of His Spirit she is what she is; and, as we have seen, the Spirit is not an outward gift which may be bestowed by the Giver while different in its nature from what the Giver is. The Spirit poured out upon the Church is that which so penetrates our

Lord's own being that He cannot give the Spirit without at the same time giving Himself, or give Himself without giving the Spirit. As, then, in the power of that Spirit He is a Priest in heaven, the life lived on earth by His Body, in the power of the same Spirit, must be priestly.

Nothing, accordingly, can be more distinct than the manner in which this lesson is impressed upon us in Scripture. At the moment when the Almighty was entering into His most solemn covenant with Israel He had declared that, if the people would obey His commandments, they should be unto Him "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation";¹ and St. Peter, having the fulfilment of that covenant in his eye,² speaks of Christians as "a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."³ Wherever also the priestly character of the Head of the Church in heaven is treated of, there the priestly character of His people upon earth appears. Of the extent to which this is the case in the central Old Testament prophecy of the coming Priest after the order of Melchizedek, it is unnecessary to say more than has been said already.⁴ In the Epistle to the Hebrews the same lesson meets us. No sooner has the writer of that Epistle set forth the glory of the Melchizedek Priesthood, and of Jesus as a High-priest after that order, than he makes the practical application: "Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holy place, in the blood of Jesus, by the way which He

¹ Ex. xix. 6.

² 1 Pet. i. 2.

³ 1 Pet. ii. 5.

⁴ See Lect. ii.

dedicated for us, a new and living way, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and having a great Priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart, in fulness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our body washed with pure water.”¹ The entering “into the holy place,” spoken of in these words, at once suggests the light in which Christians are there thought of, for into it under the Old Testament economy priests alone could enter; and this conclusion is strengthened by the fact that the two participial sentences, marking out the mode in which we are to draw near, are grounded, the one on the sprinkling of blood which accompanied the consecration of Aaron and his sons to the priesthood,² the other on the command that, when the priests entered into the tabernacle of the congregation, they should wash with water, that they died not.³ As priests, then, the members of the Christian Church enjoy their privilege of immediate access to the presence of God. Because they have an High-priest over the house of God they are priests in Him. The same thing appears even more in the Revelation of St. John. As in the fundamental vision of that book⁴ we are taught that Christ exalted in glory is a Priest, wearing His priestly garments in the manner in which they were worn by the priests of Israel when engaged in active service,⁵ so we are taught in the same book that in Him all His people are also priests. They have been made “to be a kingdom, to be priests unto

¹ Heb. x. 19-22. ² Exod. xxix. 21. ³ Exod. xxx. 20; Lev. viii. 6.

⁴ Rev. i. 13-16.

⁵ Ver. 13.

His God and Father,"¹ and the white robes which they wear throughout the book are the robes of priests. The idea of priestly function cannot be separated from the Christian Church. All the Lord's people are priests.

It is unnecessary to say more upon this point. What has been contended for will indeed be granted by most Christian men. They may dread the teaching of the Roman Church, which attempts to satisfy our need of a perpetual sacrifice by the doctrine of the Mass. They may shrink from the term Sacerdotalism or Priestliness as if it must involve an undue exaltation of the clergy and depreciation of the lay members of the Church. They may even fall into the mistake of totally misapprehending the meaning of the words which they condemn; and from one or other of these causes they may be led to urge that there is no priest on earth, that our Lord in heaven is the one sufficient and only Priest. But let Sacerdotalism be defined as our Lord defined it when He said: "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."² Let the priestliness of the whole Church, not that of any particular class within her, be brought prominently forward; let it appear that the very object of insisting upon the Church's priestliness is to restore to the Christian laity that sense of their responsibility and privilege of which Protestantism, hardly less than Romanism, has practically deprived them; and let the Church's priesthood be invariably represented as a continuation of our Lord's priestly

¹ Rev. i. 6.

² Matt. xx. 28.

office through her, not as something deputed to her ;—let all this be done, and prejudice against the doctrine would probably be removed. Yet it has been thought proper to dwell upon it at some length, because, to whatever extent theoretically accepted, there is need of a livelier apprehension of its power and consequences. It is not sufficiently felt that, in the strictest and fullest meaning of the words, the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ is a priestly Church, or that priestliness is even the prime element of her being, because it is the prime element in the being of her glorified Head.

What then, we have now to ask, is the Church's commission to the world? It is to represent her Lord, and, as the instrument through which He acts, to carry on His work. This representation may be considered under the four following particulars—her Life, her Work, her Worship, and her Confession. Let us advert to these.

I. The glorified Lord is to be made manifest in His people's Life. We have seen that the most characteristic part of our Lord's High-priestly work in heaven is Offering—that offering which is continually made in His presentation of Himself to the Father when, having accepted death as the penal consequence of sin, He yielded Himself to the Father in one perfect, free, loving, and undivided service. This is the service which St. Paul has in view when he says: "And when all things have been subjected unto Him (the Son), then shall the Son also be subjected to Him that did subject all things unto Him, that God may be all in all."¹ In thus sub-

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 28.

jecting Himself, however, our Lord does not stand alone. He never is or can be alone. Not even upon the Cross was He alone. His people were in Him when He died; they were in Him when He rose from the grave and ascended to "the heavenly places"; they are in Him as He loves and serves in heaven. He is the Second Adam, the Head of the new creation, the first-born among many brethren, who are His, not by an outward imputation merely, but by an inward appropriation of His righteousness. "And for them," He says in His High-priestly prayer, "I consecrate Myself, that they themselves also may be consecrated in truth."¹ Every part of the statement is full of meaning. He might have said, as on a previous occasion, that He had been "consecrated and sent into the world by the Father";² but He speaks then of "*consecrating Himself*," because, as being everything that was truly human, He had laid all that He was upon the altar of God with perfect acquiescence and free will, and had thus gained that place which entitled Him to become the Head of a new line of spiritual descendants. The consecration of His disciples, it is also evident, was to be the exact counterpart of His own,—that "*they themselves also*" may be consecrated. While guided by the Spirit, they were to be so guided as to act in their turn a free and consciously willing part, devoting "themselves" in personal faith to the life in which they had been offered by their Lord. And all this was to be done "*in truth*," not simply truly, but in the sphere of "truth" in its most

¹ John xvii. 19.

² John x. 36.

absolute sense — truth given in that Son who is the expression of the Father; truth as the eternal reality of things in contrast with the merely outward and phenomenal around us in all its unsubstantial, shadowy, and transitory character.

In her whole process of sanctification, therefore, the Church is only reaching onward in Christ to what Christ is. She aims at no mere perfection of pagan virtue, at no merely general idea of goodness, of obedience to the Divine commandments or submission to the Divine appointments. Her aim is to be like her Lord, and like Him in that character which distinguishes Him as the heavenly High-priest, "holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens."¹ Her sanctification is no mere *consequence* of a redemptive act finished on the Cross. It is itself salvation in its highest sense. It is that being "loosed from our sins in the blood of Christ" which makes us "to be a kingdom, to be priests unto His God and Father."² To this result the Church, as one with her Lord, has to press continually forward, yet not so much by passing into new and hitherto untried spheres of the religious life, as by realising in act what in principle she already has, until the perfect consecration of the Head becomes that also of the members of the Body. As the glorified Lord, human as well as Divine, now yields Himself in His heavenly Priesthood in eternal submission to the Father, and in that submission enjoys uninterrupted communion and fellowship with Him, so

¹ Heb. vii. 26.

² Rev. i. 6, 6. Note the later reading.

His people are to offer their life in His life, in a like perpetual service. Constrained by the mercies of God, they are to present themselves "a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God."¹ In the joyful confidence of love they are to draw near continually, with full assurance of faith, into the inmost sanctuary of the Divine Presence, and there to obtain fresh quickening for the duties that would otherwise be too difficult for them, and for the temptations that they would be otherwise unable to overcome.

More particularly, there are three great elements forming the very power of our Lord's Priesthood, which the Church, during His absence, is in her priesthood to make manifest to the world.

1. There is the Divine element. We have already seen that this element must be found in the Priest, who, not by commission only but in His own nature, is to be the Mediator between God and man. It must, therefore, be found also in the Church. Nor is the necessity for its presence in a later age modified by any demonstration that it certainly did exist in the Church at the first, that it was borne witness to by signs and wonders and mighty deeds, and that nothing but the direct interposition of God will account for the rise and progress of the Christian faith in the earliest stages of its history. It is not enough to tell the world of a Divine Redeemer who tabernacled in the flesh nearly nineteen centuries ago, and who then left promises for ever valid. Much more is needed. The Church of

¹ Rom. xii. 1.

God has, in one way or another, even now to show that a Lord of superearthly power is in her midst; that He is working there; that, in His Divine as well as human personality, He is fashioning her to a higher sphere than that of earth; and that He is to her an influence as present, real, and true as He was to the disciples who followed Him when He was here below, heard His voice, beheld His form, and received out of His fulness. Thus it was that Jesus said to Judas (not Iscariot), "If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him."¹ Thus it is that St. Paul exclaimed, "We are a temple of the living God; even as God said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."² And thus it is that St. John, in the Apocalypse, "heard a great voice out of the throne saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall tabernacle with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God."³ As truly, as really as God dwelt in the Tabernacle of old and met Israel there, must it appear that the glorified Redeemer dwells now with His people, imparting to them an element of life as positively Divine as was that element in His own life on earth, as is that element in His life in heaven.

It is no answer to this to say that, if there be such a Divine element in the Church, a continuous power to work miracles is implied; and that, without beholding miracles, we can never know that it is there. To such

¹ John xiv. 23.

² 2 Cor. vi. 16.

³ Rev. xxi. 3.

statements it is enough to reply that no more mistaken position can be occupied, none more entirely contradictory to the teaching of the fourth Gospel, than that which only sees a manifestation of the Divine in what is commonly designated miraculous. Referring to His own works, our Lord on one occasion said, "Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me: or else believe for the very works' sake. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto the Father."¹ By the "greater works" here spoken of, our Lord cannot mean only what we call miracles. Greater miracles could not be wrought than those recorded in the very Gospel in which the words occur. The changing of water into wine; the healing of the nobleman's son; the multiplying of the bread; the opening of the eyes of the blind man; the raising of Lazarus—more stupendous miracles it is impossible even to conceive. Yet our Lord speaks of "greater works" than these; and He connects them in the closest manner with no special mission of apostle, saint, or prophet—"he that believeth" on Him shall do them. He cannot, therefore, refer to merely extraordinary or occasional manifestations by His people of a Divine power resting upon them. He can only have in view that power of the spiritual life in Him which should be exhibited by His disciples after, and because, He had gone to the Father; and this power was to be as convincing an evidence as miracles them-

¹ John xiv. 11, 12.

selves, if not even more convincing, that the living Lord from whom it came was the revelation of the Father to the age which witnessed it.

The history of the Church has taught us the same lesson. In her earliest age she possessed those miraculous gifts of which St. Paul has given so striking a description in his first Epistle to the Corinthians.¹ Shall we say that, because of this, she was then at a higher stage than she has since been or is now? It is in grace as it is in nature. We can easily conceive that on that morning when Noah and his family came forth from the ark after the Deluge they would behold such a burst of new life as they had never before seen. After their long submersion trees would rush into leaf and plants would spring up with a rapidity never before witnessed. Everywhere life would display an intensity of action unseen before or since. It would be a glorious spectacle—renovated Nature's first offering to her God—but not so glorious, not so calculated to exalt our notions of the Divine presence, as when, season after season, and morning after morning, Nature, at the Divine bidding, puts forth her calmer powers—leaves gradually decking the trees, the grass gradually becoming green, one sustained quiet energy causing the earth through successive ages to renew her youth, with no agitation, no noise, no excitement, but deep, undisturbed, irresistible, the power of Him Who, amidst all changes, is Himself unchanged.

In like manner the highest idea of Christianity is

¹ 1 Cor. xii.-xiv.

not that where, under the mighty impulse of a first outpouring of the Divine Spirit, miracles may be wrought and, in the agitation of society, striking things be done, but that where the agitation has subsided; where what was felt to be only supernatural and extraordinary has so identified itself with the heart and life that it has become natural and ordinary; where God is not less but more present than before—present everywhere and in all things; and where He shows His presence by the depth rather than the commotion of the pious feelings which He awakens, by the calmness rather than the agitation of that river of life the flood of which in the soul He fills.

It is not, therefore, only in things to which we commonly confine the word miracle that the Divine appears. It may appear not less in the whole tone and spirit of the Church's life, in the varied Christian virtues of her members, in the general character of their Christian work, and in the grace received by them in the Christian Sacraments. When that life is exhibited, as it ought to be, in its distinctively heavenly character, it bears witness to the presence of a power in Christian men which no mere recollection of a past example, however heroic or beautiful, can supply. The difficulties of exhibiting and maintaining it are probably far greater now than they were in the apostolic age; and as nothing but a present Divine support can enable us to overcome these, so, when they are overcome, a testimony is given to the fact that God is with us.

It is not even enough to say this; for the New

Testament teaches us that the heavenly, the Divine, element in the Christian life is its most essential characteristic, giving it both a new point of departure and a new spirit. The Christian life is not simply an advance on what went before, or a development of the past without any break in the continuity of human progress. At a moment when, as shown by the context, St. Paul's mind was filled with the thought of the glorified Redeemer, he thus describes it: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new."¹ Twice in one verse he uses the word "new," and the word is not that which expresses the simple freshening of the old, but that which tells us that the object spoken of had been untried before.² The old things, indeed, are not destroyed; they are only so transfigured that they may be spoken of as new. They remain, and we remain. But neither they nor we are any longer what we were. The animating principle of our life is new, and that principle makes all things new. The whole strain of the New Testament leads to the same conclusion. The Christian life is not grounded on or maintained by a Redeemer who was simply the purest and noblest of the human race. It is grounded on and maintained by One who entered this world by a miraculous birth; who, after He had died, rose miraculously from the grave in which He had been buried; who ascended in a miraculous manner to the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens; and who, from His throne

¹ 2 Cor. v. 17.

² *καινός*.

there, sends His life-giving spirit to quicken miraculously into His own life the life of the members of His Body. All the most essential facts of Christianity are directly and immediately Divine. They may have been contemplated, as we know that they were contemplated, from eternal ages. They may have been prepared for, as we know that they were prepared for, by a world-wide training and discipline; but, when they occurred, it was by the interposition of God; and the life founded upon them is also by His interposition. It has a new beginning and a new spirit. It is not the water of an old covenant cleansed from the impurities that have become mingled with it in the course of time. It is wine, the new wine of our Father's kingdom, so that Christians, while they are in the world, are above the world, the springs of their new being rising out of no earthly fountain, but out of that fountain of perpetual life which is hid with Christ in God. There may be those who will reply to this, Then there is no hope for the world; the world will never receive such teaching. If it be so, there is no help for it: the Church is not responsible for saving the world; she is responsible for holding up to the world what is alone a real salvation; if the world will be ignorant, let it be ignorant. Yet the reply may be a mistake; and, at all events, the results of proceeding upon any other principle have not been encouraging.

The Church of Christ, indeed, may well be warned to hold fast the characteristic of her faith and life of

which we have been speaking. No error of the day is more subtle or pernicious in its effects than to suppose that our Lord may retain His value for humanity, and may constitute the Christian life in us, even when He has been divested of His Divine and super-earthly character, or that the life of His followers may be led without the constant inhabitation of His Divine as well as human Spirit. The logical conclusion from such views can only be that the sooner we get rid of Revelation and all the anxieties connected with it, the better. If by dealing with the human alone the highest ends of humanity may be reached, then let us deal with the human alone. We shall know where we are. We shall dismiss with a fresh enthusiasm the whole history of "the Christ" even upon earth as the product of superstition or fanaticism, and shall cast ourselves upon the history of the race and the laws of nature. It is true that the mystery of life will thus remain unsolved, that the hope of the future will perish, and that we shall be compelled to write folly, delusion, falsehood, and deceit upon everything that we have thought noblest and brightest, upon everything that has taught us how to live or suffer for others. But what will it matter? With no Divine around us and no eternity before us, there is but one other step to be taken; and then at last we shall be in the grave where "the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest."

From what has been said it will at once appear that under no circumstances whatever is the Church entitled

to keep out of sight the Divine element of the Christian Revelation, in the hope that by presenting Christ merely in His human aspect she may gain an acceptance for Him that might otherwise be denied. Entrusted with a Gospel which has a glorified Lord for its central and characteristic fact, she is bound to proclaim a Divine Redeemer, and a present Divine life in Him. She is to "preach Christ Jesus as Lord."¹ She may not always, indeed, refuse her fellowship to good men who desire it, though they think themselves unable to receive all her testimony. The faith of such men is often deeper than it seems. But to one thing the Church is pledged, under the penalty of being regarded as faithless to her Lord. She must make clear to the world her own conviction that the Saviour whom she preaches and the kingdom which she establishes are Divine as well as human.

2. There is, secondly, the human element. The glorified Lord is human as well as Divine. Even at the right hand of God He is still the man Christ Jesus. The feelings, the emotions, the sympathies of His heart are exactly what they were when He welcomed the first symptoms of contrition in the woman who came to Him in Simon's house, or when He wept over the unbelief of Jerusalem. Even now He would leave no penitent uncheered, no mourner uncomforted, no friend unloved, no little child unblessed; and in all this He is the truly human as well as the Divine Priest of men.

But if it be so with the Head, it cannot be less so

¹ 2 Cor. iv. 5.

with those members of the Body whom the Head nourishes and guides. The Divine ought no more to obscure the human in them than the human the Divine; and, as the life of the glorified Lord, because the perfection of humanity, is the embodiment, not of the fantastically, but of the simply and naturally human, so the more the life of His people approaches perfection will it be simple and natural instead of constrained and unnatural. At the beginning of its course it may be otherwise. The armies of good and evil in the heart are then too equally balanced to give either the mastery, and there can be no truce between them. One must be expelled, and the expulsion is not yet effected. To the eye, therefore, which surveys the field it is no wonder that a strange and inconsistent scene presents itself; for now the one army is victorious, and now the other. Gradually, however, as the work of the Spirit goes on, the hosts of darkness are defeated, the Lord of Righteousness triumphs, and all is calm. With God Himself as the ruling principle in his nature, man is one. Then he becomes natural again.

Whatever is human also belongs to the Church of Christ, and is part of her inheritance. Scripture and history alike condemn the idea that Christianity narrows the thoughts of men, and that, under its sway, everything that adorns and beautifies human life—literature, poetry, painting, sculpture, architecture—is doomed to perish. So far is this from being the case that one of the first Beatitudes spoken by our Lord was, "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit *the*

earth;"¹ and the last song of triumph sung by voices in heaven at the sounding of the seventh Trumpet is, "The kingdom of *the world* is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ."² It is, indeed, one of the greatest lessons of Scripture that in Christ Jesus "were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and invisible . . . all things were created through Him, and unto Him."³ What, then, must be their relation to Him when they are redeemed, and when the creature is delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God? Can it be supposed that He by whom they have been brought into existence will be indifferent to any part of the work of His own hands, to any creature animate or inanimate, to any thought or vision, which has more or less partaken of the benefits of His redeeming work? The teaching of history is not less conclusive. Not a few of the noblest conceptions of the human intellect belong pre-eminently to what are called the ages of faith; and since that time the masterpieces of genius in every department of its labours have been penetrated by the influences which, in this respect, made these ages what they were. There is a fulness and richness in human life when it is connected with the thought of heaven and eternity which it cannot possess when confined to thoughts of earth and time.⁴ And, if this is not always felt, it is in no small measure owing to those defective views of Christianity by which faith

¹ Matt. v. 5. ² Rev. xi. 15. ³ Col. i. 16; comp. Lightfoot *in loc.*

⁴ Comp. Bishop Webb, *The Tabernacle*, p. 35.

has been fixed too exclusively upon a past and humbled and dying, instead of being also fixed upon a present and exalted and living, Lord. The prayer of Jesus for His disciples was, "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them out of the evil one."¹

The Church of Christ, indeed, does not directly occupy herself with literature or science or art, and she would abjure her own special mission were she, in the hope of filling empty pews and stirring languid congregations, to change each house of God into a lecture-room, and each of her ministers into a lecturer on science popularised. It is no part of the charge entrusted to her that she shall discover, or that, having discovered, she shall proclaim, truths that can be reached by the natural force of the human mind. Whatever value she may attach, and she can hardly attach too much, to the smallest pebble gathered on the shore of truth's boundless and unfathomed sea, to gather pebbles of that kind is not her task. Enough for her that she has made men more fit for gathering them; that she has quickened their eyes to see and their ears to hear what might otherwise have been unseen and unheard in the universe around them; that she has taught men to consider every part of nature as the handiwork of God, so that they learn to feel that the leaf of a plant, or the wing of the smallest insect that lights upon it, is a study worthy of the highest powers and the most strenuous exertions. That is enough for the Church of Christ, and it is hers.

¹ John xvii. 15.

She has sent forth her sons into every field of nature, and she has welcomed them when they came back laden with spoils. Thus, then, it is that the heavenly life of Him in whom His people live elevates instead of destroying human things. Without it the inspiring thoughts which have found embodiment in word or form or colour, and which have filled generation after generation with awe and wonder, vanish away; and by the want of them life is not heightened but debased. Its silver becomes dross; its wine is mixed with water. If we wish to make it even a nobler possession than it is, there is nothing so fitted to effect this as to live under the practical conviction that our Lord in heaven desires His glorified humanity to be represented in the human lives of the members of His Body upon earth.

What has now been said is confirmed by one of the most striking declarations of our Lord Himself: "I came that they may have life, and may have abundance."¹ We have no right to limit the meaning of the word "life" in that declaration to spiritual or heavenly life. When Jesus uttered it the whole life of man as man was in His view. If the word "life" is often used in the fourth Gospel in a more limited sense, it is because other kinds and developments of life pass out of sight in the presence of that life on which the writer especially loves to dwell. The word itself has no such limitation of meaning; and, when used as here without anything to suggest limitation, it must be taken in its most comprehensive sense. In Christ was the

¹ John x. 10.

fountain of all life; and every form of life known or unknown, and every department of life, was only a drop of water from the stream which, gathered up in Him before, flowed forth at His command to people the universe of being with the endlessly multiplied and diversified existences that play their part in it.¹ When, therefore, our Lord exclaims that He came not only to give life, but to give abundance, we fail to do justice to His words unless we recognise in them a claim over everything that constitutes the life of man, over all learning and philosophy, over all literature and science, over every form of art, over every relation in which man stands in the family, the social circle, the community of the city or the state.² There is not one of these into which the breath of His life, Divine and human, is not to enter, which it is not to elevate and sanctify and bless.

3. A third element has still to be mentioned as pervading and animating the Church's life—that of self-sacrifice. Self-sacrifice is at once the result and the expression of that combination of the Divine and human elements which have just been spoken of. To empty oneself of Divine glory, and to assume and retain for ever the human lowliness, is itself self-sacrifice, which has thus a deeper place in the Christian system than we often permit ourselves to think. Why should there be self-sacrifice where there is no need for it? is an inquiry of many who keep

Heaven in their eye, and in their hand the keys.

¹ *Comp. Comm. on John* i. 3, 4, by Milligan and Moulton.

² *Comp. Bishop Webb on The Tabernacle*, p. 35.

Is it not to provoke the spirit of asceticism with all its wildest fruits? The Church's reply must be that without self-sacrifice she fails to enter into something so near to her Lord that it is involved in the very constitution of His Person. To follow Him, to be like Him, to have the same mind in us that was in Him, is to learn to sacrifice ourselves for others, and without doing so we do not bear His cross. No more need be said upon a point which has of late, and by so many voices of the prophets, been urged upon the Church.

Living, then, the life now spoken of, the Church of God is even in this world to repeat the life of her Head in another and a higher world. In one sense it is her own life, for in it the individuality and freedom of her members is preserved. In another sense it is not her own; it is her Lord's life in her, moulded upon what He is, imparted and sustained by Him, Divine because He is Divine, human because He is human, self-sacrificing because He sacrificed Himself; and these elements must be visible. Men cannot be really touched by a life that is not seen to be human: they cannot be lifted above the world by a life that is not seen to be Divine.

This visible surrender of her life to God is the first duty of the Church, the first part of that representation of her Divine-human Head which she is to make. In other words, it is the first part of her priestly offering to the Father, as she appropriates and reproduces the priestly offering of Him in whom she lives. A priest

must of necessity have "somewhat to offer."¹ What the Church offers is her life in her Lord's life.

These considerations ought to enable us to form a clearer conception than we often have of the bond between the thought of offering and the Eucharistic Service of the Church. There can be no doubt that in that service the idea of offering is more fully and forcibly expressed than in any other Christian ordinance, or that the Church has throughout all her history felt this to be the case. With the exception of a comparatively small number in recent times, her members have never been able to rest in the idea that the Sacrament of the Supper is simply a memorial of the death of Christ. They have beheld in it, in one sense or another, an offering which they make to God, as well as a remembrance of what God has done for them. They have felt, to use the language of the Westminster Confession, that it is an ordinance for "the further engagement of true believers in and to all duties which they owe to the Lord Jesus;"² or that, in the words of the Larger Catechism of the Presbyterian Church, "They that worthily communicate, therein testify and renew their engagement to God."³ But the offering thus made in the Eucharist is not an offering of death. That is rather the Roman Mass, for the Mass is an "oblation in which the thing offered is destroyed or otherwise changed, in order to acknowledge the supreme dominion of Almighty God over all His creatures, who, as He made us out of nothing, can again destroy or change us

¹ Heb. viii. 3.

² Chap. xxix. 1.

³ Qn. 168.

as He pleases.”¹ There is nothing of that kind here. The Eucharist is an oblation in which the offerer, offering himself, lives, having accepted death as the penalty of sin in Him who died upon the cross; but having now through death entered into life, the life of Him who died once, and dieth no more. As our Lord’s offering of Himself to His Heavenly Father never ends, or can end; so in that offering His people, organically united to Him, one with Him, must be offered, and must offer themselves; and this they do in the expressive and touching symbols of the Eucharist. They do not simply remember what Jesus did on earth. They bring to their remembrance as a present fact what He is doing in heaven. They commemorate, they hold communion with, they accept, and at His Table are nourished by, a living Lord,—“in remembrance of *Me*,” of Me, not as I was, but as I am, to the end of time. Christ Himself, spiritually present with them, is the life of their souls; His body and blood there given them are the substance of their feast; and living in Him, and obtaining in Him pardon, peace, and strength, they transact here below what He is transacting in the heavenly Sanctuary. In the Sacrament of the Supper, in short, they offer themselves in Him who is now and for ever an offering to the Father.

To return to our main line of thought. So far as we have come little objection will probably be taken to anything that has been said. But a most important aspect of the case here meets us, on which there may be

¹ Bishop Hay, *The Sincere Christian*, chap. xxii. 4.

more difference of opinion. The point seems to have been hardly enough discussed in the Church; and what is to be said ought to be regarded as rather suggesting inquiry than as indicating positive or dogmatic conclusions.

The principle upon which we have proceeded is that the offering of the Church on earth is the counterpart of our Lord's offering of Himself in heaven. In that offering, however, our Lord does not stand alone. He does not simply surrender Himself to God in a life of individual obedience, freedom, and joy. He surrenders Himself for others, and with others in Him. He is the Representative of His Church. He takes His Church along with Him into His own blessed life. On the one hand, as not less truly human than Divine, He carries out the life of God in humanity to its utmost development of glory and beauty. On the other hand, He has taken His people into union with Himself. They are in Him. They are partakers of His Spirit, and it is the aim of His continued "Intercession" to make those who are already ideally, more and more actually His; so that the Father shall behold in them the many brethren of the elder Brother. This, however, cannot be accomplished by a merely legal act. Christ's people must offer themselves in Him with a real and personal appropriation of such a sacrifice as He made, of such labours and sufferings as He endured, of such a death as that through which He passed. Of this sacrifice, of these labours and sufferings, of this death, the thought of enduring them for others is an essential element; and there must,

therefore, be some sense in which a similar thought ought to have a place assigned to it in our conception of that Christian offering which is only Christian when it is made in Christ.

A little reflection, indeed, will be enough to satisfy us that we must suffer for others, if either salvation in any true sense of the word is to be ours, or if we are to produce that salutary effect on the world which ought to flow to it from the disciples of the Cross.

For, as regards the first of these two points, What, it may be asked, is salvation? Were it no more than pardon and heavenly happiness; or, even taking a higher view of it as likeness to the image of Christ, could that likeness be made really ours without a training or a discipline which can only gradually conform us to our ideal, self-sacrifice might not be needed. But salvation, as spoken of in Scripture, always implies deliverance from the power of evil, together with a re-creation within us of the Divine image; and this, according to the nature of man, cannot be effected without our passing experimentally through a process of dying unto sin and living unto God.¹ Now the root of sin is selfishness, and the essence of the Divine life is love. "God is love." Love is the fundamental conception of His being. It is that boundless crystal sea which contains within it all existence, and the privilege of being bathed in it is that which God desires to communicate to all His creatures. Love, moreover, cannot

¹ Even Christ "learned obedience by the things which He suffered" (Heb. v. 8).

be conceived of without the thought of others to share what it has to bestow. We must therefore love others if we are to know what "salvation" means; and in the growing and perfecting of our love to others as well as to God, our salvation grows and is perfected. Further, when they to whom our love must flow forth, if we have love at all, are sinful and rebellious against the only true good; when they are ignorant of what their real welfare is; or when, so far as they are dimly conscious of it, they are inclined to resist and to reject it; when, too, they are involved, as is most frequently the case, in misery that shocks our sensibilities, grieves our hearts, and threatens to baffle all our efforts for its cure; when their condition, in short, needs rectifying, and when it cannot be rectified without pain, then love must assume the form of self-sacrifice. Without this it may be a genuine pity or an empty sentiment, but it is not that passion which is "strong as death," and which "many waters cannot quench." To suffer for others is thus not a burden laid in an arbitrary way upon the followers of Christ. Nor is it only a severe probation through which they must pass that their affections may be weaned from the present and directed to the future. It is not even a mere duty imposed upon us by the remembrance of Him who gave Himself for us, the just for the unjust. That we shall suffer for others is implied in the very nature of a salvation adapted to man's condition. It is part of the process. It is that experience in which our salvation is wrought out, that in which we are brought nearest to the mind of God and

Christ; so that we may say with one who has recently written with great thoughtfulness upon pain and self-sacrifice, "If God would give us the last and greatest gift, that which above all others we might long for and aspire after, even though in despair, it is this that He must give us, the privilege He gave His son, to be used and sacrificed for the best and greatest end."¹

Again, to look for a moment at the second of the two points spoken of above, self-sacrifice is not less necessary to those who would exert the salutary influence upon others that is both demanded and expected of the followers of Christ. Men must see suffering endured for their sakes if they are to own any power on the part of those who profess a desire to do them good. The spectacle of patient Christian suffering under ills directly inflicted by the hand of God may be a precious lesson to persons already within the pale of the Christian faith. It may be doubted whether it has much influence on the world. The world does not understand it. It may wonder, perhaps admire. Most probably it will treat the exhibition of such patience as something inexplicable, or as curiously illustrative of the delusions which men practise on themselves. If it is to acknowledge a right in the sufferers to speak to it, to warn it of error, or to demand its submission to views and ways different from its own, it must see more. To sacrifice ourselves for others, to bear for their sakes toil or want or privation or disappointment or sorrow, is, according to the laws of human nature, the necessary

¹ Hinton, *Mystery of Pain*, p. 17.

condition of touching their hearts and winning them to our side.

This necessity of suffering for others as our Lord suffered is taught in important passages of Scripture. How otherwise, for example, shall we explain the scene of the Foot-washing in the fourth Gospel? After that scene our Lord said to the disciples, "Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you."¹ No one who has entered into the spirit of the fourth Gospel will for an instant suppose that we have here simply a lesson of humility and kindness. What had our Lord done to the disciples whom He was addressing? He had bathed them in His blood. He had taken them up into His own holy and blessed life. They were in Him; in Him their sins had been covered; they were united to Him, and in Him to God; they were "clean." But, clean though they were, they could not live in this world without soiling their feet. Sins and shortcomings would mark them every day, not, indeed, of so serious a kind as to destroy their interest in Christ, but enough to show that they stood in need of daily cleansing. In this their weakness, then, they were to offer for one another. In suffering and self-sacrifice they were to be victims for one another. The man strong to-day was to take up his weaker brother

¹ John xiii. 12-16.

into his life and to strengthen him. Weak himself tomorrow, he was to be taken up into the life of the man he had strengthened yesterday, and in him to obtain strength; until all, thus revived and completed by the communication of their brother's strength to make them strong, and of his life to make them live, were to be "clean every whit." This cleansing, then—not the ideal but the experimental cleansing; for Jesus had before said to them, "Ye are clean"¹—was to be reached by offering, by self-sacrifice, by suffering for each other. Then the power of that sympathy and love, which were really Christ's Divine life flowing through them all, would change each other's sin into sinlessness, each other's imperfection into perfection, and each other's weakness into strength. To a similar effect is the language of St. Paul: "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the Church."² It is impossible to accept as satisfactory the explanations usually given of these words, for all of them are marked by the effort to distinguish between the sufferings of Christ and those of His people, whereas the obvious intention of the Apostle is, in one way or another, to identify them. St. Paul, indeed, would never have allowed that the sufferings of Christ lacked anything necessary to the full accomplishing of the purpose they were intended to effect. But that very purpose lay in this—that, as Christ Himself was perfected through suffering, so the

¹ Ver. 10.² Col. i. 24.

members of His Body might in Him be perfected, and might reach this perfection through suffering for their brethren's good. To introduce into the words of the Apostle a distinction between the sufferings of Christ as *satisfactoriae*, and in that sense *complete*; and as *aedificatoriae*, and in that sense *incomplete*, and needing to be supplemented,¹ is to introduce a thought which does not seem to have been in the Apostle's mind, and which is inconsistent with his desire to bring out a *similarity* between the sufferings of Christ and of His people. Even, indeed, when viewed as *satisfactoriae*, the sufferings of Christ may be said to be incomplete so long as His people are not associated with Him, for they were in Him when He suffered; and, had they not been in Him, His offering would have possessed only that character of a legal work—of a work to be outwardly imputed to man—which falls far short of the teaching of Scripture upon the point. The language of St. Paul, in the passage now before us, cannot be properly understood unless we behold in it the expression of the feeling that as the Head suffered for others, so also do the members of the Body. To idealise and consecrate for ever the law that "vicarious toil, pain, suffering, is the very warp of life"² was at least one great aim of the Redeemer in all that He did and suffered on our behalf; and as long, therefore, as there is sin or weakness for which to suffer—sin or weakness which can only be healed through the sufferings of

¹ Comp. Lightfoot on Col. i. 24.

² Westcott, *Victory of the Cross*, p. 24.

those who, in the spirit of their Master, try to heal it—the offering of Christ is not “filled up.” Its final result is not attained, nor will it be attained until there shall be no more room for suffering on behalf of others; but both Head and members, penetrated by the same life, shall be presented to the Father in a perfected sanctification and in eternal joy.

Taking these considerations into account, we seem to be justified in asking whether the Church has not been too chary of allowing the idea of offering for others to be connected with her position and life. It is surely without sufficient cause that she has been afraid of encroaching on the one sacrifice of Christ, or of attributing to sinful men the possibility of making satisfaction for the sins of others. So long as the Church feels—what ceasing to feel she ceases to be the Church—that in her Lord alone is she accepted and complete, that her life is wholly in Him, and that she can do nothing except in the grace which He supplies, there can be no room in her mind for the thought of meritorious suffering. Such a thought can have no place when all that she does is her Lord’s gift at first, and is afterwards maintained in Him, and in Him alone. Her suffering for others is simply the conveyance to them, through a life penetrated by the life of Christ, of the grace which flows from Him and leads to Him.

The life of the Church has been spoken of as pre-eminently the carrying forth on earth of the oblation-life of the heavenly High-priest. It may be added, in conclusion, that the weakness of the Church in our time

is to be traced in no small measure to the fact that this conception of her position has been so faintly realised by her. For weak she is, and the endless statistical tables to which she appeals in evidence of her strength are not the least striking illustration of her weakness. When a man begins to count the pulses of his heart there is something wrong. So here. Christian activity may be great, but its root languishes. There is a want of the freshness, the buoyancy, the enthusiasm of earlier days. There is too much ease and self-indulgence in the Church's life. There is too little not of activity, but of that active ministry of love by which, in familiarity with suffering, the soul is trained to its highest moods and efforts. There is more than necessary thought of the earthly, less than necessary thought of the heavenly, good which the Church is both to seek for herself and to bestow on others. Even the conviction of thousands that Christianity offers a fairer tone of life than can be found elsewhere is not seldom rendered practically useless, because unaccompanied by the persuasion that it can only effect this end when it is seen to spring from a life beyond this life, from heaven and from God.

If it be so the remedy is clear. The Church must learn to give fuller scope to that ever new element of the Christian life which is supplied by the thought of a glorified Head and King living in closest connexion with her through each successive age, and able to meet each age's peculiar needs. Therein lies her power to convince the world that she is Divine. We talk of

evidences of Christianity, and they have their value. They may satisfy historical inquirers, and they may meet intellectual difficulties. They will never make men Christians.¹ Nothing will do that except the recognition by those without that there is in those within the Church a brighter light, a higher life, than they have yet attained to; but which they feel, by the light and life within them, to be better, nobler, more worthy of pursuit, and more capable of producing happiness, than what they possess. If the poor, the suffering, the degraded, and the criminal do not behold in the Church as she exists before their eyes that which, by its nature, proclaims its Divine origin, we may spare ourselves the trouble of speaking to them of the Divine at all.

Nor will the Church attain her end by moderating her demands or toning down her life to something more on a level with the prejudices of the world. If by doing so she seems to be more successful than she would otherwise be, her success will only be superficial, shallow, and temporary, the prelude to a permanent and shameful defeat. The time is not long gone by when it was a common thing to encourage men to enter the mission-field by the promise of worldly comfort and short and easy service. An entirely different method is now adopted, and an attempt is made to win them by the thought of hard and, in this world, unrequited service. It is needless to say which of the two methods is the more Christian. We have reason to thank God

¹ "An age of apologetics has seldom been an age of spiritual power."—Young's *Fernley Lecture*, p. 10.

that the second has been the more successful. As in the mission-field abroad, so also with that at home. The Church's life, not her money, is there again her power. "Thy money perish with thee" are words that she ought rather to ring into the ears of not a few rich contributors to her "Schemes." We could dispense with a few schemes; we want more inner life. A tear, a smile, a hand grasped in love, is often of more avail than money. Upon this point a complete revolution of thought is needed; and nothing will bring it about except a profound conviction on the Church's part that she has to represent her Lord among men, and that, like Him, she is to do this by offering a Divine-human-self-sacrificing life to the Father, for His glory and the world's good.