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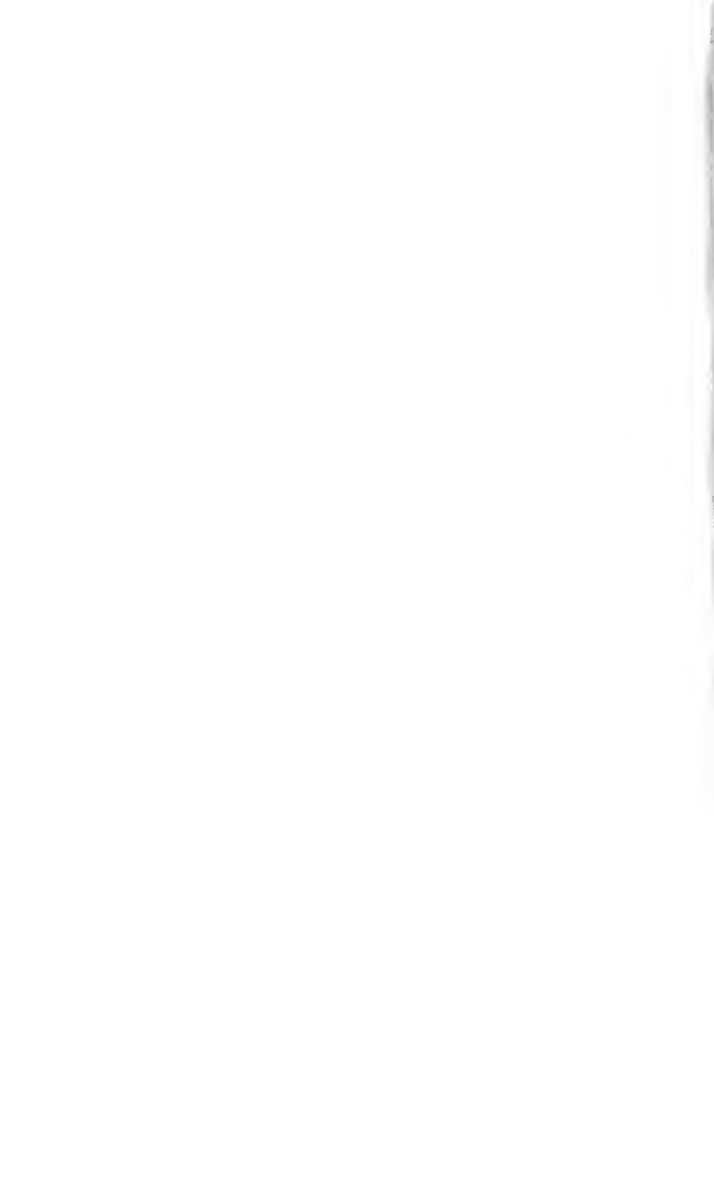
R. L. P





THE UPPER CHAMBER

PART II.



THE FINAL PASSOVER

A SERIES OF

MEDITATIONS UPON THE PASSION OF
OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST^d

VOL. II.

The Upper Chamber.

BY THE
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PART II.

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INTRODUCTION



THE discourses of our Lord and His great High-priestly prayer, given to us in St. John xv.-xvii., are so peculiar in their nature that they may well be treated somewhat differently from the rest of the narrative. Other scriptural teachings respecting the Passion do, indeed, contain mysteries which the human mind cannot fathom ; but these three chapters stand by themselves, the utterance of the Eternal Word, manifestly inexhaustible in Divine power and scope in their applications, both individual and collective.

St. John seems to set them apart, as we might in modern times set apart some special subject, removing it from the body of the work to form a separate section or appendix.

This may perhaps help us to a conjecture as to the time at which the words were originally spoken.

Some persons have suggested that they

were spoken by our Lord as the company were walking to Gethsemane. The burning of the vines might be an incident derived from what they saw in crossing the Kidron.

Again, the vine might be an image derived from the great vine of the Temple, whose golden stems and jewelled fruit symbolized the Jewish nation, the Bride of the Divine covenant.

Others, again, have felt that the character of these chapters is absolutely inconsistent with a walk into the country, and that we have no intimation and no plausibility in the conjecture that our Lord and His disciples visited the Temple after the institution of the Holy Eucharist.

It has seemed that perhaps they lingered awhile in the same room after the closing words, 'Let us go hence.' Yet there is too much formality as well as too sacred an intensity about these chapters to suit such unpremeditated delay.

May we not rather think that St. John inserts this discourse and prayer as he does, with the intention of giving them the special importance which is due, and also for the

purpose of leaving the narrative of the upper chamber free from the interruption which would have resulted had he inserted them at any earlier moment?

We may surely well conceive that they were spoken in immediate connection with the institution of the Holy Eucharist itself. Their place would be that of the sermon and the 'prayer for the whole state of Christ's Church' in our present service. We can at once see that the consecutiveness of the narrative would have suffered a confusing interruption if these three chapters had been placed there; but at the same time we can see how these teachings and prayer would have developed the sacred sense in the minds of that company.

It is just what we should do in the present day. We should first give the narrative of any religious function, and then the sermon would be printed by itself.

There is nothing to be gained by knowing the exact point at which these words were spoken. The instructions and the intercession, both alike, are better considered simply by themselves as St. John gives them to us.

We might, indeed, imagine that when our

Lord said that He would no more drink of the fruit of the vine, He might naturally burst forth in the great teaching, 'I am the true Vine.'

Let us set aside human conjecture, and gather up some few points of meditation from the words themselves, more briefly than in former meditations; for, indeed, human words are not needed to expand what no power save the immediate teaching of the Holy Ghost can bring home to the heart. We hear our Lord speaking—speaking to ourselves—in every word, and the faithful heart will respond to Him with adoring love. A few heads, therefore, will be given to develop some of the chains of thought, so manifold and so full of mystery, which the verses intimate.

O Thou Incarnate Word of God, speak Thou in our hearts by the power of Thine illuminating Spirit, so that, feeding upon Thee now with our understandings by faith, we may be nourished by Thy grace in the fulness of love, until we attain to feed upon Thee in the glory of Thy beatific vision, with the adoring joy of all Thy saints, when Thou hast gathered all in the perfection of Thy manifest truth.

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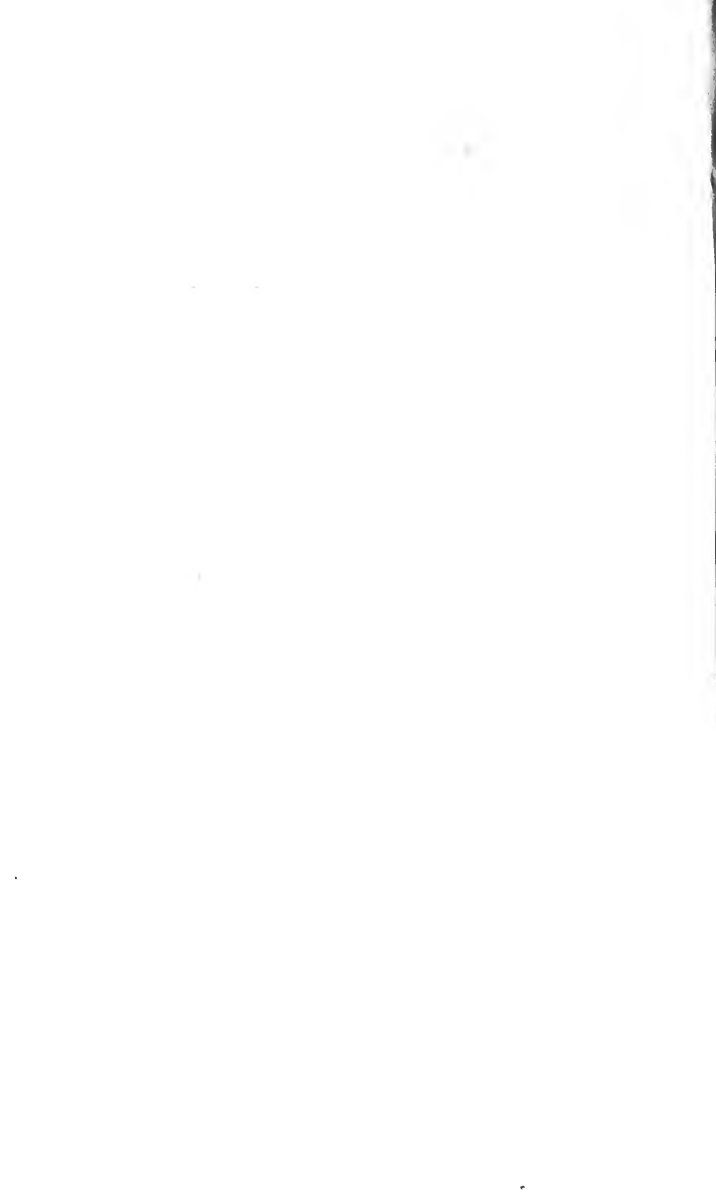
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THE FINAL PASSOVER.



THE UPPER CHAMBER.



MEDITATION I.

The True Vine.

I am the true vine.—St. John xv. 1.

1. THE SPIRITUAL IDEAL.

IN this His final discourse, Christ sets before us His relationship to His Church. He was leaving earth, but He was not separating Himself from His Church. He was ascending to the Right Hand of the Father, so as to initiate a closer fellowship with His people than was possible while He was here below. He was leaving the world of symbols and falsehood, in order to bring to light the eternal reality of the kingdom of truth.

So His first utterance bids us regard material objects as but the symbols of spiritual truth. The vine is not merely a plant of natural growth. It is a symbol of somewhat for which we have to look into the spiritual world, 'I am the true Vine.'

The vine, wherever it exists, is thenceforward to be recognized as having a greater reality by its symbolism than by its natural store of wealth.

The true Vine is the Vine contemplated in its truth, regarded in the light in which it was present to the purpose of the Creator when He created it. God is Truth, and things are only true in proportion as we look upon them according to the purpose of His mind.

So must we acknowledge our Lord's words to be altogether ideal, not falsely repudiating the natural sense, but spiritually elevating the objects of nature into the sphere of grace.

If we keep this principle well in mind, we shall find all the teachings of nature and of grace combining in wondrous harmony—the works and the words of the Creator; the manifold portions of His preparatory discipline in the old covenant, the hidden realities of the new; and the glorious manifestation to which we must be looking forward when all the shadows of time are passed away, and the original purpose of God shines out in His eternal Self-manifestation.

2. THE HUMANITY THE BRIDE OF CHRIST.

The prophets spoke of the vine of Israel as the covenanted people of God, cared for by Him, but bringing forth wild grapes. The golden vine which shone upon the dazzling height of the Temple, enriched with vast clusters of jewelled magnificence, exhibited to outward sight the spiritual Bride to

which the Psalmist alludes as the typical Mother of Israel, whose loveliness should be the joy of every true Israelitish home. 'Thy wife shall be as the fruitful vine upon the walls of thine house' (Ps. cxxviii. 3).

The covenanted people were themselves the type of the elect Humanity which should be wedded to Messiah. The promised Redeemer would take man's nature upon Himself as the Seed of the woman. The King would espouse to Himself the glorious daughter of His people. This Humanity, fashioned by the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Blessed Virgin, should by the hypostatic union be indissolubly united with God and become fruitful. The Incarnation was not the elevation of all humanity as an abstraction, but of the particular Body which God had prepared for His Son (Heb. x. 5), the promised Seed of the woman.

This Humanity was to be extended by sacramental grace, and the second Eve was to be formed from the substance of the second Adam. Thus does the idea of the vine pass on from the Incarnate Person of Christ to the Bride, the Lamb's wife. The Temple represents the Personal Body of Christ. The vine, which spread in such wealthy symbolism over its forefront, represents the redeemed people, bound to Him in the faithful covenant of regenerate life.

Now, our Lord sets Himself before the Apostles as the true Vine. His Church is but the extension of Himself. He has no existence apart from His Church, nor has His Church any existence apart

from Him. This absolute unity uniting Him and His people lies at the root of all Christian teaching, however little it may be recognized at the present day. The union is effected by the Holy Ghost, but it is more than a spiritual emanation of Divine influence. It is the real communication of the glorified Human substance of Christ to His people by the power of the same Spirit by which it was conceived, and it must operate by the power of the indwelling Spirit in their human form as truly as by the same Spirit it is glorified in Heaven. The supernatural fructification in the Church is the real glory of Christ.

If we would bear this in mind, it would surely stimulate us to live more worthy of God unto all well pleasing; whereas for the neglect of this remembrance Christians are content to think that it is enough to be a little better than other men, and fail even of that.

3. THE FRUITFULNESS OF THE VINE.

The vine is chosen as the symbol of Christ for the same reasons for which the fruit of the vine was chosen to be the sacramental form under which He would communicate to us the gift of His precious Blood.

In Holy Scripture the fig tree seems to be the symbol of nature, and the vine of grace. The cheering power of the vine specially sets before us the higher joys of the spiritual life. The parable of Jotham makes the vine recognize its Divine vocation, 'Shall

I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?' (Judg. ix. 13).

The supernatural fruitfulness of the covenanted people was to be the joy of God and man. The fruit of the vine symbolized this more than the fruit of other trees could do. Hence the various teachings by the prophets and by our Lord Himself respecting the vineyard of the house of Israel.

We need to take care that the significance of the parable is sustained by the actual results of grace amongst ourselves. The Church which has the Blood of Christ as its very principle of life should not be barren, nor bring forth will grapes. Each one of us must look to see whether there is any consciousness of supernatural effort to bring forth fruit unto God by the communication of the power of Christ's Humanity. We are not taken into that Humanity simply in order that Christ may save us, but that we may glorify Him. If His life is not manifest in us, we are not to think that His death will avail for us.

O how must we deplore the state of Christendom!

O Lord, look down from heaven; behold and visit this vine!

MEDITATION II.

The Husbandman.

My Father is the husbandman.—St. John xv. 1.

1. THE DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

WHEN Christ came into this world to establish His Church, He did not set aside the Divine claim upon the creature, but He came to enable the creature to fulfil the claims of the Creator. Consequently, in all the acts which He did as Man, He recognized the will of the Father as supreme. He did not cease Himself to possess the fulness of Divine power, but His acts were to be perfect according to the measure of human morality, although containing the power of God. That power gave them dignity, but did not exempt them from the necessities of created life. He submitted to receive the treatment proper to man, but He never withdrew Himself from the love proper to the Son of God.

We may learn from this that God's moral government of mankind is not fixed by any arbitrary or changeful standard. God rules mankind according to law, and that law is suited to the nature of man. All that God appoints for man is fixed by the inherent requirements of man's nature. The moral law is not a legislation alongside of the

physical law of man's natural condition, but it is the assertion of what man's physical nature demands. It interprets those demands for us, which perhaps we might not find out for ourselves. It tends to the development of man's nature, and now that man is fallen it tends to his recovery. Nothing could be altered in that which God has ordained without a proportionate injury to man's physical well-being. The Creator is the Lawgiver, and His word is the explanation of His works.

So the character of a husbandman implies the cultivation of existing powers, not a transformation so that one plant should bring forth different kinds of fruit. God watches over Christ so as to develop by His providence the true glory of the Humanity. He does not seek to make the Manhood of Christ fruitful in any way contrary to the nature of man, but He ordained all the events of His life so that the Manhood created in the Image of God might bring forth its full measure of fruit by the power of the Spirit of God. The Manhood of Christ was thus fruitful, not as other men may be in some elements of perfection, but failing in others. The full fruitfulness belonging to human nature was developed in Him with perfection of totality and perfection of individuality. His human nature was thus fitted to germinate in every form of humanity. It possessed the virtues necessary for every individual character, so that His righteousness might really be adequate to all the needs of all times and all ages. The new regenerate Humanity should derive its completeness from the moral nature of

Christ, cherished by the providence of God as the great Husbandman.

2. THE CONSUBSTANTIAL SONSHIP.

The Husbandman who cultivates this 'plant of the Lord' is the very Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. 'My Father.' The relationship does not belong to the Vine as a vine, but to the Person of Him who assumes the Humanity which the vine symbolizes. Thus is brought out the relation of Christ personally to God as Father, and in His created nature to the Divine Providence as moral Governor.

While culture is according to law, it is nevertheless a personal watchfulness which is exercised. So God does not merely leave Christ to go through the world anyhow. There was a real fatherly care with which He assigned all the events of His life as He, in His infinite wisdom, knew to be most suitable for the development of His personal predestination. So now He regulates the events of the world in order to bring out the graces of the life of Christ in His Body, the Church.

The human nature has been formed in the Image of God, and the Son of God, taking it upon Himself, must develop it so as to be worthy of God, whose Image it bears. The Father does not merely develop a form out of unconscious material, as a sculptor may produce a figure out of a block of marble. He is developing through the Humanity the Divine perfections of His Consubstantial Son which underlie

the potentiality of that Manhood, and enable it by the power of the Holy Ghost to rise up to the full measure of the Eternal Will. The Father cultivates the plant so that it may be worthy of the name of His Son—‘the Branch,’ the Son, ‘which Thou madest so strong for Thine own Self’ (Ps. lxxx. 15). When we think of the Church as the Body of Christ, the Vine, which the Father is cherishing with so much care, to develop therein all the Divine perfections whose Image is to be found in the ideal of human nature according to the eternal predestination of the Infinite Wisdom, how we learn reverently to accept those dispensations which seem to baffle all our natural expectation and hopes! It is the Divine character of Christ, the Eternal Son, which the heavenly Father is perfecting in those who are called to be the members of Christ.

3. THE PERSONAL INTEREST.

A husbandman cares for the plant as a living thing. The Father cares for the spiritual Vine as having the life of Heaven. As it is the Body of His only begotten Son, He cares for it with all the love which He has for His only begotten Son. The mere creature would be unworthy to be the object of such love. The creature which enshrines the Personal Life of God the Son must be the object of the same love which God has for His Son in the eternity of His Divine generation. Nor is the Manhood of Christ unworthy of this love. As the plant develops under culture, so the Manhood

develops according to the fulness of power which belongs to the Godhead which dwells within it. Creation in all its completeness would not be worthy to be the object of such loving interest to the Father, but the Humanity in which the Son of God acts possesses the glory which God alone can know. Manhood in the Person of Christ does not merely share the glory of the Creator, but merits to share it. It is worthy of the Father's love, inasmuch as its acts are the acts of God the Son. This enables us in some measure to see how creation is a filial response to the Eternal Father's love. We can form no idea of creation, not of the act of creation, nor even of its possibility, much less of its purpose, but when we know the Son of God Incarnate as the true Vine, and understand that the Father by the discipline of time is bringing the Humanity of Christ to that perfection of culture which corresponds with the eternal predestination, we can understand that the Incarnate Life is a filial act of constant submission to the Father, by which the creature, though unworthy itself, is raised to the dignity of the Divine acceptance.

MEDITATION III.

Fruitfulness.

Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh it away.—St. John xv. 2.

1. FRUITFULNESS THE NATURAL CONSEQUENCE OF LIFE.

FRUIT is not an abnormal, accidental produce. Every tree should bring forth its own fruit. The branch merits nothing by reason either of the excellence or the abundance of the fruit which is found upon it. The fruitfulness is the outcome of the sap which rises from the root; and if the branch does not bear fruit, it is violating the active law of its union with the tree.

This is marked by a difference of the structure in the original. 'Every branch in Me, if it bear not fruit, He taketh away.' On the contrary, the fruitfulness is not hypothetical. It is the natural law of the plant. 'All that beareth fruit He purgeth.'

How little do Christians realize at the present day their need of conformity to this law of fruitfulness! The branches are taken away, not because they bring forth bad fruit, but because they do not bring forth any fruit. Of how many Christians in this day can it be said that they are bringing forth fruit? They look for the tree to save them, but do

not feel themselves bound to save the honour of the tree by showing the consequences of its vitality. Too often they repudiate even the idea of bringing forth fruit, as if it must promote a self-righteous consciousness. Then, again, they speak of a fruitful life as if it merited some special reward, as if the fruitfulness were an individual property of the branch.

But, in truth, it is a necessary characteristic of all true union with Christ that we bring forth fruit; and not only some fruit, but fruit proportioned to the various opportunities of fruitfulness which are given us. Every element of our life must be made fruitful—genius, wealth, time, influence, and so forth. Vigorous life is not tolerated in the Body of Christ unless it be fruitful life.

No one deserves a greater reward because of having received certain advantages, but every branch must be cut away which does not rise to its own proper requirements. 'Thou bearest not the root, but the root thee' (Rom. xi. 18).

Our Creed teaches us this, in that it describes the Church as being the Communion of Saints. Our ordinary language is too apt to separate off the saints from the great bulk of Christians, as if their fruitfulness were something peculiar. It is, however, not the excess of holy fruitfulness which can be a specialty. It is the shortcoming of the great body of Christians which is the unhappy specialty of ages of decline. None can be partaking of the life of the tree unless there be the proper fruitfulness, nor will individuals be excused because the age or

country in which they lived fails of the necessary requirement. We may be sure that no individual will suffer loss if he alone bring forth fruit in spite of the unfruitfulness of the age, but he must be cut off with all the branch unless his life be a witness against such unfruitfulness.

2. FRUITFULNESS A SUPERNATURAL QUALITY OF CHRISTIAN LIFE.

The fruitfulness is, therefore, a universal power infused into us with our Christian life. It is a supernatural quality, but it belongs to the Church as the Body of Christ. It does not belong to any individual by arbitrary vocation. Vocations vary; but every branch has its own vocation, and must bring forth fruit accordingly.

The life of Christ must inspire every act of our life. Whatever our circumstances may be, the supernatural life must lift them up from the order of nature to some supernatural issue. Nature is like a forest tree, prized for its strength, but not for its fruit. Grace is like the vine, prized not for its strength, but for its fruit.

Natural gifts are not to be accounted as fruitful in themselves, but only in so far as the virtue of the root of the tree is effectual within them.

We must not mistake natural energy for Divine fruitfulness. Take the instance of money. A rich man may spend his money well; but that avails not, if it be merely spent in the way of nature, with natural energy, prudence, kindness, and so forth.

It cannot be recognized as the fruitfulness of the vine, unless, over and above all natural excellences of moral character, it have the supernatural quality of fellowship with Christ as a living power, stimulating the outward act with a consciousness of Divine glory, as a result of the regenerate life, the sonship communicated through Christ.

But then also every natural gift which goes towards constituting the natural individuality of every one must be thus sanctified and used. Its use without the preliminary sanctification avails not, but a general sanctification without the use of every individual property avails not. We cannot be excused if one gift which God has given us remains unsanctified and unfruitful, merely because we may use certain other gifts which God has given. The gift will have to be taken away, and with it the branch, the individual, to whom it was given. The more gifts any individual may have, the greater is his danger of removal, unless he do his best to use them all.

The gifts of nature are like the soil in which a fruit-bearing tree is planted. The character of the soil should give its special richness and flavour to the fruit; but the fruitfulness is in the organic vitality of the tree, derived from the root, not from the soil.

3. THE PENALTY OF UNFRUITFULNESS.

We are not to think Christian life is wanting because we do not see its fruit in any individual, or

age, or country. We are not to set store by the natural vigour of a fruit-bearing tree which has run to wood.

Life is given to us upon probation. Whatever be our outward circumstances, the supernatural life is capable of making them fruitful. The fruitfulness of the spiritual vine may be found in the richest or the poorest soil. It is not dependent upon the soil like the earthly tree, which naturally grows there. It has an indestructible life, capable of bringing forth its fruit in every soil, and the life must assert itself by turning to account every condition of outward accident.

Riches and poverty, health and sickness, praise and blame, are equally capable of being used to nourish this supernatural fruitfulness. We may not despise earthly gifts, as if we could do without them. If we have them, we are responsible for them. But neither may we desire earthly gifts, as if they would enable us to glorify God better than what He has given. We are to rise superior to them, knowing that God expects us to show His supernatural fructification under the conditions of difficulty which that outward lack may occasion.

The branch that is in Christ possesses all that is necessary to become fruitful; and if it be unfruitful, the supernatural virtue will be withdrawn. The branch will be left to its natural deadness, and will be cut off. The fruitfulness is entirely to be measured by the powers of faith, for that is the substance of the things hoped for. If this supernatural activity be wanting, no amount of natural

activity will cause the husbandman to spare the branch. It is impossible for a branch that has run to wood to be made fruitful. Natural excellences ministering to pride cannot be set right. Such branches need to be cut away. We must die to ourselves just in whatever manner and degree we have lived to ourselves. We have to learn the Apostolic law, 'Henceforth I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.' However useful a life may be in the world through genius, philanthropy, perseverance, it must be cut away if it has not the supernatural fruitfulness of the Divine life in Christ, however much it may win the applause of men.

There is one vocation common to us all in Christ. We are called to be saints. This is a vocation that we can all of us fulfil, for it is a supernatural vocation, and the grace of God will not be wanting to us if we seek it rightly; but if we do not fulfil this vocation, so as to have 'our fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life,' we must be cut off from Christ by the unsparing hand of the great Husbandman.

MEDITATION IV.

Swallowedness.

Every branch that beareth fruit, he cleanseth it, that it may bear more fruit. Already ye are clean because of the word which I have spoken unto you.—St. John xv. 2, 3.

1. THE UNCIRCUMCISED TREE.

‘EVERY branch that beareth fruit, My Father purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.’ The pruning of the vine is spoken as a purging. The natural pride of the plant has to be overcome. It must bear the knife of mortification. Thus shall it become ‘clean.’

This purification seems to refer to the Levitical law, by which a tree was considered for three years to be uncircumcised; then in the fourth year it was to be given for Divine rejoicing, and in the fifth year the people might eat the fruit thereof (Lev. xix. 23). The three years have reference to the three days of Christ’s grave. What is risen with Christ becomes fruitful to God. Every branch, therefore, in Christ needs to share His crucifixion, in order to have the fellowship of His risen glory.

Fruitfulness requires the knife for its proper development as well as the virtue of the sap. So it is not enough for us to have the grace of Christ unless we feel the disciplinary power of His Cross. Indeed, the pruner of the vine marks the points at

which he would have the bunches of grapes. So God, by the sufferings of holy discipline, brings out in each one of His people those special fruits of holiness with which He desires to enrich His Church.

Pruning away the natural vivacity is thus, as it were, the purifying of the plant. We must always be on our watch not to mistake natural exuberance for spiritual fruitfulness. That which has the taint of pride is unclean.

No natural excellence as such can find its recognition in the kingdom of grace. It must pass through a phase of mortification, in order that the supernatural virtue of Christ-hood may fructify upon the natural stem. That which has died to the world along with Christ can live with His power, so as to show forth the inherent possession of Divine life.

2. THE ENGRAFTED WORD.

The nature of man was created by the Word of God, and so also the fruitful character of the new man results from an inherence of the Divine Word engrafted on the stock of mortality by the Incarnation, and transmitting the fellowship of this Divine Manhood to every one who is baptized. So, then, this fruitfulness is a result of consecration; not merely consecration to the Divine service, but consecration by the Divine power. We have to bring forth not merely such excellences as are natural to man, but such as belong to Christ in a world of

antagonism to God. Our fruitfulness is, as it were, a result of a circumcised character—acceptance in the Divine covenant by deadness to the world around. The tree becomes circumcised, accepted of God, purified, by the three days' burial, issuing in the blossom of the resurrection-life by virtue of the indwelling Word. So with the vine. And the same idea is put before us under a kindred figure by St. James, when he speaks of the engrafted Word. The vine symbolizes the nature of the Divine Humanity, subjecting Himself to our earthly discipline, and bringing forth fruit by the endurance of the Cross both in the Person of Christ and in us as His members. The other phrase points to the natural unfruitfulness of our humanity until we receive the new manhood of Christ as a grafted power. The engrafted Word is able to save our souls by making us fruitful. We are not to think that we can be saved unless we are bearing the fruit which is proper to the graft. The unfruitful branch must be cut off. We are not to repine if we have to suffer through the pruning-knife of manifold afflictions. It is exercised upon us for the purpose of purifying us, that we may not be merely vigorous with natural morality, but fruitful with supernatural virtue.

3. THE SUPERNATURAL SEPARATEDNESS OF LIFE.

So must we, therefore, be fruitful unto holiness if we would live in Christ. Piety of sentiment, orthodoxy of belief, regularity in Church offices and

the various exercises of religion, are all necessary, but they avail not without the fruit of holy living.

The vine is separated for its own purposes. It cheers God and man. The Body of Christ is similarly separated from earthly considerations. It cannot seek to rule over the trees. It has a different purpose from the mere trees of the forest. It is weak in outward appearance. It does not exist to provide timber for the structures of worldly grandeur. It is separated for the exhibition of another life. Its mysterious fruit gives heavenly joy. It ministers to the Divine sanctuary and to the gladness of human society.

So must the hallowedness of Christian life make us to be separated from the ordinary aims of earth. The weakness of earth is a separation. 'God hath chosen the weak things of earth to confound the mighty' (1 Cor. i. 27). The endurance of the Cross is a separation. The Church is fruitful not by worldly power or might, but by the Spirit of the Lord of hosts (Zech. iv. 6); and that Spirit's power is developed in fruitfulness through suffering. The Church is separated from the world by the holy joy which is her mysterious prerogative, the heavenly transport which belongs to the gifts of grace, the rapturo, the ecstacy, the sweetness, the nourishment of Christ's true active Presence. The life of the Christian must have the supernatural fruitfulness of the vine separating it from all that is of merely earthly life, otherwise it can have no part in Christ. The unfruitful, unchastened branch must be cut off.

MEDITATION V.

Abiding in Christ.

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; so neither can ye, except ye abide in me.—St. John xv. 4.

1. THE LOSS OF SELF IN CHRIST.

By nature we can have no other centre of life than our own selves. Being engrafted upon the stem of Christ, we gain a deeper centre of life—the Personality of Christ. By faith we must so lay hold upon Christ as to lose ourselves. We do not lay hold upon Him as we might upon some external power, for that at best leaves self as the central principle, however conscious we may be of our own dependence. It is by an internal grasp that we lay hold upon Christ. We are ourselves laid hold of by Him. He lays hold of us by an interior inspiration, as the sap lays hold of the branch of the vine. The Divine life which the Holy Ghost communicates to us from Him spreads up thus through our whole being, and is the deepest principle of life to us. In Him, therefore, we live, so that our natural life becomes but a subordinate consideration. Our natural self is lost in Christ as the Greater Self. Our finite being is overpowered by His Infinite Being.

That is the true law of life in Christ. Unhappily, too many forms of Christianity represent

Christ, after all, as occupying only an external and subordinate position. Faith or reliance upon Christ is quite an inadequate expression. True as far as it goes, it misses the real force of the higher life which the parable of the vine teaches. True faith is an absorption into the power of Christ, the life of grace, as a regenerating principle, so that henceforth we live not for ourselves, but for Him, and therefore not in our own power, nor by our own impulses, but in His power and by His inspiration.

We have thus to abide in Christ as a substantive power, inspiring, strengthening, controlling. We have to hold Him as the Head, that we, as members of the Body, may grow with the increase of God (Col. ii. 15). Our growth is not a separate growth. It is the operation within us of the growing power by which the whole communion of saints is being developed into its final perfection. We are not left alone, therefore. We partake of the whole life of the Vine. As St. Paul speaks, under another figure, we are 'partakers of the root and fatness of the olive tree' (Rom. xi. 17). The wild natural being is transformed into the richness of supernatural fruitfulness. We abide in Christ, and Christ becomes a real second Self to us, that in Him we may abide to all eternity.

Such is the true law of Christian life.

2. THE PERSONAL HOLD UPON CHRIST.

This has to be met on our part by a grasp, laying hold of Christ, who does thus dwell within

us. Christ grasps us by a supernatural inspiration. We must grasp Him by a responsive adoration. The gift of grace overpowers, but it needs to be appropriated. It transforms our natural self, but it does not destroy. It assimilates, but it requires submission.

Our own personal will must yield itself up to the will of God. The spiritual elevation must be a moral suasive inspiration, not a coercive power. The natural understanding must accept the truths of the Christian religion as facts of the lower world, not simply die away in an idle dream. By holy contemplation we must set our affections upon the realities of heavenly joy, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. His Presence as the central Object of Divine glory, His human nature rejoicing in the delight of God's acceptance with a joy infinitely beyond what any earthly delights could give, or any merely created heart could know, must waken a sympathy of joy in ourselves. Personal fellowship is the sympathetic state which enables us to rejoice not only in His gifts, but in Himself.

Christ's abiding Presence by grace in us wakens and rewards our response, while by faith we abide in Him, using the means of grace which He has given.

3. THE STERILITY OF SEPARATION FROM CHRIST.

By this mutual action we are established in the fruitfulness of life in Christ. The powers of this

life are continually progressing. 'The path of the just is as a shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.'

If, however, this action cease, the life is lost. The life is not given so as to become our own independently of Christ. His powers will be transfused into us increasingly as we use them more and more, but they still remain His powers. Separated from Him, we can do nothing. 'As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; so neither can ye, except ye abide in Me.'

Our spiritual progress, therefore, can never lead to pride or presumption. Any such self-satisfied feeling would be instantly fatal. The branch is dependent upon the sap which rises up within it, and cannot live by any effort to sustain the vital power which it has received from the plant whereon it grows. Decay succeeds to development.

Such failure does not imply the unreality of the preceding life, but it shows how absolute is the state of continual dependence. We must indeed rejoice in Christ when we consider what He has done for our souls, but we must still be looking for Him to do more, and we must acknowledge, not only in words, but with the consciousness of entire self-forgetful homage, that all that we can possibly do is His doing. It is not in grace, as in nature, that He gives the power, and we must use it. We may use the powers of nature more or less according to our will, and for our own purposes. We cannot use the powers of grace unless He who gives them works along with us in using them. We cannot use them

save according to His will and guidance, and for His glory. The powers of nature are given with a view to the result which can be accomplished. The powers of grace are given for the sake of being used. Their value is not measured by the result externally effected, as by the tact of a spiritual guide, or the influence of a preacher, or the industry of a philanthropist. It is measured simply by the act of using it, the faith which appropriates the grace given. It is often most to be valued when it is outwardly least effective. Grace is given in order that by using it we may ourselves abide in God. If, therefore, we fail to abide in Christ, we fail of its purpose, and it is immediately withdrawn.

We have increasingly to learn our own nothingness, while increasingly we experience the transforming power of grace in Christ.

MEDITATION VI.

The Branches.

I am the vine, ye are the branches : He that abide' h in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit : for apart from me ye can do nothing.—St. John xv. 5.

1. CONSUBSTANTIAL LIFE.

THE life of the vine and the life of the branches is one life. It belongs, however, to the vine, and it may be lost by the branches. They cannot retain it save by continually receiving it from the vine, and sharing in its power. Thus do we have the gift of eternal life exhibited to us in a parable. Our eternal life is not a mere perpetuity of life along with Jesus in His glory. Our eternal life is a real participation of the life wherewith Jesus lives. It is given to us in Him, and retained by us whilst we are abiding in Him by the reciprocal activity of grace communicating and faith appropriating. In Him it is inalienable. In us it is probationary. It is one life which fills Christ and all the branches. Christ does not give one life to one of His members and another life to another, as an earthly parent gives life to various sons, whose life when received is separate in each, although derived from a common source. The life of all the branches is one. As it is a life of intelligent sympathy, it unites all in common interests, and all these individual interests are derived from Christ, the Root

and Stem. If one member rejoices, all the members rejoice with it; and if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it. Such is the life of the branches of the Vine, the Communion of Saints in the Holy Catholic Church. The outward divisions of Christendom mar the operation of this life, but they do not destroy the law by which it operates. The life of the Body of Christ is a life of mutual interest and love, binding all together in the common exercise of the powers inherent in Christ Himself as the Root. Only in proportion as this love is operative can this life be experienced. Death itself mars the perfection of consciousness whereby we ought to feel ourselves to be one with all the saints that have been before us; but death does not destroy this life, nor introduce the dying to any new life. We who remain on earth and they who die in the Lord still live with the undivided life of Christ, and therefore we must be living in mutual love. They who are gone to their rest in Paradise are not removed from our love, nor do they cease to love those who are their brethren, still continuing in the love of Christ which strengthened them whilst here, and constitutes their present repose. Our life is hid with Christ in God; but when He shall appear again, then shall our life be made manifest in its eternal and collective reality.

2. PERSONAL CO-OPERATION.

We have, then, to exercise this life in union one with another. As the blood circulates through the

veins, so is this life a circulating power throughout the Body of Christ. The unity of the animal life is more intense in its circulating action than the life of a plant. The unity of the Body of Christ as a spiritual organism is more intense in its consubstantial vitality than the life of a natural organism. The more we act in the consciousness of self-absorption into the whole Body of Christ, living on earth and departed, and so with Christ the Head, the more shall we find the individual strength which belongs to us as His members. Whatever limits our influence, checks the energy of our life. Any such limitation is like a tight bandage which checks the circulation of a limb, and instead of promoting its individual energy by separation, serves only to occasion disease.

We must mourn that the wild boar out of the wood doth so miserably root up the vine which the Lord hath planted; but we are none the less to recognize it as the branch of the Lord, and we are not to think that because it is laid waste for a season, it will never rally from its enfeeblement. We must pray for the peace of Jerusalem. None of us can prosper in aught that we do, except it be while we work for her love, that Christ may be glorified in all His saints.

3. THE NOTHINGNESS OF NATURE.

So does this parable teach us the supernatural power of the grace of Christ, and the nothingness of all power which is merely of earth. The vine

is not only fruitless if it run to wood; it is worthless. It cannot claim to rank among the great trees of the forest, the symbols of earthly power. So the Church is not a strong human power filled with a higher Divine life. It is a feeble earthly plant, existing solely for the purpose of its wondrous fruit. The Church in like manner exists in weakness, and has no power to hold her own against the aggressions of worldly spoliation and violence. Any attempt to make her strong by human policy will always be detrimental to that supernatural fruit which she has to bear. No earthly weakness can hinder her fruitfulness if she is true to the inherent life of Christ; but any failure to realize its supernatural character, and assimilate the Church to the powers of the world, as the children of Israel asked to have a king given them in order that they might take their place among other nations, can only end in defeat, delaying the full triumph of the kingdom of Christ in its glory.

We may not expect that God will give earthly power to protect His Church while His Church is living in worldly-heartedness. We must remember that the Church does not triumph by weakness as such, but by faith accepting that weakness and rising up to God in poverty of spirit. If times of weakness come to the Church, they will always be times of judgment. Unless the Church accepts her struggle with the supernatural anticipations of faith, her candlestick must be removed. If she accepts earthly weakness with Divine faith, she will shine out in proportionate lustre and strength.

How important, then, is it for us to feel that the true, the fruitful strength of the vine, will be only increased by outward weakness if Divine faith be there! The changes of history are crises in the life of the Church. She is judged according to the way in which she meets the successive forms of difficulty which arise. Persecution may redden her branches with the blest bunches of martyrdom. We must look not for a period of earthly tranquillity and triumph. It is not for such earthly display that the spiritual vine is growing. We must look for the Husbandman to come and gather the fruit in which the grace of the Incarnation has shown its power. So shall His Hand of eternal blessing be upon the Man of His Right Hand—even upon the Son of man, whom He has made so strong for Himself with eternity of glorious life.

MEDITATION VII.

Excommunication.

If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.—St. John xv. 6.

1. SPIRITUAL.

IF any one abide not in Christ, the excommunication of God begins at once. It is a judgment which God exerts upon the individual. He is cast forth as the unfruitful branch, and begins to wither. Outwardly he may remain in Church fellowship, but the separation is a real one. He is cast forth. He is no longer part of the organism.

What is it which casts him forth? Surely the will of Christ. Christ will not suffer unfruitful members to continue part of Himself. If, therefore, the branch does not abide in Him, neither will He abide in the branch.

We are apt to think that God does not heed. Christians though we are, yet we reproduce the sayings of the blasphemers recorded by the Psalmist. God may, indeed, hide Himself for awhile, but His judgments, though hidden, delay not. His judgment is not by outward penalty, but by the withdrawal of life. Indeed, the continuance of all things outwardly seeming to be the same is a most serious part of the penalty. This blinds the conscience to the spiritual

change which has taken place. The soul when separated from Christ measures everything by worldly estimate, and not by its own real spiritual state in relationship to Christ. If, therefore, there be growth and foliage, the soul is satisfied, though it is the world which has grown and drained away the proper virtue of the branch. The vine, as a living organism carrying out its Divine appointment, has no longer anything to do with the unfruitful branches. Christ, as the Root acting in the wisdom of the Father, makes spiritual grace to dwindle almost to nonentity. The sinful soul is cut off. As God of old would not answer Saul by prophets nor by ephod, so now the soul may seem to be left, God refusing to accomplish even that which He had ready to be given. Better it is for the soul to experience this long-continued shortcoming of grace, testifying to its own sluggishness, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, and look forward to God's renewal of favour as if it were something abnormal. So the branch that fails of drinking into itself the sap from the root becomes excommunicate and withers.

2. MINISTERIAL.

There is a further ministerial excommunication whereby God separates men from outward connection with the Body of Christ. This cutting off of branches that are fruitless is helpful to the life of the plant. The Church of God suffers from the neglect of discipline. The worthless branches injure the life. The Husbandman takes them away for the benefit of

the whole. Their very vigour drains the strength of the tree. The abundance of earthly show in the unfruitful makes it the more difficult for the branches, which would be true to their life to drink in the sap so as to yield the proper produce.

Alas, how has the disuse of discipline marred the growth of the Church! It has overgrown the nations with its foliage, but leaves them unnourished by its fruit. God looks in vain to see that abundance of fruit which was in the days of persecution. God sees the strong wood resisting the knife of the gardener, the power of the world mocking the pruning hand of the Church. The more the Church grows in this way, the more impossible it is for it to become fruitful.

We must accept the burden of the Divine ministry. The priests of God must prune with vigour. As they prune so must they develop the fruitfulness of the plant. The exercise of excommunication is a painful one, but it is the consciousness of the health-giving value which makes the warning voice of discipline so beneficial, even its utmost rigour.

The plant should be free from all the deceitfulness of showy wealth, if it is to manifest the power of our Lord's Passion as a real law of living energy to His people.

3. ETERNAL.

Although the ministerial excommunication may fail, yet there is still a cutting off of the unprofitable branches from all appearance of participation in the root. The final judgment will entirely remove all

that is not giving its proper fruit. Then there will be no deceitfulness. Then there will be no continued gifts of nature or of grace for man any longer to misuse. How glorious will the vine appear whose branches are all laden with such full and blessed crops!

What is cut off as unfruitful will be cast into the fire, and will be burned. The angels will come forward at God's bidding and complete the great work of separation.

That fire is an eternal fire, burning but not consuming. The consuming power of the fire arises from the condition of that which is burnt. It is capable of being destroyed. That which is severed from the Body of Christ is incapable of being destroyed. The fire burns it through and through eternally.

O how blessed is that discipline of time, tending to fruitfulness, which saves us from the unfruitfulness of time, for which nothing but the fire of eternity can be found! Let us see that we are not cut off from Christ now, by neglecting to use His Holy Spirit, that so we may be found in Him with our due store of fruit in the day of manifestation.

MEDITATION VIII.

Union.

If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you.—St. John xv. 7.

1. FAITHFUL UNION WITH CHRIST.

FAITH must lay hold upon Christ, although the gift of grace is a power received from Christ, without which our own faith, however good, would be ineffectual. If we thus abide in Christ, we must identify ourselves wholly with Him. We do not abide in Him as a mere unconscious atmosphere, but as the human perfection to which our own nature must be subordinated, both in thought and word and deed. Unless the living power of Christ be supreme in its control over our own desires and impulses, we are holding ourselves back from Him.

The promise made to prayer is, therefore, a promise made to the faithful, who are really losing themselves in Christ. It is not a favouritism which is thus exhibited to the unworthy, but a reward which operates strictly according to a law of faithful service.

There must be the negative faithfulness which repudiates every desire such as the merely natural heart might dictate. This of itself cuts away all unworthy aims from our prayer. What we ask

merely for the purpose of self-gratification is an element of thought which makes the heart lose its hold upon Christ. As the children of Israel had to abide under the roof of their houses if they would escape the destroying angel when he smote the Egyptians, so we must be shut in from worldly considerations if we would claim to have our prayer answered according to the promise made to God's Firstborn.

It is not enough that the prayer be such as Christ would approve. The life must be kept free from that which Christ would disown.

No greater stimulus, then, can be given to holiness than is to be found in this promise. The power of prayer is proportionate to the freedom of the heart from every alien subjection.

If we feel ourselves sorely tempted by the world, the flesh, or the devil, we must recall the exigency of our dependence upon Christ. We are no longer abiding in Christ if we give way to such temptations. We forfeit the promise made to prayer.

But also we must be positively faithful. We must be doing the will of Christ if we would have Him do ours. Christ is a living Unit. As He is the Head of an undivided organism, He has a definite will to which all the members of that organism must be actively conformed. The paralyzed finger cannot waken the delicate sound of an instrument, although the touch of the performer may be ever so perfect. The performer's will must act through the nerves, the muscles, the joints of the finger. So Christ must be acting through us if we are abiding in Him.

Otherwise we cannot touch the keyboard of prayer in such a manner that His indwelling Presence shall avail to claim the answer which would be due to us as abiding in Him.

Such is the condition of lively faith. It is a real appropriation of the supernatural life of Christ.

How sad it is to possess such a power, and to be so negligent as to living worthy of its exercise! It is not wonderful that our prayers are so often unanswered. It is rather a wonder that God answers our prayers at all.

What must be our chief prayer? Surely this—that we may ourselves abide in Christ more truly than we do. This prayer is the foundation of acceptance in all other prayers. It is, indeed, what our Lord gives us as the first thing to be sought for: ‘Hallowed be Thy Name in us, that we may abide in Thine only begotten Son, and lose every thought which is not subject to His control.’

2. SACRAMENTAL UNION WITH CHRIST.

Christ’s words or sayings must abide in us. He does not merely say that He must abide in us. That is implied by our vitally abiding in Him. His words must abide in us. This recognizes an agency of Christ external to our own will. We are not left merely to conform ourselves to the action of Christ in whatever way we please. We must submit ourselves to those appointed methods by which Christ would communicate His Presence as a substantive

reality and power. The methods of His self-communication to us, His self-development within us, are not uncertain, changeable, secret, simply Divine. They are fixed. They are announced. They have their power from His Divine life, but their operation through His Human speech. They have their substance in Him apart from our submission to Him.

As the words vibrate upon the air, independently of the ear of the listener, so the words of Christ have their reality which comes forth to us under sacramental forms, whether we are attentive to their spiritual power or no. He that is deaf hears not, though the words be ringing through the building round about him. So he that has not an ear cannot hear what the Spirit of Christ saith unto the Churches. Whether the deafness be the deafness of nature or the sluggishness of the natural heart, we do not nullify the operation of the grace of Christ by our deafness. Christ speaks in every sacrament to every soul, whether we as His attentive people are listening to receive that voice or no.

The sacraments are not merely covenanted acts which we have to perform in order to claim certain privileges through Christ. They are vital agencies by which we ought to be transformed. Unless we are thus keeping the sacramental grace as an abiding and controlling principle of union with Christ, we fail to profit by them ; but they are none the less real and none the less necessary. Our faithful adherence to Christ whereby we ought to abide in Him, does not supply the place of Christ's sacramental inherence

in us by the transforming power of His words of supernatural grace.

Alas, that we should so often come to His sacraments and go away as if we had received nothing! If Christ's words spoken to us in every sacrament were treasured day after day as an accumulating power of supernatural life, how should we be transformed into His likeness! We are not to think that He lives in us vaguely, with a heedless communication of His life, as if that life had no moral character. He is the Word of God—the true, the living Image of the Father. His words, His sayings, must abide in all who are gathered into the fellowship of His covenant, making us bring forth results of Divine life which we could not bring forth of ourselves. So each word of His called forth the successive forms of creation as recorded by Moses. His Word gave the original form, and sustained that form when given.

When we have received sacramental grace, we must listen for Christ's Word to go on speaking within us, so that the sacraments may be fruitful with a true Divine efficacy, abiding for present sanctification and future glory.

3. PROGRESSIVE UNION WITH CHRIST.

If we are abiding in Christ, our prayer must be for grace to abide more perfectly in Him. We cannot abide in Christ if our chief desire is for something outside of Him. Whatever else we may desire—and we are permitted to desire such things

as are compatible with His indwelling Presence—yet we are destroying all, if we seek to abide in Him because of what we can thus acquire, instead of desiring to acquire all that is excellent in order thus the better to realize our abiding in Him.

Our will must, therefore, be one with the Will of God, which is ‘our sanctification’ (1 Thess. iv. 3).

Does this consideration reduce the promises of prayer to an empty form? Not unless earth is the only reality, and heaven an empty show.

We are permitted and encouraged to look around us in the world, and see what there is which will be really conducive to God’s glory by our own growth in holiness. We are assured that whatever we thus desire will be given.

How apt people are to pray for things merely because they would like to have them! Such a prayer is an act of separation from Christ, and if granted would be merely to our hurt.

God has attached the development of His glory by a mysterious Providence to our prayers. Instead of calling the new heavens into perfect manifestation by a single act of His word, He is pleased to call them into being by the continuous action of our prayers.

Christ the Creative Word speaks thus in our prayers, and our prayers cannot fail of their effect.

The greater our desires, the more effectual will our prayers be; but our desires must not be vague, unintelligent, selfish. They must have true objects of desire, leading onward to higher results, and perfected in union with Christ, to the glory of God.

So shall we be sanctified by our prayers.

Unless we are thus rising up to God in Christ, we are not praying at all, however earnestly we may be supplicating for some special object.

The manifold needs of life are intended to waken our desires; and if our desires find utterance in prayer, they cannot fail of their accomplishment. Prayer is the streaming forth of the Word of Christ through the will, the desire, the effort, the suffering, the self-oblation, of the faithful, to whom He has communicated His Almighty power by the transforming efficacy of the sacraments of His grace.

MEDITATION IX.

The End of our Christian Calling.

Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; and so shall ye be my disciples.—St. John xv. 8.

1. THE GLORY OF THE FATHER.

IN making promises to His Church, Christ is mindful of the glory of the Father, for that is the object of His mission.

The manifold prerogatives of the Church of Christ are not a result of the Father's glory shed forth upon them that they may share it. They are the very essence of His glorification—the manifestation of that glory which is His own Eternal Being. In Himself that glory is hidden from all created sight. As He communicates that glory to the chosen people, it becomes manifest in them. His glory is in Himself unchangeable. His glorification is in them progressive, as they drink into themselves that Spirit of life which is His own Eternal Substance.

Their reception is proportionate to their desire. Whatever they ask in the Name of Christ, as abiding in Him, will be done unto them, and they are not thereby glorified so as to flatter their own pride. All that they can obtain makes manifest the Father's

glory; for though communicated to them, it does not cease to be inherent in Him. Christ dwells in Him. What they receive, they receive as dwelling in Christ. They must appropriate the gift, but they cannot add to it by any power of their own. The answer to their prayer is a Divine fellowship of living glory with the Father. Every good and perfect gift comes from Him.

Such gifts must be living gifts. God is not glorified by the material abundance which His people possess, but by the living power which His children exhibit. The gift must be worthy of the Giver if He is to be glorified in the giving; and nothing can be worthy of Him but Himself—His consubstantial Spirit the Giver of life.

God is magnified *upon* the ungodly by the exercise of His power in their destruction. God is glorified *in* His saints by the communication of His Holy Spirit, lifting them up into the exercise of Divine life.

2. THE FRUITFULNESS OF THE FAITHFUL.

The prayers of the faithful, therefore, are answered in order that they may bring forth increasing fruit, and so may exhibit the glory of God who lives within them. The purpose of our life in the world is that we may bring forth fruit to God's glory.

We are not to think that God's bounty to us is measured by external gifts. This idea does, indeed, cling to us to the very end, but we must put it

aside. It has, indeed, an element of truth which is apt to deceive us. God does give increasing gifts as reward for service done to Him, but those rewards in this world are only steps towards greater rewards. If they are accepted as rewards in themselves, as lifeless rewards, they become our destruction. Every such reward demands some increase of service. Every increased facility of life demands an increased acceptance of the Cross. Not until it has been sanctified by suffering can it be for our good, for not until then can it tend to God's glory. Whatever rewards may be set before us in the world, they are always given as the promise was given to St. Paul, 'I will show him what things he must suffer for My Name's sake' (Acts ix. 16). To receive our reward in this world in any other sense than as an opportunity for renewed suffering and service would be to forfeit the corresponding reward in eternity. Great is the spiritual joy wherewith God answers the prayers of the faithful, but in the strength of this joy they learn the delight of offering themselves anew to take up the Cross and follow Christ more closely.

The sufferings we experience are the pruning of the tree, enabling it to bring forth more fruit.

3. THE DISCIPLINE OF CHRIST.

These sufferings constitute the discipleship of Christ, for it is in bearing them that we learn to exercise His Holy Spirit. 'Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me,' is His own special admonition.

He gives us the power, and we have to learn to exercise it amidst sufferings. Thus the fruitfulness of the pruned vine is the practice of discipleship in the school of Christ. As we learn of Christ and show forth new virtues in the school of the Passion, we become Christ's disciples, and glorify His Father by our fruitfulness.

That school is a school of grace. That discipline is a discipline of life. What we have to learn of Christ is not the mere external acquisition of certain bodily faculties. It is the exercise of spiritual gifts by dying to the world. So it is a progressive discipline. We become Christ's disciples by bearing the Cross in the power of the Holy Ghost. If at any moment we draw back from following Christ, we fail of being His disciples. So must we be following Him in life, that we may follow Him and be His disciples in death. So shall we at last find rest unto our souls; but the discipleship of Christ is not complete while there is any form of the Cross which we have not learnt to bear.

The discipleship of Christ must be in thought, word, and deed. It does not consist in natural, but in supernatural, qualities. What is natural belongs to this transitory world. It is accidental. No amount of accidental resemblance between our lives and the life of Christ would be of avail. His acts derived their character and their value from the originative power of the Divine Will, the unction of the Holy Ghost, whereby they were accomplished. So it is with us. Our acts derive their value, and their likeness to Christ, from the fellowship of His

anointing Spirit. The Holy Spirit proceeding from Christ and operating in His members is the Teacher by whose inspiration we have to learn. He shows us the things of Christ by practically reproducing in ourselves the mind of Christ. This essential union with Christ makes us His disciples amidst every possible variety of accidental circumstance. There is exhibited within us the true law of the Divine Sonship in its essential power of love. Thus is our heavenly Father glorified by the supernatural fruitfulness of our lives, while we are becoming perfected in the likeness of Christ by the discipline of the Cross.

MEDITATION X.

The Divine Onflow of Love.

Even as the Father hath loved me, I also have loved you: abide ye in my love.—
St. John xv. 9.

1. THE ETERNAL PROCESSION OF THE HOLY GHOST.

WHAT the Son does, He accomplishes by the power of the Holy Ghost, wherein He is begotten of the Father, so that His Manhood abides in the unction thereof. This is the Father's love, which rests upon Him and is His life. The fruitfulness belonging to Himself as the Vine is the power of this Holy Spirit. The Father's love is not a mere external delight, but a self-communicating energy, whereby the Son abides in the undivided glory of the consubstantial life. So also does the Son love His members. He unites them to Himself by the Procession of the same Eternal Spirit. He cannot communicate His love to them by any power other than the onflowing Spirit of life, whereby He receives the Father's love and abides with Him in the unity of the Godhead. So it is in the unity of the Eternal Procession that He loves them, making them partakers of the Divine Nature.

This inherence of the Holy Ghost makes all His actions to be the joy of the Eternal Father.

They are wrought in the truth and fulness of the Divine life, and that not merely as an initiative impulse, leaving them to die out, as things of time, but abiding in them to sustain them with imperishable glory. As the acts of human perfection they would die in the doing, but as the acts of Divine glory, operative through that human perfection, they live on in the power of the Holy Ghost, whereby they were accomplished. That which the Father loves can never die.

So now the same Divine love flows on from Christ to His members, operating in them and making their actions, wrought as they are in the power of the same Spirit, to abide in the same eternal life of love.

It is in this school of eternal love that we are to become the true disciples of Christ, exercising the gift of the indwelling Spirit, and bringing forth fruit whereby the Father may be glorified. Nothing gives Him glory but that wherein He Himself delights—the object of His own true love. But His love is eternal, and having been given, will not be withdrawn.

2. THE TEMPORAL MISSION OF THE HOLY GHOST.

As by the Eternal Procession of the Holy Ghost the Son is the Object of the Father's love, so by the temporal mission of the Holy Ghost the Humanity of Christ partakes of that love. He was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and all His acts were wrought by the power of the Holy Ghost, both in His

humiliation and in His glorification. The Father's love does not rest upon Him so as to stop short in Him, as if there were nothing more for Him to do; but to communicate eternal life to what He does, so that it may perpetuate itself with the same operative power whereby it was wrought. Thus by the temporal mission of the Holy Ghost the righteousness of Christ has a quickening capacity of Deific sanctification. The righteousness of Christ is not imputed to the faithful as an external compensation for sin; but it is really transmitted to them as a germinant energy of holy life, which does not fail to be worthy of the Father's love in those in whom it continues to operate any more than in Christ Himself. It does become diluted by the human imperfection of those in whom it is found. We are truly made the righteousness of God in Christ by this action of the Holy Ghost. We are called to rise up to its Divine energy, and act in subordination to the personal unction of this grace.

Alas! how little do Christians of the present day appreciate what a godly life is; a life worthy of God, worthy of the indwelling God; a life like the life of the Incarnate God, not only in aim but in power; a life whereof the Father can truly say, 'This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased!'

3. PERSONAL SUBJECTION TO THE HOLY GHOST.

We have, then, to consider the love of God the Father, resting upon His Incarnate Son, flowing

onward to us as His members, not as a river flooding the desert, but as a Divine life-blood infused into our hearts, and enabling us to accomplish the will of God.

The overflowing waters fertilize the borders of the river, and when the river subsides the soil thus nourished brings forth its own produce in renewed abundance; but the crops are the produce of the earth, not of the water. The gift of the Holy Ghost is not of such a kind. It does not strengthen the human nature to do its own works, but it communicates Divine powers, so that the human nature may accomplish Divine works. True, there is a kindred energy in man's moral nature and God's sanctifying grace, for man was created in God's imago; but the land becomes fruitful by a real communication of seminal virtue from God by the power of the Spirit of Christ. The righteousness for which we are capacitated is a righteousness that does not belong to ourselves. Although our nature may have a kindred growth, it is of an inferior kind. It is human, not Divine. It is but like the wild form of some fruit-bearing tree. The difference is not merely a matter of cultivation, but of regeneration. Civilization and the spread of Christian principles or sentiments, as an ideal for which man should aim, does not effect this righteousness. There must be a real onflow of the Personal Spirit abiding in men by the communication of the seminal virtues of the Incarnate Godhead which He infuses into our humanity. We cannot live worthy of the love of God save by this personal

action of the Spirit of Christ. God must initiate within each one of us, by the infusion of Christ's eternal righteousness, that which He shall afterward accept as the true fruit of that righteousness. It is the Holy Spirit of Eternal Love by whom the Son of God became Incarnate, and by whom that Incarnate Presence is infused into our hearts as a regenerating power, making us the sons of God.

To this personal indwelling of Christ's Humanity by the power of the Holy Ghost we must submit ourselves, if we would have our portion with the saints. God does not work upon us by compulsion, but by suasion. We have to sanctify the Lord God in our hearts (1 Pet. iii. 15). Christ has called us to the participation of that Eternal Love wherein He glorified the Father, and now lives in the Father's glory. 'As My Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you: continue ye in My love.' He will not withdraw that love from us. The Life, the Love, which He gives are unchangeable, eternal. But we may withdraw ourselves from this Love, this Life. The human will is not superseded in us, any more than in Him. We must abide in continual subjection to the Spirit of Love. He gives us the powers of a higher life, that we may bring forth fruit which is beyond our natural power. He also communicates to us that holy strength whereby our human nature is able to retain its hold upon the Divine righteousness of Christ's Humanity. Without such help we could not even associate ourselves with Christ as His disciples. With that help we can. We are required to do so. This is that

righteousness exceeding the righteousness of scribes and Pharisees, exceeding all the righteousness which could be found in all the ordinances of the law, which nevertheless is absolutely required of us as the condition of entering into the kingdom of heaven or abiding therein. 'Continue ye in My love.' So our Lord bids us live in the supernatural fellowship of the Holy Ghost as members of His own perfection, wherein the Father may delight. We are not to think that God will mercifully tolerate our admission into the glory of heaven. We cannot have our place there unless we are abiding in the joyousness of His Love. How wonderfully He has loved us by our predestination in Christ! How we ought to love Him by cherishing the life of Christ as His true disciples!

MEDITATION XI.

The Activity of Divine Life.

If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.—St. John xv. 10.

1. THE LAW OF OBEDIENCE.

God's love cannot rest upon that which is lifeless. The nature of God is pure activity. To Him the mere material creation is as nothing. It is but the symbol and the shrine of active powers which are more or less communicated to it by God's creative will.

Nothing, therefore, can have God's love resting upon it which is not actively conformed to the Divine will. That will is the law of all perfection. It operates in lower forms of material existence by irresistible necessity. Hence the laws of nature are unchangeable. They are the impress of Divine power. So the actions of the lower forms of organic life have the perfection of Divine control. What brute animals do by instinct surpasses what men can do by reason. The possession of a rational will removes us from the immediate and entire control of God. We are still under God's government in many ways, but the possession of higher gifts exposes us to the feebleness of our own imperfection.

We are not, however, left at this disadvantage as if we had outgrown God's care. The danger of our higher position amidst the creatures is permitted with a view to our attainment of a higher life than other creatures.

Lower creatures, though acting true to God's omnipotent control, share not in His love. God's mercy is over all His works, but His love is specially given to man (Tit. iii. 4). That which characterizes God in creation is His philanthropy; His love for human nature, as being created in His own Image, to be assumed by His well-beloved Son for the accomplishment of all the purposes of His glory.

Man, therefore, must abide in God's love, by acting continually in conformity to God's will. If man would retain God's love, he must return God's love. 'I love them that love Me.' God does not love man simply because of the wondrous powers of the nature which He has given him, but because there is amongst those powers one gift which is superior to all the rest—the gift of a loving heart, capable of rising superior to the attractions of nature, and responding to His own invitations, so as to partake of the eternal glory of active fellowship with Himself.

It is by obedience that man must win this eternity.

2. THE ARCHETYPE OF OBEDIENCE.

When man had fallen from the necessary obedience, he never could raise himself so as to win the love which he had lost. Man became a child of

wrath, although human nature still remained as the object of God's special loving care. God, therefore, would send His Son to show forth in human nature the glory of that obedience which He could Himself approve and accept.

'I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love.'

So, then, the love of God to Jesus Christ is not the mere arbitrary or blind love which human beings may feel towards chosen persons kindred to them in family ties or identity of disposition. On the contrary, Jesus Christ merits the Father's love by the perfection of His obedience. He possessed our human nature with all its faculties, and He held them all in subjection to the Father's will. He never acted with any other aim than to glorify the Father according to the law which the Father had given Him. We should often think of the powers of self-display, the transcendent powers of genius which our Lord possessed, by which He might have claimed a position of world-wide supremacy in various departments of natural life. He held Himself back. God had not sent Him into the world to win the world's homage. He simply came to do God's will and abide in the Father's love. Therefore He was obedient in all things. He became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. His sacrifice was the entire surrender of His will to the will of the Father in the perfect unity of active love which the Holy Ghost established. There was the perfect outward action of obedience, both negative and positive, so that He did nothing

but what the Father inspired, but accomplished to the full all that the Father required, the human will submitting itself with entire surrender, and the Divine Spirit communicating a joyous rapture of love, so that even in the greatest suffering the human will corresponded with the Father's intention, recognizing the sanctity of command and looking forward to the glory of recompense ruled by the Father's will and rising to the Father's welcome.

Such was the obedience of Christ, and such is the obedience which we, by the life-giving Spirit of Love, are still required to give to God if we would abide in His love.

3. THE REWARD OF OBEDIENCE.

The obedience of Christ is the perfect pattern which we have to follow. It is more than that. It is itself the living principle by which we are enabled to grow into its conformity. As the habits of nature descend from father to son, so, but much more, do the habits of grace descend to us, as members of Christ's Humanity, from Him, the Author of the new race. The Spirit of Love whereby He was obedient quickens us for the like obedience according to the law of that Humanity into which we are engrafted. The fruitful power of the vine is communicated to us as its branches.

This Spirit opens the eyes of our understanding to see, and stimulates our affections to desire that fulness of reward which alone can satisfy our nature. Man was formed to manifest God's holiness in

outward action, and to enjoy it as its eternal possession. We have lost sight of the true end of our nature by the blindness of sin. The Holy Spirit of Love wakens within us the love of God as it is restored to the members of Christ, so that we can look forward to the fruition of the Divine life as the joy of eternity. It is beyond our present apprehension, but not beyond our desires. As our desires expand towards this great end of our calling, we become strengthened for the obedience which God expects from us. Here we have to suffer along with Christ, but we know that these sufferings shall be transformed into joy, and therefore we are able even now, in the midst of our suffering, to rejoice by the anticipation of that which is to be. Love is the law. Love is the strength. Love is the pattern. Love is the reward. We do not look for God to give us outward recompense, for He did not recompense the obedience of His Son by dignities of earth; but we look to be exalted in the heavenly life as Christ was exalted to be Head over all things to His Church, just in proportion as we have been conformed by the Spirit of Divine life to the image of His perfect obedience. The operation of grace is more certain in its consequences and as stringent in its conditions as the laws of nature. None who abide in the love of Christ can fail of their reward according to the measure of their conformity to the crucified Saviour. 'If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love.'

MEDITATION XII.

The Joy of the Lord.

These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be fulfilled.—St. John xv. 11.

I. THE JOY REVEALED.

CHRIST makes known to us how He rejoices in those who by holy obedience abide in His love.

In earthly toil it is an unspeakable relief to know the joy of one for whom we are toiling. We are strengthened so as not to sink down in discouragement if we feel that one for whose approval we care is taking pleasure in that which constitutes our difficulties. Sufferings are not noticed amidst the plaudits of a surrounding throng, or under the strong impulse of some absorbing affection. O that we could know how Jesus rejoices in every faithful effort which His members make to live true to Him! A momentary consciousness of that joy would rouse us to an eternity of effort. In such a moment eternity would be revealed, and it could not pass away. Such a moment would transform us, so that we should rise to the eternal sanctity of heaven in its sympathy.

Christ tells us of the active life of union between ourselves and Him in order that His joy may remain in us, not merely as a soothing hope, but as a transporting power.

We are too apt to live as if, after all, Christ did not very much care about us one by one. But He who wept over Jerusalem watches over every one of His members, rejoicing in the spiritual progress of each, although it be so insignificant. He wants us to know this joy in order that we may act upon it. A joy beginning upon our side would be comparatively feeble. We fail very often because our hopes of heaven are merely the dreamy aspirations of our hearts, and we feel that we are not worthy of such hopes. But if we recognize the joyousness of our hope as being the true expression within ourselves of the stupendous joy of Christ, Creator and Redeemer, calling us back to Him by all the glorified efficacy of His Passion, then we perceive in that joyousness the boundless transport of a Divine truth. 'We love Him, because He first loved us.' That love, which is His joy, calls us to rejoice in Him. Who that knows that joy can fail to correspond with it! If we know it ever so little, we shall grow in the knowledge of it, for the Spirit of Christ will reveal it to us as the law of our new life. Jesus, as He looks upon His redeemed, sees of the travail of His soul and is satisfied. He rejoiceth over us as one that maketh up his jewels; yea, He spareth us as a man spareth his own son that serveth him (Mal. iii. 17).

2. THE JOY COMMUNICATED.

Jesus then reveals this joy to us as a joy that we are to share. 'Rejoice in the Lord always: and

again I say, Rejoice.' He desires that this joy shall be a source of strength to us. If we gave Him a service without joy, it would be worthless, for it would be wanting in love. The life which binds together Christ and His members necessitates their mutual joy one in the other. We may feel the burden of the flesh in our nature as separate from Him, but the higher nature communicated from Him lifts us up into the joy which is His, that our supernatural service may be a supernatural joy. He is anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows, and we, while sharing in His obedience to the Father, share His unction.

The burden of the Cross, as we tread the way of sorrows in this weary world, serves but to make the triumphant consciousness of His heavenly joy only the more manifest, while we follow Him. The Spirit of revelation makes the joy of Christ's exaltation really present to our consciousness, as when He was upon earth the burden of our sins was present to His consciousness. He, the Ever-blessed, wept with us, and we, the slaves of death, must rejoice with Him.

We must avoid any confusion of natures, as if the joy communicated in Christ were to tone down the sense of misery and evil in this present world. On the contrary, it makes the sense of evil both around us and within ourselves manifoldly greater than it would otherwise be. But as our tribulation aboundeth, so also our consolation aboundeth in Christ. We rejoice in tribulations, because we rejoice in God.

3. THE JOY CONSUMMATED.

This joy which abides with the faithful, making them fruitful in exercises of penitence and charity, cheerfully accepting the troubles which are our portion here, is a growing joy, which shall be perfected at last in the manifestation of Christ. The welcome to each of the faithful is not into any abstract blessedness, but into the personal fellowship of the all-comprehensive joy of Jesus. 'Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.'

That joy is the true and adequate consummation of His joy wherewith He has served the Father, so that now the joy of every act of His past service lives on in the eternal fruition of the Father's love. As He has communicated His obedience to be a living power within each of His members, strengthening them individually to serve God here, so shall each one of them be welcomed into that consummation of joy wherein all His Body shall be glorified eternally.

The sweetness of grace, the consciousness of His holy joy, is but a foretaste of that fulness of fruition which is in store for us eventually. Jesus reveals this joy to us, that we may walk in its power and attain to its fulness. 'These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy may abide in you, and that your joy may be fulfilled.' That fulness cannot be unless we are making progress towards it by the power of this revelation.

We were created to serve God here and to enjoy Him hereafter. As branches of the true vine, wo

must be bringing forth fruit wherein the Husbandman may rejoice. Believing in Christ, though now we see Him not, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Our joy is the very participation of the Eternal Love wherein the Father and the Son rejoice for ever. Earth, with its burden of evil, still holds us down, but the joy of our Lord shall be our portion in the end. 'When I awake up after Thy likeness, I shall be satisfied with it.'

MEDITATION XIII.

The Vital Bond of Love.

This is my commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you.—
St. John xv. 12.

1. THE OUTWARD INJUNCTION.

‘As the Father loves Me, so do I love you, and so must ye love one another.’ This is the special commandment of the Christ-life, as our Lord says, ‘The commandment which is specially Mine.’ It is a commandment which no one else could give, for outside of Christ no one would have power to fulfil it. Jesus, however, in giving the injunction, gives also the power; for the very essence of the mediatorial love which is the Christian’s pattern is the communication of that Holy Spirit by which it is accomplished. It is a command to exercise self-communicating love, to retain nothing for self, but to live in the fellowship of others, giving out to them whatever each may have. Christ gives to His members the fulness of His own life. The stem of the vine loses itself, as it were, in the branches; and they are to lose themselves, as it were, in the fruit. The branch does not bring forth fruit for its own advantage, but for the glory of the tree. So must love make the members of Christ’s Body

fruitful, not that they may themselves be glorified, but that Christ may be glorified in His Church at large. It is the outflow of the Divine Love of the Father to the Son, which the Person of the Son transmits to the members of His Body, not to become stagnant in them, but to show itself forth in their fruitfulness.

This fruitfulness, which is the exercise of the Divine Love, is itself the reward of those who produce it. The glory of the branch is in the fruit which hangs upon it, although that fruit is not its own. The branch is not decorated by any greater richness of foliage because of the fruit which it bears. So the acts of love which the Holy Ghost accomplishes through each of the saints are themselves the very reward. They do not bring external rewards, for all such would be unavailing to the soul whose life is love. Love, with a view to some further end, is not love. Each shall shine with the glory of the inherent Divine Love eternally, in proportion as that love has been developed in active life upon the earth. The glory of all the saints is the outcome of Christ's self-sacrificing love in them. His glory is not in any external gift belonging to His heavenly throne, but in the fulness of the Divine Love operative in His Incarnate Person, and perpetuating itself by grace in His saints.

2. THE MUTUAL ACTION.

Love is a mutual consciousness of reciprocal joy. As the Father rejoices in the Son, so does the Son

rejoice in the Father. So, then, must the faithful rejoice one in the other. Christian life is not a hard, slavish devotion towards an unsympathizing object. It receives pleasure from the object to which it gives pleasure.

Such is the wondrous Personality of joyous Love, which proceeds eternally from the Father and the Son rejoicing in undivided glory. Such, also, is the love which Christians are to have one in the other. The joy of the Christian is not like the joy of an artist contemplating in his studio the work of his own genius, with perhaps no one to share it. Christians find joy in the communion of saints.

This mutual joy of love can only be imperfectly known in this present world. The responsive sphere of each individual life is necessarily limited, and the intensity of response is often proportionate to the smallness of the sphere. It does not depend upon the largeness of the response which the Church at large may make so as to recognize individual efforts of love. Indeed, the Church is so much mixed up with the world, that the faithful soul shrinks from public response as apt to be a worldly response to worldly capacities, rather than a real spiritual response of love to the love which animated the action. The loving heart feels that the world may estimate its accidents, but cannot understand its own true self.

Yet is there in the Church a responsive love, which no act of love can escape through its littleness or overmatch by the vastness of its self-sacrifice. The life of the vine is not an unconscious power

putting itself forth separately in each of the branches. It is a conscious unity, so that Christ, by the power of the Holy Ghost, rejoices in every one of His fruitful branches, and they, by this indwelling Divine Personality, rejoice each in all. We must recognize Christ in all our brethren, and do all out of love to Him. This is no mere phrase. This love finds its response of mutual joy. Though each seem for a time to hang separately on the tree, yet the power of the Holy Ghost even now makes the joy of the communion of saints to be a personal power. We see not those who are passed away from earth, but we know that they see us. We may be quite hidden from those who are with us upon the earth, but we affect one another, and there is a hidden reciprocity of action by the power of the Holy Ghost. Our outward surroundings may seem for a while to seclude us from all mutual interchange of sympathy, but the time is coming when we shall each of us have our perfect portion in the glory of the Body of Christ. In that day no one will claim anything as his own; we shall have all things common. There will be an equable flow of love throughout the whole multitude of the saints. Then shall those who have loved most find their joy in the common love proportionate to the measure of earthly discipline and devotion. The power of loving will be the reward of love; and as the power of love, so shall be the fulness of its Divine delight. The Holy Spirit shall be in each the power, and the Holy Spirit shall be the circulating principle of love throughout all the members of Christ. We shall know the love of

Christ as the glory of eternity, just in proportion as we have exercised the love of Christ amidst the difficulties of time, and we shall rejoice therein, not as an external recompense from strangers, but as the rapturous integrity of a common inspiration, whereby the individuality of self is lost, and as we have lived *for* others in love upon the earth, so shall we live *in* them with the unity of the Spirit of Christ.

3. THE DIVINE POWER.

Love which is of God cannot seek its reward in anything short of God. The power and the reward are commensurate. Each is infinite in its Divine origin, and the activity and the receptivity of joyous love are the measure one of the other in each of the members of Christ. Love which is of God goes forth to all in whom God dwells. Love which is of God finds the whole atmosphere of its action replete with the joyousness of Divine welcome. Love which is of God can love nothing short of God. Love which is of God can never find the answer of God's love.

Love is the command which Christ gives as the special manifestation of His own Divine life in His disciples. Love is eternal, as the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are eternal. The various forms of love change with earthly circumstance, but they do not gain from earth their excellence or their vitality. The reality of love is the manifestation of the life of the Incarnate Son, making His members fruitful with that which is altogether above the earth.

The outward accidents of Christian life are very different from those of the Prophet of Nazareth; but the power of love whereby we are called to be His disciples is identical with that whereby He offered Himself for us during His earthly years of life, and for the death on Calvary. 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.'

So is the life of the Vine continuous throughout. It is the life of the Eternal Love—the life, the love, of God. The grapes of the Church's harvest swell with the sweetness of the Divine life-blood of the Passion.

MEDITATION XIV.

Self-sacrificing Love.

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.—
St. John xv. 13.

1. LOVE STRONGER THAN DEATH.

THE self-sacrificing love of Christ! This is the law, the pattern, the hereditary archetype, of love for all His members to follow.

Love brought the Son of God into this world of death. Here death reigned supreme, but the Son of God shrank not from the conflict. He took upon Himself our emptiness, our deadness, that in it He might meet the enemy. In the emptiness which He assumed, He had the inalienable fulness of the life of love. By this He took the form, by this He bore the tyranny, by this He conquered the power, of death. Death could do nothing against Him, for the love of the Eternal Father was His very life. Had there been one moment of cessation in that love, death would in that moment have prevailed. But love bore all. Every possible privation, every possible suffering, all that death could do to destroy the life of man, was brought against Him; but the steadfastness of Divine love remained unshaken. Death could not destroy His life. He would lay

down His life, of His own free will, and that not because love was worn out by the conflict, but that He might make the victory of love complete. He died upon the Cross, but love died not. The Form that was hushed in death spake but the more significantly of the love wherewith it died. The love of Christ remained in its full majesty while He lay dead. Love was the conqueror. The Spirit of Jesus lived on by the power of the Holy Ghost. He went and preached deliverance to the captives of the grave. Those were ready to obey Him who had themselves lived in His power. Now they feel themselves captives of the love whereby they are to live, that they may set aside the chains of death from which they could not of themselves escape. The power of love whereby Jesus died makes them live. Death reigns but in this world. Love, which has removed His victims, fills them with new life, that they may resist in turn. The Body of Him that died is the Food of life; and the life which it sustains is eternal life. The last enemy of love that shall be destroyed is death.

2. LOVE COMMUNICATING LIFE.

So has Jesus brought the love of God as a creative power of renewal. As He unites men to His Body, He makes them partakers of His living Spirit. They receive His love, not as a liberating power to leave them in their helplessness, but as a regenerating power to lift them up into His fellowship of triumph. He lays down His life for

His friends, dying to this world and all that it contains, in order that He may take them out of the grasp of death and fill them with His life. He dies in love to them, and bids them die in love to Him, that in His love they now may live eternally. Death is the means whereby He would gain life for us, and call us to receive life from Himself. But it must be the death which love inspires. Death without love is the penalty of sin, whereby the captives are eternally enthralled in the bondage of Satan. Death, with love as its inspiring power, becomes the very opportunity of life. Love, by self-sacrifice, becomes identified with the eternity of God. The self-sacrificing love of God is the hand which gives. The self-sacrificing love which God inspires in man is the hand which receives. We cannot abide in the life which God's self-sacrificing love communicates unless we sacrifice all that is of earth, as He has sacrificed it according to the requirements of that life which His love calls us to share.

3. LOVE BINDING IN ETERNAL FELLOWSHIP.

The interests of earthly life are external and transitory. Love is perfect in proportion as such earthly interests are set aside; and as it has its origin in Divine inspiration, so it lives with the indissolubility of the Divine essence. Love can only act in God, so as to be exempt from the inferior motives whereby the material nature feels the impulses of selfishness. If we live in God, we must live in unity with all that shares the life of God.

To lay down His life for His friends is the law which God gives. And as God laid down His life for us collectively, so He requires us to lay down our lives, not only for Himself abstractedly, but for one another in Him as opportunity offers. The readiness to part with all that constitutes self is the very law of love; and as self individualizes, so by parting with that wherein self is crystallized, we are fused in the spiritual unity of love.

God, in the infinite purity of His nature, gives Himself by eternal communication in exhaustless fulness of love, and the Three Blessed Persons coinhere by this gift. The finite creature can only give himself by the surrender of that which makes himself. The Divine life given to us in Christ sustains the members of Christ, so as to act with the exhaustless energy of God, receiving the energy of grace continually to renew what must otherwise perish under the law of death.

The law of the Communion of Saints must, therefore, be in this world a law of suffering after the example of Christ. It would be no true love if our mutual action were simply joyous. That would be the fellowship of the world, from which, as saints, we have to be separated, to which we have individually to die. Love rejoices not only to die for God's glory, but to die by Divine grace for the benefit of those who share God's life. Love does not feel that it has put itself forth unless it suffers in so doing. Unless it has parted with something which the loved one may retain, it has no hold upon the object of its love. 'Shall I give of that which

costs me nothing?' Love rejoices in the integrity of its own self-sacrifice, and thinks but little what it shall receive in return. Love values what it receives, so that the greatest cost seems trifling in comparison.

The acts of time live on in the pure love of eternity. There suffering is no more. There the communication of self is pure as the Essence of God, by whom it is inspired. There the coinherence of the members of Christ is perfected according to the indissoluble energy of the life of the Triune Love.

MEDITATION XV.

Friendship.

Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you.—St. John xv. 14

1. SPEAKING IN COMMAND.

CHRIST shows His love in that He lays down His life for His friends. Friends must be selected. 'I have chosen you.' Friends must respond to the voice of a Superior. 'Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.'

Christ puts forward first the duty of the Apostles to accept and abide in that friendship to which His selecting authority had admitted them. They must show themselves worthy of such a friendship in which He, their great Master, was condescending to lay down His life for them.

What grateful obedience such self-sacrifice ought to demand!

From the duty of imitation, therefore, as set forth in the preceding verse, He goes on now to speak of the duty of acceptance. Self-sacrifice is the law of true friendship. Jesus has claimed them, the Apostles, as His friends, and He is laying down His life for them. His superiority of position they could not dare to dispute. The reality of His friendship they must dare to claim. The friendship did

not destroy His superiority. That must remain in the very nature of things. His proof of friendship must, however, give an entirely new character to that obedience which He, as their Lord, might naturally have claimed. Obedience was a debt from which they could not escape. To obey Jesus as a Friend was a privilege which must entirely change the character of their obedience. He desired from them the obedience, not of slaves, but of friends. Gratitude is a higher offering than servility. It is an offering more worthy of Him to receive, more worthy of them to give. He had shown the reality of His friendship by laying down for them His life. They must claim the enjoyment of His friendship by obedience to His commands.

Friendship demands reciprocity, and they might well feel that any idea of reciprocating the love of Jesus would be presumption. Jesus, however, would have them reciprocate His love by welcoming its inspiration. They could not reciprocate His love by any outward act done towards Himself. They were to show that they appropriated His power, and acted upon it, by loving one another according to the law which that transcendent love set forth for their imitation.

2. ACTING IN OBEDIENCE.

The friendship of our Master needs to be accepted by a joyful obedience. If we scorn that friendship, not meeting it with the return which it demands, we relapse into a worse slavery than before. We must

do what Jesus commands; and, as the original Greek expresses it, we must do it for His sake, because He commands. That is not the obedience of love which is rendered either out of irresistible necessity or out of agreement of purpose. The Person of our Master must be the object of our devotion. He calls us to do things which we should not do but for the sake of pleasing Him.

Such obedience of friendship lifts us up out of the lower sphere of discipleship. The disciple is more than a slave, but the friend is more than a disciple. The disciple has yet to learn his part; the friend knows what he has to do, and becomes, to a certain extent, the equal of the master whom he obeys.

The disciple who has risen to friendship has a keen perception of what his master wants. The smallest intimation of his master's will is readily seized by him.

The general command of Jesus is that we love one another, and that we love Him in one another; so that in loving one another we abide in His love, both as the principle and as the sphere of action. In doing this, we are to feel that we are rising up to the condition of true co-operative friendship with Him.

Love is the old commandment stamped by original inspiration upon the heart of man; but that love was only the love proper to human sympathy. It was the fulfilling of the old law.

Now, however, Christ gives us a higher law of love—the characteristic of all who belong to

Himself as members of the Divine Humanity of which He is the Head. Thus it is a new commandment. It is not the mere sympathy between man and man which satisfies the law of Christ. It is the recognition of a higher character in those who are partakers of His new life and the hope of the resurrection.

Love to man for man's sake is the law of human nature. Love to the members of Christ for Christ's sake is the law of Christ. 'Love one another.' This is a command of a higher character than that which was before. The Pharisee loved friends. The true law required the love even of enemies. Christ requires a higher love, even the love which the Holy Ghost inspires between those in whom, as members of Christ, the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Christ, dwells. We must love one another with a love which looks beyond the grave and lives in the anticipation of that higher life, when all mere earthly ties shall have passed away. As He laid down His life for us, so is it a debt on our part to Him that we should lay down our lives for the brethren (1 John iii. 16).

This laying down of our lives is not a mere readiness to die if some improbable emergency put us to the proof. It includes the setting aside of all our worldly interests for the sake of the Body of Christ. We have died through the death of Christ, and our relation to the members of Christ is altogether different from that which is required of us to our fellow-man merely as such. The distinction is drawn by St. Peter: 'Honour all men; love the brotherhood' (1 Pet. ii. 17). We shall not love

our fellow-man the less because we recognize this higher claim, but we must be careful not to let the lower claim of human sympathy rise up so as to shroud the higher self-sacrificing love which we owe to the members of Christ. We must live primarily for Christ and for our brethren in Him.

3. ABIDING IN OBLIGATION.

It is by thus personally rising to live in the friendship of Jesus that His disciples are to abide in His love. They must be watchful to do His will. They must recognize the spiritual bonds of the Divine family into which they are admitted. They must lose all thought of their own mere private and worldly interests. They must not even allow themselves in any spiritual selfishness, seeking their own spiritual gain rather than the good of others. They must feel that the Communion of Saints in the Holy Catholic Church is a supernatural sphere of conscious energy. Forgetful of self, they must look forward to the revelation of Christ in all His saints. That is, indeed, the consummation of the scriptural record—the manifestation of the New Jerusalem descending from God out of heaven, having the glory of God, and the Lamb is the Light thereof (Rev. xxi. 10, 23).

So must we take the yoke of Christ upon us, if we would be His disciples, His friends. The mere exercise of worldly beneficence is of no avail for this higher covenant. Our love, our self-sacrifice, must be in the Name of the Lord Jesus. Indeed,

there is great danger of the lower morality tainting rather than stimulating the higher self-sacrificing love. We must have a personal regard to Christ in all we do, observing His commandments because He has given them, if we would be His friends for ever.

MEDITATION XVI.

Ennobling Love.

No longer do I call you servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I heard from my Father I have made known unto you.—St. John xv. 15.

1. COMMUNITY OF INTELLIGENCE.

So, then, we must rise from discipleship to friendship, having a spiritual intelligence by which to recognize the will of Christ. 'I no longer speak of you, My chosen ones, as slaves; for the slave knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things which I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.'

Under the law there were many ordinances appointed by God as the conditions upon which His covenant was established with the fathers; but they to whom these were given knew not what might be their real significance. They knew, indeed, that in some way they pointed onward to Messiah. They searched with wonderful intensity of care to find out what moral purpose was discoverable in them. They inquired diligently into the various portions and manners in which God prepared them, as with line upon line, so that when the fulness of time was come they might see the promised Saviour; but it was a time of darkness,

of blind slavish obedience, of hope rather than of faith, looking forward to something which should be revealed by-and-by, not acknowledging any active presence of grace as a supernatural power of life at the time then being.

Now, however, we have the purposes of God revealed to us—not, of course, in their completeness, for it hath not entered into the heart to conceive what God has prepared for them that love Him, but in their spiritual truth and reality as far as our senses are capable of apprehending those heavenly mysteries which constitute our eternal joy.

This longing for a future not of earth but of heaven—a future wherein we shall be for ever with the Lord—is the beginning of a friendship which shall be consummated in a unity altogether transcending all human relationships.

Thus do faith, hope, and love, as infused virtues, lift us into the joy of special communion with Christ. How much we lose because we do not really claim the intimacy thus proposed to us as we ought to do! Such friendship includes a real vivacity of interest in the work of Christ throughout the world, within Christian countries and in Christian missions. It includes all that tends to the glory of Christ and the edification of His Body. And the Master's cause has to be urged onward in union with the Master's Personal control and His co-operative Spirit. We shall not be eager for our own plans on behalf of Christ, but ready to accept His will and act according to His intimations. We are too much given to acting as if Christ were

absent, and we had to do what seemed good in our own sight; but we must think of Christ, in His wisdom and love, regulating our conduct that we may experience the closeness of active friendship, and use His grace in bringing those things to pass which we know to be His intention, instead of resting in our own efforts and our own earthly aims.

2. ETERNITY OF PURPOSE.

The Church goes forth into the unexplored future, and the Apostolical ministry are to work along with Christ; but that which they know not is foreseen by Him. They have to work along with Him in carrying out the Eternal Will of the Father.

In its accidental details the future of their work lies hidden, but they have a revelation given them of what the principles of the future Church are to be. They have to carry out the mind of Christ, as He has told them, and that is what He Himself has received from the Father. The future is not to be the result of accident. The Church must never forsake the principles which Christ has laid down. The spiritual organization is fixed from eternity, as truly as the human nature which our Lord would assume. There is a definite predestination which has to be carried out. The Church is not to assume a form of variable self-adaptation to the successive ages. She is to be throughout successive ages the continuous embodiment of an eternal archetype as the extension of the Humanity of the Incarnate Son. Therefore our Lord says, 'What I have heard of

My Father I have made known unto you'—not the changeful events of the relationship between the Church and the world, but the fixed organic structure which was the proper shrine of her spiritual life. The definite consummation of heavenly glory was set before the Apostles, and the means by which they were to build up His Body upon earth (Eph. iv.) coincidentally with His own building up of the stories thereof in the heavens (Amos ix. 6).

3. COMPLETENESS OF MANIFESTATION.

The predestinated completeness of the heavenly organism which should be the full development of the Body of Christ and the temple of the Triune God was ever present to the mind of Christ. 'I have heard.' It was to be ever present to the minds of the Apostles. 'I have made known to you.'

It is losing sight of this consummation which involves so many in perplexity and discouragement from age to age of Church history. Instead of looking forward with simple faith to that end which shall eventually be accomplished, the various ages of the Church are apt to contemplate with anxiety the troubles of their own day. These are not told beforehand, except in general admonitions of the world's hostility. Instead of keeping their minds fixed upon the glory of the Church when Christ shall bring it along with Himself in the glory of resurrection, we suffer ourselves to be faint-hearted, because we are anxious that the Church of our own

days should be found free from earth's bondage, and glorious already as the Bride of Christ. It is the vision of the future—a future which cannot fail, which must strengthen for the difficulties of the present—difficulties whose very greatness constitutes the glory wherein the saints and confessors of Christ are to win their portion, exalted hereafter as they have been humbled here (Luke xviii.).

So are they to be the friends of Christ, careful in everything to fulfil His commandments, and not deceived by the threats or the enticements of the world around. He makes known to us the end towards which we have to be pressing onward. The glory of the spiritual fabric is set before us in its reality in the Epistle to the Hebrews as a hidden mystery, and in the Revelation as a building that shall come forth to view when all is finished. The Apostles lived in the sense of this unseen totality. They did not think of themselves as isolated units working upon earth without any certainty of what should come of their labours. They knew that the Divine ideal to be realized by their labours was absolutely secure—the result, not of individual successes, but of corporate grace, derived from Christ the Head. Thus were they able to look away from the present moment and its perplexities, from their individual efforts and comparative successes. Each could say, 'Whether it were I or they, so we preach and so ye believed.'

That which the Son had heard of the Father, and had made known unto them, could not be modified or thwarted. They looked forward to be

recognized as Christ's friends in the glory, as here in the humiliation. They were content to wait.

'Tarry thou the Lord's leisure: be strong, and He shall stablish thine heart; and put thou thy trust in the Lord.'

MEDITATION XVII.

Sovereign Love.

Ye did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide.—St. John xv. 16.

1. SELECTING.

JESUS had chosen them to be His friends. This friendship had, indeed, to be accepted by them. If they would continue therein, they must walk worthy of it. But it was a dignity beyond what they could have claimed or sought.

Jesus had a work to do in the world by them, and He selected them for His purpose. The consciousness of having been thus selected must make them always the more careful. It must also give them strength and confidence. Not only must the work succeed; their own part in it could not fail. They were not attempting to mix themselves up with an enterprise for which they were unfitted. Jesus had chosen them, and whether they felt their individual capacities or their weakness, they could rely upon the security of His choice. Carefulness, confidence, devotion, were guaranteed by this remembrance. How could they fail of diligent homage to Him, their Lord, who had selected them! The honour, the love, the co-operation, the support of Jesus, made

them feel identified with Him. He who had chosen could not abandon; neither, therefore, could they abandon Him. Their own steadfastness of purpose might be shaken. The steadfastness of His call was absolute. His call to them was the onflow of His own personal mission by the Father. It was the call of God.

The Apostles could not be expected to understand this at the time; but our Lord uttered these discourses with the intention that the Apostles should consider them in all their bearings when He Himself was gone away, and the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, was come in His place.

‘I have chosen you.’ Those words must come home to the heart of every one who would carry on the ministry of Christ. Christ does not select His instruments without good purpose, and He knows well our weakness. We are not to think that we have natural fitness because Jesus has chosen us; but we must feel sure that no natural unfitness can destroy the reality of His choice and the enabling virtue of His appointment.

2. APPOINTING.

Jesus appointed them, and that appointment was not a mere outward nomination. What He did, He did with the authority of God. Even now, then, there was a definite power belonging to their office. It is true that they were not endued with power from on high until the Day of Pentecost, but their participation in that power was pledged to

them by the unfailing promise of Jesus. This carried with it a gift beyond what they could conceive, but they could recognize the certainty of their position by virtue of His appointment. The human authority was irrevocably made over to them, although the Divine vitality was not infused.

The life, however, was promised, for without life there could not be fruitfulness. Since, then, Christ had ordained them that they should go and bring forth fruit, they must have the gift of life. Thus would it be seen that they were branches of the true Vine.

We have thus, therefore, discipleship, friendship, apostleship, fruitfulness—different stages of relationship to Christ, illustrating the symbolic language in which at the outset He had depicted their vital union with Himself.

They were to go forth. Their ministry was to be throughout the world. As the branches grow, so would their ministry extend far away from His personal sphere of primary ministration in Judæa. But though they might bear fruit in regions far away, it would be by virtue of His indwelling life.

How different is the fruit from the leaf! When the time of fruit-bearing came they must remember that it was by virtue of Christ's appointment that they found the fruit gracing their ministerial labours. No natural power could bring about such a result. They must recognize the fruit as showing the Divine life of Christ operative by virtue of His

appointment. They were not merely selected as natural agents. They were appointed as Divine agents.

3. PERPETUATING.

This fruit was to abide. The Apostolical ministry works in successive ages, but the fruit of each age lasts on. It abides until the great day.

The Apostles were not to be the mere leaders of thought in their day. Their fruit was to have its value in another world. The Husbandman would gather it from the branches of temporal growth to the storehouse of eternal benediction. He would delight therein. It should abide in His love.

How much more anxious are people about bringing forth fruit than they are about its permanent life! Our Lord definitely points to the permanent life of the fruit as the result of His appointment, His prayer. This fruit does not live as a matter of course because the tree has fructified. There may be many a blight destroying what seemed to promise well. The spirit of perseverance must continue to sustain what preventing grace has prepared and sanctifying grace has accomplished.

We must continually seek for the grace of Christ to abide, as the life of all which belongs to our ministry. That which is done by the power of God must be given over to the sustaining power of God. We must remember that the Church of God in all its details is not a human institution initiated by Divine authority, but it is an extension of the Divine Humanity living on from age to age by the

power of the Holy Ghost, by whom the Body of Christ was originally conceived in the womb of the Blessed Virgin, and not merely appearing in this outer world for a brief period, but formed to abide for ever in the joyous fellowship of the same Eternal Spirit.

MEDITATION XVIII.

Mediatorial Love.

That whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.—St. John xv. 16.

1. AUTHORIZING.

CHRIST ordained His Apostles to be conformed to His own likeness as disciples, united with His own work as friends, quickened by His Holy Spirit as fruit-bearing branches of His own Body. His Body was thus mystically extended in them, and though they might be bearing fruit in far-distant regions, yet it would be by the reality of their vital and inseparable union with Himself.

As embodying these various conditions, they would have a right to appear before God the Father and pray to Him in the Name of Christ. Our Lord gives this as the very reason of their appointment to the Apostolate: 'That whatsoever ye ask the Father in My Name, He may give it you.'

The authority to pray in the Name of Christ is not a mere permission to use His Name; it is a real assumption of the Apostles into the fellowship and power of His Name. The teaching of the chapter up to this point, therefore, lets us know what is meant by praying in Christ's Name. Such prayer

is a real act of vital union with Christ. As the bringing forth of fruit shows this vital union in outward manifestation, acting towards man, so prayer to God in Christ's Name is an exercise of the same vital union as a principle of devotion rising up to God. Those who are livingly united with Christ as the true Vine have a right to speak to the Father in His Name. This is the law of His mediation. Inasmuch as He is both God and Man, He enables the members of His Human Nature to speak to God with the full authority of His Sonship. His Humanity has no life apart from His Divine Person. When His members speak to God, His Personal action becomes the channel of communication, and their words gain the dignity, the assurance, of His Personal utterance.

2. IDENTIFYING.

He, then, and His members are vitally one. He does not give them a finite and separable life. A father gives life to his son, but he parts with the life which he transmits. The son has power to act in the life thus received without reference to his parent. He has a separate existence. Christ gives life to His members in Himself, so that they cannot use it as separate from Him. They are identified with Him. In this identification they bring forth fruit on earth, and live towards God. In this identification, however, they do not lose their own gift of will. As the Manhood of Christ had a will separate from the Divine Will, so the members of Christ

retain their individual volition. They cannot use it in stubborn resistance to the will of God, but they can use it as initiating Divine movements. They can make known their desires to God; and if their desires are conformable to His Divine purpose, God will grant them their desires. Thus, by the law of prayer in the Name of Christ, His people are not merely instrumental agents, but initiatory and intelligent workers along with Him, permitted to make their requests known, and sure that their requests will meet with Fatherly consideration as if they were spoken by Jesus Christ Himself.

All prayer must be offered to God in submission to His holy will. The prayer of Christ Himself in Gethsemane was conditioned by the words 'If it be possible;' and again by the act of submission, 'Not My will, but Thine, be done.' We are not, then, to think that the multiplicity of prayers offered in the Name of Christ can render the mediation of Christ nugatory because the requests may be for objects that are incompatible. All the requests must be submitted to the will of God, and the answer will be of such a kind as is conformable to God's will. Prayers of rivalry or self-interest cannot be spoken in the Name of Christ. Prayer is by each, and for the benefit of all. Each prayer will move God as truly as if it were the only prayer that rose to Him. It will not fail of obtaining an adequate result. Whether the prayer be granted literally or no, the answer of God will be greater, not less, than the petition. All prayer must have God's glory for its proper end, and no prayer which rises up to God

from the members of Christ can fail of initiating a movement of Divine glory worthy of the Name of the only begotten Son.

3. GUARANTEEING.

This Name, then, is the guarantee of our prayers. It is the very voice of prayer, so that no prayer which is not offered in this Name can sound within the courts of heaven. All voices of mere human outcry die out, as it were, in the foggy atmosphere of this sinful world. God may sometimes condescend to *them*, but *they* cannot rise to the clear heaven of His Almighty sanctuary. The claim of Sonship is wanting to them. Where that claim is, the voice of the suppliant rings out before the Throne of God with Almighty power. The glorious harmony of supplication from all the multitude of the redeemed wakens the infinite love of the Eternal Father to give the response of grace. No prayer is lost. The only begotten Son is the Mediator, giving Divine acceptability to the prayers of His people before God, and operating for the purposes of Divine love to accomplish those petitions with responsive liberality to man. The Word of the Father by whom all the Divine acts are wrought, is Himself the very Word of Prayer, having become incarnate so as to make our wants known to God. Our feeble words move His Almighty utterance as the finger of a child may waken the mighty sound of a vast organ.

As His members we pray, and His mediation

guarantees our prayer. Only we must lose ourselves in Him. We must rise up to the Father with that Love which He has to the Father, so that we may receive our answer from the Father in the fulness of that Love which the Father has to the Son.

MEDITATION XIX.

Mutual Love.

These things I command you, that ye love one another.—St. John xv. 17.

1. A COMMAND FROM CHRIST.

THE joyousness of knowing our election in Christ must make us love one another. This mutual love is not the mere pride of party, or class, or nationality which binds people of the world together. It is a joy which springs out of gratitude. It implies humility. It is not the spiritual pride which often lurks under the profession of having found Christ, as if it were a token of higher spiritual discernment or merit, however much in words repudiated. Such gratitude involves a real self-humiliation. We are grateful to Christ for having chosen us, because we know how unworthy of this election we by nature were. And so with others. 'When we were yet sinners, God loved us.' We are conscious that the love which we all in common have received, although all of us so unworthy, must form a bond of love. We must love others because Christ loved them. We must love Christ in others. To fail of loving others is to fall away from the life, the love of Christ. We must be the channels, the vital organs, of Christ's love to His people, if we would live in His Body.

Christ, therefore, bids us consider that love to the brethren is the true mode of attaining joy. Our true joy must not be in ourselves, nor in any individual gift which we can bring to God, but in one another, as being recipients of the love of Christ.

This reflection, while it is humbling, is also encouraging. The gift of new life is a principle of ennoblement, while the remembrance of the original state of condition, from which we are removed conditionally upon retaining this new life, must always be a principle of apprehension and self-abhorrence, while it stimulates us nevertheless with supernatural hope and energy.

A mistaken consciousness of election may minister to pride, but a true sense of dependence upon the love of Him who has chosen us must make us humble in ourselves, and loving towards all who are sharers with us in the same bounty and the same hope.

There may be a pride of genius binding together those who are cultivating in common some branch of art. There may be a pride of school amongst those who are pupils of the same distinguished teacher. But pride disappears when any work has to be carried on for the necessity of life. And if we can suppose a school in which the deliverance from a great political penalty involving all is made conditional upon the reproduction by all in common of some facsimile of their master's work, in which no touch that betrays individuality would be permissible, but any supposable excellence, if it deviate from the original, would be fatal to acceptance, the final

deliverance of all from their penalty being, therefore, dependent upon fresh scholars coming to the aid, so that any individuality of genius whereby one pupil has failed may be obliterated from the canvas, then there must be not an emulative pride to be known as a painter equal to the master and superior to others in the school, but a real desire of self-obliteration, and a real delight in witnessing how the partners in our common work attain equally with ourselves, or better than ourselves, to the likeness of the teacher. So must it be with us in Christ. The reproduction of the life of Christ is the common work of the Church, and every element of distinction which does not belong to that reproduction, instead of bringing merit, brings penalty. We have all to join together in the work, and are as much interested in the work of others as in our own. There must, therefore, be an entirely self-obliterating love to the brethren in the Communion of Saints. We cannot escape from our bondage until the whole work of the sanctification of God's elect is complete.

2. A NEW LIFE IN CHRIST.

So is the life of the Christian Church a real gathering of Christ's people out of the world into a common interest and fellowship. They must love one another; for without that love there cannot be the loss of themselves one in the other, which is the very condition of abiding in the supernatural life.

Christ in this discourse is throughout enforcing the great doctrine of the Communion of Saints, as

opposed to the mere notion of personal and separate salvation. We are all taken out of the world of nature. Our love one towards another is dependent upon a supernatural origin of power, a supernatural union of effort, a supernatural community of aim. If, instead of swelling into grapes, the sap within the branches could exude and form itself into diamond crystals, it would be valueless. The husbandman does not look to find any bunches of a different kind of grape from the rest. Our Husbandman looks to find the life-blood of Christ making itself manifest in each of the saints. The perfection with which the life of Christ is reproduced is the sole law of excellence. All that the world can estimate is set aside. We are admitted to a heavenly joy, which yet is not the joy of presumption, but of conscious power and lofty hope. We are admitted to a hope which yet is not the hope of individual exaltation, but of united exaltation. We are admitted to an exaltation which yet is not the exaltation of personal aggrandizement, but of absorption into the personal glory of Christ, who is the Source of our life, the Foundation of our hope, the Sphere of our exaltation, and the Reward of our ultimate attainment. His life is love, and living in Him we must love one another. The separation from the world is as complete now as it will be to all eternity. The union of life in Christ is an indissoluble unity, which shall develop itself to all eternity in the activity of mutual love and the intensity of Divine joy.

3. A SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD OUTSIDE OF CHRIST.

‘Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him’ (1 John ii. 15). So does St. John explain by contrast what the love is which is to bind the faithful together in Christ. It is altogether distinct from any natural largeness of heart which enables individuals to sympathize with the great mass of mankind, although it does bring with it a largeness of heart which will sacrifice self for others, whoever they be, which no natural largeness of heart will equal. The largeness of nature, unless it be an externalized selfishness, is the largeness of empty good will, whereas the largeness of Christian love is as intense in its feeling, as indestructible in its solidity, throughout the largest sphere as within the most limited relationships. That solid intensity is the operation of Divine love, going forth to mankind not as if to evade God’s judgment, but to extend the operations of His restoration throughout a fallen creation. God loved the world, and sent His Son to save. If we love Christ, we must love the world in so far as to bring that salvation home to all; but we cannot love the world as it is, as if it were worthy of love although it reject that salvation, worthy of our love although a stranger to God’s love.

‘The friendship of the world is enmity against God’ (Jas. iv. 4). We are in the world as Christ was, not to rejoice in its gifts, but to be dead to it, and

to die on behalf of it. There is nothing which love can suggest which the Christian will not do for the world; but he does it because he loves the Father whom the world hates, and he desires to win the world to the renewing influence of grace, without which it cannot rise to the love of the Father.

This is why the world must always hate the Christian. It desires to be approved and loved for its own sake, whereas the Christian must pronounce against it the condemnation of God, and can love nothing in it but that which accepts the invitation of Divine love. Every Christian who is true to Christ is a witness against the world. Each one must say, 'For judgment am I come into the world,' if he is to be a reproduction of Christ in the world.

MEDITATION XX.

The World's Hatred.

If the world hateth you, ye know that it hath hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own : but because ye are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.—St. John xv. 18, 19.

1. EXHIBITED TOWARDS CHRIST.

JESUS is sending forth His disciples into the world with a clear declaration of the world's hatred which they will have to meet. Alas, that so many think they can evade the world's hatred! Indeed, the world's hatred is often assumed as an evidence that something is wrong, and the world's friendship is accepted as a high ground of approval! How utterly do we in the present day set aside the Divine standard and warning!

The disciples were not to be dismayed at the world's hatred. It was the natural thing for them to expect. 'The world has hated Me, and are you not My representatives, the perpetuators of My life of witness against the world? The world's hatred was no accidental matter. What the world has done, it will continue to do.'

Christ's presence was a continuance of the relation of Christ to the world. His glory as it was made manifest could not leave Jesus alone. However much they may rally round His preaching, they

must hate His purpose of life. He comes only to set forth another world, and they who do not long for that world must go on hating whatever tells of it. The antagonism between Himself and the world was no casual matter. It was necessitated by the circumstances of the case. He had not come to reform the social system upon any principles of worldly expediency, but to transform it by Divine power. A reformer who acts upon the maxims of the world will always be the world's model. The world does not deny its own evil, but it denies that itself is evil. It claims substantive goodness, and would treat evil as being remediable and accidental. It throws the burden of the evil upon God the Creator. Christ came to insist upon the hopelessness of evil as being inherent in the world—not accidentally, by some defect of created arrangement, but essentially, because the world has withdrawn itself from union with the Creator, and nothing short of the restoration of life can raise the world from the Fall. His own Divine Person is the restorative Principle which He makes known and to which His Apostles have to bear witness. The world claims to be set right upon its own natural basis, and rejects that which claims to introduce restoration by a higher power of life.

2. INHERITED BY CHRIST'S MEMBERS.

Faith is the acceptance of the higher power of Divine life, according to God's primæval promise as now fulfilled in the dispensation of grace. The world must hate the faithful, because they are identified with this heavenly dispensation. Any religion

may win the homage of the human heart which appeals only to human effort. There is nothing too sublime and visionary, nothing too degrading in its materialism, to win the submission of mankind. 'If ye were of the world, the world would love his own.' This truth is illustrated in all countries, and in the most varied efforts of political and religious expediency and reform. Even within the Christian Church, the more reliance is shown to human sentiment, or organization, or action, the more ready will the world be to follow. The more clearly the Divine supremacy is asserted as a supernatural necessity of life, the more will the world oppose. Ecclesiastical forms will be tolerated as beneficial and expedient which will provoke a bitter hostility if proclaimed as necessary and Divine.

The Apostles went forth with the Divine claim of Christ the Mediator. This invitation was, 'That ye may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.' Christianity was from the first an exclusive religion. Many would accept the Creed as true, who yet will reject it if set forth in disparagement of other religious teaching as powerless. But the 'Amen' with which the Creed concludes involves the 'Anathema' upon all that is outside of it. There is no other name under heaven given amongst men whereby we may be saved, but only the Name of the Lord Jesus. The worldly heart is so bitter in its rebellion against God, that it cannot accept the proffered salvation upon such terms of submission. Therefore it hated Christ. Therefore it must hate

the Church in proportion as the Church is true to the heavenly proclamation.

3. A NECESSITY INHERENT IN THE SEPARATION.

The Church, therefore, is not a system of religious thought, vaguely spreading itself abroad so as to be adopted by different generations and classes of men according to their natural proclivities, with such modifications as will allow of a general ideal of goodness being common to all, while the organic structure of the corporate society is set aside. It has its own necessary form as the true Vine. Its fruit is the outcome of the Divine life spreading, not as an atmosphere around, but as the sap within the branches. Other trees may have their rich harvests, but this Vine alone can bring forth the fruit which cheers God and man. Other trees may give their nourishment for earthly life, but this is the Bread of the Lord, and it alone is beautiful and glorious for them that are escaped of Israel (Is. iv. 2).

The opposition is complete between that which is of God and for God, or that which is of the world and for the world. The faithful have to conquer the present evil of the world by patience, looking forward through death to the joy of Divine love. The world is impatient of its present evils, but closes its eyes against the future hope, and therefore rejects the power by which the soul might rise through Divine life superior to the evils of the present time. The worldly heart does not wish to

die to the world, and therefore it must perish with the world, and it resents the warning which the Church has to bring.

It stands upon its own self-sufficient dignity, and hates the love which calls it to self-renunciation. The Apostle of Christ in every age must share in the experience which is formulated by St. Paul, 'The more I love you, the less I be loved.'

The Lord of the vineyard still sends His servants, and they meet with the same treatment as in the parable of old. We must expect the world's hatred. We have to deplore that the servants who are sent into the vineyard should try and deliver their message with such elements of compromise that the worldly husbandmen can welcome them as partners.

The law of the vineyard remains unalterable. 'The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.' 'Blessed are those that are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.'

MEDITATION XXI.

The Divine Ministry amidst Humiliation.

Remember the word that I said unto you, A servant is not greater than his lord. If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.—St. John xx. 20, 21.

1. A PREDICTED NECESSITY.

‘THE servant is not greater than his lord.’ We are not to think that we have any claim upon God to watch over us and preserve us from outward difficulty, whereas He suffered His only begotten Son to be humbled even to death upon the Cross. On the contrary, we ought rather to esteem it our special privilege if we are permitted in any way to share the sufferings of the Passion. If we would seek to be joined with our Lord in the greatness of His glory, we must share with Him in the depth of His humiliation.

Neither are we to suppose that any cleverness of our own can exempt us from treatment by the world such as He received. Whenever the world promises co-operation, we must take care not to forget the attitude of the world at Calvary.

People do often doubtless think—at any rate, they act as if they thought—that our Lord endured His Passion on purpose to secure for His Church a

position of ease and glory in the world. There is nothing in our Lord's teaching to warrant such an expectation. Our Lord seems to have set before His Apostles a very different conception to what should be the history of the Church militant. We may well believe that if the disciples had never been greater in the eyes of their successive generations than our Lord was in those of the Pharisees, there would have been a greater manifestation of identity with Him in that true greatness which His discipleship should have secured for His friends. It is difficult to look through the past centuries of Christendom, and realize how utterly at variance is the world-empire of the Church with the intention of Christ. If we do so, our wonder then remains how Christ can have been willing all along to recognize as His Vine such a system resting upon earthly greatness as stifled the heavenly respiration of the Church from the days of Constantine onwards.

Our Lord treats such a condition of things as absolutely out of the question. He lays down for His Apostles, and in them for all who should take their place, the simple expectation of the world's hatred. 'If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.'

2. THE WORLD MUST PERSECUTE.

Although the Church and the world might be brought into a certain combination, yet the world would not cease to persecute such members of the Church as remained faithful. It was, indeed, soon

found out that the authorities of state were as bitter persecutors when supporting heretics as they had been when supporting heathenism. Has not the whole history of the Church been a continuous exercise of worldly power against the efforts of saints who in various forms had to encounter the violence of their respective generations? Perhaps even a greater evil than the false friendship between the Church and the world is in itself—is to be found in the hindrance which it presents to the extension of the Church in heathen lands by the persecution of missionaries and their converts. The worldly power of Christian nations which has been used for the maintenance of missions has been, perhaps, one of the greatest hindrances to the advance of the Church throughout the world. National pride can more easily send a gunboat to obtain toleration, than individual charity can supply the means for carrying on such mission works with efficiency; but if political influence may sometimes open a country to the voice of a missionary, the same power will probably hinder much of the supernatural support which would have been given from Heaven to a missionary toiling in the simple discipleship of faith. Even when such support is not given, the nations of heathendom are too much aware of political interests which vitiate the Christianity of later centuries to be free from the suspicion of secular motives. Probably we may look for heathendom to accept Christianity as the great nations of the civilized world reject it. In proportion as the disciples are conformed to their Master, and the servants simply

obedient to their Lord, we may look for manifestations of Divine power—‘the signs which shall follow them that believe’ (Mark xvi. 17).

3. THE WORLD MUST REJECT.

The world, in naturalizing the Church, was really rejecting the supernatural organism of the Body of Christ. Nevertheless, Christ has remained with His people throughout. We are not, however, to be surprised when we find more definite rejection and unbelief. Christ has not promised stationary permanence to His Church. He warns the Apostles against supposing that their teaching would have an abiding home in any place. ‘If they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also.’

So, then, we must not be surprised as we see the nations of Christendom fall away. The members never ought to have been there. Let us hope that the remnant which is left will make up in greatness of faith for the numerical decline. Indeed, we may be sure they shall much more than make up; for no amount of lukewarm Christians avail for anything in the calculations of Heaven, and the smaller the remnant of persecuted disciples which clings to the rejected Saviour in any country, the greater will be the value of each soul in its supernatural saintliness of experience in the presence of God.

The gospel must be preached for a witness to all nations ere Christ shall come again, and we know not whether that has been yet accomplished or no. Its witness, however, must, like the witness of Christ

Himself, be rejected of all nations. Then shall the end be. The world will hate the Church of the last days with a diabolical hatred in exchange for the false love wherewith the world pretended to love her. As Amnon turned against Tamar, so will the world turn against the Church which the world has defiled.

Blessed be God, whose purpose outlives the vicissitudes of ages! If the world reject, the benediction of God shall be given in fuller abundance. Only we must 'remember the word that Jesus has said to us.' So whatever happens we can look up with confidence.

MEDITATION XXII.

The World's Ignorance.

They know not him that sent me.—St. John xv. 21.

1. IGNORANCE OF THE CHRISTIAN.

‘THE world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not.’ The world does not recognize us as having a different nature from itself. Our regenerate life is altogether hidden from it. The mere claim to possess it is the very thing which the world most hates. The world can tolerate and even admire the high aims and the strict law and the beneficent conduct of the Christian; but when the Christian refers all that is good in himself and in his life to a supernatural communication between himself and God, then the world necessarily rises up in revolt. No amount of good which can be the result of a life is to be tolerated by the world, if the roots of that life are sought in something deeper than man’s own self. Man is the highest object which can be recognized, and man must be allowed the claim of all his excellences as his own inherent possession, not content in himself to be the empty shadow of God’s solid perfection. As the world does not know its own emptiness, it cannot know that fulness

which belongs to Christ, nor the truth of the Apostolical ministry by which that fulness is dispensed to the faithful. The claim to speak with spiritual authority in the Name of Christ must rouse the world to hatred and scornful unbelief. Human claims may be admitted, but the world has no room for Christ, because His claim is Divine.

How difficult it is to accept the fact that the world will follow any one except Christ! But it is now as our Lord said to the Jews before, 'If any man shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.' Jesus warns the Apostles that the same law will hold good in their case before the world as in His own case when addressing the Jews.

2. IGNORANCE OF CHRIST.

The Jews looked forward to Messiah as an earthly leader. They were not without some apprehension of His Divine character. But they shrank from the acknowledgment of God's Presence in Christ. The claim was, indeed, such as might well make them draw back in reverent horror, if it had not had the corroboration of long-continued Divine announcements. The prophecies respecting Messiah converged upon the Person of Jesus. The ministry of the forerunner was a testimony whose power Jesus had Himself brought home with fearful conviction to confound their stubbornness. The works which Jesus wrought were an attestation of His Divine mission. He had shown His power over the dead as well as over the living.

There was one thing which He had not done. He had not bowed down to their national pride. He had not offered Himself as a leader to their desires of temporal aggrandizement. On the contrary, He had shown that the kingdom which He claimed was not of this world.

The Jews, therefore, found no difficulty in entrenching themselves within the letter of the law, which doomed to a blasphemer's death whoever should come with the claims which Jesus now put forth. They interpreted the Divine commands by the stubbornness of their own earthly hearts. They professed reverence to God in rejecting the Incarnate Son of God because He did not satisfy their carnal expectations. They looked forward to Messiah, and knew the facts of His life as intimated by prophecy with wonderful minuteness of exegetical acumen, but they knew not Messiah when He now appeared before them. They looked forward for him to exert His power in temporal display. They had not eyes to see the mystery of Divine life which was hidden beneath the surroundings of His poverty.

How is it with us Christians? Do we know Christ much better? We belong to His Body, the Church: do we know Him as the Head of the Body, whose life-giving Spirit lifts up the members of the Body to a higher order of life and power and love than belongs to the natural order of man?

The Jews professed reverence as an excuse for unbelief. They really felt fear at the presence of God coming thus close to them. Do we accept with

reverent gratitude the Divine claims of Christ in His Church, or do we seek to minimize the acknowledgments of faith in order to evade the terror of such great responsibility?

Do we know Christ as the living God Incarnate? Do we know Christ as our own true Life, making us partakers in Himself and with Himself of the Divine Nature?

3. IGNORANCE OF GOD.

‘They know not Him that sent Me.’

The heathen, when they knew God with such knowledge of his eternal power as nature gave, glorified Him not as God, and so their foolish heart was darkened (Rom. i. 21). The Jews had a greater knowledge of God, for to them the oracles of God were committed (Rom. iii. 2). They in like manner failed to glorify Him. They wanted that He should serve them, rather than that they should sacrifice themselves to Him. So there was a veil upon their hearts. They knew not God, although they worshipped Him with such assiduity of outward observance. Had they known Him, they would have recognized the truth of His manifestation in Christ. They would have recognized Christ as His true Image and Representation. They would have seen that Jesus was not leading them away from the God of their fathers, but that He was making the way open for them. They were the children of those who had taken up the tabernacle of Moloch and the star of their god Remphan amidst all the wonders of the wilderness; and now, when God is speaking

to them, as He had promised, by the lips of One of their own brethren, they repudiate the call of God.

The personal, the living and true God, was hidden from them. The signs wrought by the hand of Moses could not arrest their rebellion. The miracles and the words of Jesus could not awaken their love. They measured God's message by their own will, and so they could not understand the words which Jesus spake, nor yield to His authority. He came to fulfil the law, developing its teachings as a means of approach to the true knowledge of God by the power of the Holy Ghost. They rejected the infinite glory of the Divine revelation, because the offer came to them in a form of weakness and humiliation, suited to their own finite powers of reception. They looked for God in the greatness of material display, and could not see Him in the infinity of spiritual power.

MEDITATION XXIII.

The World's Blindness.

If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no excuse for their sin.—St. John xv. 22.

1. BLINDNESS OF NATURE REMOVED BY REVELATION.

WHEN Adam fell, he could no longer see God as he had seen Him. He heard the Voice of the Lord God among the trees of the garden, but the loving Form was hidden from him. He had lost the spiritual sight. Henceforth the spiritual world would be a terror to the human heart, as being so mysteriously hidden, that while man could not but feel its power, he never could feel confident as to its active presence.

God, through many ages, was, in various degrees and manners, preparing mankind for the visible ministry of His Incarnate Son. No natural form could show forth the Divine glory. Every possible glory of the creature was infinitely beneath the glory of the Creator. It was necessary that other methods of manifestation should identify the visible agent of the Godhead with God Himself. The Jew would have been justified in refusing to recognize any created being as a manifestation of God, if there had not been sufficient preparation to give certainty to the truth of the final manifestation.

Therefore it was that God, by prophecy, promise, covenant ordinances, significant anticipations, convergent lines of distinct attestation, made plain the truth of Christ, so that when He came the Divine mystery might be accepted without hesitation.

This growing revelation was disclosing with growing clearness the character of God, as well as certifying to the truth of the coming Messiah.

Man was not prepared to have the moral nature of God made known to him at the first. The first disclosures of God were adapted to awaken man's moral sense, as the hardness of man's heart made possible. Fuller disclosures would have dazzled and blinded. The eye of man's moral nature needed the tender care of a growing revelation, in order to be able to receive the full vision of truth when the law was developed in its complete issues by the power of the Spirit of God.

So can we perceive how necessary it was for the purposes of Divine love that the Incarnation should not take place until the people who were its chosen home had passed through a lengthened series of manifold preparatory vicissitudes.

2. BLINDNESS OF HEART A CULPABLE BONDAGE.

This discipline was intended for those who would give themselves up to the school of love with child-like hearts in humble self-mistrust. All was in vain for those whose heart was void of understanding. On them the darkness only deepened by the growing light around.

They who were proud in the boast of their own clear vision, allowed the various gifts of Divine revelation to enclose them in a prison-house of prejudice, instead of leading them to gaze with more intelligent expectation upon the glorious issues to which the words of eternal life were gradually expanding. They made the promises of God subservient to their own ambition, instead of losing hold of earthly things in order to reach out after the glory of the invisible.

The power of Satan was thus visited upon them. They would not come to the Son that they might be made free (John viii. 36). They did not know their blindness. They said, 'We see;' and therefore their sin remained (John ix. 41).

Such was the blindness of heart which prevented the Jews recognizing Christ. Such is the blindness of heart which holds men back from the faith in various ways in successive ages.

If we would learn the truth of God, we must come with childlike hearts. 'Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven' (Matt. xviii. 3). The heart is held down in its blindness, not by outward darkness, but by inward incapacity of appreciation. Love alone can decipher the symbols under which love makes itself known. The heart which is wedded to earth can see things only from a worldly standpoint. As a line indefinitely produced by geometrical skill will be found, after all, to be no straight line at all, but a circle returning round the globe to the point whence it started, so the earthly heart

creeps round the world while it thinks itself moving straight onward into the vast expanse of heaven. The heart must get clear from the pride of earthly philosophy if it is to learn the wisdom of God. It must be purified from all carnal passions if it is to catch a glimpse of the Divine Sanctity.

The sinful heart measures God by its own self, and therefore can never know God truly. It seems to be incapable of entering into the Divine mysteries; but it is sin, not nature, which obscures the vision.

3. BLINDNESS OF HATE AN ETERNAL ANTAGONISM.

As love clears the eye of the soul, so hate, when it becomes a fixed principle, is an eternal blindness. No clearness of demonstration will bring the truth home to the heart that does not love. Sin causes many false ideas to rise up, so that the mind is not free to behold truth; but when hatred becomes the law of the heart, then the heart will rebel against God all the more in proportion to the clearness with which Divine truth is apprehended.

The majesty of God, instead of subduing the soul to obedience, makes the heart which is blind through hatred only the more enraged at the Divine Supremacy. The omnipotence of love is only recognized as a tyranny from which there is no escape.

So is it now. Alas, how many are filled with a hatred of God which no evidences of Divine bounty can mitigate! God can only be known in proportion

as He is loved. Controversy does not communicate love, and therefore it does not bring men to truth.

So shall it be to all eternity. The heart that is fixed in hate will regard with mad fury the manifestation of God from which it cannot escape. The more clearly it beholds God, the more blind it will be to all that God really is. Seeing God only in the distortedness of its own self-will, it becomes incapable of seeing God in the loveliness of His own blessed harmony of action. It is fixed in the assurance that it sees, and therefore it cannot be brought to unsee the creature of its own imagination. It must become blind to self before it can be purified by love so as to see God.

The words which Christ speaks meet no response in the heart. The sinful heart filled with hate has no cloke for its sin. It sets aside all heavenly teachings, because it makes the sinful world the measure of all its desires. It puts away the offers of God with scorn. They are not what it wants. The veil is taken from the Face of God which hid His loveliness, and the brightness of His countenance dispels the cloke of darkness which shrouded the sinner, and reveals the heart that is filled with hatred in all the foulness of its unchanging abomination.

God and the sinner, face to face !

O the eternal misery of the heart uncloked, which sees the love of God revealed in Christ, but sees it only to hate it with an incapacity of self-surrender ! In the presence of the eternal light of self-sacrificing love, the heart that has lived for self, finds

in its changeless self an eternal death, for it sees that it has scorned the love of God. It hates God for His very love's sake, because the love of God which it has scorned is the very measure of the hate within itself whose tyrant darkness is its doom.

MEDITATION XXIV.

The World sees and hates.

He that hateth me hateth my Father also. If I had not done amongst them the works which none other did, they had not had sin; but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.—St. John xv. 23, 24.

1. CHRIST'S WORKS MANIFESTING THE FATHER'S AUTHORITY.

THE clearness of the revelation of God in Christ made manifest the sinful hatred of those who rejected Him. He had spoken. There could be no doubt as to what He claimed. He had 'done works which none other man did.' There could be no doubt as to the authority of what He claimed. He had spoken of the Father's love: this only served to rouse their hatred. He had acted in the Father's power: this had shown their weakness, but it also showed that their hatred was incurable. They hated Him not because of any evil mingling with His deeds of wonder. They hated Him because He came in the Name of the Father. They hated Him not by reason of earthly difficulty, but in simple antagonism to the demonstration of heavenly origin.

The Father guaranteed the truth of Christ's message, not only by the miracles which Jesus wrought, but by the convergent lines of many an agelong witness which marked out the Son of

David, and identified Him with all the promises made to David of old. They boasted of the promises made to the Father. Those promises now found their fulfilment in Jesus. To reject Jesus was to repudiate all those promises which constituted their national and ancestral glory. Jesus had not come to destroy the law or the prophets. They witnessed to Him, and without His fulfilment they would remain unmeaning. The light of His teaching lit up the dark symbols of the preparatory dispensation. Moses in the law, the prophets, the psalms, spake of Him. 'These are they which testify of Me,' said Jesus to the Jews; and yet they would not come to Him that they might have life.

When the people trembled at the terrors of Sinai, God had promised to raise up a Prophet from the midst of the people like unto Moses. 'To Him shall ye hearken; according to all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God in Horeb, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And the Lord said, They have well spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put My words in His mouth; and He shall speak unto them all that I command Him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto My words which He shall speak in My Name, I will require it of him' (Deut. xviii. 15-19).

The sin of rejecting Christ must, therefore, be required from this evil generation. They rejected the authority of the God of their fathers.

2. CHRIST'S WORKS MANIFESTING THE FATHER'S
POWER.

'Many a good work have I shown you from My Father,' said Christ. He had said to John's disciples, 'Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them' (Matt. xi. 4, 5). He taught men with authority, and not as the scribes. With authority commanded He the unclean spirits, and they obeyed Him. Man rejected His Divine authority, though evil spirits, winds and waves, obeyed Him. Man could not escape from His Divine power. That power was exerted towards them in countless acts of love. Alas! if authority provoked rebellion, almighty love could only set in motion the reverberations of hate. The natural eyesight came at His bidding to one who was born blind, but the eyesight of the heart stand with mad perverseness upon the powers of the spiritual world from which the heart was estranged. 'They have seen and hated both Me and My Father. Me they would have loved, had I put forward no other claim than that of natural beneficence. This they could not have denied. The power of My Father drives them to fury, for they are not His children. They are of their father the devil. He is a murderer and a liar from the beginning. He that sent Me is true. He sent Me to be the Truth and the Life. The power of that love which I exercise before them is

the measure of this judgment. They have seen and hated both Me and my Father.'

3. CHRIST'S WORKS MANIFESTING THE FATHER'S GLORY.

As Christ came into the world bearing the Father's authority, and acted in the fulness of the Father's power, so was He working out the Father's glory. This was the aim of His ministry. The Jews sought to fix upon Him the accusation of introducing a false god, but every word and act of His was for the glory of the God of their fathers. He sought nothing for Himself. All that He did was done with the avowal of obedience. He did not claim Divine honour otherwise than as the Eternal Son, begotten of the Father, who had sent Him into the world, and in the unity of a Divine life which He had received from the Father. His claim, whereby He made Himself God, was not to draw the people away from the Father, but to manifest the Father to them, and to draw them to Him. The Father had sent Him to give life unto the world, and the Scriptures testified of Him; but the Jews would not come to Him that they might have life.

In truth, the Jews wished not to lose themselves in the glory of God, but that God should be their glory, losing Himself in ministering to their needs. They would have God glorify them in the earth, whereas Christ had come that they might be glorified with God eternally in heaven. Christ had come requiring them to glorify God upon the earth,

whereas they had no other thought than selfish pride, individual, national, ecclesiastical. Their religion was for themselves, a hollow boast. They sought therein, not the glory of God, but their own glory. Jesus had come seeking no glory from man, but as the Representative and the Son of God, seeking His Father's glory, and looking to receive glory from His Father alone in the unity of the eternal life. If He sought honour, it was for His Father's sake. 'He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him.'

So did Jesus manifest the Father's glory as the aim of His life and ministry. The Jews saw and hated both Him and His Father, because He showed them that the glory of God was not to be found in that which earth had to give. The glory of the Father was eternal life. This life, wherein He was begotten of the Father, He came to show to them. He came to show it. He came to give it. But none could have it save by dying to the false and transitory world which they, as children of the devil, called their home. The glory which He brought them was not the glory which they desired. 'They have seen and hated both Me and My Father.'

MEDITATION XXV.

The Predicted Hatred.

But this cometh to pass, that the word may be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.—St. John xv. 25.

1. NOT AN OVERTHROW OF THE LAW, BUT A FULFILMENT OF IT.

It might have seemed that the Jews, so scrupulous about the law, could not fail of accepting Jesus, since the law was given to bring men to Christ (Gal. iii. 24). Their perverseness, however, could not twist the law from its proper purpose. The Word of God would remain true, though every man were a liar, and their unbelief could not make it of none effect.

Indeed, the law prophesied of their rejection: 'They hated Me without a cause.' The perfection of Messiah's life would not avail to win the homage of their stubborn hearts. As Moses had predicted the vengeance of God which would fall upon any who should reject the promised Lawgiver, so David had sung of the angel of the Lord who would camp around the Poor Man, God's faithful Servant (Ps. xxxiv. 7), and would chase, as chaff before the wind, the multitude of the persecutors who hated Him without a cause (Ps. xxxv. 6).

The rejection of Messiah, detailed in increasing

fulness as prophecy developed, was from the outset characterized by this element of causelessness. False witnesses would rise up against Him. He mourned for them as for a friend or a brother, entering into all their sympathies, but they gnashed upon Him with their teeth; but in the midst of all He would look up for God to favour His righteous dealing, knowing that He had pleasure in the prosperity of His servant.

‘They have hated Me without a cause. Because for Thy sake I have suffered reproach; shame hath covered My face. I am become a stranger unto My brethren, even an alien unto My mother’s children. For the zeal of Thine house hath eaten Me up, and the reproaches of them that reproached Thee fell upon Me’ (Ps. lxxix. 7-9).

The same passage from the Psalter is alluded to at our Lord’s first cleansing of the Temple, and now in His final discourse, when He will visit that Temple no more.

The prophecies of the Old Testament must have their fulfilment. God does not speak in prophecy until all contingency has passed away. He does not deprive man of the free will which guides his actions by any prophecy which necessitates man’s conduct; but when moral consequences are inevitable, God can give the announcement without injury to man’s free will. The foresight which is thus certified is a source of moral or Divine strength to the sufferer, and the unheeded warning is an additional condemnation to the rebellious.

2. THE MISUSE OF WHAT GOD HAD GIVEN.

The law, if it had been used lawfully, must have drawn the ancient worshippers to Christ. It was the misuse of the law which plunged them in irremediable hatred. They loved not God, nor the purpose of God, nor the Messenger whom God had sent. They bent the law to their own purposes, and hated the Messenger who came to enforce it in its truth. He came, indeed, to cleanse the Temple, symbolically at His first visitation, and now with mystical power giving Himself as the Sacrifice. They who defiled the outward temple with their merchandise knew not that the mystical Temple of their covenant had been profaned beyond recovery by their worldliness. They had, indeed, driven God away. The law was God's law, and from the polluted husk of the old letter the germ of life would be developed in spiritual power by the new Lawgiver who should succeed to Moses. The old husk was theirs, and yet they had to take it with all the prophetic warnings. They who were content to take the letter without looking to Him by whose life-giving power alone could all be sanctified, must take upon themselves the anathemas which that law contained, and perish by the very law in which they made their boast. The law was given by God to be a bond of union between Himself and His faithful people. The law had been taken by them as if it were given for their own gratification. They had robbed God of His part in the very law which He

gave them. They boasted of the law, and it became their condemnation.

So does our Lord speak of 'the word written in their law, They hated Me without a cause.' What God gave to be a bond of loving union, they perverted to be a ground of disunion and hatred. The law was spiritual, but they were carnal, sold under sin (Rom. vii. 14). They claimed the law as their own, and the law claimed them as its victims. They had rejected the Mediator.

3. THE GRATUITOUS REJECTION OF THE FULLER GIFT.

The new Prophet came to institute a new law, but it was not to the disparagement of the old. The new law was to fill the old law with new life, and develop it in spiritual power. 'I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.'

The hatred of the Jews, as the Psalmist had intimated, just arose from their rejection of the Divine life whereby the law should be perfected. 'For Thy sake have I suffered reproach' (Ps. lxi. 8). The Jew was content to seek for righteousness by the works of the law, instead of looking up to those realities of faith which the law itself inculcated. When Christ came to bring the promised righteousness in the full communication of heavenly power, they wished to remain in their own incapacity, rather than acknowledge the insufficiency of what they possessed.

We must be careful to welcome Christ as leading us onward. He will teach us more and more if we

follow Him; but if we abide with Him there must be a continuous development of spiritual life, ever-growing experience reaching out after that which He sets before us, seeking in all things to learn more and more of His love.

‘If any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.’ Thus Christ has come and has given us the new law, yet we must look for Him to come by manifold renewals of progressive life. We must learn to hate ourselves that we may love Him, or we shall hate Him while thinking to love ourselves. ‘Except a man hate his own life, he cannot be My disciple.’ We have good cause for hating ourselves when we think what sin has done for us through self-love; and as for loving Him, we can never rise up to the fulness of the demands of His love. All else that can be loved is not worthy to be named alongside of the love which is His due. ‘We love Him, because He first loved us.’ He has loved us and suffered for us, that we might live in the eternity of His love. He loves us with the love of God, and calls us to the life of God that we may live in His love for ever.

MEDITATION XXVI.

The Promised Comforter.

But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall bear witness of me.—
St. John xv. 26.

1. SENT BY JESUS.

CHRIST promised to send the Comforter to His disciples. He would occupy the same personal relationship toward them which Jesus had occupied. He would carry out towards them a greater work of teaching than Jesus Himself had done.

The coming of the Comforter is the inauguration of a new covenant between Christ and His disciples, in place of the old covenant with the Jews which had now come to an end. The parties to this covenant are to be distinctly marked—‘Myself, yourselves, and the Father.’

The Jews had rejected Christ because His mediation involved a gift from the Father which transcended the aim of the law wherein they rested. Christ will now show His mediatorial power towards His disciples, by sending to them from the Father that glorious Comforter whose Presence was necessary to give life and efficacy to the Jewish ordinances.

In this verse, therefore, Christ passes on to speak of the real foundation of a new covenant in place of the old which was passing away.

‘I send.’ ‘I am the Prophet of whom Moses spoke.’

Moses was sent, but could send no one. Jesus was sent, but He was one with the Father who sent Him, and He sends a Divine Agent to be His Vicar when He Himself is gone. Moses left a law, and pointed onward to One greater than Himself, at whose coming the old law should pass away. Jesus sends a Divine Person to be His continuous Representative, and bear witness of Jesus as the Supreme Head of the new covenant, enabling the disciples to look up to Jesus when He was gone, and bear witness themselves to His unfailing supremacy.

The rejection of the Jews did not invalidate the power of Jesus to send the Comforter. The law had been given as a preparatory dispensation. It marked out the Personality of Jesus, so that He might be identified as the Prophet announced of old. But the law was a sphere within which the new Prophet was bound to act. The new Prophet did not derive from the old law that life which should be the glory of the new covenant. The old law was to pass away. The new Prophet came forth through it as through a doorway, but not to abide in it as if it were a home. He came from a higher world, from the Divine glory.

Moses belonged to the house as a servant, testifying to those things which were to be spoken after; but Christ did not belong to the house. The house belonged to Him. He was Himself the Builder of the house. He was one God with the Father, and being the Son of God, acted as Lord

and Master over the house, coming Himself to build a more glorious house than that to which Moses belonged—a living house, whose house are we (Heb. iii. 3-6).

Jesus builds this new house by sending His Spirit, for we are all built together for the habitation of God in the Spirit (Eph. ii. 22). The Spirit is the sphere of the new life, as well as the power. The Body of Christ was not to be glorified in any earthly sphere, but by being taken up into the glory of God. The gift of the Spirit to build the house of God follows, therefore, naturally in our Lord's discourse after the warning as to the fate of the elder covenant involved in His rejection by the Jews.

2. SENT TO THE APOSTLES.

The Comforter was not merely sent into the world to exercise a general ministry in allied action with the Apostles. He would be sent to them as an indwelling Presence. 'He shall be in you.'

He was, indeed, coming so to dwell in them that He would build them up together as a spiritual temple. They would thus take the place of the Jewish Temple. Our Lord had already, and even from the very first days of His ministry, spoken of the Temple of His Body. He had further spoken of building His Church as a heavenly structure upon the Rock. The idea, therefore, of some corporal unity, in which they should be cemented by a supernatural vitality, was more or less present to their

minds. The parable of the vine which introduced this discourse pointed in the same direction. Jesus had not said what the power should be which would communicate life from Himself to the branches. The jewelled vine whose golden branches adorned the Temple may have supplied the symbol. Jesus now proceeds with His teaching as to the mission of the Comforter, which was to be the life, a life of glorious power. The work of the Spirit was to be done through them, and they were to be strengthened for the witness which they had to bear by His indwelling Presence.

3. SENT FROM THE FATHER.

The Spirit whom Jesus would send was no inferior created spirit, even though of the highest rank in the heavenly hierarchy. Jesus, ascending to the Father, would send Him from the Father. He was not merely 'commissioned from the Father,' as the Baptist was 'commissioned from God,' because he came to carry out a commission according to the mind of God. Jesus would go to the Father. His Manhood would ascend to the Father's glory, and that glory was the home of the Comforter, so that Jesus would send Him forth from thence. That glory is not a home having local significance. It is a home of indivisible unity, the glory of the consubstantial life. It could not be said that Jesus sent the Holy Ghost from the Father unless the Holy Ghost were consubstantial with the Father in the unity of Divine life. He would come to them,

not merely bearing a Divine commission, but a Divine life. He would be sent forth by the Son of God from the glory wherein the Son and the Holy Ghost dwell eternally one God with the Father.

Our Lord would thus have His Apostles recognize the true and perfect Godhead of the Comforter who would be sent unto them. He would do all that Jesus could do; for He is Almighty, as the Father and the Son are Almighty. He would be sent down by Jesus to carry on the work which Jesus had begun, but He would do that which in the economy of grace was not suitable for Jesus to do. He would unite the Apostles to Christ, and He would work with the extended Humanity of the ascended Saviour, accomplishing the work of God. By His power Jesus in the days of His humiliation had done His wonderful works, and by His coming the Apostles, as the members of Christ, would be able to exert upon earth the same power which Jesus in His own Person had already exerted. Yea, and 'greater works than these shall ye do, because I go to the Father.' 'I rise from a state of humiliation to send to you the Holy Ghost as a principle of holiness and glorification.'

MEDITATION XXVII.

The Spirit of Truth.

The Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall bear witness of me.—
St. John xv. 26.

1. THE LIVING TRUTH.

CHRIST is the Truth, and the Spirit of Christ is the Spirit of Truth. The Eternal Truth of the Divine Word is not a dead truth, as a human statement is true through conformity with outward circumstances. Human facts and words have reference to existing phenomena. The Divine Truth is itself the origin of all created existence. Things are true which are in conformity with Divine Truth. The Divine Truth itself is the Divine consciousness of the creative will by which God is what He is, and makes other things to be what they are.

The eternal Wisdom of the Father is His Truth. He knows Himself to be what He is. In the act of the Divine life there is nothing that God does not know, nothing that God does not will. However much we may know of the laws of our nature, we do not know what it is to have such a nature. The idea of 'being' baffles us. Neither can we alter our nature for less or for more by any effort of our own will. God's knowledge of Himself is

absolute and infinite truth and joy. God's knowledge of Himself is not a latent knowledge. It is perfect in its action.

This eternal action of the Divine self-knowledge seems to lead us to some faint apprehension of the eternal generation of the Son as the coequal Word of Truth. God's knowledge of His own existence is coincident with the act of His existence. The Word is consubstantial with the Father; for if the expression of the self-knowledge were not identical with the self-knowledge, the original knowledge would remain dumb and lifeless. The utterance of the Divine self-knowledge is not by repeated vibrations, but by one undying Word, having neither beginning, nor ending, nor succession, but eternal, indissoluble, unchangeable. So, again, the joy which proceeds from this self-knowledge is identical with the self-knowledge. Existence, expression, delight, cannot be considered as separate acts in the Trinity, for either of them without the other two would be lifeless. Life could not spring up subsequently to the second or third development of the primary act. Life necessitates the coexistence of the three indissolubly.

So can our minds apprehend the necessity of the triune life of the Truth, although we cannot understand how it can exist; but let us also remember that neither can we understand our own existence, its origin, its substance, its development, however fully we may know the laws under which our nature acts.

We have to confess that life is above our apprehension, while yet we worship God as the living

Truth. All that is true has its origin from Him. The moments of time baffle our understanding as they float past us, bearing us along with themselves through perishing phenomena. The consummation of moments in the absolute fixity of the Eternal baffles our understanding. We have to confess that God, the living Truth, is the only Truth, and we in our finite sphere of creation can never rise above the falsehood of the finite. We can only know the Truth in proportion as we are assumed into the Being of God Himself. In this world we are the slaves of falsehood. The Truth, the living Truth, alone can make us free.

2. PROCEEDING FROM THE FATHER.

Jesus sends to His Apostles 'the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father.' We are not to import into these words any allusion to what is known as the Double Procession, the Procession of the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son. Our Lord's purpose is to enforce the truth of the Godhead of the Blessed Spirit. He does not use these words in order to give a clear idea of His Personality, His relation to the other Persons, but in order to assert that He is truly God as the Father is truly God.

This may be seen by comparing it with what He says, 'I and the Father are One.' The Unity of Godhead which He claims does not require Him to say, 'I and the Father and the Holy Ghost are One.' So here. Indeed, it would have been destruction

of His purpose if He had paused to say, 'Remember that He also proceeds from Me.'

The Godhead of the Holy Ghost is the perfect and undivided Godhead of the Father flowing on, so as in the Holy Ghost to accomplish all His eternal Mind, not with abstract omnipotence, but with sanctifying beatitude. He thus rejoices in His works as worthy of Himself, because they are personally upheld within the glory of His own Truth. That which is not sustained by the Spirit of Truth, so as to be worthy of God in its own order of being, has no truth, for it is not conformable to the intention, the will, the wisdom, of the Creator. It has no truth, it has no goodness, since the Holy Ghost, in whom all God's works were created, has ceased to dwell within it. Without Him it is an empty shadow. He alone can make it what it seems to be—that is, what God meant it to be, in substance, truth and light and love.

Jesus will send the Spirit of Truth from the Father, and thus will lift the Apostles up above the mere order of human existence into that fellowship of life which constitutes the truth of man's proper being, created as he was in the Image of God, and therefore requiring the life of God, without which he cannot be true to the original conception under which his nature was given him. Nothing is true save in proportion as the Spirit of Truth dwells therein to uphold it. Without this Spirit's indwelling, everything falls into disorder, decay, and death.

3. TESTIFYING OF CHRIST.

The Spirit, who proceeds from the Father, testifies of Christ, for Christ is the Eternal Image of the Father. In Christ, the Divine wisdom, the Divine self-knowledge, finds its perfect and eternal expression. Without such a personal utterance God would no more know Himself than we in our finite condition know ourselves. God's knowledge is an act, not of receptive apprehension, but of generative power. The knowledge does not come to Him like human knowledge, from without. It comes forth from the depth of His own Infinite Being, as an act of His own.

The Spirit, therefore, when He comes forth from the Father, bringing the Divine life to man, necessarily testifies of Christ.

A unipersonal idea of God is not an incomplete idea. It is a false idea. No one can know the Father save in proportion as He knows the Son, who is begotten of the Father. Consequently the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Truth, cannot inspire a vague, dark theism, however sublime in its piety. The Spirit of Truth must testify of Christ, because He reveals the Father in His Personal living glory; and that Personality involves the relationship of Fatherhood, as the eternal joyous act of Divine supremacy. A conception of a Personal God without the knowledge of the only begotten Son such as the Holy Ghost communicates, is merely an idol of the human mind—a magnified man, a dead God.

For this reason the Holy Ghost could not be

given until Christ was glorified, for the knowledge of the Trinity cannot be clearly accepted by the mind of man save through the medium of the Incarnation. We cannot conceive of the Triune God in the eternal relationships of His Being without a materializing conception of the Divine Substance. By the aid of the Incarnation our mind is able, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, to contemplate the glory of Jesus in His Personal manifestation as the Head of all creation, and thus to worship Him in the mystery of the Divine life which our finite conceptions cannot grasp. The unseen glory of the Father, and the manifest glory of the Incarnate Son, shine out before our adoring contemplation in their changeless power and indissoluble unity. We can only think of the glory which the Father has in Himself by thinking of the glory which He gives to the Son, and which shines out before our purified gaze to claim our perfect love as the Holy Ghost teaches us.

The Holy Ghost, therefore, comes from the Father, for He is one God with the Father; and He testifies of the Son, for we can only know the truth of Godhead as the Holy Ghost reveals it to us, concentrated for human adoration in the incarnate glory of the Only Begotten. The Son sends to us this Spirit of Truth; for He comes from Christ, as the Head of the Body, to illuminate, sanctify, and glorify the members of Christ's Body. He testifies of Christ as the Word of the Father, and He brings the utterance of the Divine Word home to the consciences of those that are in Christ.

‘No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me,’ saith Christ (John xiv. 6).

So also, ‘No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him’ (Matt. xi. 27); but the Son reveals to us the Father by the mission of the illuminating Spirit, lifting us up into the life of God.

MEDITATION XXVIII.

The Apostolic Testimony.

And ye also bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.—
St. John xv. 27.

1. VOCALIZED BY THE SPIRIT.

THE Holy Ghost, the Comforter, would bear witness of Christ, and the Apostles would bear witness also. There would be a Divine and a human witness. The Holy Ghost would bear witness to them and by means of them. Their human witness would be more than human, because of this Divine inspiration accompanying it and elevating it. Their witness would not be the mere witness of wisdom, or eloquence, or social position. Their words would go forth with that living power which the Spirit of Truth, speaking through them, alone could give.

There must be the internal testimony of the Holy Ghost. Without this, all they could say of Christ would only be deceptive, because it would be the mere knowledge of the earthly life. The Spirit alone could search into the depth and mystery of His Being. As St. Paul said, 'Though I have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know I Him no more.' The fleshly knowledge is rather a hindrance than a help to the Divine

perception. Hence we can see why so few of our Lord's actions are recorded, and those few recorded by various writers. It is because the knowledge of more details would not add to the Divine completeness of the representation, and the details which are given require that we shall meditate upon them in various aspects.

Hence we see how delusive are those lives of Christ, of which we have so many in the present day, filling out the narrative with pictorial adjuncts, but really holding back the mind by superficial imaginations from the deeper theological truths which constitute the real importance of all that is told.

By the gift of the Holy Ghost we have the mind of Christ revealed within us, and we need to listen to His testimony.

His testimony is not a mere transitory declamation. His voice speaks abidingly within the heart of the faithful; and if we would speak along with Him, we must hear what the Spirit saith.

How empty is all preaching, if it have not the power of this ever-living, ever-present voice of the Spirit! The mere human skill can no more utter this testimony than a solitary voice can reproduce the mighty harmonies of a powerful organ. People measure the gifts of the pulpit by many accidental characteristics; but the Presence of the Holy Ghost, speaking by the preacher, both to him and along with him, is the only and the absolute necessity. The Spirit must teach the heart, form the utterance, and accompany the words.

2. FORMULATED BY EXPERIENCE.

The Apostles had been with Christ from the beginning. It is in vain for any to speak, though it be with tongue of men and angels, if the life-giving power of the Spirit is wanting; but this life is the life of love. Unless there be the love of Jesus in the heart, we are not to look for the wisdom of Jesus to come forth from the lips. That love cannot have reality except as the result of habitual intercourse.

The Apostles had to testify what they had seen and known. He of whom they spake had gone to another world, from whence also He came; but He had not disdained the life of earth. He had lived in the ordinary surroundings of men without forfeiting the immutability of His Divine character. The Apostles had been with Him throughout.

The Holy Ghost gave theological depth to their teaching. Personal daily experience gave practical reality to its human form. It was not the exhibition of an unattainable ideal. They had merely to set forth what they had seen and heard; but what they had seen not merely with the superficial gaze of outward companionship, and what they had heard not merely with the ear of natural wonder. The Holy Ghost had bound them to Jesus in a closer fellowship than that of natural communication. Flesh and blood would have failed, but the Spirit of the Father taught them Divine mysteries, which kings and prophets of the Old Testament had been

unable to decipher beneath the symbols and fragmentary disclosures which were vouchsafed to them.

If we would bear witness to Christ, we must know Him by the power of the Holy Ghost in the truth of His Godhead; and we must recognize Him in the human features of His life as dwelling with us upon the earth—truly Man in the fellowship of our weakness, though never ceasing to abide in the fulness of Divine strength.

3. ORDAINED FROM THE BEGINNING.

The Apostles were chosen from the first for their office. 'Ye are My witnesses, because ye have been with Me from the beginning.' Witnesses they were, and are, and will be; but when the Spirit comes 'He will bear witness,' so that in future time their witness shall have a power which it has not had hitherto. The change of tense seems at once to teach the original appointment of the Apostles as witnesses, and their future exaltation by Divine power.

They had been with Christ in His earliest days, when He first manifested His glory in secret, so that His disciples should believe on Him. They had come to Him, not upon the strength of a successful ministry, but in the simple acknowledgment of spiritual intuition. He had called them to Himself by the power of the same Spirit, who would now speak through them with power to the nations of the earth.

No ministry can look to win others to Christ

unless the heart has thus been drawn to Christ by the initial attraction of personal love wakening a true devotion. We must know Christ, and share with Christ in His weakness, if we would speak of Him in His power.

Therefore, indeed, the Church is most strong when she is outwardly weak, because the testimony of the ministry is a testimony of supernatural devotion, not the eagerness of a victorious advance. We must know God's strength in weakness, if we would call men to cast away the strength of the world, so as to learn the all-sufficiency of that strength which Jesus brings and gives to us in Himself alone.

The living Truth of God must be known to us as our own true life, if we would make it known to others. The Spirit of Truth binds us in Divine fellowship with Jesus at the right hand of God, that He, the Word of Truth, may speak by us as His representatives, the organs of His own perpetual self-declaration to mankind.

MEDITATION XXIX.

The Strength of Apostolic Witness.

These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be made to stumble.—
St. John xvi. 1.

1. CONSCIOUSNESS OF UNION WITH CHRIST.

IN the foregoing chapter Jesus has set before the Apostles what the reality of union with Himself involved. It was a real union of living power. It must be developed by the discipline of the Cross. It would thus become abundantly fruitful. It necessitated mutual love amongst themselves, as a condition of experiencing the love wherein they were bound to Him. Their supernatural life would be what the world could not understand, and therefore the world would hate them. They must look for the same treatment at the hands of the world as He Himself had encountered. They were called out of the world to live with Him, and they would have to bear witness against the world in the strength of the Holy Ghost.

All this was very necessary for them to know, if they were to rise up to their life of witness.

Necessary to know! Necessary to remember!

Alas! how sadly has the Church of Christendom been content to treat this teaching of Christ; as if it

had little or no meaning! How little care for mutual love! What shrinking from the world's hatred! What reliance upon outward means of strength! How little recognition of the co-operative Presence of the Holy Ghost!

That which our Lord gave as the normal condition of His Church while bearing witness to Him in the world, is treated as if it were a condition of things altogether to be deprecated! The smallest appearance of any of these characteristic difficulties which He has foretold, is apt to occasion that very offence which their foreannouncement was intended to obviate.

In order to evade the force of our Lord's teaching, it is relegated to the Apostolic age, as if it did not include the whole Christian dispensation in its scope. Our Lord's word for the Apostolic ministry is—witness. We are content there should be—or rather that there should have been—witnesses to Christ, but we do not accept the title for ourselves, nor do we honour it if it come within the horizon of our own daily life. We are content to talk of the age of the martyrs, the witnesses, instead of remembering that we fail of our Christianity in proportion as we fail of our martyrdom. We can applaud any effort for Christ which the world accepts. We will not let ourselves acknowledge that every effort for Christ is to find its supernatural guarantee in the world's rejection. If the world does not meet us with homage, we are apt to be scandalized, as if some strange thing happened to us.

We need to learn practically our union with Christ in order to take up the banner of the Cross. Otherwise how little does it avail! From the opening verse of ch. xvi. we have to look back to the opening of ch. xv. Those who bear fruit must experience the predicted occasions of offence; but 'every branch in Me that beareth not fruit must be taken away for the burning.'

2. EXPECTATION OF HATRED FROM THE WORLD.

This, then, was to be the consciousness with which the Apostles should enter upon their ministry. They were to look for the world's hatred.

They were to have a witness which the world would not accept.

It was not then contemplated by Christ that His Apostles should be the leaders of worldly movements, distinguished by the diplomatic skill which should constantly put the Church in the vanguard of worldly progress, with all the honour which social ability wins. The power of the Apostleship was to be found in the Presence of the Holy Ghost—effecting, doubtless, wondrous victories of moral influence, but victories of suffering; victories not for the world, but victories over it; victories whose power should be found when He whose sufferings had won it had Himself passed away.

Such was the life of struggle, the continuous victory of faith, which Jesus sent His Apostles forth to carry out. The weapons by which the world was to be overthrown were not forged by the world.

Just in proportion as we try to do the work of Christ with the weapons of the world, we shall find that the world gains the advantage over us even when we seem to succeed; and in proportion as we bear the world's hatred for the sake of Christ, we shall find ultimate success developed out of immediate overthrow.

No doubt the world's hatred is hard to bear, even though we know it must eventually turn to good. Christ does not promise that it shall be otherwise. He knows that our hearts will be liable to give way to manifold discouragement, and He has given us this teaching in order that we may not fail under the trials to which we shall be exposed.

3. THE FAITH THAT DOES NOT STUMBLE.

In union with Christ we have to perpetuate the life of Christ in the world. He lives on in every branch of His Church, in every individual priest, in every one of His members. In union with Christ we have to bear the world's hatred. We must see that we are cherishing such a faith in Christ that we may not stumble.

Faith is an illuminating principle. By means of it we see the things of the world, so as to be able to step over them without stumbling. If we have not the light of faith, we shall stumble over things which, if we only saw them with the clear vision of faith, would be stepping-stones forming a very pathway of heavenly ascent. All events in our life must be to us one or the other—a ladder of upward

progress, or a stumbling-block making us fall to the ground. It just depends upon the faith with which we meet them which of the two they shall be.

Faith must be illuminated by revelation. Jesus, therefore, sets before us the character of our coming discipline. It is not what our natural reason could have anticipated. Nature looks for progress from one success to another. Nature does not look for success to be developed by continual suffering. This, however, is the law of grace. Jesus warns us, so that we may not look for His Church to gain worldly triumphs after the manner of worldly agencies.

The apprehension of faith differs from the foresight of natural reason. We may be convinced that certain events will happen, and yet we may lack the power of recognizing them as they arise. Faith does not merely know by intellectual certainty that troubles of various kinds are to be expected in the Christian life. True faith is illuminated by the Holy Ghost, so as to turn to good account what otherwise would have been hindrances. The Comforter is the Spirit of wisdom and revelation. He changes the intellectual knowledge of our natural being into the spiritual apprehension of co-operative love.

So it is that we are saved from stumbling amidst the difficulties of our earthly pilgrimage by the heavenly light within us and around. No merely natural conviction of Divine truth will suffice to make us safe amidst the contingencies of worldly difficulty which we have to meet. The heart which

listens to the warnings of Jesus, in the loving submission which the Holy Ghost inspires, will be strong to meet all that shall happen without stumbling. The worldly heart is apt to be offended even under the very semblance of faith, because it misapplies the promises of Jesus. The heart illuminated by the teaching of the Holy Ghost lives in the careful remembrance of Christ's warnings, and abides with the firm assurance that His promises will have a more transcendent fulness in the end than His warnings can have amidst the hatred of a transitory world.

MEDITATION XXX.

Confession and Martyrdom.

They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you shall think that he offereth service unto God.—St. John xvi. 2.

1. REJECTION FROM THE SYNAGOGUE.

THE Apostles would be turned out of the synagogue, but that synagogue was now becoming changed. To be turned out of it was not to lose grace, but to become the more established in God.

It was, indeed, the fundamental benediction of the law of Christ. 'Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake' (Matt. v. 11). The synagogue of those who said they were Jews and are not, is now become the synagogue of Satan (Rev. ii. 9). 'He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God' (Rom. ii. 29).

It would be the fulfilment of the typical mockery which Ishmael had practised against Isaac. The covenant of the flesh—they who were born of blood, would rise up against the covenant of the spirit—

those who were born of God. The weakness of the supernatural, however, would not be repulsed by the strength of the natural. The synagogue which rejected them would bring upon itself Divine rejection. 'Cast ye out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman' (Gal. iv. 31). God would not reject them now that He has sent His Son. It is they who will reject God. They break away from the covenant of God by casting out those who belong to the covenant of God.

In them was fulfilled that which had happened in the time of Samuel. They rejected the prophet, seeking to strengthen themselves by a fleshly organization. So now they reject the sovereign Presence of God, the spiritual throne of David, to which the promises of God were attached as the centre of national life. God does not cast them off by an initial act of judgment. Their unbelief shows itself by an overt policy of ostracism against those in whom the vital development of the original covenant was being perfected. 'They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me, that I should not be King over them' (1 Sam. viii. 7). They rejected the sovereignty of God when He raised up judges and prophets. They rejected the house of David, in which the Incarnate Presence of God was pledged to them in visible sovereignty. They clung to the visible, and rejected the Divine Presence which gave it power. That Divine Presence is being changed from an outward centre to the heavenly throne of God's right hand (Ps. cx. 1). They are

not prepared to follow. Yet God does not reject them merely for their earthliness. They cling to earth, but they also rise up against those in whom is found the germ of the promised perfection. In casting the Apostles out of their synagogue they break themselves away from the irrefragable destiny of Divine love. They rest in earth. They proclaim war against Heaven. They say of Jesus, in Himself and in His Apostolic Church, 'This is the Heir; let us kill Him, and the inheritance shall be ours.'

They would be put out of the synagogue, but this would only the more plainly identify them with the eternal life of the true Temple. What the Jews claimed as their own must perish. Their house must be left unto them desolate. God's house upon the holy hill of Zion would be His rest for ever; and the Apostles could not have their part in the eternal, save as being cast out of that which was to perish.

2. WORLD-WIDE HOSTILITY.

It was, however, not only the Jews who would be ranged in such active opposition to the Apostles. As the message was to be conveyed to all the ends of the earth, so all nations would reject it. 'Who-soever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.'

So was the Church to be militant to the very end of time.

Yet our Lord does not say that the Apostles were to shrink from this message, even though it involved their death. They were not to pare down

their message so as to make it acceptable to the fallen nature of man. Though man would not accept the supernatural truth, it must yet be offered to them. It must be offered even with the certainty of death awaiting the messenger. Instead of fearing to die, the messengers of Christ were to accept death as the natural result of their ministry. They were not to think that their ministry was hopeless because man's violence would be so intense. One thing alone can deprive Christ's message of the hope of victory, and that is for the messenger to shrink from death. It is the message of another life. Jesus died that this message might be given. They must not fear to die to whom it is entrusted.

They were not, then, to regard this message as a diplomatic arrangement, to be carried out gradually according to their sense of expediency. It was the truth of another world, it was a living truth, to be promulgated in this world quite independently of man's readiness to accept it. Doubtless they were to teach as Christ had taught. They must prepare the way for men's hearts to receive the truth; but the teaching of truth, however gradual, must be free from all compromise. They must train child-like souls to grow in the intelligent acceptance of truth; but they must never fear the opposition of worldly power, for the very purpose of their mission was 'to destroy the wisdom of the wise, and to bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent' (1 Cor. i. 19). They had 'to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to overthrow,' as well as 'to build and to plant' (Jer. i. 10). The word entrusted

to them would grow by natural power, if it had not to encounter preliminary opposition. The world would seek to put them to death, for they had to put the world to death. They must not fear. This death would only show the life of the truth they taught.

3. CARRIED ON WITH A MORAL PRETEXT OF MAN'S NEED.

This hostility would be the more difficult to bear, because it would have the pretence of religion. It is a comparatively easy thing to tilt against open vice. It may seem quixotic, but the natural heart approves the effort, and the world, though sneering, may commend the enterprise; but the relation of man's inner life to the unseen is what the world knows nothing about. It does not understand the importance of such relationships.

So in the present day Christian morals are praised, while Christian dogma is scorned. What ameliorates the relation of man to man is evidently to be desired. What concerns the relationship of man to God is not thought to be of any importance. But the Apostolic mission had reference, not to temporal reform, but to eternal life. Men have no craving for a new life, but they desire to mitigate the miseries of this. Reform will not bring life. It seems to make things better. It does not create man anew. Divine life makes man better. Things in themselves remain. It will surely bring reform to all the evils of mankind, however unconscious

mankind might be of the power which was at work amongst them ; but as they are unconscious of the power, they love it not. Mankind do not want to be changed themselves. They resent the idea. They hate such a power, for it seems to aggravate their present troubles rather than remove them. So, then, they must hate the Apostles, because their word seemed to be so entirely unconcerned with what man felt as his own need. Only those who were sensitive to man's supernatural need could welcome the supernatural gift. Men would then, as they would now, accept a religion which should bring earthly results ; but they know not the Father nor Christ, and therefore they hate what has for its primary object the glory of the Father, and for its instrumental prerogative the elevation of man to the glory of God by the mediation of the Incarnate Son of God.

MEDITATION XXXI.

The World's Ignorance.

And these things will they do, because they have not known the Father, nor me.—
St. John xvi. 3.

1. GOD ONLY KNOWN BY LOVE.

GOD is not known by intellectual knowledge, but by the apprehension of love. Our Lord speaks of His own true and perfect knowledge of God, which involves identity of nature. In speaking to the Jews, He contrasts this with the apprehension of the Father in His Divine relationship to themselves, which they ought to have had and had not (John viii. 55).

The 'eternal power and Godhead' are 'that which can be apprehended' of God, 'being seen by the things which are made' (Rom. i.). Creation points to God. Even the heathen were not destitute of this. Their fault was that they suffered the apprehension to congeal, as it were, upon degrading objects, which they chose as symbols within their reach, instead of rising up into the pure ether of a higher world, so as to be drawn onward to the sublime glory of Him whom they ought to worship. The same fault belonged to the Jews, and it was aggravated by their higher revelation of God. The Jew had no more power than the

Gentile of knowing God in Himself. Both Jew and Gentile failed, because they did not rise to the apprehensions of God which were due to their respective positions. They failed to 'glorify Him as God.' Consequently 'their heart was darkened.' When God was brought before them they did not apprehend Him, for they did not love Him. 'He that loveth not, doth not apprehend God; for God is Love' (1 John iv. 8).

Thus it was that they failed in their apprehension of God; and when Christ came with a more perfect revelation of the Father, they failed of apprehending His mediatorial character. To apprehend the mediation of Christ there must be an apprehension of man's need and of God's glory, for these are the contraries between which He mediates.

They had no wish to rise to a higher perception of God's claim upon them. Their position was the same as that of multitudes in the present day. They thought the knowledge of God was unpractical. They did not feel their need of Christ. So they said, 'We have never been in bondage to any man: how sayest Thou, Ye shall be made free?' Love would have welcomed the knowledge whereby closer access to God should have been obtained.

2. GOD'S LOVE MANIFESTED IN CHRIST.

Christ comes to manifest God's love, but none can receive the revelation unless there be in the

heart a readiness to love. Our Lord said, 'Ye have not His Word abiding in you: for whom He hath sent, Him ye believe not' (John v. 38).

Man's nature, formed in God's Image, should have the impression of the Divine Word giving form to the moral sense. In Christ that moral sense, which is the perfection of man, lives with the glory of the Divine knowledge belonging to Him as the Son of God. By coming in the flesh He enshrines the Divine Word in human intelligence. Human nature in its deadness could not receive the Divine Word. The living Manhood of the Incarnate Word, as it is the perfect recipient, becomes also the perfect exponent of the eternal Truth. The organs of the nature wherein Divine Life dwells do not act as they do in our eternal deadness. With us they are distinct. They act separately and partially. Where there is perfect life, there is perfect unity. To hear, to see, to speak, are only relative expressions of the same living act of continuance in the life-giving Truth.

As Christ is known, so He makes the Father known; but there must be the Word abiding in the heart, the sense of Divine truth making the conscience sensible to the Divine utterance. The Jews knew Christ as the Son of Mary, born at Bethlehem; but this knowledge interfered with their apprehension of His Divine origin and character. He said, 'Ye both know Me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of Myself, but He that sent Me is true, whom ye know not' (John vii. 28). They knew the Manhood. They knew

not the Godhead. Therefore they knew not the Mediator. They belonged to the world of falsehood. Christ came down from Him that is true.

Where there is a readiness to accept Christ's Manhood, not as a perfection of the creature, but as the manifestation of the Creator, there will also be found a growing knowledge of God. The love of God will be seen in its true correspondence with the capacities of human nature, as we come to a fuller perception of the Divine perfection in Christ. The two whole and perfect natures are joined together in Him; and although they are not confused so as to lose their own natural properties, yet they act by the Divine unction in perfect and inseparable unity. The Person of Christ does not act sometimes in the one and sometimes in the other. His Divine glory does not destroy the emptiness of the creature which He assumed, but it fills that emptiness with Divine life and power. As we behold the Manhood glorified in Christ, we gain increasing perception of the Godhead acting in Him. So by perceiving Him whom the Father hath sent, we come to perceive the Father. Without this perception, which love alone can have, all merely earthly knowledge of Christ as Man seems to deaden our sense of God, and all supposed knowledge of Christ as God hardens itself into a delusive formula. The living and true God can only be known by the apprehension of love illuminated by the Spirit of Christ.

3. IGNORANCE DRIVING TO ANTAGONISM.

‘These things will they do, because they have not apprehended the Father, nor Me.’ The Father represents the abstract Godhead in personal relationship to creation at large, and to themselves as the chosen people in particular. Those who did not desire the supernatural communication necessarily hated it. It was revealed to Christ in order to raise them up to the Divine fellowship, and the knowledge could only be gained in proportion as they were so raised. Such elevation, however, was the destruction of their self-satisfied earthliness. They could not ‘see God and live.’ As the outward sight of God brought outward death to the sinful creature, so the moral and spiritual perception of God involved a dying to the natural self. St. John ‘fell down at His feet as dead.’ It was the joyous death of adoring love. ‘The keepers became as dead men.’ It was the terror of conscious antagonism to the spiritual world. Such is the terror which must seize upon the spiritual nature when contemplating the infinity of the Divine excellence, unless there is a kindred consciousness sustaining the soul with the immortality of love.

Thus do the perfections of God assume an appearance of hatefulness to the natural heart of man in its ignorance. He does not see them in their proper completeness of action. He beholds them only in their opposition to all that his limited nature desires. He cannot know God so as to experience God’s glory, unless he be taken into

God, so as to live with God's life. Remaining outside of God, he feels himself an alien to God's love. He knows not God, for he cannot know the Divine love in its own true sphere of exercise. To hold himself aloof from the relationships of loving fellowship is to cherish the darkness which may keep God out of sight, and to shrink with abhorrence from all that would make God's Presence interfere with our daily occupations. To know God is to love Him, but not to know Him is to hate Him. None can regard God with a merely neutral indifference. There is an Eye discernible in the loving power from which man turns which makes him feel the impossibility of escape. Beneath that gaze man trembles, if he knows it to be the gaze of One whom he repudiates. The more conscious he is of the Omnipotence which holds him fast, the more must he resent every glance of love which invites him to voluntary submission. He must have Divine love bow down to himself in his hateful pride. The greater the evidence of Almighty Love, the more imperious is he in his demands. He hates God, because he would have God love him in his own way. Since God's way is not his, he will accept no Divine embassy, whatever the invitations of eternal Love may be. In vain for him has God humbled Himself to earth. In stubborn hate he still refuses to humble himself to Heaven. The hatred which the consciousness of Divine omnipotence engenders pours itself forth against the Apostle through whom Divine Love speaks.

MEDITATION XXXII.

Contrast of the World's Ignorance and Apostolic Expectation.

But these things have I spoken unto you, that when their hour is come, ye may remember them, how that I told you.—St. John xvi. 4.

1. EXPECTATION A PRINCIPLE OF STRENGTH.

THE world acts against the Apostles without knowing what the Presence of Jesus along with them involves. The Apostles, on the contrary, were to be armed with a full knowledge of what they had to expect from the world, and how they were secured against it. The position of the Church is, therefore, very different from that of the world. The world is continually making fresh assaults, and it gains seeming victories—not, however, such as to last. The Church is continually suffering defeats at the hand of the world; but she knows herself to be possessed of a recuperative power, so that she can suffer these mighty waves of Satanic violence to beat over her, and yet remain in a perfect sense of security. ‘God is in the midst of her, therefore shall she not be removed: God shall help her, and that right early’ (Ps. xlvi. 5).

The Presence of God is her strength, but it does not act as a charm. It acts as a moral power. It

therefore requires recognition. The moral strength of the Church consists in her knowing how to use the Divine strength. The final victory of the Church over Satan is postponed by reason of her supineness. Through want of faith she mistrusts the Divine promises, and therefore holds back when the world threatens, or else, in the misguided impulse of merely natural faith, she anticipates victory without preparing herself for the necessary struggle. The expectation of hard struggle to which Jesus summons His followers ought, however, to make them exert their Divine prerogatives with calmness and energy; whereas the assaults of the enemy, carried on blindly, fitfully, as the opportunities of each successive age may permit, roll back after each devastation, and leave the Church in some respects stronger than before.

2. PREDICTION A FOUNDATION OF TRUST.

There is great moral strength in the mere fact of knowing what is to happen. But in the present case there is something more than this. The difficulties and disasters which the Apostles were to experience were known not by natural calculation, but by the express word of Jesus. They were, therefore, a ground of personal trust in Him. So He says, 'Remember that I told you of them.' And here the personal pronoun has an emphasis which the English translation has no means of representing. 'It was I who told you what should come to pass. Therefore, instead of letting difficulties

draw you away from Me as being unexpected, they must make you rest in Me with the more assurance, for they show My power of foresight and My truth.'

The great promises of the kingdom, which should be the reward of the faithful, were not given without due warning as to the severity of the long-continued conflict which must precede. Jesus had not called any to follow Him without assurance of the Cross. This showed at once His Divine foreknowledge, so as to establish His claim to the Divine life, and the open-hearted truthfulness of His human friendship, in that He did not make any false pretences in calling His disciples around Him, but bade them accept a life of hatred in the world, in order that they might have the Father's love in the eternal kingdom.

Our Lord thus desires that they shall never forget Him in struggling for the great cause. There was great danger that they would forget. They might look to earthly opportunities. It might seem to them that they could only meet the uncertain sea of perplexity according to the suggestions of the moment, now that Jesus was gone away. He bids them now remember that He was fully aware of all that would happen, and so their thoughts must recur to Himself. He had foreseen what they could not foresee. They must, therefore, put away all the undisciplined impulses of natural hope and fear. They must live not in themselves, but in Him. He was gone from their sight, but in Him was their life.

3. FOREKNOWLEDGE AN EVIDENCE OF DIVINE POWER.

The opposition which the Apostles had to meet would be an opposition to themselves distinctly, as claiming a Divine mission. The prediction, therefore, must sustain them, as being itself a voice from God continually speaking in their hearts. 'He who called us to this office knew what was coming, and He chose us for this very purpose. As the prediction was Divine, so was the election.'

Thus it was our Lord's purpose in this warning, not merely to give them the advantage of knowing what to expect, but to use the future accidents of their life as a means of elevating them into a continuous practical apprehension of His own Divine character, that He might be their Head, and they might feel themselves living in constant subordination to Him.

Yes, they were to look back to Him! As yet they knew not the form in which He would be present to their memory. He who had warned them of their difficulties would be remembered to them in the culminating agony of His Cross. The prediction told of His Divine Nature. He, the Incarnate God, whom they were to cherish and to follow, had died upon the Cross. 'Thou hast given a banner for such as fear Thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth' (Ps. lx. 4). The Incarnate God, the Crucified God, called them to remember Him and follow Him, whilst after His likeness they bore the hatred of the world.

In a few hours from the time when these words were spoken, that Cross would be set up. As yet

they knew it not, but He who spake the words knew well what was coming. That Cross would be the banner, the sign of the Son of man. The symbol of redemption would call all loyal hearts to follow without fear. They had never yet brought themselves to accept the literalness of our Lord's bidding, when He had again and again called them to take up their cross and follow Him. When they saw its literal truth exhibited in the Person of their Leader, they were admonished of the literal truth in which that Divine example must be followed. How could they shrink from any sorrow, when they remembered that the Crucified had warned them to expect it? 'If we suffer with Him, we shall be glorified together.' Such would ere long be the constant anthem of the Christian Church; and Jesus now bids His Apostles go forth to the conflict with the motto, more true to them than to the earthly conqueror who took it for his watchward—'Herein shall ye triumph.'

MEDITATION XXXIII.

Natural and Supernatural Guidance.

And these things I said not unto you from the beginning, because I was with you.—
St. John xvi. 4.

1. TUTELAGE.

JESUS had not spoken to His Apostles of the continuous opposition to the world which would be the law of their ministry. He had, indeed, told them of the blessing of being persecuted for His Name's sake, but that belonged to all the disciples. He had sent them forth on their earlier mission with words which pointed onward to something of a greater kind, when they should be delivered up to synagogues and scourged. But this was quite compatible with eventual triumph. They looked forward to Christ taking His place in His kingdom, and themselves being seated along with Him. Now the time is come for Himself to die; and as He was about to die, so they must learn to put aside all expectations of worldly success. They would have to follow Him in death. The glory of His kingdom was to be of a different kind. His throne was upon the other side of the grave. They who would sit along with Him in the regeneration must die first of all.

Jesus has not yet made them understand this,

because He was with them. The law of martyrdom could not be revealed until the death of Christ had taken place, for it was to Him as dead and risen again that the martyrs bore witness.

Not until then could the supernatural virtue of His communicated life be experienced. The life of the Vine operating in the branches could not be known until Christ had died; for this Vine, though growing from the earth, was to grow with a higher life than earth could supply. From this time onward they were to be a new organism, in which the life derived from Him as the buried Root should manifest itself in resurrection-power.

But as long as He was here, He watched over them. 'While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Thy Name.' That external guardianship was now to cease. Now they would have no Head visible upon earth. But our Lord's words were to make them realize their unity of life, as being no mere agreement between themselves as a human society, but a power derived from Himself. He would still live on in them, and no difficulties experienced from the world must make them doubt the perpetuity of His care. He had to pass through death, and from His Body which had died their life was itself derived; so that they must not fear to die, but rather look for greater fruitfulness through dying as He did.

2. IGNORANCE.

During the time that He was with them they had known nothing of the future. All they then

had to do was to look to Him. Now they must know what sort of a future was awaiting them. They must regard His words now spoken to them as having a deep significance. Time would show what their full meaning was. Experience would make them feel that the spiritual strength which He promised them was as true and real as the outward sufferings which He foretold.

The parable of the vine had within itself a summary of teaching which they could not work out by any prognostications of their own. They must keep it well in mind, so that the events of their future history might bring its meaning home to them. We must remember that we have the commentary of eighteen centuries to explain them. The Apostles went forth, not knowing what their trials in the world would be. Think of them as twelve missionaries going into a new country, not exactly such as China or Africa, for already the Jews had spread abroad some knowledge of revealed truth, but these very Jews would stir up the people against them. They had, however, by God's providence, prepared the way. Yet the Apostles went forth with the continual witness of the Holy Ghost that bonds and afflictions awaited them.

When some of the faithful, like the deacon Stephen, died at the hands of the enemy, their hearts must have been sorely tried; and especially when the first Apostle met his martyrdom. Could the cleven survive such pruning? They learnt to trust their Lord's word!

The death of James might have seemed like the

taking away of a branch. But that could not be! His death was an honour, not a penalty. So, then, the outward removal was not what our Lord meant by taking away. The ministry of James would live on in greater fruitfulness by the very stroke which seemed to threaten its obliteration. It was taken away from earth. It was not taken away from Him.

3. CONFIDENCE.

Our Lord's words would thus sink into their hearts and deepen their confidence in Him. The less they felt themselves to know of the future, the more must they rely upon His unseen support. Visible truth! Invisible grace! Triumph over unseen powers of darkness which ruled the world, while yet the world seemed to be getting them under its dominion, and destroying their hopes of advancement!

O that we could learn to act in obedience to our Lord's bidding, with the same consciousness of ignorance and the same confidence in His pledged support! Happy they who in outward failure can read the assurance of greater success! Would that those who profess to believe in Christ would accept His words as true! They were true in the beginning. They will be true to the end. But never will the struggle between the world and the Church lose any of its intensity. As the antagonism calms down, so must the power of the Church dwindle. As the outward facilities of ministration multiplied, the Divine power died away,

Surely we must wonder in these days not that the Church is so feeble, but that the Church has any continuance!

God grant us more faithful fruitfulness! We must remember that if we are more fruitful we must also look for more difficulty. We know not the future any more than the Apostles did; but we know the law of the Church's triumph, whatever the future may be. There must be the cutting away of the earthly in proportion as the heavenly power of the presence of the crucified Saviour is to assert itself in spiritual harvests. How pleased we are with outward growth, though, alas, there be leaves only! How we despond when anything is cut away, as if what is lost to our sight were taken away from the spiritual harvest wherein the great Husbandman delights!

MEDITATION XXXIV.

Personal Independence.

But now I go unto him that sent me.—St. John xvi. 5.

1. CHRIST LEAVING THEM.

CHRIST had been their continuous Guide, so that they were to do nothing without Him. In every time of perplexity He was at hand to resolve their doubts. But now their difficulties would be greatly increased as they went forth to carry on their mission throughout the world, and this continuous personal guidance would be gone. True, Jesus had promised to send a Comforter; but whatever that word might imply, they would feel the absence of a personal guidance such as a human companion alone could give, for only such a one could speak with the full sympathy and detailed instruction which their human nature required.

Our Lord wishes them to realize this change in their condition. He had a gift in store, but they must realize their new need before they could exercise that new gift. The new gift would be a greater power than His own companionship, but it would require to be used in a new way, and it was necessary that they should apprehend the change in their circumstances.

Henceforth there would be no one upon earth

to whom they could refer their difficulties. They must learn to act with a sense of independence and responsibility. They had a definite mission—to go forth into the world and bear witness to Him. They must do so in a spirit of brotherly love, for all had one mission and all had one life. He was their Life, and they must be true to Him. Their witness would be borne by suffering on His behalf at the hands of the world. They had to proclaim Him as the Chosen One whom the Father had sent. Their witness, however, was henceforth to be of a higher character than in former time. Hitherto they had prepared the way for men to receive Him as a Prophet. Now they had to say that Messiah who had appeared upon the earth was gone away, and had left them to be His representatives in teaching the people.

We must be careful not to think of the Apostles as anticipating the future which subsequent centuries have unrolled for our consideration.

We must be careful, also, to remember that much of the evil and difficulty belonging to the centuries of Christian history has been the result of the unfaithfulness of Christ's ministers in various ways to the trust originally given them. The promises of Christ extended to the legitimate needs of the Apostolate in their earthly witness. They were not intended to meet the difficulties which would arise in consequence of their unfaithfulness. We are not, then, to be surprised if the supernatural guardianship which was promised leaves many a difficulty unsupplied.

Rather we must be thankful that the gift of God was to work its way in spite of man's unfaithfulness, so as to preserve the life of the Church, however much disabled, to the end.

2. CHRIST GOING TO THE FATHER.

Christ was going to the Father. This was not a mere translation of His earthly Body from its present existence in the midst of them to the glory of a heavenly locality. It was an approach of His Manhood to the Father so as to act in personal relationship to the Father. The sphere of the action of His human Body would henceforth be not in the outer world, but in the mysterious sanctuary whither He would ascend with His own Blood (Heb. ix. 12). It would not be an otiose acceptance of glory, but an active ministry directed to the Father in the glory of Personal, Consubstantial Godhead.

Although the Apostles could as yet have no theological idea of that ministry such as we now have, yet they would understand that He went up to do a personal work in the Presence of God. They would probably catch some glimpse of this as the fulfilment of the High-priestly entrance within the veil.

The people waited for the High Priest to come back with the blessing. So they would have to wait! But, 'Lord, how long?' They had no idea of the time. They had been warned of the hard fight which awaited them. Now Jesus gives them plainly to understand that He, who should, as they

thought, have been their Leader, would have another work to do. He would leave them to fight, while He was gone to the Father, and was obtaining for them the strength which should make them victorious in the struggle.

3. THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST'S DEPARTURE.

They were to be one with Christ, and yet Christ was to go away. They were to be one with Him in substance and life; but their personality would remain, and they would have the glory of His Divine Manhood entrusted to the feebleness of their natural apprehension. The very greatness of the gift, in so far as they could appreciate it, would seem to intensify the tremendous responsibility which must weigh them down.

We are so accustomed to traditional thoughts of the sacred ministry, blurred with the associations of many generations with varied forms of unfaithfulness, that it is impossible for us to conceive of what the Apostles felt, looking forward eagerly to a speedy triumph, conscious of a mysterious power, but now about to be put upon their trial. While Jesus was personally guiding them, His Presence sheltered them with its sympathy, although they were separate from the world. Now He is going. Now it seems as if they must strive in the isolation of their own separatedness.

A mysterious union would, however, bind them to Him, though He went away. The same mysterious union must bind them all together if they would

be bound to Him. Union with Him could not be except upon the condition of union among themselves. The words of Joseph to his brethren seem to apply to them: 'See that ye fall not out by the way.' They must have looked forward with amazement as they contemplated their own position, their relation to Christ, their relation to one another, their relation to the world, conscious of some sore time of trouble, but looking forward with confidence for the kingdom to be restored to Israel.

The world seemed to be dying away from them as they felt that Jesus was going away. It was like the extinction of the last ray of light when the sun sinks beneath the horizon. They felt a world of darkness round about them, and knew not what forms of evil might spring up on every side. They had as yet no thoughts such as we should call missionary, no idea of forming Christian communities in various parts of the world. Their one great thought was that they had to bear witness—a witness of suffering, and probably of death. Christ was leaving them; but wherever He might be in active personal Presence, their only security was in the recognition of their union with Him.

MEDITATION XXXV.

Sorrow stifling Inquiry.

And none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? But because I have spoken these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.—St. John xvi. 6.

1. SORROW.

WELL might sorrow fill their hearts when our Lord thus told them that He was going away. They could not rouse themselves to think of Him. They were absorbed in their own sense of privation.

How we need to rise out of ourselves! Sorrow blinds the heart to its true interest in others. The Apostles felt their own loss. They did not consider what that departure of Christ might involve for Himself. It seemed to them as if He could live only for them. In the miserable selfishness of our nature we are soon absorbed in the consideration how various events will affect ourselves. This causes sorrow. If the soul will take a larger view, we shall gain much joy, even in time of sorrow. One purpose of sorrow as a Divine discipline is to enlarge our sympathies, that we may rejoice with others, even whilst feeling poignant sorrow in our own selves.

Besides this, their sorrow blinded them to any gain which might accrue to themselves through the departure of Christ from them. That they should

be slow to apprehend this is not surprising. It is sad to think how little we have advanced beyond their natural position. After the removal of anything wherein we delight, we are tempted to deplore it, as if God could not in any way make up for some cherished blessing which He removes. And yet how often does that very object ripen into some greater power of benefit by the very change!

If we will enter into the possibilities of new life which others may gain by some change which breaks in upon our former relationships, we shall find that this very sympathy helps to heal our own trouble. Though dark night succeeds to day, we may look for bright constellations to rise upon our view of which we had no anticipation. The world is formed upon a law of progress, and however much we may rightly deplore the past, we must not let sorrow overwhelm us. Faith in God will not suffer sorrow to fill the heart, however great may be the shake which some severe trouble occasions. We have to be looking ever onward to see what God has in store.

2. SLUGGISHNESS.

So should sorrow rouse us to fresh expectation. This is what our Lord intimates by saying, 'None of you asketh Me, Whither goest Thou?' We are not simply to think of the going, but of the purpose of the going.

How little did they know of Christ, if they could think that He would leave them without some compensation! What they needed was to rise to a sense of their own duty under the new circumstances.

They had relied upon Him with the wondrous powers of His earthly companionship. Now they must consider whether they cannot rise to some share in His changed condition. Has He loved them, and can they fear lest His love should fail them now?

Indeed, He has all along been calling them to remember that they must take up their cross and follow Him. If they suffer themselves to droop in anguish by reason of His loss, they show the sluggishness of their own self-love rather than the devotion which love to Him should inspire. If they are ready to draw the sword for Him, and yet can doubt His continuing security, they show that they would keep Him with themselves as an earthly Protector, but know as yet very little of Him as a heavenly Guide. There must be a brave and active self-surrender to Jesus, and then we shall find that the energy of love quickens the soul with a self-forgetful vigour, so that sorrow itself lights up the very chamber of death.

3. DESPAIR.

And this the more when we consider who Christ is! We know He loves us, and His love cannot terminate with any phase of earthly experience. Whatever our sorrow may be, we are sure that Jesus suffers it to overcloud us in order that we may acquire something better than we lose beneath its oppression. The love of Jesus must not only rouse our own energies of response, as all true love should do in time of danger. It should make us look to

behold Him manifesting His power in some fresh gift of Divine grace.

Sorrow belongs to the passing away of earthly things, inasmuch as they are under the dominion of death ; but in the heart of the faithful there must always be an upspringing of hope, which will rouse the whole soul to fresh energies, knowing that Divine Love never faileth. ' Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more.' This was a power which the Apostles could not then know, but they could know sufficient of Christ to be confident that His removal would not be an overthrow.

It should be so with us. Troubles happen to ourselves individually and to the Church collectively. We are not to regard them as hindering the continuance of Divine protection and guidance. If God takes anything away, He is able to supply the need, and will do so if we look up to Him with trustful obedience. We are never to suppose that anything is essential to His Church because it has been a source of strength whereon we have relied in times gone by. The future is as much hidden from us as the Resurrection was from the Apostles when our Lord was with them. They could not conceive of His Presence save in a carnal form of external companionship. We must take care that we in our own day rise up to live along with Him in His heavenly power, instead of wishing to draw Him near to ourselves by the mere limits of earthly proximity. So in all the anticipations of the future we must feel that He is able to supersede every provision whereby He has nourished His Church in the wilderness of

earth. All outward things may change, but His Almighty love remains for ever sure in its operation and exhaustless in its resources. Only He requires us to look to Him with the confidence of holy hope. We may fancy that it implies faith, when we express our value for what God has given by yielding to despondency, as if no fresh arrangement could be equivalent to that which disappears. But faith looks beneath the surface of natural experience, and lays hold upon God, so as to act with perfect joyousness under the seeming inadequacy of successive conditions. Instead of drooping in the sluggishness of helpless sorrow, we must act as those who know whom they have believed, convinced that whatever God may take away, His love is sure towards us, if we abide in Christ and act as He calls us. Though all be swept away, yet if the soul retains the full consciousness of the changeless love of Jesus, so as to act in its power with dauntless loyalty, we shall find that in taking away that wherein He has shown His care for us, He is only calling us upward to abide with Him in the experience of the Almighty love of the Father which His mediation guarantees.

Loss comes to us through morbid sorrow, but love finds the Presence of God in renewed fulness more and more effectual, as all things round about us leave the soul with adoring satisfaction to drink into itself the vision of the Eternal Truth. Earth must vanish—it may be in the darkness of despair—but if the heart be true amidst much darkness to the obedience of faith, it shall be thereby perfected the more in the growing glory of eternal day.

MEDITATION XXXVI.

The Truth.

Nevertheless I tell you the truth.—St. John xvi. 7.

1. DECLARED BY CHRIST.

SORROW belongs to the deceitful world. It is ignorance of the truth which makes sorrow to be overwhelming. Instead of rising up to God with devout affections in order to learn His truth, we relapse in despondency because it seems to us that things are going amiss.

So it was with the Apostles now. They did not rise up to Christ to ask Him. Therefore He has to begin the declaration of the truth as a spontaneous instruction. ‘You will not ask Me, therefore I tell you.’

How full of love was this communication! Jesus hereby indicates just what their weakness was. They did not know the truth, although they had been so long with Him who was the Truth. Now, then, He tells them the truth. The fellowship of outward earthly life is no true fellowship with Him. His condescension avails nothing. To hold fellowship with Him, they must rise to Him by participation of spiritual life. Earthly knowledge of the truth is not the truth. The truth cannot be known

save by the teaching of the Spirit of Truth, and the Spirit of Truth cannot come to them unless Jesus personally go away.

Jesus emphasizes this as His own declaration, in order that they may understand its importance. They would not otherwise have perceived that He was really drawing a contrast between earthly presence and heavenly. The difference was a difference, not of degree, but of kind. Earthly presence addresses itself to the earthly sense, and is regulated by the laws of material substance. Heavenly presence belongs to a different sphere of action. It is brought about by the operation of the Comforter, and instead of being regulated by the laws of material substance, it acts by an inherent energy of Divine power.

His death would avail them nothing, unless His human Body went up to the glory of the Father, so as to be the means of sending down the Holy Ghost.

2. AN ABIDING MYSTERY.

The departure of Christ from the material world, so as to be in the glory of the Father, and transmit the Holy Ghost to the disciples upon earth, was a mystery altogether beyond human grasp. We know it as the glorious mystery of the Ascension. The Apostles could only look forward to it as the sorrowful mystery of the departure. We know it under a form of brightness, but we scarcely know its power more than the Apostles did. We see Christ rising until a bright cloud receives His Body out of the

sight of men, but we cannot look into the cloud. Our intelligence cannot follow the changes through which His Body passed as He went up to the Father, the various glories of the successive heavens to which He assimilated His earthly frame as He went up through their several choirs, until He reached an elevation of glory infinitely surpassing all that any created being had attained before—not a glory of external lustre, but of spiritual power, so as to become the channel through which the Eternal Spirit for the first time came forth to act not only by man as an instrument, but in man as man's life; not only in the Manhood of Christ as a separate entity, but in that Manhood as the sphere of operation, and from that Manhood in its exaltation as a principle of self-communicating energy, a self-extending substance. The gift of the Comforter was to be given through the Body of Christ, as the power of Divine self-extension whereby that glorified Body would act. The Manhood would be extended, the Godhead would be communicated. Our Lord Jesus would prepare His Apostles to receive this Divine mystery. They were not prepared as yet to know these things. Alas! it is to be feared that even now our thoughts of our Lord's Ascension and of the ministry of the Comforter are miserably insufficient and earthly in their form. We are unwilling to acknowledge that our Lord's Body is more truly present by His being personally unseen in the glory of the Father, than by His being subject to the apprehension of our senses by a nearness which, after all, is external only. Our earthly imaginations are apt sluggishly to forget

that the living fellowship which the Comforter effects between us and the glorified Saviour is not of earth, but of heaven. If Christ were to humble Himself to our earthly accidents of sense, His Presence would be nothing worth. He vouchsafes to us a Presence which elevates us, because it does not degrade Him. Nay, it absorbs us into the imperishable solidity of the Being of God.

3. NECESSITY OF ACCEPTING IT.

We may possibly be tempted to put away from ourselves the thought of Christ's Ascension, not by the overwhelming sorrow which stupefied the Apostles at this time, but by being so much habituated to the acknowledgment of it, that it seems to us simply a law of the spiritual world with which we need not concern ourselves—a heavenly law as the angel-hosts are heavenly, but finite as they also are finite; not far above all heavens, as being the operation of the Spirit of God superior to all the laws of finite nature. Such indifference is very fatal to our spiritual life. Consider how St. Paul repeatedly calls us to think of union with the ascended Saviour. 'Set your affections on things above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.' We need not any agency to 'bring Christ down from above' (Rom. x. 6). A Christ upon earth would be of no use to us. The Divine power of Christ's glorified Humanity is conditional upon His acting towards us from the right hand of God as the centre of all power, apart from which He would

have no power to bless. We must live in the power of the Spirit of Truth, so as to have our affections directed towards that hidden glory which the Holy Ghost communicates to the members of Christ's Body, that they may live in heaven with Him.

We degrade our baptismal calling, we rob our Eucharists of their spiritual power, because we do not accept the great spiritual law of the heavenly kingdom. We are unwilling to own that it is expedient for us that Christ should go away. To see Him with the outward eye in this world, as if He came near to us by any local presence, would be to lose sight of Him in the reality of that heavenly life into which we are elevated along with Him out of the world by the participation of the two great sacraments. He will show Himself by an external Presence at the last day, but it will be in judgment to the world at large, when He brings His saints along with Himself as members of His Body. But at the present time, during the dispensation of grace, He shows not Himself to us as the children of earth, but He calls us by the power of the Comforter to be united with Him and feed on Him, that so our eyes may be opened to contemplate the Divine glory whercinto He is entered; and into that glory He gathers us, that we may live with Him, and see Him with the eyes of a nature lifted up above all the considerations of man's natural being.

MEDITATION XXXVII.

The Mission of the Comforter.

It is expedient for you that I go away : for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you ; but if I go, I will send him unto you.—St. John xvi. 7.

1. HIS PRESENCE MORE EFFECTUAL THAN THAT OF CHRIST.

THE Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity are coequal. They are one in power, majesty, and glory. They are One Almighty, though each has the Almightyness in Himself, even the fulness of the Divine Nature.

We are not to think that the glory of one takes away from the glory proper to each of the other two Persons.

The title of Person expresses that active relationship in which human persons stand one to another as centres of voluntary activity, but it does not connote that limitation and separatedness of being which marks one man off from another. The limbs of a statue lack the unity which belongs to the living form of man. The difference between the Infinite Life and our finite existence is greater than is the difference between our finite life and the inanimate unity of the block of stone. The unity of the Three Persons in God is beyond our imagination, for we cannot rise above finite considerations.

If the nature of God did not involve something above our understanding, and at variance with the life of all created things, He would not be God; for the Infinite is not the mere exaggeration of the finite, but its contradictory. There may be union and combination between finite creatures, but unity true and proper can be predicated only of that which is Divine. God is a Unit of Being—a Unit that is all-comprehensive, for all finite things have their origin from Him, and exist by His external sustaining power; a Unit that is indivisible, for His completeness does not consist in juxtaposition of parts, but in absolute unity of power.

The Holy Ghost, therefore, is not an Agent of more power than the Incarnate Son. The Son of God did not forfeit any of His Divine power by becoming Incarnate. He does not act on a lower level than the Holy Ghost. The action of the Holy Ghost is more effectual than that of God the Son in our Humanity could be, for the Humanity of Christ approaches us as human beings from without, whereas the Holy Ghost, who comes to us by the medium of that Humanity, enters our nature from the spiritual side, breathing life into our spirits as created in the Image of God. The Humanity of Christ is given to each one of us as an infused substance by the power of the Holy Ghost. Though now in a glorified form of existence, it is a substance akin to our own. The regeneration of each one of us by the Holy Ghost coincidentally with this infusion of the glorified Humanity is an inspiration. It is the communication of a spiritual nature altogether distinct from

our own, whereby the Manhood of Christ is glorified. That inspiration is a complete Deific act. Its effects are to be appropriated lest they be lost. But it is complete as the Divine Nature is complete. The infusion of Christ's Humanity is a developing gift capable of nourishment and increase, confirmation, edification, for it is correspondent with our human nature, and Christ is to be 'formed within us' gradually. The Spirit of God cannot regenerate the nature of man save by the infusion of the Body of Christ. 'By one Spirit we are all baptized into one Body.' But the Humanity of Christ glorified only acts through the Spirit of Christ, which is its glorified life. Therefore it affects us only through the Spirit, by whose power it comes. 'It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing.' That is to say, the Flesh of Christ glorified has all its renewing virtue from the indwelling Spirit of Christ whereby it is glorified. The Godhead of Christ does not act collaterally with the Holy Ghost, for that would be a rending of the Divine Unity. The Godhead of the Word flows on in the Person of the Holy Ghost, and acts through Him, not by reason of feebleness nor in any form of co-operation, but in the absolute unity of Divine life and the glory of the eternal relationships of the Blessed Trinity.

2. HE CANNOT COME UNLESS CHRIST GO.

Those relationships required that Christ should leave the world and go to the Father, if the Holy

Ghost was to come and act in the world. By leaving the world is not intended a mere local transference of Christ's Body from the region of our companionship to some place far away. It is the exaltation of His Humanity from the weakness of created life to the Right Hand of power, from the limitation which subjects it to temporal and local accidents, so that it becomes the instrument of Divine Omnipotence in the infinity of the Divine operations.

Before the glorification of Christ, the Spirit might operate upon the world of creation from without; but all creation was, so to speak, hollow, empty—even the highest of the heavenly host. Now that created nature has been exalted to the Right Hand of God, the Spirit dwelling in that nature, by reason of His Procession from the Eternal Son, flows forth not merely upon the creatures, but into the depth of the nature of such as are regenerated in Him. The glorified substance of Christ's Humanity becomes a new substance underlying their natural substance, and with its solid imperishable glory filling the hollowness of their created superficiality. So the Holy Ghost inspires the regenerate, whereas the human nature of fallen man outside of Christ is incapable of receiving into itself that regenerating power. As members of Christ we are made to drink into the one Spirit, whereas without the solid mediation of Christ's glorified Humanity we should be incapable of appropriating the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost moved prophets from without, spake by them, wrought by them, but did not

sanctify or regenerate them. Even in the Incarnation He overshadowed Mary, descended upon her as an external power to separate from her flesh those pure elements which He would form to be the Body of Christ, and His own, His only, dwelling-place. As He infuses into us that nature now glorified, He inspires us by His own regenerating virtue, which otherwise we could no more receive than a perforated vessel could contain the fluid which should be poured into it.

While Christ was upon earth, the Holy Ghost rested upon His Humanity, but His Humanity did not possess the power of self-communication. He had emptied Himself of His Godhead, not ceasing to be God, but assuming our nature under the conditions of created life, so that the Divine solidity of His own being was His own personal, incommunicable prerogative. He acted under the power of the Holy Ghost, but He could not give forth that power to another, for the human nature which enshrined it could not transcend the physical laws of action under which it was created. Now that His human nature is at the Right Hand of power, the Holy Ghost, as the Spirit of Christ, comes with the self-communicating glory of that Humanity to act according to the will of Christ throughout His mystical Body, *i.e.* throughout all those to whom His Humanity has been communicated. The Body of Christ is the instrument, the Holy Ghost is the Spirit, whereby we are sanctified. Unless, therefore, Christ were exalted to the Right Hand of power, He could not send forth the Eternal Spirit

for our sanctification, since that Holy Spirit comes not merely by His request or authority, but through the mediation of His Humanity as the sphere of His action, and from Himself as the Head in union with whom all His members must receive their life.

3. HE COMES AT CHRIST'S MISSION.

So, then, the Son of God sends this Holy Spirit. To have the Holy Ghost proceeding from Himself as from the Father, is the special property which distinguishes the Person of God the Son. It is in accordance with this relationship that God the Son sends Him forth to sanctify the elect. It is not a mere fitness. It is an inherent necessity of the Holy Trinity that the Holy Ghost should act only as from the Son, and that the Son should act only through the Holy Ghost. Any other view of the Godhead would be tritheistic. The Three Persons are not Three Gods, but are Three Persons related one to the other in the unity of the Godhead. There is no partition of power between them, but a transcendent unity of will, so that each one of necessity has His relationship to the action of the others. The Father cannot act, setting the Son aside. He created all things by His Word. The Son cannot act, setting the Holy Ghost aside. He sends forth the Spirit to sanctify. The Holy Ghost cannot act, setting aside the originative will of the Father or the instrumental will of the Son. To act otherwise than in harmony with these eternal relationships would be for 'God to deny Himself.'

Our Lord emphasizes the necessity of His departure. He must go away in order to send. No one else can send Him. He cannot come unsent. He declares the certainty of the Spirit's coming; for if He goes to the Father, He will send the Spirit down from the Father. The time of His restraint in the form of a servant will cease. He will act as the Son of God from whom the Holy Ghost proceeds, and will send that Holy Spirit down to make His members share His glorious life.

MEDITATION XXXVIII.

The Conviction of the World.

And he, when he is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.—St. John xvi. 8.

1. OPENING THE MORAL SENSE.

JESUS will send the Comforter. The Comforter, when He is come, will convince the world.

Christ did the work, wrought out the redemption of the world. The Spirit must bring that work home to the consciences of men, make them feel the fitness of Christ's work, open their hearts to perceive its truth, effect the spiritual demonstration of the gospel.

We are not to suppose that men would receive the Apostolic message simply by natural demonstration. The moral proof is the true proof, although external demonstrative evidence is doubtless necessary in its own subordinate sphere. It is an essential element of human conviction; but however convincing, it is not enough to guarantee what is Divine. Divine truth must be recognized not by the pure reason, but by moral perception, and moral perception requires the illuminating power of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost reveals that which is invisible, so that moral perception may rise to spiritual certainty.

The Holy Ghost would personally accompany the Apostles in their life of witness. He, the Spirit of Truth, would testify, while they also in their human capacity testified. This is something quite different from inspiring them as earthly mouth-pieces. He would inspire them, but He would also bear His own Personal testimony in man's heart. Without that corroboration accompanying them, no powers wherewith He might inspire them would be of avail. The Holy Ghost works upon men's hearts, to awaken the consciousness of the supernatural world.

St. John gives us a threefold summary of what the Spirit has to bring home to men's minds—the sinful state from which man needs to be delivered, the righteousness wherein alone man can be perfected, the bruising of the serpent's head by the Redeemer's power.

The Spirit opens the moral sense to perceive relationships which transcend our daily necessities. As He testifies of Christ, so He rouses man to a sense of his own nature as transcending the circumstances of this transitory world, and containing the possibilities of limitless development both physical and moral. The Spirit makes man see that his present state is not his proper state. As in the regenerate He bears witness to us that we are the children of God, so in the world at large He bears witness that each individual man has need of this Divine adoption. The intuition of the Divine life and of our own need are correlatives. We can have no idea of the Divine glory save as gathered from

those germs of correspondence which our nature contains. The hero-gods of the heathen are imaginations of developed humanity, fashioned after the image of corruptible man. The true sense of God is the consciousness which the Spirit awakens of a higher Being, from whom our nature had its origin. As some heathen poet said, 'We are His offspring.' This sense latent in nature is quickened into action by the gift of the Spirit acting along with the Church in preventing grace. Alas! how terrible is the blindness, when those who have been trained in this consciousness as children of the Church, close their eyes to the mystery of the Personal Fatherhood of God!

2. DEMONSTRATING EVIL.

As the Spirit opens the moral sense to higher visions than those of time, it makes us feel the evil of this finite gulf of darkness. We see that we have by nature no escape, although we feel our need of the infinite light which is beyond. Hope changes to despair when it feels this world as a prison; enjoyment to disgust as the light of truth shines on what had a specious beauty, but comes out to view in its proper colour of shameful deceit.

The world has to learn the misery of things round about. The experience of life may well bring that knowledge in part. That it does not do so more fully is because of the misery and evil which we have within. This inclines men to seek satisfaction in what is superficial and untrustworthy,

and also to complain of that which really tends to their own good. The Spirit brings home the consciousness of indwelling evil. Under the Spirit's teaching we learn that we are not only in a world of evil which hinders our proper development, but that we are in a state of rebellion against the good even as far as we know it.

The convicting power of the Spirit is proportionate to the convincing power. He brings the revelation of God not so that the world knows Him, but so that the world knows His unknownness, and knows that that incapacity of knowing God is a result of blindness superinduced upon our finite nature by sin.

The consciousness of blindness which the Spirit stimulates is a penitential longing for a power which the soul recognizes as part of the original endowment of man's nature, an element of the supernatural righteousness in which Adam was constituted so as to be the son of God.

Philosophy, rejecting the aspirations of the Spirit, accepts the unknowableness of God as a law of that natural world over which, in its pride, it claims the mastery. It knows not, and it does not desire to know. It repudiates all intimations by which any knowledge of the Infinite Truth might be acquired, content to think of our nature, in spite of its ennobling yearnings, as if the blindness which is the penalty of sin were a defect of man's original creation.

3. AWAKENING TO RESPONSIBILITY.

The Spirit thus moving upon the waters of man's heart dispels that ice-bound stillness of spiritual death. The head necessarily recognizes the world of the Infinite, the Absolute, as greater than this world; but pride rejects all practical consideration of it. The Spirit quickens our sensibility, that we may feel our relation to the unseen power, and own our responsibility in action, although the knowledge of that world in itself may for the time be hidden.

In how many ways are we responsible for events which depend upon our own action, although the chain of causation which binds those events together baffles all power of scientific investigation! Ignorance, therefore, does not destroy responsibility, if we possess any tokens which mark the sequence of events, although to outward appearance there may be no connection. The Spirit helps us to see our responsibility in spiritual things. He does not bring hidden verities in obtrusive nakedness before the eye, but He leads us to appreciate the bearing of our present conduct on the future which awaits us. He makes us feel that our relation to God is a real one, however little we may seem to be capable of knowing Him, and that we have to give account to Him of actions which must be none the less directed to His glory because He is unseen. The Spirit reveals Him as claiming our love. It is that same Spirit who enables the regenerate to love Him.

MEDITATION XXXIX.

The World.

He . . . will convict the world.—St. John xvi. 8.

1. THE NATURAL ORDER IN ITS PERFECTION.

IT is the work of the Spirit to convince the world. Christ's Presence does not do that. The world of itself is too blind to recognize it. Christ was to sit at the Right Hand of the Father, and then the Father would make His foes His footstool. The Father would subdue the world to Christ by the power of the Holy Ghost. So our Lord says, 'No man can come unto Me, unless the Father which hath sent Me draw him.' The world and Christ are opposites. Christ took upon Himself our nature; but He did not sanctify mankind in its totality, although He sanctified our nature in its completeness. There was no element of our nature which He did not assume, but His assumption did not affect any one outside of Himself. He called His disciples 'out of the world,' as He called them to be incorporated into Himself. The influence of His Incarnation was not a diffusive sanctification of mankind, but an inclusive sanctification of human nature, so that those into whom His Humanity is infused as a regenerating instrument become new

creatures in Him, and are raised out of the corruptions of the old world.

The world, however, was not to be swept away in order that God might form a new body in Christ. God sent His Son 'into the world,' not as an angelic herald like Gabriel coming to Mary, but by a real incarnation, to be identified with the world in nature as truly as He was opposed to it in aim.

The world is in itself the object of the Divine love, for it is the organic material expression of an idea present to the Divine mind eternally as the kingdom in which His Son should reign. His 'kingdom is not of this world' (John xviii. 36). The kingdom is in Himself, a Personal Power, but the world is the framework which that Personal Sovereignty should quicken by a new organization, not by external means so that His servants have to 'fight' for it, but by Divine communication, the power of the Holy Ghost.

This organism of human society was smothered up in the accidents of human corruption. No human effort of reformation could, or ever can, set it free. The old worldly corruption remains inherent in all socialistic efforts, however well intended, and however much impregnated with Christian principles. A new life is necessary in order to remove the corruption, but that new life does not start with *tabulæ novæ*, a fresh organization. It is a spiritual power regenerating that social order which makes the antagonistic kingdoms of the world to belong to God and to His Christ (Rev. xi. 15). Although during the continuance of the present state the

sovereignty of Christ be in affliction, the patience and kingdom of Jesus Christ is preparing for the glory and triumph which is to be hereafter (Rev. i. 9), when the kingdom shall be manifested. All anticipation of that kingdom is equally anti-christian, whether the effort be to set the world aside by ecclesiastical domination or by spiritual self-will. The world is the sphere—mankind at large. The will of Christ is the sovereign principle, acting independently of all human legislations. The Spirit of Christ is the subduing Power, building together the elect for manifestation in the great day when the city of God is complete.

2. THE ABSENCE OF DIVINE FELLOWSHIP.

‘The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.’ That darkness was not of nature, but by reason of the Fall. It was the loss of that correspondence with the Creator’s will which ought to have sustained the world in purity and joy. Darkness was upon the face of the deep, doubtless by reason of the fall of the prince of this world and his evil angels. ‘He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own home, and His own people received Him not.’ Thus does St. John declare the Presence of God in the world by the Word of His power. That Word of power was in the world, but it was not the Word of life. The course of nature testifies to God’s inherent power (Rom. i.), but that is not the quickening immanence of

personal identification. He who 'was' thus in the world 'came' into the world by taking the Manhood personally into union with the Godhead. Now the union with God was a union of immanence that could not be destroyed.

Yet was the blindness of the creature at large not removed by this special union of the assumed flesh. On the contrary, the antagonism between God and the fallen world became the more intensified by the manifestation of God in the flesh. The close proximity of action necessitated the deeper consciousness of separation. When He took upon Himself the flesh predestined for Himself, those who were akin to Him would have nothing to say to Him. The Divine Presence annihilated any superiority which their pride would have felt in the ties of consanguinity to a merely human prophet. Being God, He belonged as much to the whole world as to the chosen race. Their groundwork of pride was destroyed. All who would come to Him from whatever race were as near and as welcome as they were who were the heirs of the promises. 'As many as received Him,' of whatsoever race, 'to them gave He,' who was the Son of Abraham, 'power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name' as the Eternal Son of God (John i. 12).

So, then, His coming into the world, instead of sanctifying the world, made the antagonism of the world to God only the more apparent.

The mission of the Spirit of Truth was necessary in order to effect a union between the Incarnate Son and the world outside. It was necessary first

of all to awaken the conviction of higher truth, and then to effect the regenerating consubstantiation with the Divine Word—to produce from the wild olive tree the fruitfulness of Divine life. ‘By one Spirit we are all baptized into one Body.’

None, however, could be taken into the new olive tree unless they were taken out of the world. They might have grown upon the wild olive tree of Gentile parentage. They must be cut out of that which is natural in order to be grafted into that which is supernatural. Even if they belonged to the ancient covenanted people, they could gain no exemption from the supernatural claim of the new covenant. Broken off from the old stem, they needed to be grafted in again, although into their own olive tree. There was no fellowship of fruitful life between that which was below, and the Branch of the Lord which sprouted up in the fulness of Messianic power.

So, then, the perfection of the world, even under the training of the Mosaic law, needed the preventing grace of the Holy Ghost. The old world had to pass away, and God would form it anew, not by external reformation, but by internal renovation and supernatural regeneration. There was no fellowship between light and darkness. All the evils of Christendom in successive ages have originated in the endeavour to substitute the influence of nature for the regeneration by the Spirit of grace. Men cannot learn their need of Christ by any experience of outward social difficulty. They cannot learn the life of Christ by any reorganization of things around

them. The Spirit of love must reproduce Christ within us, so that by His indwelling life we may become the sons of God.

3. WHAT SHALL THE END BE? .

We are not to be surprised that the work of the Spirit fails with so many. The Holy Ghost is Almighty, but He does not act with Almighty compulsion, although He gives Almighty support. The act of receiving Christ must be an act of individual volition, although it is done under the influence of the Almighty Spirit. To come out of the world and enter the kingdom of Christ is probably not much less of a trial in one age of the world than it has been in any age preceding. 'The affliction, the patience, and the kingdom of Christ' remain as the continuous description of the Church militant, even though there be an outward acceptance of Christ.

The Spirit's dazzling power blinds instead of enlightening those who will not respond to His supernatural impulse with the trustful acceptance of a humble heart. The more Christian principles are recognized, the more fatal is the condition if the supernatural power of Christ is not accepted as the only adequate power of renewal. Indeed, the more the world could be reformed, the worse would it be for the world, if the Spirit of Christ be not recognized as the only Giver of life. Evils make men dissatisfied with earthly things, whether they come to Christ or no. The instigation of evil, instead of preparing the way for Christ, makes men delude

themselves into the idea that they can do without Him.

This may very likely be the condition of the world in the days of the final antichrist. The conviction of the Spirit repudiated, and a natural Christ taking the place of the crucified Saviour, men will hate God, because they have not risen up under the suasive influence of His blessed Spirit to the love of the truth.

MEDITATION XL.

Conviction of Sin.

Of sin, because they believe not on me.—St. John xvi. 9.

1. THE FALLEN WORLD.

CHRIST does not come into the world to judge the world (John xii. 47), but His coming is for judgment (John ix. 39). His personal act is that of a Saviour, but the natural operation of His Divine nature could not be restrained from exerting its influence as a test of the human heart, so as to elicit the love or the hatred of those to whom He came. 'He that is of God, heareth the words of God. The Jews therefore heard them not, because they themselves were not of God' (John viii. 47).

So the Spirit of God speaking through the utterances of Christ showed the Jews that they were fallen. They had been called with a Divine predestination, but they had closed their ears. They had surrendered themselves to worldly schemes. They could not convict Christ of sin (John viii. 46). Therefore they convicted themselves in that they did not accept His message.

How, then, were they thus under the dominion of sin? It was because they 'sought righteousness

by the deeds of the law,' and their own law itself taught them plainly how impossible it was to gain righteousness by the law. It spoke to them as a fallen race. They were to 'die like Adam,' instead of rising up to the Divine sonship (Ps. lxxxii. 7), according to the predestination of the Divine promise. The new life was to be given by a Prophet whom they had to expect and obey, and unless they would listen to the words of that Prophet, God would require it of them (Deut. xviii. 19).

The Holy Spirit coming amongst them showed their incapacity of rising up to the Divine call. The Presence of Christ was a test. The further personal ministration of the Spirit would bring the power of His Presence home to their hearts so as to complete their condemnation.

As the gospel was first preached to the Jews, so would they be the first to manifest the stubbornness of sin. As the Word of truth was proclaimed to the world, so would it be manifest that all were under sin. There would be a world-wide rejection of Christ, although there would be a world-wide acceptance of Him. In every nation some would obey the call, but the ministry of the Church would develop in every time and country the hatred of the human heart. Sin would be shown in its power at the same time that it would be manifested in its hatefulness. Sin would be known as it never had been known before, in the presence of a sanctified community, living by the power of the Holy Ghost in a Divine fellowship which was before unknown, but the sinfulness of the human heart would be shown

in that it would refuse to rise to the righteousness of Divine life in Christ.

2. THE LOSS OF FAITH.

The secret of their sinfulness was their unbelief. No law of outward observance could give life, but God required from man a living righteousness. They must receive life by believing in the Name of Christ if they were to live in the righteousness of God. The Jews would not come to Christ that they might have life. The same is true of multitudes in the present day. Under various pretexts the supernatural life of Christ is repudiated, whereas it is the only power by which men can rise from sin, and their blind sinfulness is the occasion of their unbelief.

Various ages may reject Christ's supernatural life in various ways; sometimes, perhaps, in ways that seem to be quite contradictory to others. In every age, the power of sin arises from the non-recognition of Christ as a Divine Principle of supernatural righteousness. It may be that Christ's ordinances are Judaically observed, while the power inherent in the form of godliness is neglected; or it may be that men are content with the moral principles of Christianity, not seeking the grace which is needed in order to act with that spirituality of affection which shall make them pleasing to God; or it may be that they measure Christianity by piety of sentiment, not believing that the ordinances which Christ has ordained are essential to the reality of

their spiritual life ; or it may be that they deny all supernatural holiness, as if our new birth in Christ did not lift us up into any higher fellowship with God in righteous service than was possible in the misery of our fallen estate. It may be that the tyranny of sin is shown by secular reliance upon ecclesiastical splendour, or by covetousness holding men back from self-sacrifice to God, or by failure of reverence dishonouring the Presence of God in His sanctuary, or by distrusting the reality of Christ's promise when the outward phenomena of His Church, whether temporal or spiritual, seem to be inadequate and unworthy. The outward trial of life in the world, under all circumstances, is practically the same. The Holy Ghost calls us to the judgment of faith, altogether distinct from that of carnal reason. The sinfulness of our heart is made apparent because we do not welcome the righteousness of Christ as the living principle whereby alone we escape sin. He is made unto us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption (1 Cor. i. 30).

3. THE ABSENCE OF HOPE.

The sinfulness of the unbelieving state is shown by its hopelessness. Sin tyrannizes over the present life, and shuts out all hope for the future. Faith is the substance of things hoped for ; and while we believe in Christ, we look forward for the hidden virtue of His mediation to be revealed hereafter as the eternal glory of His members. The Holy Ghost

develops the sense of a future life more keenly than the heathen possess it. But then, if we do not come to Christ to seek for life, we are shown to be the slaves of sin more manifestly than the heathen are ; for we cannot claim the bright hope of immortality and life which are set before us in the gospel, and are driven back either to the anguish of remorse, or the dreary hopelessness of philosophic unbelief, or the reckless degradation of sensual indifference. If we believe not in the covenant of God with its appointed ordinances, its lofty responsibilities, its spiritual powers, and its glorious promises, we have no other way of escape to which we can look so as to be delivered from the condition of sinners before God. Sin is seen in its present tyranny and its retributive claim upon the sinner to eternity, while the Holy Church shines so that the nations of those that are being saved walk in the light thereof, and the offer of grace is made in His Name, by whom alone we have access unto the Father.

MEDITATION XLI.

Conviction of Righteousness.

Of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye behold me no more.—St. John xvi. 10.

1. THE ACCEPTANCE OF CHRIST.

THE Holy Spirit reveals the world in its sinfulness. It shows how far the world is from realizing the intention of its Creator. The sin of the creature is in missing the mark of the Creator's purpose. Righteousness is the true correspondence between the creature and the Creator. The Comforter shows how this is realized in Christ. By the Spirit He offered Himself without spot to God. The acceptance of that sacrifice is shown in that God raised Him from the dead. The resurrection of Christ shows the righteousness of Christ. He is 'declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection of the dead' (Rom. i. 4).

The Apostles were to go forth as witnesses of His resurrection, and the Spirit accompanying them would show not merely that the resurrection was a reality; He would show that it was the beginning of a new life. A principle of resurrection was communicated to man, so that men might be brought to a new life of righteousness in union with the risen

Saviour. He would convince the world of righteousness as a real power, which is the original normal law of human nature, although mankind are so grievously fallen from it. We are made the righteousness of God in Him. So, then, the Holy Spirit manifests the sinfulness of the natural man and the righteousness of the new man. His mission is an appeal to the world to rise to the life of Christ, that they may find acceptance in the Beloved.

2. THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD.

The witness of the Spirit to this Divine righteousness is a result of Jesus ascending to the Father. The promise of life to Abraham's seed is a promise from the Father; and Christ, as the Seed to whom the promise was made, can only exercise that life by going to the Father. That life, which is the power of righteousness, is not a separate individual life given to the various inheritors of the promise in Christ, so that they shall each act by himself. It is a Divine life, and can only be exercised in union with the Father from whom it comes. While, therefore, Christ was upon earth, the glory of this righteousness was held back from manifestation. It cannot be exercised in its true and proper fulness save by exaltation to the Right Hand of power.

The Father, who is the Source of Godhead, is the Source of righteousness. The Divine life, and therefore the Divine righteousness, comes from Him. It is the Father that justifies, or makes us righteous, by sending the Spirit of His Son into our hearts,

that we may live as members of His glorified Body. If Christ were not glorified in His Humanity at the Right Hand of the Father, we could not have this gift of righteousness.

The righteousness which the Holy Ghost effects in the saints is a supernatural righteousness. It is manifest to the world that the Church possesses a spiritual life, which makes those who are believers in Christ superior to the world. In individuals this superiority may be sadly obscured, but it is manifest that Christian people, taken as a whole, do possess some secret of life which brings power, joy, and blessing. The righteousness of God is manifest in the social benefits which gradually but surely the Church has conferred upon mankind, not by outward superiority of station, but the power of the Holy Ghost inculcating Divine maxims by their life, and practising Divine charity in their lives.

The Holy Ghost in the Church is a witness to the righteousness of God acting and speaking in the members of His Body, while He, the Head, is abiding in the glory of the Father.

3. THE INVISIBLE GLORY.

The righteousness which is of God is by faith. It comes through sacraments of external transmission, but it is a spiritual power which faith alone can appropriate.

As long as Christ was visibly present with the Apostles, they could not claim this living union with Him. They were external to Him, and His Humanity

was external to the Divine glory. When He went unto the Father, they would no longer see Him as an Object whereon to meditate, as containing a gift which they wanted to receive. They would contemplate Him in His Divine glory as being themselves one with Him. Their life would be in Him. They would know that they possessed all that was His. His righteousness would shine forth in them to the world, in the power of the Holy Ghost whom He would send unto them from the Father.

This righteousness would be hidden in its source, but it would be manifest in their lives. Alas, that it should be so little manifest as it is now! We do not sufficiently remember how manifest it ought to be, the great difference between the Christian Church, the Communion of Saints born of God, and the world at large lying in the wicked one.

We may forget, but the mission of the Comforter does not cease. The very sins of Christians become the more manifest by contrast with the law of the Spirit, and so they serve to make that law the more noticeable in its non-observance. The Christian religion stands out before the world in its Divine purity with nothing like to it, whether men live true to it or no. The life of Christ personally dwelling upon the earth has been a consummation of righteousness which has no paragon; but though it be unmatched, it is a parent of righteousness whereby others are to live. He is Himself the Pattern to which His members must be conformed, as He is the Head from whom the transforming virtue comes. The lingering earthliness of nature obscures, but it

cannot destroy, the glory. The Comforter whom Christ sends unto us from the Father attests the truth of the Christian Church by convincing the world of a righteous ideal, embodied in the faithful, which transcends all teachings of other cults as infinitely as the life of Jesus, the Lord our Righteousness, transcends the life of every other teacher.

The world had its theories of righteousness, both the Jewish world and the heathen. They availed not. If there had been a law which could have given life, righteousness should have been attained, as the Jews hoped to attain it, by the glorious law which Moses delivered to them from God. But all was dead. The ascension of Jesus and the gift of the Holy Ghost are the beginning of life and righteousness, a form of living lustre before which all carnal ideas of merely human righteousness must pass away. The world is convicted of the sinfulness of its acts and of the inadequacy of its noblest imaginations. The unseen Lord makes His glory manifest in His saints. Righteousness goes before Him to make His footsteps a way of holiness, and the redeemed shall walk therein (Ps. lxxxv. 13; Is. xxxv. 9).

MEDITATION XLII.

Conviction of Judgment.

Of judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged.—St. John xvi. 11.

1. THE FINAL JUDGMENT AT HAND.

IN the time before Christ, when the sense of sin was obscure and the true righteousness unknown, there could be but little idea of the judgment to come. Man's responsibility was scarcely felt. In various religious philosophies it was ignored.

Now, however, the gift of the Comforter would develop the sense of man's responsibility. The proclamation of a Saviour involved the truth of a judgment to come. 'Righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come' (Acts xxiv. 24) naturally belong together. Of these St. Paul spake. There can be no righteousness if there is no judgment to approve, no judgment if there is no righteousness to be vindicated.

The Comforter, therefore, will convict the world of its danger, inasmuch as it has to appear before the judgment of God. The personal relationship of the soul to God the Creator is drawn out in the three heads—the soul's need, the soul's power, the soul's responsibility. The conception of a future state is not any longer to be a trance, a dream, a

possibility. It stands forth with a reality greater than belongs to the outer things of sense in this present world. Sin is a real bondage; righteousness a Divine life; judgment an inevitable self-manifestation.

The Comforter is a Person, and so He will bring this threefold truth home with personal conviction to the hearts of men.

If the world had not this conviction effected by the power of the Holy Ghost, it would be in vain for the Apostles to approach the world with the gospel message. These preliminary thoughts are essential if the world is to take any interest in what the Apostles would say concerning Christ. 'The past times of ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent; because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the inhabitants of the earth in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead' (Acts xvii. 30, 31).

2. THE PRINCE OF THIS WORLD.

The prince of this world held the nations under his power in former time. We think too little of the greatness of his power as it was of old. We do not sufficiently estimate how really his power was broken by the redemption of Christ. Consequently we do not praise God as we ought to do for our present freedom, nor do we give the care which is fitting to avoid that consolidation of his power

which he is ever seeking to re-establish, and which he probably will temporarily re-establish before the end comes—re-establishing, by deceiving the nations, the tyranny which he acquired of old by the submission of Adam.

We are sworn to fight against the world, the flesh, and the devil. The ancient world knew not the prince of this world as an enemy with whom they had to contend. They were his slaves, and knew it not.

Ho is by creation the prince of this world (*κόσμου*); but he has rebelled against the Creator, and therefore he must be cast out in the end. Christ has come to rescue the order of creation out of his power, and reconstitute it in Himself by a glorious resurrection. Nevertheless, the whole world still lieth in the wicked one (1 John v. 19). It is only they who are gathered into Christ who are made partakers of the life of God, and those who fall away from Christ fall back into the death which belongs to Satan.

He is the god not of this world, as an organized universe, for that is God's creation, but of this present age, as a transitory phase of rebellion against the Creator (*αιῶνος*, 2 Cor. iv. 4). As such he blinds the minds of those who are under his dominion, so that the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the Image of the true God, may not shine upon them.

While the strong man armed was keeping his palace his goods were in peace, but now the prince of this world has been hurled from his throne. He

goes about seeking whom he may devour. A light from heaven has burst in upon the darkness of the nations.

3. THE REBEL OVERTHROWN.

The prince of this world was judged, the Seed of the woman bruised the serpent's head, on Calvary. This beginning of a new day awakens the world from the dreamy torpor of past ages to a sense of the coming judgment which awaits themselves. The Comforter will prepare men's hearts to receive the gospel, by arousing a consciousness of their responsibility which they could not have while the darkness of Satan's empire spread in its unbroken sway. The ascension of Christ was necessary, in order that He might obtain the gift of life, with authority to give it unto men. The overthrow of Satan's tyranny, the judgment of the prince of this world, was necessary, in order that man might be able to receive the gift. The rebel prince has been cast down, and now, feeling themselves set free from his domination, must gain a sense of the judgment which awaits themselves. They can no longer plead the bondage of the sinful power which held them down. Christ has shown forth the triumphant righteousness of the Avenger who should fight for God. The head of the serpent has been bruised. The establishment of the Church militant here on earth is a call to all nations and individuals to join the army of the living God. They must feel that they have to join in battle against the conquered rebel, or else they will expose themselves

to be cast into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt. xxv. 41). He has been judged, but there is a delay in accomplishing his doom. That cannot be fulfilled until the nations of the earth have had their trial, and the number of God's elect from amongst all nations has been made complete.

Such are the preliminaries of inspiration which the Comforter will bring home to men's hearts, in order that they may receive the Word of truth. How important it is for us in the ministry of the Word to bear this in mind! We toil in vain in trying to convince people of subordinate truths before the Holy Spirit has brought them to a real sense of the supernatural. We enter too often upon our work as if it just rested with us to convince the world of the truth of God. But it cannot be. Such conviction cannot be wrought in the soul save by the power of the Holy Ghost.

MEDITATION XLIII.

Growth of Knowledge.

I have yet many things to say unto you.—St. John xvi. 12.

1. REVELATION EXPANDING.

JESUS, the Word of God, contains within Himself all truth. The living truth is one. Its oneness develops itself in multiplicity without losing the oneness of vitality. The final truth is not the gathering back of many into one. It is the manifestation of the unbroken unity, known here in part and prophesied in part, but in the end shining out with the glorious triumphant energy of the Eternal Mind.

That mind, personally self-expressing in the Consubstantial Word, assumes our flesh and speaks through our nature, creating, ordering, developing, filling that nature with increment of wisdom according to the needs of each moment as it grows in this present world by the spiritual intuition of Divine fellowship. In its communication to others it is limited by their capacity of reception, not only as to things told, but as to the apprehension of what each thing thus told contained; for, in truth, each truth contains all. Divine truth finds a sort of parable in the structure of the animal frame, which exists by

such a law that one bone implies all the other bones belonging to the same organism. Those to whom Jesus spoke could only receive His Word in its human delivery. They could not receive the Divine Spirit which filled it with life (John vi. 63). The human teaching was to prepare them for something further. Jesus knew how much they could carry. The Divine Word supports the recipient, strengthens the human faculty to bear what is altogether beyond its own strength of understanding, or endurance, or devotion. But it strengthens by deifying. The human faculty is made to live with the Divine life, so that it may correspond with the Divine revelation. When Christ took the Apostles into union with Himself, they began to apprehend the truth with a Divine knowledge. Thus they were able to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. But ere they could grow in the knowledge of the Word, they must be taken into the life of the Word. So would that Word be revealed increasingly within them in all the manifoldness of its purpose. Each truth would be not merely an added weight, but an added power. Christ had many things to say, but He would speak not after the manner of human prophesying, point by point, but in the exhaustless onflow of Divine life.

We are prone to confound the utterance of many truths with the communication of truth as a living whole. We wonder that people will not accept truths, but really they cannot accept them because we bring them to their notice as earthly truths, and

without due regard to the Spirit's presence who alone can give vitality to our statements. The fault is in the overhastiness of the utterance.

2. DIVINE PURPOSE EFFICIENT.

Jesus came to speak that which He had seen with His Father (John viii. 40). The eternal predestination contained all that was now to be declared to the Apostles. The Word of God would not be driven into dumbness, but the whole will be uttered eventually. He speaks not of Himself, nor does the Holy Spirit speak of Himself. It is the Word of God which goeth forth from age to age, the exhaustless Word, speaking from the exhaustless mind of the Divine love. His Word will accomplish that which He pleases, and will prosper in the thing whereto He sends it. His creative Word will so speak as to give the capacity of hearing. The sanctifying Spirit opens the ear to receive the Word of Christ. Jesus cannot speak so that men shall bear the Divine message unless the Spirit accompany His utterance, fitting men to hear.

How needful is it to seek for this co-operation of the Spirit, not only teaching the speaker what to say, but also quickening the hearer that he may hear! In vain would Christ speak if the Apostles are not yet prepared to hear. Only we must not think that men will learn to bear truth by having it given them earthly-wise, piecemeal. The truth must be spoken in the integrity of its principle so that men's hearts may be drawn under the power

of the Holy Spirit. Then will they grow in their power of hearing and bearing. The Spirit must work along with the speaker, and speak through words of eternal life.

3. HUMAN CAPACITY WANTING.

There must be many an experience of Christ helping to fit the soul to receive God's truth. The Apostles would witness the sufferings of Christ. They would be led onward to contemplate the mystery of His resurrection. After that He would open their minds to understand the Scriptures.

So do the stern conflicts of the outer life prepare us to receive the spiritual truth of Christ. The reliance upon outward things must be shaken. The consciousness of the higher world must become to us not only an intellectual conviction, but a spiritual power. The Apostles as yet knew Christ after the flesh, but not in the fulness of His heavenly glory. They must know Him so no more. When He came again they would be changed. Present sorrow now kept them from rising up in the power of the truth. Every earthly thing must be shaken. They would not gain merely by seeing things pass away. In order to profit they must be themselves identified with that which would not pass away.

How dull we are, and how little do we know our dullness! How apt are we to think of the supernatural rather as an exaggeration of the natural than as really contradictory to it! How prone to suppose that if we only know more of God's purposes we

shall be ready to bear anything, instead of acknowledging the infirmity of the flesh, which makes it good for us at present not to know! We must grow in submission, that we may be able to bear what God requires as we learn by degrees how great that requirement is. Yet the truth is one. We do not learn first one truth and then another. We have to be disciplined in the truth as a living power in holy obedience, and the witness which we render to the world in suffering will strengthen us for the vision of glory which shall be revealed by the experience of heaven in our own hearts.

MEDITATION XLIV.

The Guidance of the Spirit.

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth.—
St. John xvi. 13.

1. THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH NECESSARY FOR DIVINE KNOWLEDGE.

THE Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, comes to be the Vicar of Christ, conveying the sovereign will of His Headship to all the members of His mystical Body. His action has a threefold specification.

- (1) He abides for ever (ch. xiv. 16).
- (2) He testifies of Christ (ch. xv. 26).
- (3) He guides into all the truth (ch. xvi. 13).

Christ reveals, but the Spirit guides. Christ is the Word of the Father, but without the Spirit's quickening power the heart of man cannot receive the Word. There is a necessity for the operation of the Holy Ghost inherent in the nature of God and inherent in the nature of man.

In God there is an inherence of living power which necessitates the action of the Holy Ghost going forth along with the Divine Word. The Word is a living Word, not a word dying in its utterance as the words of man, but living eternally with Divine efficacy to effect what He declares. This creative

energy is the Presence of the Holy Ghost inalienably present with the Divine Word.

There is an inherence of feebleness in man which necessitates the operation of the Holy Ghost in order that man may hear the Divine Word. Creation springs into being by the power of the Divine Word. It obeys, though it has no conscious power of hearing. The Holy Ghost holds it up as by an external grasp, so that it may be conformed to the Divine Will.

But not even the highest intelligences have, by virtue of their creation, any power of hearing the Word of God. The Spirit of God must bring the Word into their consciousness. Unless there be this inbreathing of Divine life, there is no possibility for man's finite mind to receive the infinite truth of God. So the Holy Ghost creates an infinite receptivity to be conscious of the Word of God as the finite natural senses are conscious of the finite external world.

Thus St. Paul says, 'No man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him. Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received . . . the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things which are freely given to us of God. . . . We have the mind of Christ' (1 Cor. ii. 11, 12, 16).

Thus the Spirit comes not merely to uphold the natural intelligence by external power, but to inspire a Divine intelligence that we may know Divine truth.

How terribly has the loss of the *disciplina arcani* undivined our Christian habits of thought! We

speak of Divine things not merely to the world, but amongst ourselves, as if they had the mere truth of the outer nature, and not the truth of Divine mystery. But the *arcanum* was not a mere secret which the early Christians did not divulge. It was a mystery which required a spiritual understanding in order to be received. It was a mystery which none but the regenerate could know. Human words could not express it in its living power. Consequently we fight in modern controversy about contradictions of natural apprehension, because we lose the higher vision of the Spirit, whereby alone the things belonging to the Word of God can be contemplated.

2. GUIDING INTO ALL THE TRUTH.

Thus does the Spirit 'open the heart' to receive Divine truth, by penetrating within the substance of the external nature, not merely as the word of man penetrates through the natural ear to the spiritual intelligence, but deeper far than this. The Spirit penetrates through the sensible intelligence to quicken the affections with a Divine love. The hollowness of man's inmost spirit becomes thus a chamber for the Divine wisdom. The soul becomes divinely sensible of the things of God.

The Holy Ghost thus inspiring the intelligence leads the affections to rejoice in the Divine truth. That truth proclaimed by Christ in its unity has to be experienced in its far-reaching reality. The Holy Ghost guides not into fresh truths, but into

the truth in its integrity. What Christ proclaimed, man could not naturally receive. By the power of the Holy Ghost he is led into the fulness of the knowledge.

This does not imply that the Holy Ghost will make fresh points clear, or formulate fresh utterances of orthodoxy as time goes on. Such decisions, when legitimately made by the Church, are doubtless a result of His guidance; but His guidance is rather practical, so that the whole body of revealed truth, as a living entity, may become the rule of our life with joyous and sanctifying experience.

The Spirit must work thus personally in every heart and conscience. He guides not only the Church in her collective utterance, but each individual in his private apprehension. He does not come at stated times and only for formal and authoritative action. As the wind is ever breathing, so His Presence is a continual coming. So we say, 'Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire.' His inspiration comes to each individual soul, and without it none can accept the teaching of the Church, although they may accept her accredited phraseology. This is the fulfilment of the promise, 'They shall be all taught of God.' So the faith is not a watchword of agreement which we accept in order to be admitted into the Church. We are 'baptized into the faith' as a living system of Divine consciousness which we share as individuals along with our brethren in Christ. We must build ourselves up in this most holy faith.

3. IN THE POWER OF THE DIVINE LIFE.

The Holy Ghost thus dwells personally with every Christian and collectively with the whole Church. His Presence is the guidance of Divine power. We cannot walk in the faith without His personal sustaining Presence.

He leads us, showing the way, personally encouraging us, and directing our affections to that which the truth requires.

He takes us by the hand, upholding us so that we may not fall, strengthening us to persevere, however much the flesh may rebel.

He illuminates us to see the bearings of Divine truth upon the outward accidents of life.

He enables us to grow in the grace of Christ, so that we may walk in the law of the Lord by the development within ourselves of His renewing humanity.

He opens our hearts to a consciousness of our adoption in Christ, so that we may speak to God as our Father.

He establishes us in the unity of the Divine life and the glory of the beatific vision.

MEDITATION XLV.

The Spirit's Ministry.

For he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak: and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come.—St. John xvi. 13.

1. HIS PERSONAL PROCESSION.

THE Holy Ghost, the Comforter, does not speak as a separate created Agent of the Godhead, carrying out the will of God according to His own mind. His Personality is a derived Personality, a relationship whose whole activity is in correspondence with the Father from whom it is derived, and with the Son as the Image of the Father from whom it is subordinately derived, in the unbroken unity of Divine life. This correspondence is described as 'hearing,' because it is not a mere mechanical echo from created substance. It is the complete act of One who knows and wills. The act of Godhead never loses its personal property. It cannot be other than Personal, because the Person and the Substance cannot be separated in the Godhead one from the other. The 'hearing,' therefore, expresses the relationship of receptivity, and that not the receptivity of the only begotten Son, who doeth whatever He seeth the Father do, and speaks from the Father, but the further subordination by which

the Father's Word is heard. 'Seeing' is the expression for the Son's relationship as the Father's Image; and as He is the Word, 'hearing' is the expression for the relationship of the Holy Ghost to both the Father and the Son. So also 'hearing' is applied to the Humanity of Christ, acting as the Word, the Divine Personality, directs (John v. 30). It is as Man that Jesus exercises the judgment. As Man, therefore, He hears. Jesus does not say 'what He heareth of the Father,' as He said before 'what He seeth the Father do,' for the Son acts in subordination to the Father alone as the image in a mirror corresponds with the movements of a figure gazing thereon, but the Holy Ghost acts in subordination to the Father and the Son, the Source of the Word, and the Eternal Word whereby the Father speaks.

If the Holy Ghost speaks from the Father, He also speaks only in unity of act with the Father. He speaks not *by* Himself, because He speaks not *of* Himself. There is no submission of will whereby He speaks, for then the utterance, however imitative, would have a created origin and a created substance, so that it could not be adequate to express the Divine Word. The Eternal Consubstantial Word of the Father proceeds in him as the living Power of Godhead, whereby the Word Himself abides in the unity of the Father's Substance. Without this Procession of the Holy Ghost in Himself, He Himself would be an utterance of the Father, losing Divine life in the very act of utterance. The Word abiding in the unity of the Holy Ghost with the Father speaks with the fulness of consubstantial

identity in the Holy Ghost, and thus remains in the unbroken act of Godhead. The act of Godhead goes forth in the Triune consciousness of the Eternal, and thus also in the dispensation of time the Word, acting by the Holy Ghost with creative omnipotence, sustains the creatures in their several orders of life with an external Divine grasp. Thus also subsequently by the Holy Ghost the same Word, personally penetrating to the depth of the chosen Humanity, elevates it with interior impulse to become the created instrument of the Incarnate Lord.

2. HIS COMPLETE UTTERANCE.

The Holy Ghost thus speaks as being One with the Father and the Eternal Word. Consequently He speaks all that that Word contains. Jesus could not speak all by the lips of His Humanity. His whole Being as the Word of the Father comes forth in the Divine utterance of the coequal Spirit.

The words of a human speaker tell but a small part of what is in the speaker's mind. It is not so with the Word of God. The Word is the entire self-expression of the Father, the true and perfect Image of His predestinating mind. Not in part as a speaker in time, but with integrity, once for all, imperishably the Creator speaks.

Therefore the Holy Ghost, as the Divine utterance, speaks by one act the whole mind of the Creator for the guidance of the creatures in whom He comes to dwell. The infusion of grace by the Body of Christ varies according to the measure of

every part, with special gifts for the work of each. The inspiration of the Holy Ghost is a Presence of Divine life, and therefore it is one and the same in all members of the Body, the very life of Christ the Head, hidden with Christ in God, manifest according to the gifts of Christ in His members upon the earth.

‘Whatever He hears’ is the Divine subject of the Spirit’s speech. It does not imply a complete prediction of all that shall happen in time, but a full communication of Divine fellowship in eternal life. The Holy Ghost cannot be said to hear the things of time. They come from His speech. He hears the Will of the Father, and speaks according to the successive receptivity of the created basis. As a perpendicular surface reflected upon an inclined plane, so we may think of the eternal projecting itself upon the temporal.

3. HIS DECLARATION OF THE FUTURE.

‘He will show you things to come.’ Without the inspiration which He gives, we cannot know the things of the kingdom of heaven, the Christian Church, the world to come. So St. Paul speaks of our Christian calling by a cognate phrase. We have been ‘enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the noble utterance of God, and the powers of the future age’ (Heb. vi. 4, 5). The Holy Spirit thus reveals to the faithful the glory of the future age, the coming kingdom of Christ, the

blessedness of the Divine adoption. These are, indeed, summed up in 'the love of God, which is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost.' That love is no ignorant affection. It is a love worthy of God as being the expression of the knowledge of God, and the power whereby that knowledge is possessed. It is the knowledge of God's excellences which calls for our love. It is by love that we have knowledge of God's excellence, for only love can know what love is, and God is Love. But the Holy Ghost awakens in us a worthy love, because He reveals within us an adequate knowledge.

He announces to us things to come, preparing us to expect them, enabling us to rejoice in them, perfecting us that we may obtain them. He that hath an ear must hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches. 'The Spirit and the Bride say, Come' (Rev. xxii. 17). The testimony of the Spirit accompanies the appeal of the Bride, calling us. 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God' (1 Cor. ii. 9, 10). So does He open the eyes of our understanding, building us up in Christ, revealing the Son of God within us. So 'we all, with open face beholding as in a glass [or, 'reflecting as a mirror'] the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord' (2 Cor. iii. 18).

MEDITATION XLVI.

The Spirit glorifying Christ.

He shall glorify me: for he shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you. All things whatsoever the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he taketh of mine, and shall declare it unto you.—St. John xvi. 14, 15.

1. BRINGING FORTH THE THINGS OF CHRIST IN THE REGENERATE CONSCIENCE.

THE Spirit hears the Eternal Word and speaks accordingly. Therefore what He receives, He receives from the Son. So all His own action is the manifestation of the Eternal Word. He will not bring to the Apostles anything outside of Jesus. As the Son seeks not His own glory, but the glory of the Father which hath sent Him, so the Spirit seeks the glory of the Son, not superseding the Father's glory, but including it.

The glory of God cannot be manifested by any vague process of glorification in the created world. 'His eternal power and Godhead' are made known by the things that are made, but neither creative almightiness nor personal supremacy really convey the thought of the glory of God. His glory cannot be truly known save by the moral personal manifestation of the Incarnate Son. God cannot be glorified except through Christ, His Eternal Wisdom,

and that Wisdom is glorified by the Holy Ghost, His Eternal Love. Creation requires to be justified by the purposes of love. These are the things to come which the Comforter was to show. The stupendous machinery of creation can never adequately exhibit the glory of the Creator, although it may declare it in many ways. The true glory of the Creator is within Himself, and can only be known as we are taken up into fellowship with Him. Creation may testify to its Author as Supreme amongst the creatures. His love, made known to us through Christ by the Holy Ghost, is a glory not of supremacy, but of moral character distinct from all—His own eternal love.

In consequence of sin the world fails to bear even its own proper witness to God's love. The presence of suffering so extensively through that portion of the world with which we are acquainted, serves to obscure the evidence of love. There is a terrible 'revelation of wrath from heaven against all ungodliness' (Rom. i. 18), so that in this sinful world God's love is largely hid from sight; but 'God commendeth His love to us, in that, sinners though we were, Christ died for us.' We are summoned to share a glorious kingdom of love. The Holy Ghost glorifies Christ by setting forth before us the wondrous future, the triumph of eternal love. That triumph is not to be estimated by any speculations of our own reason. The Passion of Christ is a work which baffles our contemplation. The Incarnation is a mystery which baffles our understanding. The glory of Christ in the things

to come is a consummation which baffles our imagination. The Holy Ghost leads us into the truth in its integrity, and shows us these things, by taking of the things of the Incarnate Saviour, the merits of His atoning life, and showing them to us, that we, by conformity thereto in this sphere of suffering, may awake up after His likeness, and be satisfied therewith hereafter.

2. THE DIVINE GLORY OF CHRIST.

‘The Holy Ghost takes the things of Christ.’ This phrase, like that of ‘hearing,’ implies Personality, and the word ‘take’ is a truer word by which to emphasize the action than ‘receive,’ for we may receive without any will or effort of our own; but ‘taking’ implies that the reception in this case is by a personal correspondence of the recipient with the person who gives. The Holy Ghost, therefore, is not a created angel in whom God hath ‘put His Name’ (Exod. xxiii. 21). He is a coequal Person, whose relationship to the Divine act is one of free volition.

As the Father rejoices in the Son begotten of Him, so the Holy Ghost rejoices in the Son from whom He proceeds as from the Father. The joy of God finds its completeness in the Incarnate Son, who is not only the Beginning of all God’s creative work, since by Him were all things made, but is also the Consummation of God’s creative work by the Incarnation, gathering up creation into the life of God, and by the atoning Passion triumphing over the evil which marred the Divine purpose.

The Son abides with the Father in the unity of the Holy Ghost, and accomplishes His work of creation and atonement by the same Spirit. By Him He was conceived in the womb of Mary. By Him He offered Himself without spot to God. By Him His Manhood was glorified when He ascended up on high and received gifts for men, sending down the Holy Ghost in power from heaven to organize through His Apostles the ministry of His Church, the glorious ministration of the Spirit. Thus does our Lord say, 'He shall glorify Me: for He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you.' So 'there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; and diversities of ministrations, but the same Lord,' from whom, as Head of the Body, the Spirit brings the gifts 'wherewith every member is to profit' (1 Cor. xii. 4, 5, 7).

3. THE ANNOUNCING.

'He will announce to you' (*ἀναγγελεῖ*). Three times our Lord repeats the words, so as to give them special emphasis.

The Spirit, as it were, causes the voice of the Eternal Word to ring in the hearts of the faithful, like the wind which, swelling from an organ, makes the notes of the keyboard to speak. The glorified Humanity speaks in all the manifoldness of His Divine reward by the power of the Holy Ghost. It is no perishing breath which bears that sacred strain of joy from the height of the everlasting glory. The mind of the Father wakens with the touch of His

Word the loving response of creation, so that by the obedience of the Redeemer the fallen world resounds with all the sweetness of its predestinated perfection; and the Spirit of holy joy makes the Divine merits of the Passion spread themselves forth throughout the countless intelligences of heaven in sanctifying power and unwearied praise.

MEDITATION XLVII.

The Little While.

A little while, and ye behold me no more; and again a little while, and ye shall see me. — St. John xvi. 16.

1. ABSENCE.

HOWEVER little the Apostles at this time can have understood the words of Christ, yet they must have felt the surpassing character of glory which they indicated, and this glorious issue must have made them feel, perhaps even more than the announcement of approaching suffering, how tremendous a struggle they had to go through before that glory could be reached.

But our Lord seems to say that whatever He intended would soon be accomplished.

A short time of absence is to be followed by a bright return. The absence would destroy their power of contemplating Him. The return would restore Him to them in open sight, so that they might feel satisfied.

This absence was to begin on the morrow, and the return would happen after the three days of the grave.

Nevertheless, events are spoken of which demand something more than belonged to these intervals.

The metaphor of the travailing woman cannot be applied to the Apostles during these three days without very forced effort.

The words seem to swell out into a further development. 'After a little while ye shall not contemplate Me;' that is to say, when Jesus ascended to the Father. 'And again, after a little while ye shall see Me;' that is, when Jesus shall return at the last day.

The words would thus point to our Lord's departure by His ascension after a little while—that is, forty days of resurrection-life in their midst—and His final return after another period, which is also called a little while—more than eighteen hundred years of Christendom.

The little while of the absence may seem to us to be a long while, but it is not a long while in His sight to whom a thousand years are as one day. Our Lord wished the Apostles, and wishes us still, to feel how brief is the period of the Church militant. After forty-three days they would see Him no more. After another brief period they would see Him again.

Alas! we are content to think of this period as if it might be indefinitely longer, whereas Jesus, by these words, calls us to cherish the desire for His return, and to live in this world satisfied just because we feel that His return may be any day.

The time is not fixed. The three, the forty, days were fixed by mystical purposes of God's pure will.

The time of His absence which should follow was not fixed by purely Divine mysteries. It was dependent upon man's probation. If man had been

true to God, the time might have been very short; but corruption so soon began to spread over the Church, that the time became prolonged in a degree that would have staggered the Apostles had they looked forward to it. We must realize that this long duration of the militant Church is the penalty for the sins of Christians.

2. RETURN.

The time was brief according to God's intention, but prolonged by man's unfaithfulness. There was, however, to be a great change in their manner of regarding Him.

First, during the three days they would be so stupefied that they could not contemplate Him, but during the forty days they should see Him with a clearness of vision yet unknown. They should, as it were, see in Him that Divine life whose hidden power had made Him to be to them so great a matter of wonderment hitherto.

Then, again, during His absence at the Right Hand of God they should not contemplate Him as a mysterious Personage in the midst of them, which He had been all along. He would be gone. The wonderment would have disappeared in the glory, but the visible Presence would also be lacking. When that time of absence should end they would see Him, but with clear and unveiled face. That sight would be satisfying.

Our Lord wished them to take comfort in the thought that the time of not seeing Him would soon

be over, and would be recompensed by a clearer vision than had ever been granted to them before.

3. THE SIGHT THAT IS TO BE.

‘In Him, though now we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory’ (1 Pet. i. 8). This joy is dependent upon the security of the vision which we anticipate, and the two words of our Lord, although it is difficult to represent the difference in the English language, clearly imply how great is the difference between the contemplation of the Apostolic companionship which would have to be suspended during the age of Christendom, and the vision of joyous welcome with which the Church upon the earth and the saints in glory would welcome His return.

The more we keep this sure vision in our minds, the more shall we long for the coming of the kingdom of Christ, for which we are called so frequently to pray. How earnestly must we fix our hearts upon the hope of that kingdom soon to be revealed. Yet ‘a little while!’ The saints under the altar cry out, ‘How long?’

O how must we humble ourselves in the thought that that kingdom does not come, that bright vision of the return is delayed, because we are not worthy! We have sinned. O let us seek to live in the light of His countenance, that we may attain to be like Him when we shall see Him as He is (1 John iii. 2).

MEDITATION XLVIII.

Perplexity of the Disciples.

Some of his disciples therefore said one to another, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye behold me not ; and again a little while, and ye shall see me ; and, Because I go to the Father? They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? We know not what he saith.—St. John xvi. 17, 18.

1. VARIETY OF CHARACTER.

It has been well suggested that St. John's language implies his special notice of the effect of our Lord's sayings upon the Apostles who were present. 'Some of His disciples said among themselves.' Not, therefore, all. Probably St. John himself silently listened, and silently looked. He was in a midway position between our Lord, who spake words utterly beyond their present power of explanation, and those eager-hearted disciples, who were anxious to explain before they had any data for their exegesis.

What a lesson there is for ourselves in this !

How ready people are to determine what the intimations of prophecy ought to mean, whereas they have no more data than the Apostles then had for fixing the two little times of one and three days, or the further indefinite little time of the Church's militant pilgrimage into which this prophetic speech was to develop ! In truth, however, the more we

determine what is likely to be intended, the more we preclude ourselves from seeing the signs of fulfilment when they begin to show themselves in other ways than our fancy had suggested.

The same thing applies to revelations of past mysteries, and to those incomplete narratives, whether of revelation or research, which have come to us under the control of an inspiring power. People make difficulties by trying to solve them. We must be content to leave God's words in their Divine obscurity, while we watch and wait.

The deep love of the disciple who leant upon our Lord's bosom at the supper could lean upon the words of Christ without impatience. This fitted him to be the organ of those great revelations which should afterwards be given to the Church.

Why does God place us in such perplexity?

It is for the trial of our character, the development of a faithful love, that we may rest satisfied to leave difficulties with Him. He does not want us to know the future simply for the purpose of knowing the future. He wishes us to be alive to a future of doubt and anxiety, in order that we may learn to let that doubt and anxiety be hushed in the security of His all-ruling love. If we could see the way out of every difficulty, whether in our private lives, or in the possibilities of ecclesiastical complications, we should lose the sense of depending personally on Jesus. Even though we might know all was His doing, yet we should not be relying upon Him, although we might be praising Him.

How many difficulties have been generated by

overhaste, as if certain precautions were necessary to make the Church of Christ safe! People do not see at the time that, in reaching out their hands like Uzzah to stay the ark of God, they are dishonouring God, although they intend to serve Him.

Difficulties, therefore, are permitted in revelation, and in practical Church life, just in order that we may learn a more complete self-surrendering love than we could otherwise have. Christ would have us look to Him while He is gone away with a more sublime dependence than we could have if He were here. Christ, who had led the Apostles hitherto as Man, would have them now rely upon Him wholly as God, not merely for guidance day by day, but for interventions at intervals of necessity, which would be ordered by Him although they could not fix any law of recurrence.

2. DEPENDENT LOVE.

So it is that faith, working by love, must raise us above difficulties. It does not remove the difficulties. It makes us rely upon the power of Christ, though unseen, to bring us through them. We may be sure that He will expose us to what surpasses human contrivance, in order to develop within us that perfect dependence of love which is worthy of His Divine wisdom. Not only is our character tested by sure discipline; our spiritual capacity is increased by it. As natural powers require exercise in order to gain strength, so also do spiritual powers. It is not enough that we have the spiritual

apprehension of a truth. We must become identified with it. The spiritual grasp of love must rejoice in it, not merely as a dull mechanical certainty, but as a means of personal intercourse. The faithful soul feels the love of Christ when His interposition carries us safely through some crisis, and thus there is generated a personal correspondence of affection beyond the mere gratitude which might be given to abstract omnipotence.

In all the vicissitudes of our life on earth God would have us thus rise to a personal fellowship with Himself. Thus it is that we grow in Divine knowledge. Better far than any knowledge of what God will do for us, is that sweet, soul-sustaining knowledge whereby we know Himself as the Lord our God.

3. THE BREVITY OF EARTHLY LIFE.

We ought to learn our dependence upon the personal loving care of God by meeting the unknown future in simple trust. We have also to learn a holy indifference to earthly things by consideration of their short continuance. 'A little while!' That is the measure of everything that can happen to us, whether it be good or evil. Christ's presence with us; Christ's hiddenness! Both alike are for brief periods. So it was with the one day of remaining presence, and the three days of the grave. So now. However long be the period of Christendom, it is but a little. The eternity of joy that is to follow makes them 'seem but a few days for the love' we

must have for Him whose return we expect (Gen. xxix. 20). His final return shall be, as He soon after this seems to indicate, not only the pain they will have to suffer changed, but the speedy deliverance and eternal glory.

As years go by, and things which we have dreaded happen according to the announcement formerly given us by Christ, we feel our own helplessness, and rise above all thoughts of earth to anticipate the delight of Christ's perfect glory which shall have no end. His absence makes one brief day seem long. His presence makes all thoughts of time disappear in the manifestation of the Eternal. We are the sons of the Eternal. Why should we measure wearily the lingering necessities of time! However painful they may be, they shall soon give place to the eternal good. They must strengthen our affections and enlarge our desires, so that when the fulness of the truth appears, we may welcome it with the rapture of expectation that does not die in disappointment, but expands with vigorous delight in the experience of that consummation of bliss which shall expel the waywardness of every impetuous complaint.

MEDITATION XLIX.

The Relation of Jesus to the Disciples.

Jesus perceived that they were desirous to ask him, and he said unto them, Do ye inquire among yourselves concerning this, that I said, A little while, and ye behold me not, and again a little while, and ye shall see me?—St. John xvi. 19.

1. THE PERPLEXITY NOTICED BY JESUS.

IT was manifest to those who were looking on that our Lord's words had aroused their curiosity. Jesus, although possessing Divine knowledge, suffered Himself to act as man in participation of the intimations of outward intercourse. So we are told that 'He perceived that they were desirous to question Him.'

How great was His condescension in showing them that He took notice of their conduct! By this He exhibited His human sympathy, as by His previous words He had been preparing them to enter into His Divine love.

We must remember that He still regards us with human affection, although He is exalted to the Right Hand of God. He takes notice of our demeanour. He acts with the genuineness of human interest, although He abides in the glory of infinite knowledge. That knowledge He had inherent

within Himself when He was acting upon the level of earthly companionship in the days of His humiliation.

He could have solved their doubts in a moment, but He had not raised them without a purpose. He therefore shows Himself to be aware of their want, while He proceeds not to explain the obscurity, but to fortify them, so that they may rise up to its demands.

By this treatment He makes them feel that they are under a process of discipline, and that the want of clearer statement is not due to negligence, but is an intentional and authoritative withholding of knowledge to prepare them for what is to follow.

We may notice that our Lord does not repeat the words which the disciples had joined to His saying of the 'little while.' They had taken from His previous discourse the 'going to the Father,' as if it supplied the *rationale* of the 'little while.' Really the two expressions had no immediate connection.

So with ourselves. We often create difficulties by joining together words of Holy Scripture which may perhaps refer to the same thing, but under entirely different aspects.

The attitude of our souls must be that which is expressed by the Psalmist, 'My soul waiteth still upon God.' The stillness wherewith we wait is the measure of the love wherewith we hope. Jesus knows our needs. Let us leave them in His hands.

2. THE REVERENCE OF THE DISCIPLES TOWARDS JESUS.

They did not make bold to question Him. We have other indications which show us that their conduct towards Him was one of reverent submission. So when the Greeks came wishing to see Him. So when St. Peter made signs to the beloved disciple to ask about the traitor. So now. Much as they desire to know the events which He alludes to, they feel that they must repress their curiosity. Doubtless they perceived that the four leading Apostles did not encourage such interrogation. All were hushed in a reverent consciousness of the mysterious future into which Jesus was conducting them—a darkness in which He was the only Light.

He the only Light! But what a Light was He!

The darkness was of earth. Faintly as they might realize His Divine glory, yet they felt the presence of a Divine light into which they did not dare to gaze. The habitual awe with which they regarded Him deepened their consciousness of the great trouble that was impending, and of the strange deliverance which was to follow.

We may see in this how mercifully our Lord was preparing them for the great mystery of His death and resurrection. These He had already announced to them, but they could not bring themselves to understand His plain words. They were too plain. The disciples could not accept them as literal truth. Now from the letter they are

passing into the mystery. A supernatural presentiment must have taken possession of them.

This narrative helps us to realize how utterly the thought of His death and resurrection surpassed their expectation. The disciples, whose reverent wonder is portrayed in this chapter, were not such men as could have invented the tale. They needed training in order to be able to accept it. When the three days' absence was over, how they would look back to this promise that they should see Him again! And how they would be strengthened for the longer time of absence which should bring them to the eternal vision in the end.

3. THE RETICENCE OF JESUS.

Jesus speaks to draw us onward, but beyond His speech there is a silence without which our advance would be impossible—the silence of the Infinite which formulates the disclosures of finite prediction. So it was with the disciples now. They were not to think of His death and resurrection as if He would be going through the same stages of natural death as Lazarus had already experienced, coming back to the world as Lazarus did. His departure was of a totally different character. His return would be also. Indeed, He would not, properly speaking, return. His own word is the true expression of the greeting in which they should welcome Him. They would see Him again. But the sight would be very different from ordinary earthly sight. It would be a sight quickened in

themselves by the power of the Holy Ghost. It would be the sight of One who no longer belonged to this lower world. He was going to the Father, and would appear to them no longer in the world of His humiliation, but in an advanced stage of the heavenward progress. They would see Him, and He would draw them after Himself.

MEDITATION L.

The Church Militant.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice; ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.—St. John xvi. 20.

1. THE EXULTING WORLD.

OUR Lord's words plainly refer to a more distant future than that of the two primary intervals. 'Verily, verily,' is a phrase which indicates a great mystery, in which they would call this warning to mind as a groundwork of conduct. It goes beyond the brief periods of bewilderment and helplessness. It points onward to that period when they should need to form plans for themselves amidst a triumphant world. Indeed, it could hardly be said that the world did rejoice at the death of Christ. They carried their intention into effect, but the strangeness of the attendant circumstances was such as to keep them all the while full of apprehension.

The time, however, was coming when the world would make merry over the calamities of Christians. Our Lord evidently speaks of the days when the two witnesses shall be slain, and they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another, as having got rid of the two prophets which tormented them that dwelt on the earth (Rev. xi. 10).

The word is a continuous warning--too little remembered—for all the ages of Christendom, that the joy of outward success is not that to which the Church must look. The true manifestation of Christ's power in His Church must be in the endurance of mockery. The time will come for Ishmael to be sent away, but not while the Church militant lasts. We must distrust all worldly rejoicing, as having a greater element of evil in it than of good. The Church is so definitely antagonistic to the world, that she succeeds by failure, lives by death, triumphs by martyrdom.

Alas, alas! who would think that the one object, in this nineteenth century of Christian life, was to bear the Cross!

But so it is. The justification of any effort that we make for Christ is not that the world at last gives way, but that we are faithful unto death.

We must expect not to conquer, but to suffer, for we look forward to eternal victory. 'This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.'

If we are willing to suffer martyrdom because we think the next question will acknowledge we were right, we are giving up the very thing which makes martyrdom complete—the simple witness to the love of God. We need a ministry in the Church which shall raise a succession of martyrs. When the world begins to build their sepulchres, it shows that the voice of their martyrdom is no longer sounding from the lips of their successors. Great as are the achievements of the Church, the world

can never cease from its exulting animosity until the spiritual success has become so diluted with earthliness that it no longer troubles the world.

2. THE SORROW OF THE FAITHFUL.

Our Lord then admonishes His Apostles that they are to look forward, not to a sharp conflict followed by a time of ease, but to a continuous time of trouble. It would be a brief period, but not brief in the annals of the world. It would be brief, for all the ages of the world are but as a moment compared with eternity. 'Ye shall be sorrowful.' That word sums up the whole of the Christian era. Nor is any age worth calling by the name of Christ unless it share the fellowship of His Passion. Without this none can know the power of His resurrection.

If we believe Christ's words, why do we not exult in every prospect of difficulty which threatens us? As we look back, do we look with complacency to victories which the Church has won, so as to bring the world under subjection? These successes will but blur the annals of Christendom in the last day. There is only one cause of rejoicing for the faithful heart. It is to think how many have suffered for Christ amidst contempt, reproach, poverty, calumny, during all these ages, whom the world despised, but of whom the world knew nothing. The stately homage which the world has given to the Church at various times will have

passed away like the sun-glow on the evening clouds, to be lost in darkness.

3. THE JOY THAT FOLLOWS.

A life of sorrow, a death of shame—such is the brief biography of an Apostle. A heart rejoicing to have it so—such is the faithfulness of Apostolic love.

And why?

Is it because of a pessimistic sourness of disposition?

No. It is because the triumph of faith is sure.

As well might the Hindoo deplore the monsoon as the Christian deplore the sorrows of time. A very brief time, and the sorrows shall be turned into eternal joy. To look for worldly success is to close the eyes to the victory of heaven.

The Cross is given to the Christian not as the shield of the Spartan mother, who said to her son, 'This!' or 'Upon this!' No. The Cross never can be brought back to the world to be the token of victory, to be commemorated with triumph. Christ says to His Apostles, 'Upon this.' That is all. There is one end for all—to die upon the Cross. 'It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him' (2 Tim. ii. 11). In so far as we stop short of the death, we stop short of the life.

Wondrous life which awaits the faithful. How little do Christians think of it! How little do they long for it!

The Apostles did not die that they might look down from heaven exultingly upon a Christianized world, but that they might glorify Jesus by bringing multitudes out of the world to die upon the Cross, and live with Him in the glory of the Father.

MEDITATION LI.

The Travailing Woman.

A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come : but when she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for the joy that a man is born into the world.—St. John xvi. 21.

1. THE LONG CONTINUANCE OF PANGS.

THE Apostles are here compared to a woman travailing with child, because the Israel of God are to be born through their ministrations and suffering. This pain cannot be intended to represent their sorrow during our Lord's absence in the grave. Their sorrow at that time was a passive sorrow, not an effective sorrow. Their trouble was by reason of the circumstances round about them, not by reason of anything in themselves. Their sorrow was for our Lord's death which they could not understand, but it was not the cause of our Lord's resurrection.

Here, therefore, we have a description of the state of the Church as time went on; and inasmuch as the words are expressly addressed to the Apostles, they are a plain indication that the Apostolic order was to continue after the Apostles had died. Just as our Lord said, 'I am with you always, even to the end of the world,' so now He says, 'Ye shall be sorrowful.'

The Apostolic ministry was to continue, and if

it was to be fruitful, its fruitfulness would be the result of violent travail-pangs. It would not be the easy life of influential prosperity winning adherents in the world. It would be the hard travail of a woman bringing forth an offspring by reason of her own sufferings. The result of their ministry would be the birth of a regenerate humanity, to whom they would transmit the supernatural life of which they were themselves partakers. The birth of each new generation of Christians would be not a result of worldly power, and such facilities as favour worldly influence, but a supernatural inherent power, in the strength of which they would be ready to endure the greatest suffering.

Alas, how Christendom has forgotten this! People look back to the age of the martyrs as if it were an exceptional period from which we may be thankful to be exempt; but if the Church is exempt from her martyrdom, she must be doomed to sterility.

Let us hope that the Church may rise up to meet the growing assaults of unbelief, and regain the glory of a maternity worthy of God. Nations possessing power do not convert heathen nations. As the Church loses her hold of one country, she will find a family springing up in another country by the Divine endurance of Apostolic ministries.

2. THE NEW-BORN RACE OF THE REDEEMED.

The Church brings forth, and her child is caught up unto God and to His throne, as in the vision of

the Apocalypse. The new-born race perpetuates the Divine life of Christ. The Seed of the woman has to bruise the serpent's head. The dragon still goes on contending, but the new-born race have a life hidden with Christ in God. St. John may well have recognized the words now spoken by Christ as finding their completeness in his vision. One may even believe that 'the woman,' although it naturally expresses merely 'a woman' (the words being used as a general expression according to Greek idioms), yet has a reference to the woman whose seed should triumph through suffering; that is to say, the human race, or, rather, the elect humanity, the Church of God.

The child is caught up to heaven; the mother is driven into the wilderness to suffer under the persecution of the dragon.

The mother seems to represent the Church in her human aspect, as in the original prophecy the bruised heel represented the suffering Redeemer; and the child caught up to heaven represents the Divine life of the faithful hidden with Christ in God. The Redeemer has the remnant of her seed safe with Himself, although the dragon makes war against them along with the woman, *i.e.* assails their earthly life (Rev. xii. 17).

The mother with the twelve stars symbolizes thus the Church of the Apostles. They are to be as a woman travailing, and rejoicing at the birth of her offspring from year to year as they are born. The world would rejoice in the sufferings of the woman in the wilderness, the human nature of the

redeemed with whom the woman is travailing until the appointed time be come. The Apostles, the ministry of the Church, rejoice in the spiritual life which the persecutors of the dragon cannot hinder. The chosen seed are born, and are caught up to heaven, one with Christ, made to sit with Him in the heavenly places.

We must never forget the reality of the Divine life of the regenerate, nor think it less because of the outward weakness of the wilderness. The danger is lest, instead of rejoicing that her seed is caught away to be hidden safely in God, the woman may be led to seek the delights of the world, and so the earthly side of the life of the Church may be corrupted by the intoxications of worldly pleasure which the dragon gives for her to drink.

3. THE JOY OF THE RESURRECTION.

The time of Christ's absence during the age of the Church's progress would be a sad time for the Apostolical ministry. But Christ would come again. Then should the Church be seen in all her purity and glory, as the Bride of Christ. The joy of the marriage supper of the Lamb would be a consummation of delight beyond all that earth could know. 'I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.' This would be true of Christ's resurrection, but is manifoldly more true of Christ's return, when faithful hearts should welcome Him, looking forward to be for ever with the Lord.

The regeneration, when they should sit upon thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel, would indeed be the welcome of a new-born progeny, many yet one, and human and Divine. The expectation of this day was to be the consolation of the Church during the long time of waiting. Then shall the great enemy be cast out for ever. Then shall all sorrow be done away. That day should be the full accomplishment of what the prophet had foretold: 'As a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee; and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee' (Is. lxii. 5).

'A man is born into the world.' The New Man is now born. One by one the faithful have been regenerate. Now Christ is manifest in the fulness of His Being. Now we come to the fulness of the measure of the stature of Christ. The Child caught up to the throne of God appears summing up in His perfected glory the whole race, the remnant of the woman's seed. Into the kingdom of grace they were reborn as many individuals. In the kingdom of glory they are found as one new man (Eph. ii. 15). Christ is the Head, and all the rest are His members. The relationship between Christ and His people is variously set forth, for no earthly relationship satisfies all the conditions. The Head and the Body; the Bridegroom and the Bride; the Mother and Child; the primary seed of the woman and the remnant of her seed, His brethren; the maternal travail of Apostleship and the joy of the mother over the new-born; the sons of the Church, who

are also the husband of the successive ages of Church ministration; the multitude that are as the dewdrops of the morning, and the One Child, the One Son of Man, who is seen in His fulness;—all these set forth in various ways the development of the Church from her suffering to the glory of the day of resurrection.

MEDITATION LII.

The Return of Christ.

And ye therefore now have sorrow : but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no one taketh away from you.—St. John xvi. 22.

1. SORROW ORDAINED FOR FRUITFULNESS.

CHRIST assures the Apostles that they shall see Him again. Yes ; and when He comes it will be with all the multitude of His saints. He leaves them upon earth in the solitude of His own individuality. He does not speak of any vision of Him which will be granted them in the intermediate state. He speaks of the welcome which they will give Him in the resurrection. At that day He shall not be in the solitude and separatedness of His present earthly relationship. The multitude that have been born into the spiritual life as His members shall be with Him. They shall see Him again, but under very different circumstances.

This they could not know at the time He was speaking. The growth, however, of the multitude will not destroy the individuality of the love or the identity of the Person of the Beloved. On the contrary, they themselves will be drawn to a closer fellowship with Him at the time of His reappearing. They will themselves have borne those mysterious ministerial travail-pangs, travailling in birth until

Christ be formed in their faithful servants (Gal. iv. 19), themselves the first in an order of ministry which shall experience the same labour of childbirth in successive generations. They themselves will, as the children who bear the mark of Christ's Fatherhood, and will welcome Him as their Father in the spiritual life who now only know Him after the flesh as Master and Lord. O how changed will He be, and will they be! Yet the same individuality abiding in the unity of a higher fellowship, the glory of a Divine life.

As we look forward to the coming of Christ, we must look forward to the accomplishment of what we know respecting the circumstances of His Advent, when He shall come to be glorified in His saints and they in Him (2 Thess. i. 10). The contemplation of that perfected glory must strengthen us for all we have to suffer, and we must remember that our participation in that glory, our sight of Jesus as He shall then be manifested in those to whom we have had to minister, can only be proportionate to the fruit-bearing pains of our ministry during the time of His absence. The thought of our participation in that reappearing must stimulate us to the greater toil in striving to make the work of His grace effectual by labour, by prayer, by suffering, while the time yet remains.

2. THE JOY OF BEHOLDING JESUS.

Wonderful joy! Jesus says, 'Your heart shall rejoice.' He would have them realize that their joy

shall be a true joy. It shall be no mere abstraction. It shall have the individuality of present human joyousness, and it shall have the immensity of the consummate glorification. Other interests will not have intervened so as to make Him in any way lose the personal interest which now binds them to Him. The ages which shall pass away meanwhile will mature that joy, and not detract from it. The growth of their own spiritual character will make them more capable of entering into it. This is the joy of which it shall be said, 'Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.' The joy of heaven consists not in the joy of attaining the ten cities as a reward, but in sharing all joy along with Jesus Himself. He will Himself be the Source, the Sphere, the Object, of all joy.

The joy shall consist in knowing how Jesus sees us, and there shall then be nothing that we would hide from Him. He sees us with a real delight, a personal interest, as His own redeemed ones. He sees Himself reflected within us as a living power. 'We love Him, because He first loved us.' We rejoice in Him, because He rejoices over us.

He sees us with the everlasting love of Divine contemplation. To know that He sees us is to know that we cannot fall away. In this world He sees with an external love; for though it is an internal principle of life, it requires to be appropriated, absorbed into our whole being, so that we may be penetrated thereby. But there His love shall be our glorifying life. There will be no earthly element hiding Him from us, or us from

Him. He will, indeed, see that which has called us into the glory of His life, and behold, it is very good.

Such is the assurance which Jesus gives. His seeing His own people shall be the changeless law of joy to them.

3. THE ETERNITY OF GLORY.

To abide for ever in the Presence of God! To know that the Eye of God rests upon us! To rejoice not in the Beer-lahai-roi of the wilderness of earth, the objects of Divine Providence, but in the very spiritual union of God, as being partakers of His nature, like Him because we see Him as He is, and seen of Him as being precious in His sight! Such is the glory to which our Lord points onward as characterizing His return in the day when He maketh up His jewels.

Now for a while we have to labour and suffer because we see Him not, but we look forward to beholding Him. This must strengthen us by the way. 'Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty.' That joy no man can take from us.

While we are on the way we must be growing in the experience of the heavenly vision. 'When shall I come to appear before the Presence of God—appear before Him and see Him?' The language of the Psalm is capable of either rendering; and the one involves the other.

'Your joy no man taketh from you.' It is the joy of eternal life in the beatific vision.

MEDITATION LIII.

The Day of the New Life.

And in that day ye shall ask me no question.—St. John xvi. 23.

1. CHRIST WITH THE FATHER.

THE day of the new dispensation is while Christ is with the Father. It begins to dawn when the heavens open to receive Him. It has no ending. It is the day which is as the light of seven days, the perfect illumination of grace.

Christ is with the Father. The Father's Wisdom is the Head of the Church. The Spirit of Wisdom is the Life of the Church.

The supernatural consciousness is the light which fills the souls of the regenerate, as 'the children of the day.' It is a light which is at once moral, intellectual, spiritual. That day is a day of moral power, such as the world has never known before. Christ is Himself the Light of the conscience, shining within the heart, lifting up the faithful to delight in that which is worthy of man. No civilization previously had elevated mankind as the brightness of this light elevates. It elevates all of every class, for all are invited to walk in the light of the Lord.

It is a day of intellectual light. Earlier ages witnessed the brute strength of human nature,

leaving monuments behind which should endure for ages. The day of Christ would see man raised to a mastery of mind over matter. The secrets of nature would be unfolded. The elements of science were to be learnt as never before, under the discipline of the Christian Church.

The spiritual light of the coming day would, however, be its true glory. God would be known in His personal Sovereignty, and in His relation to the world as Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier. Man would be conscious of himself as belonging to a higher order of existence than could find a home within this present world. The faithful would find their true joy in that God lifted up upon them the light of His countenance.

Judaism and Gentilism both alike had left man in his darkness. Now the Dayspring from on high hath visited us, and in His light we are called to see light.

True, that light is not yet what it shall be. The more we experience its brightness, the more do we long for that which is to be, that we may see face to face. 'The path of the just is as a shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.'

2. THE FAITHFUL REALIZING THE DIVINE SONSHIP.

Christ will no longer be with the faithful as a personal earthly Teacher. He had been with the Apostles, but He could only teach them in proverbs. The spiritual meaning of His words lay hidden from

them. They had brought to Him many a question which He had to set aside, because they were incapable of receiving the answer. When He was risen from the dead, He would open their understanding to understand the Scriptures. They should look to Him, not for details of accidental difficulty, but they would recognize the illumination of Divine Sonship, the power of the Holy Ghost, speaking within their hearts. Then would the prophet's words be fulfilled, 'They shall be all taught of God.'

This access to the Father, in the Name of Christ, would be far more than outward fellowship with Himself as the Companion who had been with them for three years past. It would not solve transitory doubts, but it would lead them to the contemplation of eternal mysteries.

They would ask the Father, and He would send the Spirit of His Son into their hearts. There would be nothing to keep them away from God. They must not rest in Christ's mediation as an end, but as a means to a knowledge of God beyond what they could as yet anticipate. They would speak to the Father with all the confidence which belonged to Christ Himself, for they would be the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ. He who had spoken to them hitherto as an earthly Companion would speak to them now as the Word of the Father, and the measure of earthly significance would expand in the infinity of creative power.

3. DIVINE REVELATION COMPLETE.

They would contemplate all truth in the mysteriousness of its Divine essence, but the revelation of truth would be complete. There would be no doctrines remaining to be disclosed, although that which was made known to them would allure them onward with progressive experience. They would need no external mouthpiece to formulate additional doctrines, but they would be led by the Spirit to rejoice more and more in that complete body of truth which the Spirit of revelation proceeding from Himself, as the Word of the Father, would develop in their own consciousness. It was not for them to ask questions at the dictate of curiosity and wonder, as they had been apt to do. The Spirit would guide them so as to understand the spiritual bearings of what Christ had already taught. This saying of Christ, therefore, concludes the section of His discourse in which He promises that 'when the Spirit of Truth is come, He shall guide the Apostles into all truth' (ver. 13).

In that day revelation will be complete, but experimental knowledge continually progressive. Jesus therefore bids them understand that questioning such as nature's blindness suggests will be no more; but prayer, as the moral power of spiritual intuitions, will be their constant prerogative as God's children in Christ, so that they may learn to profit by the mysteries of grace, and abide in the enjoyment of the Divine goodness. In the olden time, God, in various parts and manners, had spoken

to the fathers by the prophets. Henceforth would the Son of God speak with the indivisible power of the Spirit of Truth, so that the various elements which had been declared by way of preparation, and all that He Himself had said to them during the years of earthly companionship, would spring up with supernatural life as the consequence of His own resurrection from the dead.

If they would know truth, they must not expect to advance by intellectual certainty, but by spiritual power. The truth would be a life. As they lived true to His ascended Being, they would find the power of that life. The Spirit of Truth would be the Spirit of Life, so that as they lived by His inspirations they would be taught the fulness of His mysteries.

MEDITATION LIV.

The Final Announcement.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, If ye shall ask anything of the Father, he will give it you in my name.—St. John xvi. 23.

1. SECURITY OF THE PROMISE.

CHRIST now begins to encourage His disciples that they may be strengthened for the hard task to which they are called. He opens this portion of His discourse with the strong asseveration, 'Verily, verily.'

We need to have those words continually sounding in our ears. We are so apt to bring down the promises of Christ within the sphere of mere human friendship, instead of recognizing them as exercises of Divine power, that we fail of profiting by our relationship to Him. We bring His promises down to the measure of our desires, instead of elevating our desires to the infinite glory of His purposes.

Prayer, however, is not ordained in order that we may get God to do what we like, but that we may be the instruments co-operating with Himself, by which His own eternal purposes may gain their full and individual accomplishment. All that is good is contained within the will and purpose of Almighty God, and our prayer ought to bring the Divine possibilities into actual experience.

If we would pray aright, we must pray with the fulness of faith in this promise. We must not suppose that the promise belongs to some few individuals by separate favour. The promise is a law of the covenant, and to doubt this law is to set the covenant aside. The fulfilment of our prayers is as much a law of the new covenant as the attraction between two particles of matter is a law of the material universe.

The Name of Christ is a law of vitality by which we are bound to speak to God, and God cannot refuse to recognize the power of that name, for He has given all things into the hands of His dear Son.

Even if a prayer be accidentally aimed amiss, it will surely bring an equivalent of good from the bounty of Divine wisdom, although that for which we have asked is held back as being itself harmful.

How this security ought to make us live true to the covenant ourselves! There is no power of nature whose security is equal to the security of prayer. What miserable want of faith it is for us to look for great results from earthly agents, and to be afraid to give up some earthly stay in order to claim the security of prayer! Constantly let us hear our Lord giving us an assurance when He Himself was returning to Father. 'Verily, verily, I say unto you.' To doubt Christ's words, spoken with so much solemnity, as the culminating word of admonition ere He returned unto the Father, is indeed to plunge into a miserable unbelief from which nothing can extricate us. To believe them, and to fail of diligence in prayer, is a strange folly, which nothing

but the blindness of Satan's deceit can explain. We profess to believe in Christ, and yet we distrust His most solemn words.

2. THE GUARANTEE OF CHRIST.

As Christ speaks to us in the Name of the Father, from whom He comes, so the Father acts towards us in the Name of Christ, His Incarnate Word. The Name of the Mediator rings throughout earth with Divine goodness, and throughout heaven with impetrative power. It is to us the guarantee of the Father's acceptance. He gives us all things, because, in treating with the members of Christ's Body, He is treating with Christ Himself. The members of Christ have no mere personal interest, in which Christ does not share. The Name of Christ is not merely a nominal guarantee, like a signature upon a ticket of admission. It is the manifestation of a real identification whereby Christ moves the speaker to ask for something which is needful to Christ Himself. The Father recognizes not merely the authority given by His Son to the faithful who pray to Him, but the vital interest which His Son takes in the performance of our petition.

How little do we feel the identity of life which constitutes our union with Christ, and therefore we approach God in a timid, servile spirit, which is of itself a sinful contempt of our Divine sonship!

It should not be so. God does not act towards us in pity because Christ recommends us. God acts towards us in love because Christ dwells within us.

So, then, whatever we ask, He will give to us in the Name of Christ, glorifying His Son by all that He does for His Son's members, rejoicing not to accept His Son's assurances by the worthiness of those who draw near to Him, but to honour His Son's dignity as giving a claim to His love which no unworthiness of Christ's members individually can destroy.

The Name of Christ summons into operation every element of Divine power. There is no limitation to restrict it. The restriction is simply with ourselves, because we do not get beyond the sphere of our own personal considerations, so as to let our prayers expand with the power of faith in the infinity of Divine love.

We must rise up by faith to the greatness of Christ's Name wherein we speak, and God will act towards us in love, according to the fulness of the Name of His coequal, consubstantial Son.

3. THE NEWNESS OF THE COVENANT.

Until Christ ascended up to heaven no man could thus speak to God in His Name. The privilege of prayer belongs to the new covenant. If Christ were upon earth, we could not thus speak to God in His Name. It is His exaltation to the Right Hand of the Father which makes it possible for us to be vitally identified with Him. His Manhood must be at the Right Hand of power, otherwise the Spirit who proceeds from the Father would be external to His Incarnate Being, instead of dwelling therein

and using it as the radiating instrument of all Divine actions.

Until the Body of the Mediator was thus exalted, there could be no real, spiritual connection between God and mankind. God was in heaven and man upon earth. The Incarnation was the coming down of God to earth, but it did not effect this great result which was to be the Mediator's triumph. The Ascension, whereby God took the earth up to heaven, was the initiation of a new relationship between God and His creatures. While Christ, as the Head of the Body, is living at the Right Hand of God, His members upon earth are partakers of the fulness of His Divine power.

Whenever we pray, therefore, we must lift our hearts up unto the Lord, so as to speak in the power of this vital union with Him, our Personal Head, through whom all the Divine actions are performed.

The Christian Church is a new development of the human race, with powers of communion with God such as no man possessed before. We live with the life of Christ, and therefore we have a faculty superior to any natural endowment. We can speak to God in the Name of Christ, into which we are baptized. The difference of the Christian covenant of prayer is not a difference of permission which God's condescending mercy grants us. It is a difference of vital power whereby God, in His wonderful bounty, has elevated us to live with Christ on high, and have Christ living within us.

The fault is with ourselves if we are strangers to this power. True, at the very best we must

come far short of acting up to all the conditions upon which this power is given to us. Still it remains true that this covenant is a covenant not of outward approach, but of inward and spiritual life, infinite in its powers, perfect in its operation, un-failing in its efficacy, binding us to God in the fulness of that love which binds together the Father and the Son in the unity of the Holy Ghost.

O let that 'Verily, verily,' quicken us to prayer! The Name of Jesus is revealed as a vital power of mediation. Have we ever really prayed in this Name? Let us pray with all simplicity of faith, as if now, for the first time, the new covenant were made known to us. Let us seek to rise up to its power. 'Ask, and ye shall receive;' 'According to your faith it shall be done unto you.' If that was true under the covenant of natural faith, how much more shall we experience its truth in putting forth the supernatural faith whereby the new covenant of Christ's Name must be exerted!

MEDITATION LV.

Fulness of Prayer.

If ye shall ask anything of the Father, he will give it you in my name.—St. John xvi. 23.

1. ALL-COMPREHENSIVE.

THE promise to prayer is not limited to any special class of subjects. It includes all things, both temporal and eternal, material and spiritual. The objects of the outer creation are not unworthy to be the gifts of God, for they are the creatures of God. He created them for us. He created us and them for His only begotten Son. No created object has any end short of the glory of Christ. Consequently there is nothing which is beyond the circle of legitimate prayer.

We are too apt to doubt whether we may pray for temporal mercies. The real reason is that we doubt whether all created things are really worthy of God as their Creator. He who created them with a purpose can use them for the highest of all purposes. The universe is one, but manifold. It has unity of purpose, from God in Christ. It has unity of purpose, for God in Christ.

We must be careful to remember that we cannot take anything out of its place in creation. It will work for the glory of Christ; and if we will use it

for Christ's glory, we shall share in its blessing. If, however, we suppose that these meaner things are just created for our indulgence, and too often use them for the purposes of our sin, then we set them apart from the dispensation of God's love, and must get them how and whence we can; and instead of finding a blessing if we do acquire them, we shall find that they have turned to be to us a curse.

If only the necessities of earth drove us to live more conscientiously for the glory of God, we should find that the weariness of earth, instead of dragging us down, would urge us to efforts more worthy of heaven.

If we pray, we must pray not only for the moment, but for eternity. To desire anything as a mere matter of transitory enjoyment, is to ask God to give us what His infinite power has created, that we may waste it upon our finite folly. As prayer is the voice of God's children, it must contribute towards the eternal well-being of God's children. As He has created all things to be used with thanksgiving, so we may draw upon the Creator's treasury for all we want, as long as we bear in mind the eternal issues of the most transient phenomena.

We ought to learn to love God while we accept at His hands the answer to our prayer. Our needs make us search into the boundless reaches of His power, and our gratitude finds itself rapt in adoration as we return to duties of earth with renewed consciousness of His Almighty love.

2. APPROACH TO THE FATHER.

This implies a constant recognition of our filial relationship to God. The world is not a bubble which has floated away upon a stream of accident. In prayer we acknowledge and in prayer we find the Personal God. He is our Father in Christ, in whose Name we speak and in whose Name He acts.

What a terrible thing nature would be, with all its powers, if we did not recognize the Personal Godhead whose infinite love disposes everything for the personal good of such as diligently seek Him!

If we consider the infinite wisdom and love of our Father to whom we pray, we know that He will give or withhold what we ask in accordance with His knowledge of what will be most conducive to our good. The future issues of events are not known by us, but we know that God will do for us that which will most surely turn to our good. While we seek everything from Him, we must use everything in union with Him, and whether the immediate gift of God be what we should ourselves have chosen or the reverse, we know that His appointment only requires to be turned to good account, and the result will be something far better than we ourselves could have chosen.

So, then, the constant approach to God as our Father when we pray must lead us to a deepening sense of filial love. In the very greatness of God's gifts we lose sight of them, and have the eye of the soul fixed with adoring love upon Himself. Prayer

seems to burst the bounds of creation and lay hold upon the Creator. This prayer can only be in the Name of Christ. In Him all the goodness of God shines out towards us, and it is only in the fellowship of His mediation that the goodness of God's creatures can be found. In Him we find the whole creation ministering to our necessities, so that all things good and bad in themselves become subservient to our good as the children of God in Christ. So it is then that we learn the supreme goodness of God our Father in Himself. His creatures are good because they come from Him. He has all goodness in Himself, and desires that we should experience more and more of His goodness, drawing near unto Him in the Name of His Son.

3. MEDIATION OF CHRIST.

As this mediation enables us to behold the goodness of God in a loving consciousness which we could not otherwise possess, so the goodness of God, acting towards us in response to our prayer, makes us learn the goodness of Christ, in whose Name this access to the glory of God is provided for us.

Perhaps in the outset we are inclined to think of the mediation of Christ rather as if it brought God down to us, removing obstacles from the strictness of the Divine requirement. As we draw near unto God in Christ, we attain to see that this mediation does not degrade God, but lifts us up to Him. He purifies us that He may present us in Himself unto the Father.

Blessed are those prayers which seem to have no answer, if they really obtain for us more worthy penitence, more trustful patience, more spiritual contemplation. But results such as these will surely come if we are praying through the mediation of Christ. We cannot plead the merits of His Passion as the power wherein we soar to God without learning the manifold lessons of the Passion, in penitential sympathy with Him whose Heart has borne the burdens of our sins. The Blood which pleads for us with God must purify us to be worthy of God.

‘Whatsoever ye ask the Father, He will give it you in My Name.’ The abstract requirements of Divine sanctity might leave us without any definite sense of what God expected us to be, but the mediation of Christ brings the answers to our prayer, as it were, wrapped up in the spotless purity of His own life, and we cannot look to receive them in baskets covered with the filth of our sins. In conformity with that purity we must cleanse ourselves, in order to receive the gift which the angel of God would bring to us in the stainless sanctity of the heavenly perfection of Christ.

How many of our prayers remain unanswered, because we do not yield ourselves up to the redeeming love of Christ to be cleansed from sin, although we ask the Father to show His love to Christ in dealing with us as Christ’s members!

‘Whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, if we keep His commandments, and do those things which are pleasing in His sight’ (1 John iii. 22). Then we learn the mediation of Christ as enabling us to

approach to God with holy aspirations, efforts, watchfulness. Then we learn to look to God for all things in our prayer, and to look upon all things which God gives only as fresh means of serving Him through Christ.

MEDITATION LVI.

The Joy of the Mediatorial Covenant.

Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be fulfilled.—St. John xvi. 24.

1. A NEW POWER.

‘THE fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace.’ The covenant of God in Christ is not a mere covenant of stern law such as was between God and man in the olden time. Nature could know no relationship to God of personal freedom. The creature was the simple offthrow of God’s power, and could assert no rights, for it possessed none; nor could it plead any merits, for there was no spontaneity in its action, whereby it could rise towards God. It was responsible for its evil in that it did not use God’s gifts aright, entrusted to the creature for a particular end, but whatever it might do could never exceed the requirement of God’s law. It could only fulfil the conditions of a trust, knowing that God would exact a strict account.

As the covenant of Christ dawned upon the earth a new expectation was introduced. Even the typical ordinances of the old covenant woke a consciousness of Divine love. There was something beyond the slavery of nature for which man might live, now

that the love of God towards man was revealed by the intimations of the coming Saviour. Man was roused to hope. He was not merely to submit to God's omnipotent rule as a power which would eventually be irresistible. He was to associate himself with the Divine omnipotence with the anticipation of sharing it in some mysterious form of future fellowship, symbolized by filial love, and communicated by the Son of God, who would clothe Himself with our humanity, enabling us thereby to rise to God with holy confidence. The acts of nature's slavery were to shine out with a blessed foretaste of freedom in response to the promises of a new relationship of Fatherly love.

But if it was so before Christ came, much more did this great hope shine out when God became incarnate. Expectation was changed into power. The Spirit of the Son of God filled the members of the Body of Christ with a sense of present power. They knew themselves to be the children of the Most Highest, separated by a fresh gift of life from the rest of the world. God's love was indeed a law, but it was also an inspiration. It was a law of living power. The descent of the Holy Ghost quickened the faithful with 'the powers of the world to come,' infused into us by union with the ascended Lord.

In this covenant there was a real regeneration by the power of the Holy Ghost, so that filial love towards God might show itself forth in supernatural outreachings, drinking into itself exhaustless communications of Divine energy which God gave in

answer to the longings of His people, while He with Fatherly delight rejoiced to see them exercising for His glory the spiritual faculties whereby they were renewed after His Image.

Whatever the sufferings of the outward nature might be, this covenant was a sphere of joy altogether transcending what the natural heart could perceive. This joy was not to be the individual acquisition of some few souls, called as Abraham to a mysterious fellowship with God which none could share. It was to be a covenanted life, given to all who would seek it in sacramental ordinances, the creative words of the Incarnate Word. The life thus given was to be developed, not by necessary obedience, but by the unitive power of filial love, wherein those acts of obedience should be rendered.

So would the regenerate soul and the Eternal Father rejoice each in the other. The Body of the Incarnate Son would elevate the sensibilities of the faithful to a consciousness of the supreme joy of the Father's love, and the joy of God would consist in giving forth to the individual members of His only begotten Son those graces whereby His Son might be glorified. Wondrous unction of joy and power! The communion of saints should be perfected in the joy of God.

2. ASKING, THE MEASURE OF RECEIVING.

The gift of God in Christ was not to be as the gifts of God in nature. These are given, so to speak, haphazard. Men have them who never seek

them. In this fallen world, men often seek them and never obtain them. Doubtless, in the world of creation, before the Fall, men would have received the due reward of their deeds. Their toil would have produced its natural result. Yet even then the result would have been contained in the effort. No effort could raise man above the limited range of his natural abilities.

It was not to be so in the covenant of grace. None would seek without finding, and that which was found would be altogether beyond the natural limits of the efforts put forth for its acquisition.

The regenerate were not to toil by themselves. Their life was from God, in God, and for God. God, therefore, the Author of their life, would work along with them. They had but to ask, and they would receive fresh gifts, ever expanding in consequences of widespreading glory. While they used what God had given, they were to look to Him that He might give yet more. All work must be done in this spirit of prayerful desire, looking beyond the possibilities of that which had been attained to the glory of that which God had yet to bestow. Fresh gifts could not be given except in proportion as previous gifts had been consecrated by holy service. Every act of filial obedience offered to God with the exhaustless yearning of unsatisfied love was to call forth fresh gifts to satisfy the present longing and intensify the hunger after righteousness. Such gifts would be given in proportion as the individual soul sought for them. As each would ask, so should each receive. The capacity of the soul would grow with

receptivity, but in order to receive, the soul must feel the hunger and put forth the prayer.

In nature God giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not. The heavenly life is a world of responsive intelligence and personal action. The gifts of God in Christ are, therefore, bestowed upon the elect in proportion as they personally seek for them.

Indeed, past gifts die out, if we are content with having received them as if they were as much as we knew how to use. We must ask for what is beyond ourselves if we would retain what God has already given. What is in store is beyond our understanding, much more beyond our anticipation, but not beyond our desire. The revelation of Christ within us summons up all our energies that we may lose ourselves in Him, while we desire to behold Him in that fulness of manifestation which shall be hereafter. To this we must be advancing by assiduity in prayer.

Jesus says, 'Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.'

The regenerate soul exclaims, 'When I awake up after Thy likeness, I shall be satisfied with it.'

3. INEXHAUSTIBLE FULNESS.

Thus by prayer are we to attain the fulness of joy. The principle of joy is given to us in our regeneration. It must expand in energies commensurate with the initial power. It needs to be fulfilled with powers cognate to itself, that God

may lift us up to the full measure of joyous Divine sonship.

This joy is sometimes spoken of as a holy inebriation. We ought thereby to be lifted quite out of ourselves. As the inebriation of the flesh destroys the natural sense, degrading us under the tyranny of foul passions, so does this holy inebriation transport us out of the limits of natural sense by the overpowering mystery of Divine blessedness.

Even false religions have an idea of this mystical life, for it is inherent in every true conception of religion. False religions, however, fail, because they have not a true end, however much of sublimity may linger about their phraseology and aspiration. Hence, the inebriation of merely philosophical religions ends in idle dreams. When the personal reality of Divine love is not known as a substantive power, the aspiration of the soul cannot get any nearer to the accomplishment of its desires. There is no real welcome in vague Divine infinity. The soul loses itself in that for which it longs, and finds nothing.

Not such is the joy of the faithful. The soul loses itself, but it finds the welcome of God revealed in Christ. The arms of the Incarnate Love sustain it. The sympathy of the Incarnate Love inspires it. The wisdom of the Eternal Father shines forth with a reality which the material world symbolizes, but now at length it becomes known as the eternal purpose to be accepted of the soul with adoring gratitude.

Thus does the soul rise up to God, emptying itself

of material dreams, and receiving the fulness of the joy for which it was created by the experience of spiritual reality. It knows God at once as the external object of its desire and the internal principle of its life. It came forth from God with a predestination of infinite capacity. It grows as God invites, with a longing of infinite aspiration and an exercise of infinite energy. It loses the natural self of the lower world, to find the supernatural self of union with Christ. It reaches out after God with a security of infinite satisfaction. It beholds Jesus at the Right Hand of God, and the illuminations of grace vouchsafed amidst the struggles of a suffering life are fulfilled in the fruition of the Redeemer's triumph.

MEDITATION LVII.

The Day of Manifestation.

These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs : the hour cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but shall tell you plainly of the Father.—St. John xvi. 25.

1. THE TRIUMPHANT WORD.

OUR Lord calls the attention of the Apostles to the purposed obscurity of what He has now been saying. He has spoken to them in parables, partly metaphorical, partly sententious, but all along setting forth what could only be understood by the unfolding of the future. They could not profitably have received clearer teaching. Indeed, utterances which would have been better understood would not have conveyed as much. Had He spoken to them of isolated events, they would have known what to look forward to, and then there would have been an end. These 'parables' indicated more than isolated events. They set forth a law of developing power which was to have its application in various sequences of fulfilment.

So, indeed, it commonly is with Divine prophecy. God reveals purposes which are to be realized in successive events, and are not exhausted in one generation.

The hour was coming when Jesus would show

them plainly respecting the Father. Here, again, we may look to a double fulfilment—first during the forty days of the Resurrection, and then by the power of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost. He would open their minds with spiritual apprehension before He made known to them the things of the kingdom of heaven. As yet they could not understand the things which the Holy Ghost teacheth. Jesus was desirous to make them known. It would be the joy of His resurrection-triumph to speak forth to them the mysteries of God. The ‘proverbs’ of human utterance are preparing the way for the manifestation of the Word, the Eternal Son of God. When He tells them plainly concerning the Father, He will make known to them what He Himself is, the Son of the Father.

No one can understand or receive the words of Christ unless He knows Christ as being Himself the Word in whom all is included.

2. THE OPEN SPEECH.

The time is coming. Christ is advancing to the completeness of His ministry. They are advancing in the power of that ministry to a blessed participation of His spiritual glory. They are united with Him. Their advance in receptivity is united with His own advance in the work of Atonement. They cannot understand what He says and does as Man, except in proportion as they rise up to acknowledge His Personal Godhead in every word and work. His Passion, His death, His resurrection, are mere

portents until they have attained to know His unchangeable life as the Divine Word. The completion is not until He takes His place at the Right Hand of God in power.

Then He will speak to them without any concealment respecting the mysteries of God. They shall be endowed with power from on high by the gift of the Holy Ghost from Himself in His ascended glory. Then with unveiled face they shall behold the glory of the Lord, and shall hear His voice, receiving the truth in its fulness, and shall be 'changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord' (2 Cor. iii. 18).

Nowadays men hope to know Divine truth by clearness of human utterance. The unbeliever is expected to accept what without the Spirit of the Lord he cannot understand. What are all the heresies of Christendom but the result of indiscriminate controversy, while men strive to win truth by human subtlety, which can only be known by prayer and self-surrender to the teaching of the Spirit!

3. THE FATHER'S MYSTERY.

The time would soon be come when Jesus would teach them the mystery of the Divine Fatherhood, which contains the mystery of the Eternal Trinity within itself. He will show them concerning the Father, speaking from God (*ἀπαγγελῶ*). The true reading indicates the Divine origination of the Word thus to be spoken. Jesus, therefore, will thus fully

speak when He is fully glorified. When He is glorified with the Father, then He will 'speak from the Father's *glory respecting* the mystery of the Father's *Person*.' That seems to be the literal meaning of the words.

Thus shall be fulfilled the fundamental utterance of the Psalter: 'I will proclaim the law whereof the Lord hath said unto Me, Thou art My Son' (Ps. ii. 7). To declare the mystery of the Father's Person is to declare the correspondent mystery of His own Sonship. That twofold mystery can only be told in its fulness by the mysterious operation of the Holy Ghost.

How joyously does our Lord look forward to the hour which is approaching! His disciples shall share not only the knowledge, but the life which He gives. He tells, by the gift of the life which is in Himself, the Word. This knowledge is life eternal, hidden with Christ in God, but revealed in the heart of the faithful by the power of the Holy Ghost.

In this knowledge there is no concealment on the part of the Speaker, but a growing experience on the part of those that hear. The hearing ear is God's gift to those who seek Him. They who seek to hear by the mere arguments of natural demonstration shall ever hear amiss. Open thine ears to the obedience of love, and thou shalt hear what God Himself will say. The natural ear must feel its deafness, own its incapacity. If it be closed with pride against the supernatural teaching of the Spirit, it never can hear. We must not relapse into the

contented deafness of the agnostic. Let Jesus once speak the word 'Ephphatha' with power, and then we shall know how plainly He will speak to us more and more as years go by. In the full participation of His glory we shall know as we are known.

MEDITATION LVIII.

The Boldness of Adoption.

In that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you; for the Father himself loveth you.—St. John xvi. 26.

1. ASKING IN CHRIST'S NAME.

WHEN Christ was ascended to the Father, and had sent down the Holy Ghost communicating the Divine life to His disciples, they would approach the Father in prayer, and ask for what they wanted as His true sons in the Name of His only begotten Son. The door of heaven would be open. We should have access to the holiest by the blood of Christ.

We could not know God as the Father unless we were partakers of His life, nor could we partake of His life without knowing Him as the Father. The promise, therefore, to reveal the Father comes along with the promise of access to God in filial prayer.

Jesus had already said that God would give to them in His Name (ver. 23) whatever they might ask. Now He says that they are to ask in His Name. He had already said that He Himself would give them what they asked (ch. xiv. 13, 14). He had told them that an abiding union with Himself,

while they cherished His words, was to be the law of their fruitfulness, giving efficacy to their prayer (ch. xv. 7). Now He assures them that they are to be identified with Himself. They do not merely invoke His Name as an external authority. They are taken into the life and experience of His Name as a unitive power, wherein God acts towards them and they themselves speak to God.

The Name which they are thus to use is the Name of the only begotten Son, consubstantial with the Father. As we advance in these verses to learn the full power of that Name, we learn that it is not an inferior name of administrative authority, but it is the very Name of Divine life, wherein the Father and the Son are one. Into this Triune Name we are baptized (Matt. xxviii. 19). The Holy Ghost proceeding from the Father and the Son takes us up into this Divine life. Therefore He is called the Spirit of adoption, the Giver of no fictitious adoption, but the Communicator of the Divine sonship to the members of Christ.

Variable as our own state of mind may be, this Deific sonship is an invariable power. It operates towards us from God the Father, and it operates in us towards God the Father. It guarantees the accomplishment of all that we ask, so long as our petition is worthy of the Divine life. It does so not merely by the assurance of Divine fulfilment, but by the initiatory assurance of Divine co-operation giving power to our prayer, which nothing but our own subsequent failure can evacuate.

This promise, then, is a call to Divine life, not

merely as a law imposed by God, but as a privilege empowered by God. Prayer living in the Name of Christ with Divine power cannot be a mere intermittent appeal, such as the creature could make to an infinitely powerful master. It must be the sustained act of a contemplative life rejoicing in the glory of that elevating sonship whereby the Father becomes manifest to the soul of the regenerate, and regarding all created things only from the standpoint of the Divine life, so as to desire nothing unless the glory of the Divine life will show itself thereby.

2. THE THEOCRATIC INTERCESSION.

We pray as being really exalted to the throne of God along with Jesus, the Source of our sonship, whose members we are. We are not, then, to think that we need Christ's supplication on our behalf as an external Intercessor. He intercedes for us by communicating to us the glory of His own exalted life. He does not intercede as one separate from those for whom He intercedes, but they are, as it were, so many mouths to Himself; and as they pray for themselves, His voice fills their utterance with the authority and claim belonging to Himself.

The word used of Christ's intercession is different from that of their prayer. They ask. He does not say that He will now question the Father respecting them. This word implies an ambassadorial interposition. He, as the Head of the Divine embassy to mankind, warrants His members in speaking

with as much authority as belongs to Himself. In approaching the heavenly throne, they do not look to Him as a referee to support their petition, but they are clothed with all the virtue inherent in His office of Mediator. They do not come before God with the mere claim of reconciliation through His pardoning grace, but with the claim of Divine identification through His quickening power.

There could be no showing of the Father, unless it resulted in their perfect elevation to the boldness of filial love, whereby we are to approach the throne of grace (Heb. iv. 16), and say, 'Our Father.'

3. THE PARTICIPATION OF THE FATHER'S LOVE.

God is love. The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the regenerating, illuminating Spirit—the Spirit of adoption, the Spirit of prayer. Our Lord had promised that those who loved Him should be loved of the Father, and Christ would manifest Himself to them (ch. xiv. 21).

That love was the essential love which belongs to identity of nature. Now He speaks of a different element of love—the personal relationship and intimacy of love.

Jesus thus assures them that the love of God towards them is no vague amiability, but a personal regard. The Father does not need that the Son should stimulate Him to show His love to the faithful. They come to God, and must remember that He is their Friend.

In this friendship they may look to draw forth

the love of God towards them as they appeal to it. God is not only loving to all, so that they may feel His readiness to do good to any one; but He has called them into personal relationship and activity, so that it depends upon themselves to bring out the love of God in personal co-operation. They are not to think that God holds back from, that He is slow to acknowledge them. A friend is a second self. God will regard their interests as His own.

This remembrance ought to make us watchful over God's interests as over our own. We must love the Father with no empty good will, but with an intense interest, a personal devotion.

To love one who is of high character, position, power, dignity, is an elevating thing. How must this love of God elevate us! We must rise up to take an interest in all wherein God is glorified. This will be a principle of glory and sanctification to our own lives. Our love to God must claim a sacrifice of all else, for He is worthy to receive all that we can do. The friendship of the world draws us away from God (Jas. iv. 4). The friendship of God draws us away from the world. It associates us with the work of God, with His glorious predestination, with His infinite power, with His perfect goodness. We love him, for He is good. We learn His goodness, and we rise up to His goodness in the association of His eternal purpose.

MEDITATION LIX.

The Loving Fatherhood.

The Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came forth from the Father.—St. John xvi. 27.

1. HOPE IN THE FATHER'S LOVE.

‘THE Father Himself loveth you.’ Each disciple personally is an object of the Father’s love, as being the personal representative of Christ. We are not to think of God’s love as an indiscriminate benevolence, but a personal consideration. God desires to work out our own good, that each one of us may have a true personal relationship, in which He may show forth the glory of Christ in us as Christ’s representatives. The friendship bestowed upon us by the Father is the onflow of the Father’s love to the Son; for whatsoever the Father does, He does it through the Son. That love does not become enfeebled by transmission. It flows on, therefore, to the persons of the disciples, and raises them to the glory of the Only Begotten. God’s love is eternal to Christ, creative towards us. It therefore communicates to us those faculties of the Divine Humanity which may fit us to be the objects of its influence. It is no patronizing love, outwardly bestowed upon the unworthy. It is a

dignifying love, which raises up the recipient to the glory which such personal fellowship requires.

Such being the nature of the Father's love, we must find in it a real ground of hope. He will give us in the Name of Christ what we ask in the Name of Christ. He, indeed, teaches us what we ought to ask. The Son of God has no will separate from the will of the Father. The Father's will finds in Him its perfect expression. Therefore the saints can only ask what by the Spirit of Christ the Father has taught them to pray for. We ought to know ourselves as being thus, each one of us, the true and proper object of the Father's love, just as if there were no other member of Christ but ourself alone.

O to feel the Father's love thus personally resting upon us in Christ by the power of the Holy Ghost! By such knowledge our nature rises up to the fulness of hope in prayer. We know that whatsoever we ask, according to His will, He heareth us (1 John v. 14). Our prayers are formulated by that will which inspires them, and they cannot but be accomplished by that personal regard which substantiates them.

2. LOVE TO CHRIST THE GROUND OF OUR BEING LOVED.

This personal love of the Father to us is the outcome of our personal love to Christ. 'The Father Himself loveth you thus personally, for ye have shown the fulness of personal love to Me.'

The Father does not regard the love of Christ as if it were a shortcoming which is unable to extend itself towards the Divine Majesty, and therefore rests upon the throne of Christ as an inferior object. It is quite the reverse. The love which rises up to Christ cannot stop short in Christ. It must reach to the Father's Person, for He is in the Father and the Father in Him. Their personal characteristics are not diverse as the characters of two men. He that hath seen, that knows, that loves, Christ, hath seen, known, and learnt to love the Father in the unity of consubstantial Godhead. This love to Christ, therefore, necessitates the love of the Father both actively and receptively. 'The Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me.'

3. FAITH IN CHRIST'S DIVINE GENERATION.

'Ye have believed that I came forth from God, came forth from being alongside of the Father.' Their love to Christ was far beyond a human admiration. It was a faith not necessarily at that time realizing the fulness of our Lord's Godhead, but recognizing at least that He has a nature higher than the nature of earth, and that all which constitutes His claim to their love is a transmission throughout of the goodness of the Father who has sent Him.

There is cause for much thankfulness when the soul beholds Christ in the glory of the Father. The love which reaches out toward the glory of

God cannot fail of its reward as being accepted of the Father. This love did not separate Christ from the Father who sent Him, as if there were a limitation to the Being of Christ, providing a term whereon the love should rest while the Divine glory lay beyond, unreachd, unloved, unknown. No; their love recognized Christ as the Partner of the Father's Divine life—a separate Personality, alongside of the Father, but abiding in an eternal relationship with the Father. The Son is not alongside of the Father accidentally, as if He could be elsewhere, but essentially by virtue of an unchangeable correspondence. In whatever respect the Father is God, in that respect the Son is God likewise. There is an absolute unity of substance as the basis of the coeternal fellowship, without which neither could the Father be the living Father nor could the Son be the living Son. The Apostles had learnt to associate Christ with the Father, not as a transparent medium, which implied separation and diversity, but as a correlative principle of powerful identity and personal co-operation.

MEDITATION LX.

The Summary of Christ's Work.

I came out from the Father, and am come into the world: again I leave the world and go unto the Father.—St. John xvi. 28.

1. THE DIVINE GENERATION.

OUR Lord has said, 'Ye believed that I came forth from the (*παρὰ*) Father.' Thus He expresses the consciousness of His glorious Personality, coming forth from the Father's home, which the Apostles in some sort apprehended, although until He had showed them the Father by the gift of the Eternal Spirit, they could not rise to the full meaning of the words. Now He proceeds to teach them more fully the truth of the consubstantial Godhead. 'I came forth from (*ἐκ*) the Father.' This seems to be the right reading, and it helps very much to the full exegesis of this discourse. The Apostles knew Him as the Teacher come from God. Even Nicodemus confessed thus much. He was a Person who had come into the world from a higher state, where He held personal intercourse with the Father. He was the Son of the living God. So Simon had confessed; but as yet they did not know the mystery of the Three coequal, consubstantial Persons. He tells them now that He comes not merely from the

Father's home, which, in their limited apprehension, might convey a merely local and limited idea of the Divine Being, but from the Father's Substance, in that He was truly begotten from the Father, as He had said before, 'I and My Father are One.'

He comes forth. It is the very act of His eternal life thus to be begotten of the Father. He is not the Son of God by a mere transitory act of birth. His coming forth is from everlasting. His relationship in the Eternal Trinity is a continual expression of this Divine generation. All that He does as God, He does in virtue of this consubstantial Sonship. God acts through Him. He is the Creative Word. As God cannot have parts, so the fulness of the Godhead comes forth in Him. As the word is the expression of the thought, so is He the Expression of the mind and purpose, the wisdom, of God. All the power of God comes forth in Him. He is not an accidental agent accomplishing the Father's will by a special prerogative as the most glorious of God's creatures. He is the plenary, coequal, consubstantial, eternal Expression of the Divine Being, coming forth from the Father by an eternal generation antecedent to that manifestation whereby He came into the world. He dwelt in the eternal glory along with the Father, in a personal relationship, as His Son, before the world was. 'As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself.' The Father gives this life, but does not part with it. He gives it in all its completeness, for this life itself is incapable of being divided. It is the very substance of God. Nothing

could spring up within it which did not belong to its eternal, indivisible essence. Therefore the Son of God is coeternal with the Father. This generation of the Son is the act of eternal life whereby God is what He is; not a blank, unconscious power, but a God of wisdom, utterance, and joy. Jesus is the Word by whom all things were made.

2. THE HUMAN INCARNATION.

Jesus came forth from being with (*παρὰ*) the Father, and He was of one substance (*ἐκ*) with the Father, and He came into the world. He did not derive His existence from the world. He had a life previous to His birth in this world, and altogether independent of this world's life; but He took upon Himself the nature and life of man. His life in this world was a true human life, subject to all the weakness which belongs to our nature, but exempt from death, and, by reason of the indwelling Godhead, incapable of sin. He took upon Himself the emptiness of our nature, although in Him dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily. He had all that belonged to Him as the Incarnate Son of God, the Eternal Wisdom, but He acted in the weakness of the human organism, not laying aside anything which belonged to His Godhead, but acting under the conditions of our manhood. The sense of Divine power, wisdom, and goodness, inherent inalienably within Himself, made His sense of our human weakness only the greater. His human will did not rebelliously snatch at the power of the Godhead

wherewith it was associated. He submitted to act as the slave of human infirmity (Phil. ii. 6), but not as the slave of sin. The power, the wisdom, and the goodness of God dwelt in Him, not so as to nullify the weakness, but to enable Him to bear the suffering under which, unaided, humanity must have succumbed. He was immortal, strong, wise. The Divine nature supplied to Him all that could be given to human nature from without, but it did not change the receptive humanity. The fulness of Godhead dwelt in Him by personal identification, even as we receive in our various degrees gifts from that fulness by sacramental incorporation into Him; but His perfect Humanity was as true to all that constitutes the human organism in its perfection, as ours is true to that humanity with the wounds of sin and the superinduced necessity of death, from both of which He was free. He, in the fulness of coequal Godhead, came forth as begotten of the substance of the Father eternally, and came into this world uniting to Himself the emptiness of the creature, which could not lose its emptiness by His assumption, for the empty is finite, and the fulness is infinite. He could not eat, or speak, or think as man among men, save by the emptiness of the assumed nature; but He never acted, spake, or thought without the personal co-operation of the Divine nature in its fulness. Neither of these natures suffered loss, but the Divine nature supplied infinite power, while the human nature acted in its natural weakness.

3. THE HEAVENLY GLORIFICATION.

Thus did the Son of God humble Himself by coming into the world, but He was to leave the world and go to the Father. He would take the human nature out of the conditions of earthly life to which, whilst here, He was subjected. He did not lay aside His Humanity in going, any more than He laid aside His Godhead in coming. He took His finite nature up to be glorified in the Divine nature. It was not to be lost in the Divine infinity. Had He lost it, He would not have gone to the Father, for personally He was with the Father, and substantially One with the Father all along. It was henceforth to act, not under the conditions of our manhood, as subjected in this world to the weakness which is the penalty of sin. It was to be glorified with the effulgent glory of Divine power, so as to be the channel through which the indwelling glory would act with Divine manifestation to all created worlds. He was to sit at the Right Hand of God, not by any circumscription of place, as if God dwelt in a finite locality, but so as to be the Instrument of Divine action, that whatever God does should be done not only by Himself personally as the Word, but by Himself in the sovereignty of His Incarnate Being. His human nature is still inferior to the Godhead, but only through it can the Divine glory act. It is the Temple of Divine indwelling. It is incapable now of being reduced under any limitations, such as belonged to the period of His humiliation. He fills all things, not by an immanent presence coextensive

with the empty universe, but by a sovereignty of power, holding all created things within the grasp of His will, and communicating from His fulness the gifts of grace to His covenanted members, which shall enable them by union with Him to have access unto the Father, and rejoice as God's children in the fellowship of His eternal life.

He has left the world and gone unto the Father, and now He cannot come again until His second advent, when the glory of His manifestation shall make the earth and heaven to flee away, and there shall be no place found for them (Rev. xx. 11).

He comes to His people now in the gifts of grace, not by humbling Himself to them by earthly presence, but lifting them up to be partakers of His glorified mediatorial character in the fulness of Divine life.

MEDITATION LXI.

The Faith of the Disciples.

His disciples say, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now know we that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.—St. John xvi. 29, 30.

1. RELIANCE UPON CHRIST'S DIVINE WISDOM.

OUR Lord's words spoken hitherto could not convey to the Apostles' mind that fulness of meaning which we can perceive therein, regarding them in the light of the Christian Creed as we now possess it. Nevertheless the teaching thus given had for them all the distinctness of a new revelation. They became conscious of our Lord's truth in a manner beyond that of earthly teachers. They saw that He belonged to that other world of which He spoke. They could not, of course, understand as yet the relations of the Eternal Trinity, nor the hypostatic union, but it seemed to them as if they knew all that had to be known. This was not said in any tone of self-sufficiency. They poured forth their gratitude and their amazement at our Lord's definite announcements. He had promised to speak to them plainly. They cannot think of any greater plainness wherein He should speak to them. They did not perceive what mysteries lay hidden beneath His words, which

required the gift of the Holy Ghost to open their hearts to their plain acceptance.

We are too apt to think that we know Divine truth, whereas we know nothing yet as we ought to know (1 Cor. viii. 2). We have plain statements of Divine mysteries given to us in the Church, but we must not think that those plain statements are to be accepted with the limitation which belongs to earthly words. They need the wisdom which the Holy Ghost teacheth in order to be duly apprehended by us. How sadly is Divine truth marred by being subjected, as it were, to investigation through the smoked glass of the human intellect, so that while men are striving to maintain statements which are true, they deprive others of their Divine radiance by controversial self-satisfaction! They think of the truth as if their minds were its measure, instead of accepting its mystery as the master-motive of their minds. They dwarf Divine truth to their own understanding, instead of rising out of their own littleness to its infinity.

Our Lord checks the over-confidence of the Apostles. It was not wrong in them, for they were only acting as a genuine impulse of nature dictated, but this impulse needed illumination before this confidence could be justified.

2. UNQUESTIONING ACCEPTANCE.

‘Thou needest not that any man should question Thee.’ Our Lord had said that in that day of joy

which was approaching 'they should ask Him no questions' (ver. 23). They think that He has already anticipated all they had to ask. His words meant that they should have an illumination of the Holy Ghost, opening their minds to a full vision of Divine truth and all the glorious purposes of the Divine will. The same words upon their lips mean that the few statements which Jesus has made, feebly as they could then be understood, were yet a sufficient evidence that He knew what they needed to know, and could, unquestioned, give them information as an earthly teacher could give to those who inquired of him.

Human words come far short of expressing Divine mysteries. They are not untrue because they are inadequate; but we must recognize the fact that, however true, they are but earthly expressions of Divine realities. The mysteries of the kingdom can never be set aside. The simplicity of the gospel in which no mystery remains is but a barren waste. The clearness of systematic theology in which all mysteries are hardened into a crystallized orthodoxy is but, as it were, a fossil. The living organism of truth is a living power, whose mysterious depths must be learnt by the teaching of the Holy Ghost, who 'searcheth all things, even the deep things of God' (1 Cor. ii. 10).

The Apostles thought only of human questioning for the satisfaction of a legitimate natural curiosity. Our Lord spoke of a new and higher life, when they should no longer question Him in human ignorance, but should be led onward in spiritual understanding,

by continual infusion of Divine wisdom, perfecting them in the Divine life for the glory of God.

3. CONFIDENCE IN THE DIVINE MISSION OF CHRIST.

‘We believe that Thou camest forth from God.’ After all, they had only attained to the conviction expressed by Nicodemus long before: ‘We know that Thou art come as a Teacher from God’ (John iii. 2). The expression avoids the distinction of personality and consubstantiality contained in our Lord’s own words. This preposition (*ἀπὸ*) merely implies the Divine mission.

Thus the very phrase which the Apostles use indicates the earthly level of their apprehensions.

It is an evidence of Divine truth, that it satisfies a human longing. But false religions contain much Divine truth which satisfies human longings of various kinds. Because a religion meets a present want, it does not follow that it is a true religion. People are often led to exaggerate the value of various religious systems because of truths which they contain. Truth, however, must not only satisfy the human mind as far as it is apprehended. It must stimulate the human mind with the desire of fuller knowledge. All vital statements of truth must be germinant, elevating, expansive. Truth does not come down to us, the children of falsehood by reason of the Fall, but it lifts us up to itself. Forms which repress inquiry, eliminate mystery, humanize the Divine, are lifeless, however literally exact. In Divine revelation, as in the mystery of

the Incarnation itself, the human is the manifestation of the Divine, but the infinite is not thereby imprisoned in the finite, although the finite is the instrument of its action. The Divine truth finds its form in the human manifestation, but loses none of its own power. As the human form is apprehended, so must we be lifted up into the Divine power. The Divine does not come down so as to accommodate itself to human longings, and leave us in our littleness. The Divine cannot be approached under the human form unless through that form we are lifted up into the living fellowship of the Divine glory.

The Apostles at this time did not feel their need. Alas; that in the present day so many Christians are satisfied with the human conception, the human expression, the human organization, of a gospel of the letter, and have no hunger after the truth which it contains! Truth ought, indeed, to satisfy every true longing of the soul; but that cannot be divinely true which does not waken up a fresh longing to be satisfied by continually expanding communications from Him who is the Truth whereon we are to feed.

MEDITATION LXII.

Faith needs Trial.

Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe? Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.—St. John xvi. 31, 32.

1. THE SCATTERING FORETOLD.

‘Do ye already believe?’ Jesus asks the question in order to make them feel their own confidence in their convictions. Human faith may rest upon human satisfaction, but it is not taken beyond the limits of human weakness. The faith of the Apostles would soon be subjected to a severe trial, beyond their calculations; then it would be seen how weak their human faith really was. No; the Divine revelation must be divinely apprehended before their faith could be worthy of Him. If they were really to believe that He came forth from God, as He Himself had said, they must themselves be taken up to God. The trial in store was such as must shake all human confidence in Himself as a mere human messenger possessing a Divine authority. Faith in Him must be a Divine faith, and that Divine faith had not yet been bestowed.

We are ‘baptized into the faith’ of Christ, not as giving our assent to His truth, but as being

ourselves assumed into His life to share the supernatural sustaining power of His truth.

The Apostles would soon be scattered every one to his own. This would show that they had not risen up to the faith of Christ so as to find their own true home in God.

If we really believe in Christ, our home must be in Christ. 'Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life' (John vi. 68). Earth can then be our home no longer. Earthly notions of Christianity may accept Christ as giving a higher tone to earthly life. This is not enough. We must be content to see all earthly expectations overthrown. The truth of Christ abides as a living power, and we must find new life therein, so that no catastrophes of earth may disturb our confidence nor make a breach in our fellowship. We cannot have that loving, adoring faith which He requires unless we are prepared to sacrifice all else for Him. Well may Israel be scattered as sheep having no shepherd if an Ahab die, but death cannot separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. And if we know Jesus to be the Son of God, we must feel ourselves to be absolutely secure in Him under every possible vicissitude. It is easy to die for Christ. It is a much greater trial of faith to see Jesus Himself led out to die. So the faith of the Apostles had to be tried, and our faith has to be tried while we witness the various modes in which the world gains from time to time victories over the Church. We have to remember that the greater the world's victory may be, so much the greater also shall the

overthrow of the world be in the end. Nothing that happens must make us fall away from Christ in distrust or despair. The home of our hearts must under all circumstances be in Him alone.

2. EARTHLY HEARTS AND EARTHLY HOMES.

Jesus came to His natural home among the covenanted people, and His own kindred received Him not (John i. 11). All His life on earth He had been separated. Those who lose sight of Jesus and turn to their own home show that they have not, after all, learnt what it is to follow the Son of man. 'He hath not where to lay His Head.' We perhaps in the present day think that this was true of those mysterious thirty years, but that it is different now. It never can be different. The Church of Christ can never have a home upon earth. She is nursed in the wilderness while the dragon carries on his persecution, but she can have no home here.

The Christian life is not a mere accident of the Christian's life. It is the reality by which he lives. His earthly life is but a varying phase of existence. 'Faith is the substance of things hoped for,' and they that live by faith can recognize nothing as truly substantial save that unseen reality for whose eventual manifestation they are continually hoping. All that belongs to the outer life, whether it be of joy or of sorrow, is only accidental. The only value of that which is phenomenal must be to give opportunity of experiencing more fully the imperishable glory of the heavenly substance.

The Apostles were not ready as yet to see Him die an ignominious death who was the sole Foundation of all their hopes. They would die with Him. So said they all. His fellowship would strengthen their natural courage. But to see Him die without an effort of resistance—this threw them back upon their natural weakness. Death separated Him from their fellowship, because they were living with Him in the perishable association of nature, not in the immortality of grace.

3. CHRIST'S CONSUBSTANTIAL SONSHIP ABIDING SURE.

This trial, which would scatter them to their earthly homes, would manifest the inseparable union whereby He ever lived with the Father. The outward overthrow of that with which His earthly nature associated Him could not affect the unity of life wherein He personally dwelt as one God with the Father.

If He leaves the world, it is that He may go unto the Father, but not as if He were now personally separated from Him. He goes by virtue of that Humanity wherein He ascends, but He is ever with the Father and the Father with Him by virtue of that Godhead which He has in the unity of the Holy Ghost.

Let us remember that we have received in Christ a kingdom which cannot be moved (Heb. xii. 28). So let us live apart from every hope and fear, resting simply in the Divine love. Then shall our faith in Him not be ashamed.

MEDITATION LXIII.

The Purpose of Christ's Teachings.

These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye may have peace. In the world ye have tribulation : but be of good cheer ; I have overcome the world.—St. John xvi. 33.

1. PEACE THROUGH HIS ASSURANCE.

CHRIST speaks. Even the winds and the sea obey Him when He says, 'Peace; be still!' Shall not man's heart accept the same authority? The teaching of the last two chapters has been given for the purpose of stablishing the faithful in peace. They were to live in an atmosphere which the hatred exerted by the lower world against them could not taint. Christ is the Giver of peace. That peace is to be found in Himself. If we would have it, we must receive it as having been promised to us by Him. He has all along contemplated the bestowal of this peace. As He has promised it, we know that it is not an accidental, transitory peace. It is a permanent state of security for which He has been training us, so that our hearts may welcome the gift as befits His true disciples. We cannot carry on the necessary warfare against the powers of evil unless we are living in this Divine peace. It gives us the strength for the conflict, and the calmness so that we may use the strength.

The contemplation of theological mysteries is the very foundation of that practical life of holiness whereby we are to appropriate the gift of Divine joy. In the knowledge of the eternal relationships of the Divine life, we learn to act true to God in spite of the conflicting relationships which entangle us in the complications of the lower world. Every Divine truth supplies a motive of holiness, while it also indicates the power by which that holiness is to be acquired and exercised.

How comprehensive are the teachings of Christ given to us in these chapters! How solid is that peace which He gives us in Himself!

2. PEACE IN THE FELLOWSHIP OF CHRIST.

Christ came to give peace to those who would come to seek it by union with Himself. He did not come to make peace for the world at large. 'He is our Peace' (Micah v. 5; Eph. ii. 14). The peace is not through Him as an external agent, but in Him as the very sphere of its reality, so that what is outside of Him has no peace.

Accordingly, our Lord's teachings in this long discourse have reference to the incorporation of the faithful into Himself, more distinctly declared afterwards in His High-priestly prayer, where the union between Himself and the Father is set forth as the very pattern and prototype of the union between Himself and His people.

This peace is given to us in Him because He, the Prince of Peace, is the Head of the Body. The

peace assured to all His members is, therefore, assured to us as truly as it belongs to Him, the Head.

3. PEACE A SUBSTANTIVE REALITY.

This peace is far more than the absence of war. Indeed, it is given to us because we have many enemies around us with whom to contend. While all the powers of the world are against us, we experience the reality of this peace, giving us a sense of victory, whereby we learn the truth of the Divine indwelling.

We are pledged to fight against the world, the flesh, and the devil. The peace which is here promised by Christ shines out with a bright sunshine of tranquillity, while the storms are raging which our three enemies raise against us. The world passeth away, with all its antagonisms. This peace remains. We do not maintain the peace, but in our struggle the peace maintains us. The world would accept an outward compromise, the peace which may be generated by indifference. The world resents the peace which comes from the Divine inspiration as being its own most deadly foe. It is the peace which belongs to the faithful, who are able, amidst all contrarities, to rejoice in the promise of God vouchsafed to us in Christ. The flesh rises up against the Spirit with manifold temptations that are bitter to be borne; but the will rejoicing in the Divine peace is strengthened to set aside all the false allurements of appetite. Our soul is refreshed in the multitude of peace when it would

be worn down by natural resistance to such violent assaults. And in our conflict with Satan it is the same. God will tread down Satan under our feet shortly; but He must first fill our hearts with that Divine substantive reality of peace, which will enable us to take part and tread down the enemy with only temporal loss, and a brightening perception of the Divine glory which comes to fill the void and heal every wound, that we may have to bear all troubles with thankfulness. 'The very God of peace shall sanctify His people wholly; and their whole spirit and soul and body shall be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ' (1 Thess. v. 23).

MEDITATION LXIV.

The Struggle with the World.

In the world ye have tribulation : but be of good cheer ; I have overcome the world.
—St. John xvi. 33.

1. TRIBULATION THE CONTINUOUS CONDITION OF THE CHRISTIAN.

WHILE our Lord promises His disciples the peace which passeth understanding, He assures them also that their life in the world is to be one of tribulation. How slow we are to accept this! We want peace externally, but we cannot have peace with Christ and peace with the world at the same time. We may choose which we will have.

Historians may arrange the prosperous and the adverse circumstances of the Church in different ages, but in truth it is the adverse circumstances which are the happiest. The prosperous events must, in the very nature of things, bring a cloud over her spiritual life and heavenly joy.

We are not on that account to set aside the things of the world in a contemptuous or pessimistic spirit. Evils are not good because they produce good; neither are good things evil because they produce evil. Evil does not produce good if it comes by our own seeking. It is that evil which

comes to us by the world's opposition which produces good. We have to use the things of the world to do our external work in the world. We must not expect that the good things of the world will make our Christian advance easier, nor are we to regard them as tokens of God's special favour. Every form of affliction is a means of Divine power if it be welcomed and used in a spirit of faith. The good things of the world are sure to bring some special affliction along with them if they are used to God's glory. The seeming prosperity is granted for transitory purposes, but we are not to rejoice because the devils are subject unto us through Christ's Word. We must take care that we do not become subject to them by falling away from Christ's Word. The Church from age to age has suffered when she has had least of tribulation. The victory of faith is to subdue the world, but the world is not to be the sphere of its enjoyment. Every victory must be regarded with suspicion unless it brings some increase of affliction, a closer fellowship of the Cross.

The Cross is as the bridge between earth and heaven. It is formed of earthly things, but they are riveted together by the nails of Christ's Passion. Any worldly structure that is not thus consolidated by suffering must pass away like a child's castle built of sand.

2. COURAGE AMIDST DIFFICULTY.

The bearing of the Cross must not, then, lead to despondency. Quite the reverse! We must accept

overthrow in this world as being, not a necessary evil, but a real and unfailing instrument of God. If good were obtainable with or without suffering, we must recognize that what is gained without suffering has not the same eternal value as that which has been gained in the fellowship of the Cross, even though the outward results may seem to be identical.

Suffering must, therefore, awaken in us a spirit of holy boldness. The very evil of success is just that it overclouds the sense of hope. We seem to have what we desire, and cease to long for that which God has yet to give. Faith may be strong while yet hope is feeble, but faith that expands itself in the present moment, however full of daring, loses the heavenly glow of love. While we think to rejoice in earthly things for God's sake, we are apt to reduce our estimate of God's glory to an earthly standard. Every conception of the kingdom of Christ as developed upon the earth has a tendency to blind us to the glory of that heavenly kingdom for which we ought to long. As earthly expectations vanish, heavenly hopes become solidified.

Hope, therefore, gives courage to faith amidst the sufferings which love delights to bear. That courage is invincible, because it has one only term to which it looks forward. It rejoices in tribulation, because it looks forward to the joy of God. 'God is our Refuge and Strength in trouble' (Ps. xlvi. 1). But more than that. 'Thou, O God, art my Hope;' or, as it is well expressed, 'Thou art the thing that I long for' (Ps. lxxi. 4). In order to have true

Divine courage, we must not only hope in God, but for God. 'He shall be our Guide unto death' (Ps. xlviii. 13).

3. CHRIST'S VICTORY ALREADY WON.

'I have overcome the world.' The pronoun is emphatic. Since Christ has overcome the world, we look personally to Him so as to find peace, victory, joy, in Him. We need no strength of our own, for the victory is His. If we have to perpetuate His sufferings, yet we have to look up to Him and experience the joy of His accomplished victory.

He triumphed in the strength of His Divine Nature, in the consciousness of the Divine joy which belonged to Him by eternal generation. We have to triumph by the very same strength, because the joy of His Divine Nature is infused into us as His members by the power of the Holy Ghost. We have a twofold nature—one of suffering, our own earthly nature; and one of joy, His Divine Nature, of which we are partakers. The joy is brought out into actual experience by the endurance of suffering.

Would that we strove more faithfully to call forth the energies of this joyous life whereby the faithful ought to live with Christ. A dead philosophy of faith may produce a hard and stubborn resoluteness of earthly character, but without the joy of God there cannot be the sweet, supernatural inebriation of the martyr's triumph. There must be a living correspondence of faith with Jesus at the Right Hand of God. This is not dependent upon any

specialty of outward circumstance. If we live in Christ glorified, we shall be the same under all vicissitudes. We shall then begin to know Christ crucified as the real Strength of our hope. The more we are called to bear the suffering, whether it be in mind or in body, the more shall we feel the rapture of love, giving our inmost nature a fruition of that which in its fulness can only be known hereafter.

We cannot love the world as an external order, for it is dead. There is a new world, a spiritual order, gathered out of this fallen husk, the true world, which God's predestinating love has saved by the death of Christ. This world, glorified now in Christ, is that whercon we must set our affections, and we can only attain to that living order of righteousness by having our nature excised from this fallen world by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Jesus has overcome the world. His triumphant Humanity is the sphere of all our delight. We have to give ourselves to Him and die to all that is outside of Him. We are not to turn from Him as the Israelites turned from Moses, saying, 'We know not what is become of Him.' Rather we must look to Him, that we may know what He has obtained for us. 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.' But all is summed up in the glorified Being of Jesus, 'Whom not having seen, we love; in whom, though now we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.'

MEDITATION LXV.

Mental Attitude in Prayer.

These things spake Jesus ; and lifting up his eyes to heaven, he said, Father, the hour is come.—St. John xvii. 1.

1. JESUS PRAYS FOR THE WHOLE CHURCH.

WE now come to the great High-priestly prayer of Christ—the prayer of His Self-consecration. It is the prayer which gives tone and meaning to all the mystery of the Passion. It is evidently the summary of our Lord's inmost thoughts, uttered aloud in the presence of others for the purpose of teaching the disciples who heard it. It shows how really the sacrifice of Christ was a priestly ministration. It was no empty drama. It was no cosmical development. It was a real, personal self-oblation, made with a definite consciousness of the human will in obedience to the personal charge of a divinely accredited ministry, for the purpose of obtaining an answer from God in acknowledgment of its own inherent merit. It was the expression of love, filial, coequal with the Father, the utterance of human lips, the movement of a human heart, in perfect correspondence of personal action with the Divine wisdom, through the undivided life of the Eternal Spirit.

Such an act of ministry demanded an audience of fellow-worshippers. It was on behalf of the congregation. Jesus prays not for Himself alone, but for the whole Church as being His Body. His Church must, therefore, take part in the prayer, although He alone pronounces it. At other times He has prayed while His people slept. He has prayed in solitude, as One separate from His brethren ; but now He prays as the Head of the family of the redeemed, ministering upon their behalf, and therefore with their concurrence.

We are not told when this prayer was spoken, but it could not be as they were walking through the streets. Nor does it seem fitting that the old Temple, which was passing away, should have its deserted chambers hallowed by such an intercession. A new order of things had begun. A new sacrifice was giving efficacy to the prayer of a new priesthood. It seems as if this prayer should be taken as part of the new institution. These chapters, if regarded as what in modern publications would be called an appendix, may be taken as the sermon, and His prayer 'for the whole state of Christ's Church' in that primary Eucharistic Office. It may well be that they were omitted in the section which closes with ch. xiv., because they would interfere with the sequence of the narrative. So John does not give the account of the institution ; but the foot-washing, the discourse, and the prayer may be taken as his contribution, to be inserted in their proper places, as completing the description given by the other evangelists.

2. JESUS LIFTS UP HIS EYES TO HEAVEN.

He lifted up His eyes, not merely to the outward heaven, but, with a gaze of contemplation far beyond what human eyes could see, He looked to the spiritual heavens.

The upward gaze, when contemplating spiritual objects, is not so much a symbolical as a natural action. We think of that which is purest and most spiritual in its nature as being above our heads, 'above the starry host.' The mysterious realm of space belongs to our material nature. The whole universe is moved by a power, unjarring, unceasing, unwearying. Even here we find movement of inconceivable rapidity. Power is felt by us as something of a higher nature than mere solid form, which is immovable. It acts we cannot tell how. It acts by eliminating itself from what is tangible. The laws of its motion we can register. What the motive power is we cannot say. The electric current has a circulating law which we can use, but cannot conceive. The circulation of the blood is the law of life to our own bodies. So in the universe, there is a circulating energy acting with a speed altogether defying our imagination. The mind is lost in wonder as it considers the movement of the whole celestial sphere, of which, however, we know but a small part. This material universe is finite, after all. The intellectual world seems to come between it and the infinite; but the world of intelligences itself also is finite, though to us immeasurable. We can only think of it as a circulating power,

enveloping all that it contains, as if the realm of the material creation were merely a grain of dust. As we advance from the grosser sphere of material existence, we find a law of motion distinguishing the higher, purer spheres. Our repose is in the stagnation of lifelessness. The higher forms of existence rise beyond all possible conception of ours to a velocity free from effort—a power binding all the universe in manifold combinations of unity, which yet leave individuality unimpaired. The higher world of thought is not stagnation. Its movement is so rapid, that in whatever direction we lift our thoughts we seem to behold it as centred immediately above us. Perfect with the calm and powerful contemplation of nature, it seems to meet our view as we look upward, not because it is limited by localization to any point, but equally whichever way we look, because it traverses the whole circle of space with velocity altogether immeasurable, proportionate to the infinity of its extension.

Such mysterious circulation of living power involves no perplexity, no complication, no disturbance, no antagonisms. The pure life of a healthy frame is unconscious of its own multitudinous activities gathered up in the simplicity of the living self. So may we conceive of created orders of being which are purely celestial.

But how much more when we come to think of God as the all-surrounding, all-controlling, omnipresent Power!

As we look beyond the creature to the throne of God, we have to adore the action of the Infinite.

That, again, we recognize as being no stagnant, local presence. The Presence of the Infinite God is a Presence of infinite activity, speed, power, although perfect in repose. We must not think of God as locally contained in any point of space, nor, again, as being extended throughout the created world by an immanent partial presence in the various regions of space. Space exists in God, not God in space. We have, therefore, to look beyond the spacious firmament, and consider God dwelling outside of it, contained in Himself alone—an active Power, distinct from all local existence. We have to rise out of the indefinite world of space. We must not think of God as if He were commensurate with space. Space and its contents are a void, for God is not in them save as a result of the Incarnation. His only created dwelling-place is the Body of Christ in itself, and in its extension through the Church. To think of God in Himself we must look outside of all conceivable space, and think of Him as acting towards the nothingness of created worlds with a rapidity of all-comprehending Providence.

It may help us to realize the thought of God's personal consciousness in its indivisibility, its omnipresence, and its tranquil power, if we remember that, mathematically, a point moving with infinite speed is an expression of the Infinite equivalent to a stationary abyss of space generating universal forces. We are not to think of God's supremacy as the point of a pyramid over our heads, but as an ocean of consciousness in which the created universe floats as an empty bubble. Transcending all limitation of

outward form, this ocean of consciousness meets us with personality of response through whatever point we look up to it beyond this created sphere. Nature looks upward to seek what is nobler than itself, and it is no self-deception, but an instinct true to our natural relationship, when we look upward to a point beyond nature, so as there to contemplate in its integrity of manifestation the throne of the Infinite Godhead. Through every point of space, the finite mind perceives an exit for its adoring gaze that it may approach to God; but our hearts must look away from the earth under our feet, in order to look up to the sovereign immensity and majesty of God.

Taught by Revelation, we recognize in the doctrine of the Trinity a mysterious eternal omnipotence of self-comprehending energy as constituting the Being of God. The multiplicity of Divine providences as God rules over the realm of creation are as nothing compared with the infinity of personal consciousness wherewith God acts in Himself eternally. To whatever point we look beyond the created world, there God meets our gazing heart in all His fulness, as though that point were His only place of existence. His infinite motion is only matched by His infinite repose, His infinite omnipresence by the indivisible unity of His Presence. As the wheels of Ezekiel's vision were full of eyes, so in the surrounding infinity which upholds the created worlds of space we see an eye that meets our gaze wherever we look, and that eye has a power of universal vision. It is concentrated to receive our

worship, but operative throughout all space to show the limitless expansion of its loving power. With the reality of our own individual needs, we must look up with faith to claim our part in the infinite action of Divine love, if we would really rise to the prayer of faith as acknowledging God's individual integrity of love towards ourselves.

God would be to us no real God if we thought of Him only in the mystical vagueness which eludes our apprehension and our love. Yet does our point of contemplation serve as an approach only. It does not contain Him. His Eye surveys us not like the brilliance of an electric light, causing darkness, but as the sunlight which floods the atmosphere. The vision of God sees, as it were, all round everything that is created. Neither is it to be thought that with an infinite number of eyes God sees everything by a manifold organism, beholding it from every side. The Eye of God, though it be thus conceived of by us as meeting our view, sees all things by an undivided action of omnipresence. Though we think of Ezekiel's vision as if God with countless eyes beheld a countless multitude of worshippers, yet the vision is one and indissoluble, infinite in watchfulness and absolutely one in vital energy, one in governing power, one in loving welcome. The Divine vision is as a thrill of undivided joy, contemplating His works in their created multiplicity, itself an external power of unification, making all things, material and intellectual, one glorious universe by its own circulating unity of life.

So let us think of Christ lifting up His eyes to

the highest heavens, the super-celestial glory of the Infinite Godhead, with the contemplation of the Divine activity whereby created things are upheld. He did, by the full participation of the Divine Essence, what we are called to do by grace as an act of faith.

The thought of Jesus thus looking up from the world into which He entered by His incarnation to the infinite glory whither He would return, elevating His Manhood with spiritual power at His ascension, will help us in our prayer to look upward in like manner, not merely to vacancy, but to the spiritual energy and power and personal majesty of God.

3. LOOKING UPWARD IN PRAYER.

So must we then be careful as Jesus was, not to pray to an empty imaginary abstraction, but to look beyond the sphere of created life to the glory of the Uncreated. When we invoke God's power, we must be careful to remember its infinite extent, its personal concentration. We must not bring God down to the level of our earthly thoughts. We must lift up our thoughts and hearts to Him. His infinity surpasses our understanding, but we must remember that it embraces us with personal love, and that God looks for our love while we pray.

Jesus looked up to heaven. Now His Manhood is exalted there, according to the prayer He made, and He prayed that we might attain to be with Him in His glory.

Thither we must be careful to look in our prayer, and we must recognize the Humanity of Jesus exalted above our earthly sphere, and glorified with the infinite activity of Divine omnipotence. If He were within our finite sphere of being, He could do us no good. His mediation consists in the exaltation of our infinite nature to the throne of the Divine Infinity. As in the power of His Godhead He looked up to the Father, so it is by the power of His Godhead, operative within ourselves as members of His body, that we must look up beyond the sphere of our present earthly life, not to an infinite vacancy beyond our finite conception, but to an infinite power to which His glorified Humanity uplifts His members. The power to which we gaze, external to the world of nature, is the same power whereby we live as partakers of the gift of grace. The Blood of Christ, infused, gives us the power of spiritual vision. The Blood of Christ, circumfused as an atoning power around the realm of creation, brings the invisible glory of Divine love within the gaze of faith for all who share the new life which is given to His members.

Thither, then, we must look up to Him, 'lifting up our hearts unto the Lord' while we plead His mediation. By finite forms of sacramental power He touches our finite being, that by the infinite substance of Divine glory operating through His Humanity, He may lift us up to be with Himself, where He is glorified above the heavens.

So Stephen saw the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the Right Hand of God.

Thus must we look up to the reality of the heavenly glory of the great High Priest if we would have our prayer answered according to the fulness of the glory of His heavenly covenant.

MEDITATION LXVI.

The Acceptance of Predestination.

Father, the hour is come.—St. John xvii. 1.

1. THE APPOINTED HOUR.

THERE was a true development of the work of grace in the life of Christ. As in nature the powers of vegetable and animal growth have a fixed time, so that each successive period of life would follow regularly upon the one preceding it, and thus the original perfection of development intended by the Creator ought to be attained, although by reason of sin that normal progress is anticipated, delayed, and eventually broken off before it is fully reached; similarly in Christ there was a continuous growth of the created nature in perfect correspondence with the fulness of grace dwelling within Him. In Him every moment of life did its proper work by reason of His Personal perfection. It was no mere accident whether His death should happen a few hours sooner or later. There was a work needing to be done in order that His oblation might have its full perfection. His life was not measured by its effect upon the external world, but by His own interior progress, whereby He sanctified Himself, not by

receiving further gifts of grace, but by developing to its perfection that fulness of grace which was within Him from the first.

So now the hour is come. He can say, 'I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do.'

In like manner must we wait upon God. He answers our prayer when the hour is come, and the coming of that hour is not an arbitrary determination of autocratic omnipotence, but a judicial appointment dependent on the fitness of the human recipients. God is always ready to give, but there must be a certain development in the spiritual life of man, if he is properly to receive what God would give. If the glory of Christ had been given before the work of redemption was fully accomplished, the world would not have been redeemed. The final act of expiring would not have availed to redeem the world. The redemption by the death and Passion of Christ involves the three and thirty years of obedience by which the various powers of grace were exercised by Christ's Humanity, so as to provide the necessary gifts of grace for the renovation of the fallen universe.

So also the gifts of grace are not given promiscuously to the redeemed, but to each successive age of the Church those gifts are given which have been obtained for it by the prevision of Christ, working out in His Personal life those meritorious communications of righteousness which should be germs of sanctifying life to His people according to the emergencies of their several positions.

Patiently must we wait to receive the reward

which Christ so patiently elaborated by His long-continued Passion. In a life of obedience He wrought out for us that righteousness which by the obedience of faith we have to exercise and appropriate. His righteousness can neither be defective in merit nor can it fail of its reward. But we must wait for our glory in the communion of saints until the hour of His glorification be come, when that righteousness has so found its expression in the supernatural life of His individual members, that He can receive the fulness of the glory which is due to Him in the consummation and bliss of His perfected Body.

For this we pray, 'Thy kingdom come.'

2. PREDESTINATION NOT SUPERSEDING BUT INCLUDING PRAYER.

The gifts of God are given at the time when His predestination has ordained, but that time is fixed not irrespectively of man's effort, but so that the human side in receiving may be in true correspondence with the Divine donation. God, however, does not work upon man merely as a machine or an unintelligent being. The reward of seeing God can only be given to those who have cultivated the power of knowing God; that is to say, the power of faith. But we do not know God merely as an Object of curiosity. 'He that loveth not, knoweth not God.' We can only know God as an Object of love, that is, of desire. We cannot, therefore, be fit to see God except in proportion to the desire which

we have of seeing Him, and that desire finds its utterance in prayer.

Hence it follows that the predestination of God includes the prayer of His people as one of the conditions of accomplishing His glorious will.

Our Lord, therefore, does not look for the glory to be given Him because the time is come. He asks for it.

Our prayer can never obtain for us more than the loving predestination of God has assigned, but we often miss of His Divine goodness because we do not ask for His gifts. We cannot ask too much. His purposes go far beyond our imaginations, but we must rise up to the full measure of our loving desire; and when the desire is adequately formulated in earnest, loving prayer, we may be sure that God will give. Such prayer of love can never be the prayer of complaint or of anger. We must always wait patiently, knowing that what God has to give surpasses our human conception, and will surely be given as soon as we are ready to profit by it.

As prayer is loving, so will it be intense. Prayer is not earnest which addresses God as if He dealt with us hardly or niggardly. The more intensely we desire God, the more content we must be to wait God's time, being fully convinced of His goodness. Our desire of God is truest and best when we leave our prayers with God, and wait in stillness for His answer. Jesus knew that the hour was come, for He knew what the Father had given Him to do, and that He had done it to the full. We know

not when the hour is come. Indeed, we may know that the hour is not yet come, if we ourselves are still fretful and impatient with disappointed hope, instead of losing ourselves in God with faithful love.

3. RESTFULNESS IN THE DIVINE GOVERNMENT.

So, then, must we gain a spirit of entire acquiescence in the Divine government. This is the very foundation of all prayer. And so Jesus begins His prayer, not as if He would force God to some fresh act of loving power, but as responding to the predestinating love to whose glorifying action He has looked forward all His life—a Divine glory ready to be revealed in due time. For the joy that was set before Him He endured the Cross. So must we bear all the discipline of God. Our sufferings do not come to us because God has withdrawn His loving purpose, but because we need them in order to be fitted for that purpose.

If it shall be a blessed thing to behold God hereafter, we must feel it to be a blessed thing to rest upon Him now. The anticipation of faith does not allow of weariness. Jacob's years of waiting for Rachel seem but a few days by reason of love. God must be our satisfaction in our pilgrimage if He is to be our satisfaction in the heavenly home. Different is the satisfaction of restful faith and rapturous vision, but the difference is in ourselves, not in Him. It is lingering earthliness which complains of earth. The true Divine sonship of the children of faith finds its perfect repose in the Father's love.

MEDITATION LXVII.

The Triune Law of Prayer.

Glorify thy Son, that the Son may glorify thee.—St. John xvii. 1.

1. THE FATHER THE OBJECT OF PRAYER.

JESUS speaks to the Father as the Source of all Godhead and of all life. There can be no glory to any of God's creatures which is not His own, nor can the only begotten Son have any glory but what He receives from the Father. He who is the Head of creation speaks in the relationship of the Eternal Godhead. His created nature cannot look to His Divine Person for the supply of its need, unless through that Divine Personality it looks to the Father.

The Eternal Sonship is the life of the all-prevailing mediation, for 'through Christ we all have access by one Spirit unto the Father' (Eph. ii. 18).

If we are forgetful of this subordination, we do not ascribe greater glory to the Son by attributing to Him personal independence, but we take from Him His eternal glory by separating Him from the Divine Substance.

Christ in our nature asks from the Father for that which in His Divine nature belongs to Him by indissoluble fellowship. We in our prayers

must look to the Father in order to receive the answer, although we can only receive the answer through the only begotten Son.

The name of Father implies unity of nature. In human sonship there is a transmission of nature by generation. In the Divine Sonship there is a fellowship of nature by eternal generation, but the nature is in itself indissoluble.

If unity of nature is the foundation of love between parent and child, how much more does the indissoluble unity of essence bind the Eternal Father and the only begotten Son in perfect love! There is no fatherhood to compare with the Divine Fatherhood, no confidence of claim like that with which the Son can ask, no joy of exhaustless communication like that with which the Father gives.

In the Godhead the Son has nothing for which to ask, for all that the Father has is His. In the Manhood the Son rejoices to feel the infinity of glory surpassing all possibilities of created life which He is called to share by exaltation to the Right Hand of the Father. His Manhood rejoiced even while He was here upon earth in contemplating the glory of the Father, for He knew that His Manhood was formed for the fruition of that glory, and that He could not fail of it. But He looked up to the Father in prayer, for that glory could be obtained in no other way. It was not a mere condition of heavenly aggrandizement to which He looked forward. The joy of that glory consists simply in the personal reciprocity of the Father's infinite love, and the glory of that love would

vanish if it were not recognized as the Father's Personal gift, continuous in the progressiveness of the economy of creation, as it is absolute in the changelessness of consubstantial eternity.

So did the Son call upon the Father in the days of His Personal humiliation, and now He carries on the same law of prayer to the Father, speaking through us as His members upon the earth. All true prayer, such as the members of Christ alone can offer, is the expression of dependence upon that Eternal Fatherhood which none can know save by the action of the Eternal Son within them. Nature may acknowledge God's omnipotence while it appeals to Him for external gifts. True prayer is the voice of grace calling upon God by the appeal of Fatherly relationship in Christ for the sanctification of all external gifts in the glory of His Personal love.

2. THE GLORIFICATION OF THE SON BY MEANS OF PRAYER.

'Glorify Thy Son, Thine own Son.' The Father cannot hold back from His Son that glory which is His inalienable inheritance. The glory is a Personal glory, Personal in its gift, Personal in its reception; but it is an essential gift in the unity of the Holy Ghost, not an accidental gift measurable by the finite multiplicity of created prerogatives. The glory of all worlds is utterly below the glory of the Son of God. They have no glory but what they receive from Him. His true glory is that which He Himself receives from the Father.

Creation does, however, receive glory from Him, and His own created nature, formed for a relationship of glory whereby it is superior to the whole universe of created life, has, by virtue of His Personal immanence, a capacity of glorification through the action of His indwelling Personality. He prays, therefore, that that flesh which for a season veiled His Divine majesty may be the instrument of His Divine manifestation. It is to this end that all true prayer tends. There is no good which can be sought for on behalf of any creature but by the manifestation of God in Christ. All creation exists for Him, for He created all. He desires that all creation should be perfected by the manifestation of Himself as the glorifying principle, while He Himself is glorified therein by the manifestation of His Divine Sonship as the creative Power. The work of creation attains its completeness by the manifestation of the Divine glory through the Humanity which the Son of God, the Creator, has taken upon Himself.

This must be our prayer, 'Thy kingdom come.' That kingdom comes by the manifestation of the glory of the Incarnate Son of God, who is Himself both Creator and Mediator.

3. THE SON GLORIFYING THE FATHER BY THE GIFTS OF THE OUTPOURED SPIRIT.

The Son of God does not seek glory for Himself, but that He may glorify the Father. In the unity

of the Godhead there can be no separatedness of interest. The relationships whereby the Three Persons abide in the Divine unity are so absolutely one in their action, that there can be no relative action of one towards another without a correlative response of absolute equality and identity. The glory which the Father gives to the Son must therefore flow back from the Son to the Father. That glory is by the Procession of the Holy Ghost, and He proceeds equally from both, Himself the undivided essence of the Godhead, the eternal act of conscious power, and the illuminating principle whereby created darkness is sanctified.

As, then, the Father by the Holy Ghost manifests the glory of His Son in created form, so the Son by the same Spirit glorifies the Father, gathering all created intelligences in their various degrees to participate in this glory by union with Himself as a regenerating principle. The glory is not given to the Son that His Humanity may be lifted up into a separatedness of glory amidst the despair of all around, but that He may gather all creation into such vital union with Himself as shall enable all to know Him and rejoice in Him as the Mediator to them of the Father's eternal love. So does the Son glorify the Father by the action of the Holy Ghost opening the eyes of creation to the contemplation of the Father's glory. The glory which the Son receives would not be manifest to created intelligences unless the Son gave them eyes to see the glory of God, for the Divine glory can only be known in proportion as the created intelligence is

admitted by the fellowship of the Spirit to be partaker of the Divine nature.

This prayer of Christ, therefore, begins with a desire for the purpose of creation to be accomplished, that He Himself may be exalted as the Head of that creation, gathering up all created intelligences to the participation of the Divine life by the operation of the Holy Ghost acting through His glorified Humanity.

MEDITATION LXVIII.

Glorification the Outcome of the Incarnation.

Even as thou gavest him authority over all flesh, that whatsoever thou hast given him, to them he should give eternal life.—St. John xvii. 2.

1. THE GODHEAD THE SPHERE OF GLORY.

ALL authority is given to Christ from God. The glory wherewith the Son would glorify the Father is the response to that predestination of glory. 'Thy Son would glorify Thee in accordance with the authority which Thou hast given Him.' He is to be a Priest upon His throne, ministering to God and reigning in the power of God. The Divine glory is the Source of His power and the brightness of His exaltation. No created source would avail to originate this universal sovereignty over creation, and so no created glory would be an adequate reward for the fulfilment of His mission. As it was derived from God, so it could have no consummation short of the Divine life. In that Divine glory, therefore, must His Manhood be glorified.

He is glorified therein as a sphere of activity. The glory is not a halo surrounding Him in the inertness of material session, but it is the glory of the Divine power acting through Him in the

universal sovereignty of spiritual life at God's Right Hand.

In the glory of this inherent power the Son of God has to exercise the authority ordained for Him from the beginning. Creation, which was called into being by His Word, is the gift of the Father to Him that He may rule over it. The throne of David is the nucleus of a mighty dominion extending beyond the limits of this world, embracing all the host of heaven. 'All were created by Him and for Him.' By the *fiat* of His predestination 'God hath put all things under His feet.'

First, however, it was necessary that He should assume to Himself the nothingness of the lowest creation. He must accept its nothingness if He would reign over it in fulness. He must identify that nothingness with Himself, otherwise He could not act therein with the display of Divine fulness.

2. THE HUMAN AUTHORITY THE CLAIM FOR DIVINE EXALTATION.

God gives Him authority over all as the Son of man, because in thus becoming Incarnate He has taken upon Himself our nature in its weakest form. He has not merely taken created nothingness into His Hand. He has taken it upon His Person. He has clothed Himself with it. He has acted through it. He has exercised infinitely glorious obedience by the infinite humiliation of His Person to such surroundings of feebleness.

By the power of the Holy Ghost He has developed that Humanity which is the greatest work of God, combining in itself all the capacities of material and spiritual life. That authority which is thus given to Him as the Son of man, whereby He is fitted to be the Judge of all, becomes the foundation of a higher claim. He is to be as truly glorified with a Divine glory as He has been raised to sovereignty over all flesh which no other created form can claim. It is by the indwelling Godhead that He has merited to reign over all flesh, and by the same indwelling Godhead He is to be glorified as coequal with the Father. The glory of the Godhead no created eye can behold; but the glory of the Incarnate Godhead, whose merits have attained to this supremacy over all creatures, shall be the instrument of Divine manifestation whereby all creation in their various degrees shall behold God. 'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father' (John xiv. 9). The words of Jesus to Philip enunciate for us a law of faith. In the glory that shall be hereafter, the law of faith shall be transformed into the actuality of vision. To our present limited faculties power is imprisoned in form. As we look up to heaven, we must recognize form mysteriously glorified in power. We must not think of the elements of Humanity as being annihilated by the Divine Substance, but sustained with infinite capacity of operation, to be throughout all worlds the instrument of mediatorial power for the accomplishment of the Divine will.

3. THE MANHOOD THE INSTRUMENT WHEREBY THE SON GLORIFIES THE FATHER.

It is not for Himself as an end that the Son rejoices in the authority which is given. As in the days of His humiliation, so in His exaltation He seeks not His own glory, but the glory of the Father, His own glory only as being the Son of the Father, in whom the Father is glorified. He rejoices, therefore, that His Manhood, perfected according to the Father's will by the obedience of the Passion, shall now exhibit its perfection in triumphant activity as the perfect Divine instrument.

We cannot, therefore, think of the Passion and the glory as if they were mere equivalents of merit and reward. They are identified in character as they are equal according to the terms of remunerative justice. The sufferings of earth developed those human elements of power which are remunerated by the sovereignty of the glorified estate.

As it was with Christ, so shall it be with us as His members. We receive into ourselves those possibilities of future reward which have been formed for our individual sanctification by Christ's redemptive obedience. As by His obedience those living germs of future glory were formed, so we have to be transformed into Christ's likeness. We are to have Christ formed within ourselves by a corresponding discipline of suffering and obedience which makes their virtue purge away the weakness and waywardness of our fallen character. As we rise up to this discipline of grace, so also we are being prepared

for the participation of glory in the risen life. The glorified multitude of the saints will be all one Body, testifying to the glory of Christ as Head over all. His Spirit was their life, His virtue their strength, His Passion their law, His Cross their discipline, His communicated substance the principle of their resurrection. His likeness stamped upon them with living power is the degree of glory wherein they are to rise. The glories wherewith they shall be crowned in Him will be the counterpart of the sufferings which by His grace they have borne for His sake.

If we bear this in mind, surely we shall not shrink from any suffering. In suffering must we glorify God upon the earth; and by the same law must we be glorified in Christ, showing forth the glory of God in our own selves eternally in heaven. His Glory shall be seen upon us, if here we have borne His Cross. O joyous discipline to which so unfailing a reward is assigned! What glory is attached to all the suffering life of this world, when we contemplate each moment as being given to us that it may shine out, and that God may be glorified in us eternally!

Nov 27 9

MEDITATION LXIX.

The Manifestation of Eternal Life the Object of the Son's Predestination.

Authority over all flesh, that whatsoever thou hast given him, to them he should give eternal life.—St. John xvii. 2.

1. THE DIVINE LIFE COMMUNICATED BY THE SON.

ETERNAL life is a free gift. No one can obtain it by any created effort. No mechanism can work itself into vitality. No form of created life can work itself into a higher form. Much less can any created being rise by any effort of its own to the life of God.

Neither can any being claim it as a reward due for what has been done. No action of the creature can merit an eternal recompense. The actions of Christ Himself could not merit such exaltation save by the glory of the Divine Presence accompanying them. They were the actions of man in their outward form, but they had the merit of Divine glory by the substance of His Personal action. If all that is human in them could be reproduced by any other, yet would they merit nothing. They would be lifeless and incapable of such vital glorification, as not having the vitality of the Divine Sonship for their formative principle.

But God rewards His Son, who dwells in His own

eternal life, by giving Him power to communicate this life to others. So our Lord had said upon a previous occasion, 'As the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom He will' (John v. 21).

The Son is coequal with the Father. He is not merely an agent of the Father for the performance of some of His works. 'The Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth' (John v. 20). The Son, therefore, as coequal with the Father, doing whatsoever the Father doeth, exercises His authority over all flesh by giving this Divine life. The Father gives through Him. The Divine life comes forth by the power of the Holy Ghost. The Son has not received it so as merely to possess. He has received it eternally so as to be able to give it to those creatures whom He created in time. The Holy Ghost proceeds from Him, and this Procession from the Son empowers the Son to be the Giver.

2. THE GIFT OF LIFE TO THE CHURCH AS ONE BODY.

'All that Thou hast given Him.' Such is the phrase by which our Lord describes the new universe of life which the Father has given to be His inheritance, the Church which is to live with His own life. There is one Body and one Spirit. The gift of life from Christ is not speradic or manifold. The life is one, and none can receive it save by being taken into the unity of the living Body. This life is in the Son of God.

That Body is not an indefinite organization capable of more or less extension as the accidents of the future may determine. It is a complete gift, given to the Son of God according to the predestination of the Father. It is an organization in some mysterious fitness commensurate with the actions of our Lord in His Incarnate life, so that the grace developed by His actions binds together those who receive it in such a manner as to become His Body.

The heavenly Jerusalem in all her glory has been present to the Divine Mind from the very first. This glorious city of life is that universe which is here spoken of as being given by the Father to the Son.

Our Lord's gift of Himself to the Father was a definite, solid, complete act. So was the reward definite, solid, and complete. Whatever the contingencies of time might be, whatever the delays occasioned by human sin, the issue, the Divine reward, was sure and perfect in its Divine integrity. No faults of men could destroy the absolute conformity wherewith the gift of the eternal future should correspond to the ideal existent in the Divine Mind from everlasting. That ideal is a living organic unity wherein the glory of Christ, the Head of the Body, shines out as the Deific glory of His saints. So we read of the New Jerusalem having 'the glory of God,' and 'the Lamb is the Light thereof' (Rev. xxi. 11, 23). 'And this is the name whereby she shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness' (Jer. xxxiii. 16).

3. THE GIFT TO INDIVIDUALS WHOM THE FATHER HATH CHOSEN.

The city of life is the complete ideal of the Father's gift. The Father has given it to the Son, that the Son may make it live with the life of God. The city, however, is made up of individuals, and those individuals are, one by one, the Father's gift to Him. Our Lord appeals to the Father, 'Thou gavest Him authority over all flesh, that all the multitude that Thou hast given Him, to them should He give eternal life.'

The Church in its completeness is the ideal of the Divine Mind. This cannot fail of being realized. It is gradually being formed by the members which are given to Christ, so that He may quicken them one by one. So we give God thanks for the Holy Eucharist, as assuring us that we are 'very members incorporate in the Mystical Body of His dear Son, which is the blessed company of all faithful people.'

'By one Spirit we are all baptized into one Body.' Christ calls us individually to participate in His life, but that life is a life of action. If, therefore, we would retain that life, we must act true to it. It is a life of Divine experience, as our Lord proceeds to say. It is a life of conformity to Himself, for we can only exercise it in subordination to Him. We receive it from Him. We retain it in Him. If we think to use it for our own self-will, we die. It is not given to us finally and irrevocably until we are established in Him, so as never to swerve from His

guidance. We cannot have this life in its completeness until we are completely dead to this present world.

We are not chosen by Christ haphazard. Each individual soul is given by the Father's predestination, so that each one of the baptized is called to profess faith in the Holy Ghost, 'who sanctifieth me and all the elect people of God.'

Why God chooses each one of us we cannot tell. It is a great ground of comfort to know that our Christian calling is by Divine election. This is a guarantee to us that we possess the necessary qualifications if we will use them aright. Why God chooses individuals we cannot tell, but we do know that He would choose none who were disqualified from using the gifts which this calling demands. We might often otherwise doubt if our Christian calling were not too good for us.

No; the Father has given me to the Son that the Son may give me eternal life. That life is the Son's gift, and the Father's election is a guarantee to me that I can carry out the purposes which the Son of God has for me to accomplish.

The Son will not fail of giving me those gifts of grace whereby this life may be exercised to His glory. I am given to the Son as the reward of His Passion, and therefore the Son will rejoice to make the power of His Passion manifest in me.

The Father has given me to the Son by the attractive power of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost will enable me to use the gifts of nature which fitted me for the election and the gifts of

grace which shall perfect me for the manifestation of Christ's glory. God the Holy Ghost will ever be present with me to sanctify me, unless I break away from the Body of Christ.

This life is eternal. Nothing but my own sin can rob me of it.

So does the Son of God teach us to recognize our own personal possession of eternal life as being the very purpose of His own predestined glory. He cannot be glorified until His saints, one and all, having persevered through the discipline of earthly life, are perfected in the life which death makes sure to them.

MEDITATION LXX.

Life Eternal.

And this is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ.—St. John xvii. 3.

1. ITS OBJECT, THAT GOD MAY BE KNOWN.

By natural life, we know the things of this world to which we naturally live. Our senses take notice of the outward phenomena of this transitory universe. The life of faith is, as it were, a sixth sense, a supernatural sense. It takes notice of all things in their relation to an unseen power. It contemplates the eternal through the veil of the phenomenal, and hears the voice of God attested by movements in the superficial material world, which imply other relationships than those which belong to the natural order of things as traced out by physical research.

Life eternal consists in the capacity of apprehending God by this higher sense—‘that they may apprehend.’ It is not the mere knowledge of a completed statement, but the continuous apprehension of a continuous reality, a living receptivity corresponding with a living object of contemplation. God cannot be apprehended without a participation of Divine life. To the natural sense He is unknowable, and eternal life does not consist in

knowing that there is a God, but in knowing what God is. So it cannot be without love. Love alone can apprehend love.

The Son of God gives this eternal life. Therefore the Son of God must be equal with the Father, the living and true God. He could not give the faculty of knowing God unless He had, so to speak, mastery over the nature of God, possessing that nature in its fullest truth and power. He gives the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of love, the Spirit of revelation.

To know God is to know Christ as God, for no one can know God as the Father who does not know the Son. It includes the apprehension of the Incarnation as the means whereby the knowledge is communicated.

God created man for the purpose of knowing Himself, but no created nature could have this knowledge. The subsequent sanctification of man by the Spirit of God was, therefore, a necessity. The angels veiled their faces in the presence of the Divine glory, symbolizing the incapacity of the highest intelligences to behold God. How wonderful was the love of God which made Him determine to raise man to such knowledge by giving His Son to be Incarnate!

Truly we live to the world by a consciousness of worldly phenomena. We live to God by the consciousness of Divine reality and truth. We live to Him by living for Him. We cannot apprehend Him unless we look to Him as the only end for which we can live.

2. ITS ESSENCE, THE CAPACITY OF DIVINE KNOWLEDGE.

The object of eternal life is to know. Its essence consists in knowing. In the lower life the life may be possessed without attaining its object. We do not live merely for the purpose of apprehending the things of sense. We may have different degrees of apprehension, and yet the apprehension fail of satisfying. We have the faculties of sense given to us with a view to subsequent action. In eternal life it is not so. The essence of apprehension and the object of apprehension are one. We have the life that we may apprehend; we have it by the fact of apprehending. We cannot live for God but by living in Him. Our nature must be transformed by contemplating Him. 'The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do;' and so with us as members of Christ. We cannot exercise the Divine life but by looking to God as the Source of all our actions, the Law to which we must be conformed. The law of the Spirit of life is the law of the Divine likeness. 'When I awake up after Thy likeness, I shall be satisfied with it.' The most cultivated eye may lack any works of art on which to gaze. The eye of faith perishes in darkness if it behold not God. We see Him not yet, even at the best, as we ought to see Him. By watching Him we gain the power of being like to Him. That power we possess only by acting true to His purpose. We see God not by outward separation, but by interior unity of action. While we do

His will, we behold Him in His truth. Mysteries are revealed to the meek, for it is this submission to Him which develops His revelation to ourselves.

3. ITS PRINCIPLE, THE MISSION OF JESUS CHRIST.

We do God's will not by outward observance of a command received from God, but by loving, filial exercise of a transforming, controlling power received by absorption into God. Such union with God could not be if God had not sent His Son to take our nature upon Him. We as men could not be taken into the Divine nature. The Infinite Personality of the Son of God clothing Himself with our flesh takes our nature up and sustains it in union with the Divine. The nature is glorified in union with the Divine Person, which otherwise must perish as a mere nothingness if lifted up to the Divine immensity. With that glorified Humanity we are sacramentally united. So we cannot have eternal life save by knowing Jesus Christ as the Mediator. We know Him by subjecting our human nature as the Spirit of God teaches us, and acting true to Him as the real Head. He is the Head of the Body as the Source of life, and He is the Head of the Body as the Master-power to whom we must obey, and He is the Head of the Body as the Intelligence which directs all our actions—not only some occasionally, but all habitually.

By assumption as subordinate instruments of His vital energy, we come to know Him, and in Him to know the Father. Such knowledge is an activo

knowledge. It is a knowledge of His character—what He would approve and desire. It is a knowledge of His power, so that we can rely upon His omnipotence. It is a knowledge of His wisdom and of His goodness. Faith, hope, and love are combined in this active apprehension of Christ. We cannot turn from Him and live. We must be looking to Him, so as to be more and more transformed into His own Image from glory to glory by the Spirit of the Lord. Here we grow in grace and in knowledge. Hereafter we shall be perfected in knowledge, for grace when perfected shall be inalienable.

MEDITATION LXXI.

The Earthly Glorification of the Father Complete.

I glorified thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which thou hast given me to do.—St. John xvii. 4.

1. GOD GLORIFIED BY THE EARTHLY MINISTRY OF JESUS CHRIST.

THE SON of God looks forward to glorify the Father by raising up a multitude who shall exult in Divine knowledge as being possessed of the Divine life. This is what was foretold by the Psalmist. 'My seed shall serve Him: they shall be counted to the Lord for a generation' (Ps. xxii. 31). That future glorification is the outcome of a glorification already accomplished. Jesus in all His ministry 'sought not His own glory, but the glory of Him that sent Him' (John v. 30). So now He says, 'I glorified Thee upon the earth, having perfected the work which Thou hast given Me to do.'

What a summary of life—'all to the glory of God'! The purpose of man's creation is that he may glorify God. So shall he attain glory with God in the end. But if we seek glory for ourselves upon the earth short of the glory of God, then we cannot have glory with God. Glorious as was the

Manhood of our Lord Jesus Christ, yet He would have forfeited all had He sought for glory in Himself. The whole of His own glory consisted in working out the glory of the Father. He was thus a true Pattern for us. His wonderful excellences, instead of raising Him above our imitation, make Him shine forth as the one Pattern which we must seek to follow. The one law of life to us must be, as it was to Him, to glorify God upon the earth.

Jesus glorified God in the presence of all the hosts of heaven and hell by His obedience. His acts had their glory from His Divine Person.

It was not the display of outward miracles which constituted that glory. It was the complete surrender of His whole Being in acceptance of the Father's will, and the accomplishment of the Father, and reliance upon the Father's co-operation, which made His life so glorious. He manifested the Father by being what the Father willed Him to be. Through the weakness of the manhood which He assumed the glory of the Eternal Spirit shone forth, giving Divine perfection to all His actions.

So must we glorify God upon the earth. The weakness of the flesh does not hinder the power of the Spirit. It is our sin which holds us back from glorifying God, and it prevents our seeing God. 'Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God;' and they that see Him shall be like to Him. His glory will shine forth through them. We are a spectacle to the world and to angels and to men. Our acts have not their glory by the applause of

men, but in all things great and small we must glorify God by the power of the Holy Ghost.

2. THAT WORK NOW DONE.

Christ has now accomplished the work which He had to do upon the earth. The effect of that work upon mankind at large was a secondary consequence. The integrity of the work consisted in the simple obedience of love wherewith He gave Himself to the Father. The Father was not glorified by His actions because they won the approval of men. Whether men rejected or approved, His own work was equally complete. It was perfect in the doing, not in the consequences.

How needful it is to remember that God accepts our service by the perfection wherewith we render it, and not by the consequences which seem to follow it! The consequences are His gift to us, and will be abundantly given in due time. We have to do our work, and leave it simply with Him. 'I have perfected the work which Thou gavest Me to do.' The offering is perfected, so that it can now be offered. Still must a few hours pass away ere it can be said, 'It is finished.' Jesus, however, can now give Himself up as a perfected Sacrifice. The full perfection of the human oblation awaits the Divine acceptance. It must be accepted upon the Cross. We are not to doubt the Divine acceptance because it is on the Cross that it must be offered. If we fail in the last trial of the Cross, it shows that we have not perfected the work. The work is perfected when

the victim is capable of ending the final trial whereby the acceptance is given.

3. THE FATHER'S PURPOSE THE LAW OF ITS COMPLETENESS.

'The work which Thou gavest Me.' To have done what God gave to do is a work of infinite perfection. It is perfect with the infinity of God. The work which man may do of His own choice has no life, no eternity, and therefore no value. God's will gives eternal life to every act of loving obedience. The smallest act has thus an infinite value, which exceeds the value of all creation outside of God. The glory which we may win for ourselves perishes as the flower of the field. The work which God gave us to do He will accept when done. What He accepts lives with His own eternity. It cannot fade. God is not only for a moment glorified thereby. The reward that He gives is eternal, because the delight which He takes therein is an eternal delight. All the host of heaven who have witnessed the efforts of suffering obedience wrought out by man upon the earth shall never cease to praise Him for the glory of that love wherewith He welcomes every such act throughout eternity. The glory wherewith we glorify God upon the earth in perfecting the work which He gives is the outcome of that predestinating love wherewith God would have us rejoice with Himself in heaven.

Whether our works have permanence and prosperity upon the earth or no, let us see that they are

so done in accordance with the appointments of God's providence, that they may constitute a bond of Fatherly delight and adoring gratitude through the ages of eternity, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

MEDITATION LXXII.

The Heavenly Glorification of Christ's Manhood by the Father.

And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.—St. John xvii. 5.

1. GLORIFICATION OF THE SON BY THE FATHER'S ACCEPTANCE.

THE SON of God speaks on behalf of His Humanity. He never laid aside His glory so as to cease to be God. The consubstantial Son could not empty Himself of the Father's glory. He must die to God and be again begotten of the Father by a new act of generation, if this appeal had reference to His Divine nature. He is in this chapter speaking of Himself as the Son of man. It is as man that He has glorified the Father upon the earth. It is as man that He looks to be glorified with (*παρὰ*) the Father in heaven. His Manhood in its perfect obedience glorified the Father. His Manhood in its perfect acceptance is to be the means of glorifying the Son. He has been absent from the Father upon the earth. Somewhat similarly we Christians are said by the Apostle to be for a while present in the body, but absent from the Lord. Not by rapture of

relationship, nor by the withdrawal of His omnipresence, but by the suspension of interpenetrative action such as belongs to a full exercise of the unitive glory. The exercise of social relations according to the flesh is the suspension of such exercise in the sphere of Divine relationship (*ἐνδημεῖν ἐκδημεῖν*). So our Lord took upon Himself our nature under the conditions of man's emptiness, not forfeiting His relationship to the Father as the Eternal Son, but suspending the exercise of that relationship until the Father should glorify Him by accepting His obedience, and calling His Humanity away from earth to act in the glory of the Divine fulness. God's Presence is not a local Shekinah of brightness. It is an act of power, altogether infinite. The Humanity of Christ is glorified in this Divine act by becoming the Instrument through which God acts in all things. He is not glorified by a dazzling brightness shining through Him, and yet distinct from Him. He is glorified by the operation of the Divine brightness immanent within Him, and using His human nature as the medium of its own manifestation. The glory of God the Father was hidden from all creation until He glorified His Son, by the elevation of His Manhood, to the Divine instrumentality. Now that God has accepted His Manhood as having been perfected by the Cross, every tongue must confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. The Manhood is not glorified so as to take the place of God, or act in a glory of independence. Christ is glorified with God, but the glory is still the glory of the Father.

2. THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE FATHER'S LOVE.

Christ is glorified in Personal fellowship with the Father in the unity of the Holy Ghost. 'With Thine own self' is the same as 'in Thy society.' The same preposition is used of Jesus being with the Samaritans, and of the Holy Trinity coming to be with the Apostles. It implies personal communication at the same time as personal distinctness. He and the Father are 'alongside of' one another in the participation of that life of Divine unity. They act unitedly. The Son could not act thus with the Father unless He did so in all things. He never ceased so to act as God. His human nature had acted hitherto, not in the authority of Divine power, but 'in the form of a servant,' keeping His Human Will drawn back from its own natural desires, and submitting it to the sovereignty of the Divine Will. Henceforth His Human Will shall act in the freedom of the Divine Sonship (John viii. 36), not in the restraint of created necessity. The human nature of the Divine Word shall act in the full and free participation of the Divine counsels. As belonging to this lower world, His natural will had transitory interests at variance with the Divine government. The surrender of these interests constituted His life of sacrifice. Now, in His exaltation, His Human Will is superior to every interest that could arise from the created world. It is thoroughly identified with the action of the Divine Wisdom. It needs no longer to submit itself to the Divine Will as a restraining authority. It submits to the

Divine Will as a directive power, so that it carries out the Divine Will with absolute unity of desire. As the Will of the Son and of the Holy Ghost is one with the Will of the Father by reason of their consubstantial truth, so the Human Will of the Son is one with the Divine by free action of identical judgment, receiving its impulse from the eternal Spirit of Wisdom, and having nothing in its created exercise which knows any object of delight save what it experiences in the blessed repose of the Divine glory.

Thus is the Son glorified along with the Father in the fulness of the Father's love. As Man, He is glorified, even as in His Divine nature He is eternally glorious, in the perfect correspondence of love wherein He is ever One with the Father. The Manhood wherein the Son is glorified is the shrine wherein the Eternal Trinity dwells and acts. His glory as Man is to be the loving, conscious instrument of the Almighty love of God.

3. THE GLORY FROM ETERNITY THE LAW OF GLORIFICATION TO ETERNITY.

Thus is the Manhood of Christ glorified with the glory which He had with the Father before the world was. All glory that is given to God must be given through the glorified Humanity which enshrines God, and without which there can be no access to God. That Humanity is absolutely identified with the Person of the only begotten Son. Therefore it is not merely a medium of permissive

approach, but it is, upon God's behalf, the recipient of all the worship. Only therein can the Person of the Son of God the Redeemer be known or seen. The glorification of Christ's Humanity rescues the whole created universe from a condition of blank ignorance of God. The worship of the highest intelligences was given previously to an unknown God. God could only be known in some of His external actions and attributes. Now Jesus is seen in His glory as it mysteriously shines through His Manhood. That Manhood is no longer a veil, but is now the perfect instrument of the manifestation of God, in whose Image it was originally created; and the worship thus given to the Incarnate Lord belongs to the Father, nor can any one give worship to the Father except through His only begotten Son, the Lord Christ (Acts ii. 36). The necessity of this mediatorial glory, in order to reveal to us the glory of the Father, shows the force of the Apostolic phrase, 'God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.' He took upon Himself the form of a servant; and now God hath given to Him, by gracious exaltation as the Son of man (*ἐχαρίσατο αὐτῷ*), 'the Name,' the adorable majesty, 'which is above every name: that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father' (Phil. ii. 9, 10).

MEDITATION LXXIII.

The Election of Grace.

I manifested thy name unto the men whom thou gavest me out of the world.—
St. John xvii. 6.

1. GOD'S LOVE TO MAN BY NATURE.

'THINE they were.' Mankind, as created in God's Image, are the special object of His love. Although fallen away as children of wrath, they were His children still. God longed to welcome them back. 'This My son was dead, and is alive again.' So we have this given to us by St. Paul as the great characteristic of God manifested by the Incarnation, 'His lovingkindness towards man' (Titus iii. 4).

Man was in a special sense God's property, being created in God's Image, and having received life from the Breath of God. While Adam lived with his first true life, he was the son of God. Later generations, dead by reason of the Fall, could not claim this sonship, but they had the capacity of being raised up to it by the communication of the Spirit of God, as Adam had had the life originally breathed into him. This life was essential to the completeness of their nature.

It was in love to man that God gave to Christ those whom He might restore. Man could receive

no gift from God except through Christ. There was but 'one blessing' (Gen. xxvii. 38). The Eternal Father could no more divide the blessing of eternal life than He could divide His own Personality as the Source of eternal life. All His action towards His creatures is through His Son, and the fulness of His own eternal life flows on undividedly to Him. This life by the Spirit, proceeding from Himself, Christ can communicate to man. The Father's providence brings man near to Christ in creative love. The Son is the Fountain of all grace, so that His Humanity lifts those up to the Divine life who are given to Him.

The gift is a real gift. They are given to Christ to be as truly His as they were truly belonging to the Father. They are not given to Christ as a lifeless possession. Then they would not truly belong to Christ. They would not be taken out of the sphere of God's natural providence. They might be at Christ's disposal, but would not then be given to Him to be the living instrument of His glory. Such external gift would not reach to the true action between the Father and the Son. The spiritual gift is an exercise of the prerogative of the Son, while He receives and quickens them. They are given to the Son by a Divine act for a Divine purpose, even that they may be subordinate to the Son in the possession of a Divine life.

But 'if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.' Therefore this gift can only be by the power of the Holy Ghost. It is by the power of the Holy Ghost that the Father draws men to

Christ. The Holy Ghost proceeding from Christ receives the gift on Christ's behalf, by quickening with the life of the Incarnate Son those who are thus given to Christ. 'By one Spirit we are all baptized into one Body.' By Him the Father gives. By Him the Son receives. So are the faithful taken up into the fulness of the Divine love. Our spiritual life is a mysterious action of that love wherewith the Son of God is glorified in heaven, even as He glorified the Father upon earth.

2. HIS ELECTION OF MEN BY GRACE.

'The men which Thou gavest Me.' So does our Lord describe the election of grace. Those who are given to Christ are chosen of God. We may be sure that they are chosen by some law of fitness. Others are not given, because they had not the necessary fitness.

Such fitness, however, is not determined by any arbitrary selection on the part of God. It can only be determined by the relation of the individual man to the nature which God loves. 'For judgment Christ came into the world, that those who see not might see, and that they who see might be made blind' (John ix. 39). This implies the hopeless misery of a self-satisfied condition. A worship of humanity, which desires nothing more than nature in its present state provides, cannot accept the gift of supernatural grace. Those only can be given to Christ who feel their own need of His grace. The sensualist, living only for the degradation of animal

pleasure, and the proud of intellect, unwilling to confess the mysteries of the higher life, are both equally shut off from the spiritual advancement to which Jesus invites them by His grace. There must be a yearning of faith for somewhat higher than this lower world, and we are held down quite as much by sublimity of intellect as by grossness of passions. God gives to Christ those who 'do not see,' *i.e.* those who feel their blindness. We may be sure that the judgment of God acts in the same way now as it did amongst the Jews of old.

No one can complain that God has not given him to receive life from Christ. If thou desirest that life, thou shalt be given to Christ, and that life shall be thine. True, thou canst not come to Christ unless the Father which sent Christ draw thee by the power of the Holy Ghost. But equally true, thou hast only to feel thy need of a Saviour, and that Holy Spirit's power shall not be wanting to thee.

3. CHRIST AS MEDIATOR MANIFESTING THE DIVINE NAME.

Those who felt their blindness received from Christ the illumination. Christ manifested to them the name, the nature, the power, the majesty, of God. All are to bow to the Name of Christ for this very reason, that Christ makes manifest in His own Person the Divine glory, the character of the Father, the eternal truth of the Divine love. By nature man might apprehend the Divine power. Without the

knowledge of the Eternal Son, no one could know the personal love of God existing in Triune Eternity, and calling mankind from the slavery of earth to the joyous participation of the Divine likeness. Nature in this fallen world makes manifest God's sovereignty and anger (Rom. i. 20). It is reserved for revelation to declare His love, giving righteousness to those who seek Him (Rom. i. 17). The revelation of the eternal Son is the revelation of a call to the Divine Sonship in Him.

Christ manifested the Name of God to those who came to Him, and they were the firstfruits of a mighty multitude that should come to Him in ages then future. His revelation must be regarded in its future prospective power, as His prayer afterwards swells forth into an intercession for those who shall believe through their word.

Christ manifested the Name of God once for all. In that Name He claimed the allegiance of those to whom He spoke. He called them unto Himself that He might present them to the Father. By the Father's love He is glorified as the God-Man in receiving them. In the fulfilment of His mediation He glorifies the Father by presenting them purified and perfected according to the operation of the Spirit of life. So will He present His Church without spot or wrinkle, in the fulness of the glory of the original purpose of God's love.

MEDITATION LXXIV.

The Divine Sovereignty over Man as a Creature.

Thine they were, and thou gavest them to me; and they have kept thy word.—
St. John xvii. 6.

1. THE CREATOR'S ETERNAL RIGHTS.

THE special relationship in which God binds man to Himself according to the purpose of His love must not blind us to the primary creative rights which God possessed over man in common with all His other creatures. Those rights are too deep for us to fathom. We cannot understand the act of creation. Therefore we cannot expect to understand the rights which belong to a Creator. If we were to measure them as men frequently do, by the rights which one creature may possess over another, we necessarily fall into error. The relationship is so inconceivable that the rights which belong to justice between creature and creature are altogether transcended.

'God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life' (John iii. 16). Thus has God revealed to us the practical operation of His love, that we may rise to a higher order of fellowship with Divine love; but

Christ, who reveals to us this love, reveals also the absolute Personal Sovereignty of God as it was not known before.

The covenant of grace is not the elevation of an inferior race by the intervention of God as a Being evolved in some higher order of existence out of the common mystery wherein God and man had been of old eternally shrouded. The Personal wisdom of God is eternal, and man is created by His power out of nothing. God, man, nothingness, existence,—these, quite independently of religion, are fundamental objects of thought which we cannot set aside. The offer of Divine love, by which we are invited to a higher order of existence than we naturally possess, is a practical offer. We can perceive its necessity, and accept the terms on which it is presented. Thus the revelation of God's love enables us to accept the revelation of His Almighty power. The infidel rebels against the justice of God's sovereignty, but he does not escape from the misery of the world as he finds it. We must hush every complaint such as our natural blindness might raise against the sovereignty of Almighty Providence, by rising up in adoring gratitude to acknowledge and accept the transcendent beneficence of redeeming love.

Mankind are God's creatures. 'Thine they were,' says our Lord. We must acknowledge in God the eternal right to deal with us as He wills. The potter has power over the clay; much more has the Creator power over the clay which He Himself created out of nothing.

We have, then, no right to complain that God

has instituted a special covenant as necessary for man's salvation. We cannot understand how the misery of sin began, but we find the misery universal in this world of ours, whether we will attach to it the character of sin or no. The limitations of God's covenant are what we cannot wholly account for, although we can see certain elements of fitness in them for the development of our higher nature, and also the external issues of God's covenant are beyond what our highest imaginations could formulate as objects of desire. The sovereignty of God shall justify its wisdom by the inconceivable glorification of man, raising him from the insignificance and misery of his present earthly condition.

2. THE MEDIATOR'S PERSONAL HEADSHIP.

God has given us to Christ. People often think of God's giving Christ to us; but without the reciprocal gift of ourselves to Christ, the gift of Christ to us would be unavailing. God has given us to Christ, that the glory of Christ may be manifest in us as His members.

It follows that Christ must rule us by laws of grace in His kingdom as truly as the Father rules us by laws of providence in the natural world. He has a right over us by the Father's gift of us to Himself as our Redeemer, equivalent to the right which God had over us as our Creator.

How ready people are to take what seems to them the benefits of the Christian dispensation without considering its special obligations! The gift of us

to Christ involves our having certain duties to perform towards Christ over and above what we should naturally have to perform in order to satisfy the natural requirements of God's creatures.

Conscience may in some rough way teach us what God naturally requires of us. The allegiance due to Christ involves the fulfilment of certain supernatural duties in recognition of our relationship to Christ, to whom we are thus given.

This is the foundation of the sacramental system of the Church as the kingdom of Christ, the organic operation of Christ's mystical Body, by which the various members claim and exert a special fellowship with Him as the Head. We are not merely admitted into heaven by virtue of Christ's intervention. We are taken into the living Body of Christ by sacraments of grace, that Christ may use us as His members and we may glorify Him. We must not look upon fallen man as the ultimate object of the Christian economy. It is the God-Man whose glory is to be manifested in that He has made us partakers of His glory, while we exercise the supernatural powers of life which bind us to Him from whom they come.

3. THE PROVED FIDELITY OF THE ELECT.

God has given the elect to Christ, and 'they have kept God's Word.' They have accepted the terms of God's covenant. Many, alas! refuse the terms of God's covenant under the idea of greater spirituality than belongs to the Incarnate Saviour,

or greater large-heartedness than belongs to His organic fellowship of life.

‘Many are called, but few are chosen.’ Those only can be chosen who accept the terms of salvation offered us by membership in the Body of Christ. It is of these that our Lord speaks—‘They have kept Thy Word.’

Christ is Himself the Word. God gave them to Christ by giving Christ to them. As they received Christ, so they have kept Him. This gift is not merely an external presence, nor is it an emotional consciousness. It is a real power, the power of the engrafted Word, which transforms their fallen humanity with its own supernatural influence—an indwelling power of the glorified Humanity.

The faithful have kept this Presence as a law of life, raising them up above the world. As they have special duties to perform for Christ by reason of being given to Him, so they have special gifts of grace whereby He, the Incarnate Word, operates in them, and enables them to fulfil those duties. They accept Christ as the Word of the Father, speaking to them with the power of a Creator to uphold, and the moral sovereignty of sanctifying grace to perfect. They are not saved by being taken out of the power of Satan and left to themselves. They are given to Christ to belong to Him, and He, by sacramental channels of grace and the continual operation of His Holy Spirit, holds them unto Himself, and they by faith acknowledge His Headship, drink into themselves His gifts of grace and spiritual life, and hold Him unto themselves until faith shall be absorbed in the fruition of His everlasting glory.

The Covenant People.

Now they know that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are from thee.—
St. John xvii. 7.

1. SUPERNATURAL INTUITIONS DRAWING THEM TO
CHRIST.

‘I HAVE manifested Thy Name, and now they know’—they have come to the apprehension (ἐγνωνκαν)—‘that all things whatsoever Thou hast given Me are of Thee.’ The action of Christ in revealing requires a correspondent action of the disciples in receiving. They, however, could not receive unless they had been given to Christ by the Father, for it is the work of the Holy Spirit to open the understanding so that man may receive Divine truth. They could not know it by the natural intellect. Now they know that all things which the Father has given to the Son come from the Personal action of the Father; not merely from Him as created things might, nor out of Him as the gods of Oriental philosophy come out of the unconscious mystery of the abstract eternal, but from His side (παρὰ), by Personal action. They belong to the Son by inheritance, for ‘whatsoever the Father doeth, these things doeth the Son likewise; for the Father loveth the Son, and showeth

Him all things that Himself doeth' (John v. 19, 20). Whatsoever the Son of man receives, He receives in fellowship with the Eternal Word.

The disciples, as Christ manifested to them the Father's Name—the Name of the Indivisible Godhead—came to the knowledge that what God gave to Him was an eternal, Divine gift, not merely an honour given to Him as an earthly Prophet, however much He might be greater than other prophets. These words do not necessitate a clear theological apprehension of our Lord's eternal relationship in the Ever-Blessed Trinity, but such an apprehension as involved the truth, and only waited—shall we say for the Pentecostal gift?—to be matured in definite consciousness. They needed to have their understandings opened (Luke xxiv. 45), but they had all the necessary premises. Their love was in advance of their intellect.

This is surely the case with many who are held back by certain prejudices from accepting statements of faith while yet their hearts have accepted them. Such persons are in a very different position from those who similarly repudiate the theological statement, but do so because they hold their reason closed against the germination of the supernatural verity. The denial deprives the imperfect truth of all supernatural life, whereas in the other case the undeveloped germ of truth contains the supernatural power whereby faith may be perfected through love.

2. SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD.

God took them 'out of the world' to give them to Christ. By nature they belonged to the world. The Holy Spirit uniting them to Christ separated them from the world, as the gift of reason separates man from other animals. This separation was waiting for its completeness until, according to the phraseology of St. Paul, 'Christ should be fully formed within them.' The incipient truth which He had communicated to them was more than an intellectual communication. It was a vital communication, perhaps specially belonging to the Eucharistic gift, as these words were spoken in close connection with the institution of the Holy Eucharist. They were thus drawn into a mysterious fellowship with Christ, to be themselves the germ of that Body the Church, which was to take the place of the old world. The old world was as the husk which was now to be cast away, although it was originally the object of the Father's love, who sent His Son to quicken it with life. Now that love is concentrated upon them. The world now retains nothing in itself wherein God can delight, but yet there is no withdrawal of God's love. The love of God still remains upon that which He ever loved, the elements of Christ-life which were contained in human nature. The true world lives on in the new Humanity. The world which is rejected is the dead world, itself rejected because it rejected Christ. Henceforth living power, gathered out of it, has

been concentrated within the company of the faithful. None can share this vitality but by being gathered out of that old world into the life-giving substance of this chosen Body.

3. THE OBEDIENCE OF FAITH.

'They have kept God's Word' as a supernatural power communicated to them. They have kept it as a law to which they must be conformed if they would experience the blessings of that power. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has been accepted by them as it is by us in our Baptism. Our Lord does not here speak as if the probation were completed. He means that they have advanced to the full recognition of this law. They have accepted it. Thus He helps us to see that He did not mean to speak of their theological apprehension being yet fully developed. Their practical sanctification and their knowledge of Divine truth are proportionate. His own truth and His own Righteousness are communicated to them as they are to a child in Holy Baptism. There is no need of any additional communication from heaven. The gift of the Spirit with power as a result of union with Himself is not the communication of any added gift, but the development of that vital principle which has been engrafted within them.

They are taken out of the worldly condition of fallen Adam to be united with Himself as the second Adam, the Lord from heaven. His Presence within them needs, indeed, to germinate so as to take

possession of their nature. The coming mysteries of His Passion, death, and resurrection, and then His glorification, whereby He gives the Holy Ghost with power, are to be not fresh gifts to them as from without, but developments of that gift which they have received. They have given themselves up to Him, and He has given Himself once for all to them. They have given themselves to Him, accepting the obedience of faith, that they may no longer live to the world, but recognize their Divine separation.

MEDITATION LXXVI.

The Revelation of Christ.

For the words which thou gavest me I have given unto them ; and they received them, and knew of a truth that I came forth from thee, and they believed that thou didst send me.—St. John xvii. 8.

1. MEDIATORIAL TEACHING.

CHRIST is Himself in His totality the Word of regenerating power. He has given Himself to the disciples, and they have entered into the covenant of the new life. They have thus kept the Word.

Christ has given to them the sayings by which that Word is to be effectual in the new covenant. As in the Hexaameron, the saying of each day of creation was an utterance of the one Personal Word, so the sayings given to the Apostles are the utterance of the one Divine Presence which He has imparted to them.

Whatever previous teaching may be included amongst these sayings to which our Lord here alludes, we cannot on the present occasion avoid specially interpreting the word as having reference to His great 'saying,' 'Do this in remembrance of Me.' The phrase specially refers to the sacramental sayings by which the grace of regeneration and union with Christ is conferred. 'The sayings which

I speak unto you are spirit and are life' (John vi. 63). Here our Lord has been specially speaking of the Eucharistic gift. 'He whom God hath sent speaketh the sayings of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure (John iii. 34). ['Unto Him' is a false reading.] 'Sayings of eternal life' (John vi. 68) are thus sayings connected with the communication of eternal life, the sacramental sayings of the new covenant. So our Lord said that Moses wrote of Him; but if the Jews would not believe His writings, they would not believe Christ's sayings, they would not accept the communication of grace (John v. 47). They would not come to seek from Him in ordinances of grace that eternal life which their Scriptures directed them to seek from Messiah in the new Law (John v. 40). Our Lord expressly says to His Apostles at this Eucharist, 'Now ye are clean through this saying which I have spoken unto you' (John xv. 3). So with reference especially to Holy Baptism, Christ is said to 'purify the Church by the washing of water in the saying' (Eph. v. 26).

That which God has given to His Son is the Divine nature, and the disciples are raised to a knowledge of this Divine nature by being called to share it, for—our Lord thus expresses the foundation of their spiritual knowledge—'I have given unto them the sayings which Thou gavest Me.' The life of the Eternal Word is communicated in the Son by the sacramental sayings of grace. 'This is the record, that God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in His Son' (1 John v. 11). If we

believe His sayings, we come to Him to receive eternal life (John v. 47). Thus we are made partakers of the Divine nature (2 Pet. i. 4), and receive the mind of Christ (1 Cor. ii. 16).

2. EXPERIMENTAL PERCEPTION OF CHRIST'S GODHEAD.

It is by the sayings of the Christian covenant that Christ becomes our 'Wisdom' (1 Cor. i. 30), and therefore by these 'sayings' we know that 'all things which the Father hath given Him are from the Father's side,' that His eternal life is a personal relationship to the Father. We know Him to be the Son of God not merely by the teaching of a transcendent philosophy, but by the experience of the Divine Sonship given to us in Him. 'They have received these sayings, and know surely that I came out from Thee.'

How closely is the perception of our Lord's true Godhead connected with the acknowledgment of sacramental grace! A great truth must have proportionate consequences. We cannot have an abiding faith in the Incarnation unless we recognize consequences in ourselves proportionate, and nothing can be proportionate to God becoming flesh short of the great mystery of ourselves becoming one with God as His children.

The Godhead which Christ has received is a real participation of the Divine act whereby the Holy Ghost proceeds eternally from the Father. This is what the disciples come to realize by being themselves made partakers of the Holy Spirit through

Christ. What He has eternally received, He now gives to them. This Spirit is the illuminating power whereby they rise to know the things of God.

3. ACCEPTANCE OF CHRIST'S DIVINE GENERATION.

Thus they have 'received Christ's sayings,' the spirit and the life (John vi. 63) of the new covenant—that life which the Father gave to the Son eternally—and so 'they know that Christ came out from God.' The Spirit of knowledge teaches them the mystery which the natural intellect could not grasp. They know it now by a blessed experience of Divine love, and they 'believe that God has sent Christ.' The eternal generation is the foundation of the mission which has come to them in the fulness of time. God has sent Christ in the fulness of the power of the Holy Ghost, and therefore Christ 'gives them the Spirit without measure.' Christ has come forth from the very substance of the Father (ἐξῆλθον), and therefore the Spirit of the Father acts truly as being His Spirit. The Spirit rests upon other men, but is not their Spirit even in the Christian covenant. The ministry of grace cannot give the Spirit as belonging to the individual minister, but to Christ the Head. The Spirit does not rest upon Christ merely by an external communication. He rests upon the Manhood of Christ by procession from His own Divine Person, from His eternal Personality which underlies that assumed Humanity. Christ has come forth from God the

Father, taking upon Himself not a human person in close alliance, but human nature to be the instrument of His Divine Person. The Spirit, therefore, of Christ proceeds from Him as Head of the Body, and there can be no union with Christ which this illuminating Spirit does not glorify. The Divine generation is an object of supernatural apprehension and knowledge. It is the foundation of the subordinate truth of Christ's mission which is an object of faith. 'They have believed that Thou didst send Me.'

MEDITATION LXXVII.

The Intercession of the Son.

I pray for them : I pray not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me for they are thine.—St. John xvii. 9.

1. HIS PERSONAL DIGNITY THE GROUND OF APPEAL.

THE personal pronoun is emphatic. ‘I, the Eternal Son, pray for them. The disciples have accepted Me as coming with a mission from Thee as Thy true Son, and I appear before Thee as their Representative. I come to Thee to inquire on their behalf. I do not leave them to appeal to Thee by the greatness of their need, but I speak Myself, in virtue of that identification which Thou hast ordained, in giving them to Me, Thine only begotten Son. I speak for them as being My own Body.’

The intercessory inquiry implies the Divine predestination. He has come to show the Father’s love to them, and He asks to have that love made manifest in their acceptance.

The Father has given Him to them, and them to Him. As He has shared their suffering by His humiliation, so He appeals for them to share His glory by the reward which shall be given Him for that which He has done. ‘He shall see of the

travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied: by His knowledge shall My Righteous Servant justify many' (Is. liii. 11).

He is the High Priest having authority by the Divine covenant to inquire of the Lord on behalf of the people. That authoritative inquiry involves the right of communication. He is Himself the Channel through which all the gifts of God in store for His elect shall be given to them.

He inquires not as if He were personally ignorant, for He knows that the glory which is to crown them is that glory which He had with the Father before the world was; but what He personally knows He desires in His humanity to experience. He looks forward to the joy wherein His human nature shall delight when finally associated with all His members in the deliverance from evil, and triumphant in the universal consciousness of Divine love which shall constitute the glory of resurrection for Himself and for His saints. That joy shall not be the mere cumulative joy of a vast multitude, but the unitive joy of the Divine life, reciprocated from Himself in every one of His members.

So is He individually interested as their Head in the Divine beatitude of every one. Thus do we learn the individuality of love which our Lord exercised with prescient anticipation in His sufferings, and wherewith He shall welcome His redeemed unto Himself in the day of His kingdom.

2. THIS INTERCESSION LIMITED TO THE ELECT.

He suffered for all the world, but we are not to think that His sufferings were lost because many are not saved. His sufferings live on, so as to receive every one of them an eternal reward, but those who reject them cannot be partakers of the benefit. The human race must continue in its probation until the sufferings of Christ have been definitely appropriated, every one of them. The number of God's elect, that complete organization of His mystical Body, bears thus some mysterious proportion to the sufferings of Christ in His natural body. Every suffering of His, both in body and mind, must have its spiritual result in some member of His mystical Body. The graces wherewith His Church is replenished are the outcome of those sufferings. None of us can have any grace from God by a vague dispensation of Providence. What we have comes to us from the suffering of Christ. None of us can fail because Christ has not obtained for us the necessary grace. None of us can be saved by the grace which is given unless we appropriate it. If we fail of its appropriation, it must find some other recipient so that it be not lost.

Our Lord, therefore, does not inquire with God on behalf of the world at large, but on behalf of His mystical Body—those who have been chosen out of the world and given to Him. The grace is provided for all. If men will not come to Christ that they may have life, they must be left. Christ did not die simply to save men from misery. He died in

order to glorify God by the supernatural graces which should be manifested in those who come to Him to be His peculiar people, zealous of good works.

3. THEY ALONE ARE CAPABLE OF PROFITING, BECAUSE
THEY POSSESS A DIVINE LIFE.

They who thus come to Christ by the power of the Holy Ghost are capable of the glory belonging to the sons of God. They who reject Christ are not capable of the glory of the Divine life. Those for whom Christ intercedes belong to God. 'They are thine,' says Christ.

Are not all men thus truly belonging to God? All are His by creation, but those are not truly His who do not meet His love with love on their own side.

'Those whom Thou hast given Me: they are Thine,' says our blessed Lord. None can come truly to Christ unless they come with a real desire for the Father's love. Christ does not come to save men who reject the guidance of Providence. He comes to perfect by the grace of adoption in the love of God's children those who felt their bondage in the condition of nature and sought to serve Him.

Let none, then, think that he is excluded from Christ's intercession, as if Christ failed in His prayer. Those who come to Him He will in no wise cast out. None is cut off from this intercession by the greatness of past sin. The redemption and satisfaction of Christ avail for the sins of the

whole world. But none can profit by them unless they come to Christ. Christ has not broken down the walls of the heavenly Jerusalem that all may scramble into it. He has built up the walls by the glorious merits of His Passion, and those who acknowledge Him as having come forth from God shall find that He has restored to them the Divine sonship from which they were fallen. God has called them to the adoption of sons by Jesus Christ unto Himself, with a glory infinitely surpassing that which could have belonged to them in the eternal relationship of God's natural providence.

MEDITATION LXXVIII.

The Consubstantiality of the Father and the Son.

They are thine : and all things that are mine are thine, and thine are mine : and I am glorified in them.—St. John xvii. 10.

1. THE DIVINE FATHERHOOD.

ALL those persons whom the Son claimed as His own, as the members of His covenant, His body, His life, were the gift of the Father to Him. They belonged to the Father as Creator by a natural covenant before they belonged to the Incarnate Son by the mediatorial covenant.

Not only they. All that the Son has and is, has been derived from the Father. This great truth of the relation of the Son to the Father has been accepted by the disciples. Our Lord has just said they have apprehended that ‘all things which Thou hast given Me are of Thee.’ Not only are these My disciples from Thee. I Myself am from Thee. I am Thine (*τὰ ἐμὰ πάντα*). My Godhead is Thine, given Me that I may do Thy will.

All things temporal and eternal belong to the sovereignty of the Father. The subjection of the Son, by which He acknowledges all things as coming to Him from the Father, is not a subjection of

inferiority, but of equality. It is His glory to acknowledge that He possesses nothing apart from the Father, for thereby He claims to possess all things in fellowship with the Father. He claims to be of one substance, power, and eternity with the Father. Inferior beings, creatures however glorious, cannot say that all which is theirs is also belonging to God. They may say that nothing is theirs, because what seems to belong to them really belongs to God. But Jesus claims a joint possession with God. Things are not the less His own because they belong to the Father. The Father has given them to Him by an eternal fellowship of consubstantial authority.

2. THE COEQUAL SONSHIP.

Therefore He proceeds, 'All Thine are Mine.' He could not possess some things with God, as given to Him by God, unless He possessed all that God possesses. The Father has put all things under Him. St. Paul explains this (1 Cor. xv. 27, 28): 'He hath put all things under His feet. But when He saith all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.'

All that belongs to Him belongs equally to the Father, for they are one undivided God.

All things that belong to the Father belong to

Him by the Father's eternal gift of consubstantial life, and therefore His Manhood has the inherent right of Divine sovereignty over all things which is given to Him eternally, as God the Son is given to Him in the dispensation of grace, that He may exercise over it the mediatorial sovereignty as Incarnate God.

He does not exercise His mediatorial sovereignty save by the Father's gift of fellowship, who subdues all things under Him by the power of the Holy Ghost.

His mediatorial sovereignty extends over all that belongs to the Father's creative sovereignty.

As the Father by His creative sovereignty gives all things to the Son, the Word by whom they were created, so the Son by His mediatorial sovereignty gives all back to the Father, redeemed from the power of the enemy and glorified by the gift of the sanctifying Spirit.

By the mediatorial sovereignty the will of the Creator is perfectly accomplished. He created all things by Christ and for Christ. The new heavens and the new earth rise up in their fulness, so that nothing fails of the eternal purpose of God's glory.

What rejects God's sovereignty as Creator is also outside of the realm of Christ's mediatorial intercession. God rejects what rejects Him, and so Christ will say to those who reject His mediation, 'Verily I know you not. Depart from Me, ye workers of iniquity.'

3. THE GLORY MANIFESTED IN THE REGENERATE.

The act of glory, transient as accomplished in time, whereby Jesus was glorified, was the sacrifice of the Cross. The sphere of glory wherein He has become glorified to all eternity, is that multitude of His redeemed living with His own eternal life, in whom the merits of His Cross abide for evermore. 'In them I have been glorified' with a glory which abides for evermore.

The past tense has reference to the predestination whereby these disciples have been given to Him; and all disciples are included who shall be given to Him in accordance with the same original gift, until the eternal purpose of His predestined glory is fully wrought out.

With this utterance Jesus closes this section of His prayer. It describes the final issue of His work in the world. He has done what He came to do, and looks forward to the development of glory which cannot fail.

His presentation of Himself to the Father in the Eucharistic oblation is the consummation of all His work. In that oblation He anticipated the sacrifice on Calvary. He has now presented Himself to the Father as the perfect Oblation. The sacrifice on Calvary was not a distinct event, which happened a few hours afterwards. It was an event contained within the oblation of Himself when He said, 'This is My Body which is given for you, My Blood which is shed for you' (Luke xxii. 19, 20). Christ speaks in this prayer as if all were done,

because in that oblation of the upper chamber all indeed was done. His probation as the Son of man is accomplished. The strife which remains is the mysterious exercise of His power to bruise the serpent's head. He has given Himself to the Father, and the Father has accepted Him. The hour is come. Christ has accepted the cross. The Father has accepted the Crucified.

MEDITATION LXXIX.

The Return to the Father.

And I am no more in the world.—St. John xvii. 11.

1. CHRIST PERSONALLY LEAVING THE WORLD.

CHRIST has already said to His Apostles that He was 'leaving the world.' Now He says to the Father, 'I am no more in the world.' Throughout this prayer He speaks of the oblation of Himself and its glory as a completed transaction. There is a solidarity of Divine power uniting His Eucharistic oblation with the physical manifestation of it which took place on Calvary. It is not merely spoken proleptically. It is spoken as if outside of time. Hence the aorists which in English we can only translate by the present tense; and the perfect affirming what has begun, as if its effects were already in fulness of operation. 'I have been glorified in them. I am no longer in the world.'

The prayer is spoken to the Father somewhat after the manner in which the ancients wrote their letters. The time of writing is regarded as past. The words are written as from the standpoint of time when the receiver reads them. So these words of Christ are spoken from the standpoint of the

Divine acceptance. They belong to the eternal sphere of communication. In His primary sacramental oblation of Himself all the future is seen as an accomplished fact.

Jesus is no longer in the world. He recognizes Himself as glorified in His disciples, while in His own Humanity He is set free from natural bondage. Death has no more dominion over Him. In the victory wherein His oblation culminates He sees death destroyed. He could not be glorified in them if He were in the world. He has been glorified in them because His human Nature has been glorified in spiritual power with eternal life.

Hitherto He has been acting as Man in the world. The Holy Ghost proceeding from Himself eternally has acted through His Humanity by the exercise of indwelling omnipotence. His Personal action has been manifested in the perfection of Divine power, although lacking the display of Divine glory. His human Nature has experienced the empty condition of human weakness, but has been sustained in absolute freedom from sin, and from every kind of imperfection, and from death. No exhaustion could take His life away. When He does lay it down, it is by an act of His own power and will. That He has done in giving His Blood to be shed for the life of the world. Now He is no longer in the world, compassed by human infirmity. His Manhood lives in the fulness of spiritual power. It is glorified as the temple wherein God dwells, the instrument whereby He acts.

2. HIS MEMBERS ABIDING HERE.

Now His people remain in the world. They have been made members of His Body. His Spirit has not acted personally through them, so as to obliterate the personality which they possessed as men. His Body spiritualized in Divine glory dwells within them as a principle of sanctification, so that His Holy Spirit unites their human nature to His own, and renovates them, sanctifying them to act in subordination to His indwelling assistance. But their thoughts, words, actions, are their own, not His. They partake of the weakness of the flesh, although they are called to summon up to their aid the omnipotence of the indwelling Spirit. They are liable to death, but they are partakers of His triumph; for if they take refuge in His indwelling Humanity into which the Holy Ghost has baptized, and wherein that Spirit sustains them, they do not fall under the power of death when their bodies die, but they continue personally to live in His glorified Body—'the House not made with hands, eternal in the heavens' (2 Cor. v. 1). 'They will then be absent from the body, and present with Him, the Lord.' Their bodies will die, but His Body with which they are united will raise them up at the last day, then no longer to suffer the weakness belonging to them in the world, but to act under the life-giving sovereignty of His own Headship, as the instruments of His own glorious omnipotence.

Thus does Christ now intercede for His members remaining in the world. His intercession does not

extend beyond His actual Body. No piety nor any earthly excellence can be a substitute for this mystical union with Himself. He speaks as personally acting in Heaven, but substantially identified with them upon the earth.

3. CHRIST'S MANHOOD ELEVATED.

'I come to Thee.' Personally He has never left the Father's side. He has come into the world, not by leaving the glory of Heaven, but by assuming the earthly nature whereby to act as if He were a child of earth. God does not properly dwell in the world, for it is finite, and He is Infinite. The world dwells in Him, as a thing of nothingness in the solidity of His infinite power and glory. Omnipotence does not mean widespread presence, but the localized infinity of Divine omnipotence. By the Incarnation the Son of God came into the world so as to act as an earthly creature, although still possessing His Divine perfections. The finite creature became the agent of Divine omnipotence by personal organism.

There was no created personality sharing in His actions. They were all wrought in the power of the Almighty Spirit, through whom His Divine Person acts indissolubly. All that is essential to the personal action of man was indissolubly gathered around the Person of the only begotten Son, by the power of the Holy Ghost proceeding from Him. The organism was created, weak, empty. The Person acting therein was uncreated, Almighty, having the fulness of God.

Now He comes to the Father, lifting up His Manhood above the weakness of created organism. He comes, manifesting Himself as the Mediator, who had ever dwelt along with the Father as His Son. By this exaltation of His Manhood, His mediatorial power manifests itself in its triumphant and exhaustless reality.

When He was upon earth, He performed His human actions through the omnipotent Personal instrumentality of the Holy Ghost proceeding from His own Divine Person, and making His will effectual in the will, words, and deeds of His Humanity. The Spirit rested upon His human nature.

Now the Spirit no longer rests upon His human nature as a power belonging separately from it to the higher sphere of Divine glory, but elevates that human nature to the Divine glory, so that it no longer has an emptiness within itself needing to be filled by communication from without. That fulness of Godhead which by the instrumentality of the Holy Ghost always operated within His Humanity now acts immediately through the organs of that Humanity, and the Holy Ghost is no longer instrumental to effect the Personal union between His Godhead and His Manhood, but is effectual so as to proceed through all His human nature in full manifestation of the immanent inseparable glory of the Triune Majesty wherein He dwells.

That Spirit thus coming forth from His Humanity unites to Him and sanctifies in Him all those who are made His members. They are still in the

world, as He was in the world; but He comes to the Father, and will raise them up along with Himself by the Spirit acting with life-giving sanctification upon those who look to His indwelling Presence by faith, as when He was upon earth the same Spirit acted with instrumental omnipotence to sustain His own Humanity in the sanctity proper to His own eternal Godhead. His glorified Body is present within them as a germ of spiritual action and sanctifying power, although hidden from sense, as when He was upon the earth His Godhead dwelt immediately in His human nature by the personal anointing of the Holy Ghost, although hidden from the sight of man.

MEDITATION LXXX.

Christ and His Members.

I am no more in the world, and these are in the world, and I come to thee.—St. John xvii. 11.

1. HIS MEDIATORIAL HEADSHIP NECESSITATES HIS REMOVAL FROM EARTH.

CHRIST could not act in His mediatorial power while He was limited by the conditions of earthly localization. Such conditions belonged to the emptiness of His assumed Humanity, the form of a servant, wherein He lived upon the earth. It was necessary for Him to leave the world in order that His Humanity should act as the temple of His infinite glory. That glory is not a dazzling brightness of created majesty. It is the uncircumscribed exercise of Divine energy. He is Mediator, being both God and Man, the two natures acting indissolubly in His Person. They are not merely joined together by the unction of the Holy Ghost, but they are personally identified in glory. He can no longer act in the weakness of the flesh without laying aside the glory of God, wherein His Manhood is glorified, not by an intermittent transfiguration, but by an inalienable co-operation. If He were to act in His Manhood with the limitations of emptiness to which

He subjected Himself during His earthly ministry, He would deprive the whole Church, His Mystical Body, of that Divine power which she receives from Himself as her mediatorial Lord and Head. The Divine manifestation wherein He dwells as the Head is the principle of deifying sanctification whereby His members live in the unity of His Spirit. That glory is more than a manifestation to be recognized by the adoring creation round about. It is a manifestation within the very Being of God. The glorified Body of Christ is the sphere of Divine inhabitation which God delights to contemplate. God cannot act outside of His glorified Word Incarnate without 'denying Himself.'

Thus, then, although the glorification of Christ by going to the Father is a mystery which we cannot comprehend, we can apprehend the necessity of His exaltation if He is to carry out towards us that other mystery of mediatorial love and power whereby He, the Incarnate God, makes us partakers of the Divine nature.

This is what our Lord meant by saying to His Apostles, 'Greater works than these shall ye do, because I go unto the Father' (John xiv. 12). He acted with the circumscription of fleshly locality. They were to act as the instruments of His super-local glorification. He acted under the emptiness of man, although by the instrumentality and in the unity of the Spirit. These, when He was glorified, were to act as His members with the fulness of Divine manifestation, the Spirit 'working along with them, and confirming the Word with signs following.'

2. HIS MEMBERS MUST REMAIN IN THE WORLD IN ORDER TO BE SEPARATED FROM IT WITH THE GRACE OF PERSEVERANCE.

By one Spirit we are all baptized into one Body, but our own personal responsibility is not taken away by our incorporation into Christ. We have to abide in Him, to look to Him, to hold Him as the Head, to live true to Him as His members with the obedience of faith.

This involves an act of choice upon their part, which again involves their being subjected to probation in the world external to Him. They must choose Him if they are to abide in Him. Mediation is not an act of mechanical superintendence. Christ acts as Mediator towards mankind as free agents. He created us without our own will, but He does not sanctify us without our own will, for that would be destructive of the personality which He has given us.

A life of discipline is, therefore, necessary in order that we may appropriate the gifts of grace which come to us by union with His glorified Humanity. The severity of our trial must be proportionate to the gifts of grace which we receive. If the trial were too severe, it would nullify the grace. If it were not adequately severe, it would leave the grace unexercised. We may be sure that, however great our trials may be, God gives us grace in Christ according to our necessity. There never can be any trial so great that the grace of Christ will not be sufficient to enable us to meet it. Instead of fearing

the peril, we must look up with faith to call forth the grace, and 'according to our faith it shall be done unto us.'

Our probation on earth, therefore, may be severe and it may be prolonged, but we may be sure it is assigned by Divine love so as to enable us to call forth the powers of Christ's mediation in that fulness of degree which belongs to our faithful hold upon Christ's indwelling Presence. By every continued phase of trial we must 'grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ' (2 Pet. iii. 18).

3. HIS GLORIFIED MANHOOD OPERATIVE TO GIVE THEM STRENGTH.

The Manhood of Christ being exalted to the glory of God, is not taken into a condition of simple inactive splendour. It is glorified with power, and power cannot be without action. Man may act by occasional power, for his power is not inherent in himself. It is not so with Christ. His Manhood is continually operative with the inherent omnipotence of God. 'Whatsoever He seeth the Father do, the same doeth the Son likewise' (John v. 19); and the Humanity is the instrument of all which the Son does, otherwise the hypostatic union would not be complete in its glory.

That Manhood of Christ is the Head of a new Humanity, communicated sacramentally by the Holy Ghost to those who become His members. Hence it follows that that glorified Manhood must be operative

in all His members. His Headship is not merely a representative headship, as one man may be the head of a family. It is an organic, vital Headship. Christ must, therefore, be as truly operative towards His members on earth, as the head, being the principle of life, is operative towards all the members of our natural frame.

We have each one of us our work to do, and from Him as the Head we receive the special gifts necessary for our work as His members. His Humanity is a complete indestructible organism. It is not glorified in such manner as to become an unconscious medium of Divine omnipotence. It retains all that constitutes its human perfection, although we can in no way conceive of its present super-local existence and activity. The parts of His Humanity are the instruments of grace for the correspondent action of His members upon earth. They are always operative towards us by reason of the changeless tranquillity of energy wherein He lives. If we do not find their operation, the fault is ours. We do not always correspond with them.

This, however, has always to be remembered. We do not call them into operation. It is rather they which call us to co-operation, so that we may live and act subordinately to their power. Thus does 'Christ live in us.'

If we would but cherish this indwelling Presence of controlling and enabling power, we should find the truth of Christ's promises.

The withdrawal of supernatural gifts from the Church is not by reason of God's diminished care or

Christ's wearied mediation. His Manhood is still the unceasing source of omnipotent sanctification to each one of us, but it can only act in us in proportion as we are subordinated to His control; and that can only be in proportion as we are separated from the world, 'growing up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ' (Eph. iv. 15).

MEDITATION LXXXI.

The All-Holy.

Holy Father.—St. John xvii. 11.

1. THE FATHER THE SOURCE OF HOLINESS TO THE ETERNAL SON.

JESUS, the Mediator, addresses the Father not so much in virtue of the eternal Sonship in itself, as of the mediatorial Sonship. He speaks as the Representative of all who are admitted to be the sons of God in Himself.

We must bear in mind the eternal relationship as communicated to us. The Father is the Source of Godhead, and has given the Son to have life in Himself, and hath commissioned Him to transmit the Divine life wherewith His Body lives. We are not partakers of an empty title of sonship, but a substantial vitality of sonship derived to us through Christ our Head, and therefore we must always think of the First Person of the Blessed Trinity as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. So St. Paul speaks of Him; and we must cherish the title, as including both the eternal relationship in the Godhead, and the covenant life transmitted in the economy of grace.

Holiness is the essential character of God. 'God is Love.' Each Person of the Blessed Trinity is holy. Thus the seraphim sing their continual praise. The holiness of God is eternal, conscious, and active.

The heathen could call their gods by the title of Father, but on their lips it was the application of a relative term from earthly reality to an imaginary parallelism of heavenly association. The title of Father is eternally true in God, and upon the lips of a Christian it signifies not an exalted metaphor, but a mystical truth. The Jew did not dare to call God by the name of Father, for it expressed a reality too great for the empty letter of the law. It was foretold as the distinguishing title of Christian devotion, flowing out of the mystery of the Incarnation, which guarantees its truth. We have received in Christ the Spirit of true adoption. Hence we can call God really our Father, for we are partakers of His Nature. Our union with Christ makes us to be truly the children of God.

The holiness of God flows forth in the Holy Ghost, and as the Son of God lives with the Father in the unity of the Eternal Spirit, so He is one with the Father in holiness. This Holiness is not so called by reason of conformity to an external law of ideal sanctity. All holiness that exists, and all that can be imagined, has its reality in the active mystery of the Eternal Father's life. The transcendent reality of His Being is the very foundation of every idea of holiness that any of His creatures can form. The idea which springs up in any created mind is

only the faint expression of the reality which the Substance of the Father originates. Holiness in the creature is an approach towards God by participation of the Divine life, but holiness in God is His very life, wherein the Three Persons of the Godhead exist in undivided love, surpassing all our conceptions, and manifesting itself towards us in various degrees of sanctifying power as we are able to receive it. Holiness is the very life of God, and the measure of holiness in every creature is according to the communication of life to each creature from the Father. God is addressed as being holy, not by possessing holiness as an acquisition, but by the origination of a vitality which flows forth in self-communicating power from the depth of His exhaustless love.

2. THE SON CLAIMS THE INCOMMUNICABLE NAME.

It seems that we ought to read, 'the Name which Thou hast given Me,' rather than as in our Authorized Version, 'to those whom Thou hast given Me.'

This Name is the Divine life of the All-holy. The name of the Holy Trinity is one. It is not a name which grows to its completeness by the addition of the Son and of the Holy Ghost to the Father. It springs up in its complete activity of holy love by the eternal generation of the Son and the eternal procession of the Holy Ghost. Its completeness is within itself. It cannot be communicated to any creature. It belongs to the Son and to the Holy Ghost because they have no origin external to the

Father, but in them the Father's life comes forth in the fulness of its Almighty self-knowledge. In them the Father knows Himself, but 'There is no God beside Me, saith the Lord : I know not any.'

This Name belongs to the Son, the holy Name of God, for He is coequal with the Father, the Word and perfect Expression of the Father's eternal power. The holiness of the Son is not a distinct holiness from that of the Father. The Substance, the Name of the Eternal Trinity, is One. 'There is One Lord, and His Name One.' The unity is not unity capable of multiplication but incapable of division. It is the infinite solidarity of all-originating life. We pray, 'Hallowed be Thy Name'—that is, the Name of the the All-holy Father—not that its holiness may be augmented within itself, but that it may be manifested as giving life to His works. So now the Son of God asks that the Name of God, in whose holy power He lives with the Father, may preserve His faithful people now that He is ceasing from their external superintendence.

His pastoral care of His people is being elevated to a mediatorial character by His exaltation. He did watch over them in a ministerial relationship. Henceforth He would glorify them with the participation of His Divine life. He did watch over them as Man. Now He asks that His mediatorial character may shine, since He is the God-Man. His mediation cannot be exerted save by the glory of that Name which the Father has given Him, and that Name cannot act in the Son as distinct from the Father. The Father must keep these whom the Son

represents mediatorially. He is their Representative as Man. He acts in the Father's Name as God. He does not, therefore, by this prayer transfer His people from His own keeping to the Father's keeping, but He pleads for the manifestation of the Father's Name as Consubstantial God, that His mediation may thus be exerted in its truth.

3. THE NAME ACTS BY THE PROCESSION OF THE SANCTIFYING SPIRIT.

As the Holy Ghost is one with the Father and the Son, this prayer is a prayer that the Holy Ghost, in the fulness of Divine sanctifying power, may take His own place and become the immediate Guardian of His people. Hitherto He has been acting with the power of the Holy Ghost, but His action in guarding them has had the limitedness of external influence belonging to the flesh. Now He asks that the Holy Spirit may act towards them with the infinite fulness of Divine self-communication. Hitherto He has acted in the fulness of the Holy Ghost, but through the limiting conditions of the flesh. Now He desires that His flesh, being removed from earthly limitations, may act in the Father's Name according to the fulness of the Spirit. The Father, therefore, having glorified His Incarnate Son, will show the truth of Christ's mediatorial character by making His Divine Name effectual, through the agency of the Holy Ghost, to keep the members of Christ in the safety of eternal life.

MEDITATION LXXXII.

The Spirit of Unity.

Keep them in thy name which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are.—St. John xvii. 11.

I. THE SPIRIT TAKES UP CHRIST'S MEMBERS INTO THE DIVINE LIFE.

THE Name of the All-holy Father is manifested in sanctifying power as the Divine element of Christ's mediatorial character by the action of the Holy Ghost towards those who become Christ's disciples. By one Spirit we are all baptized into one Body, and are made to drink into one Spirit (1 Cor. xii. 13).

The result of Christ's mediation, therefore, must be the unification of His people in one Body, by one Spirit. That Body is the extension of His glorified Body. It is the one Holy Church. That Spirit is the Holy Ghost who dwells in the Church, making our bodies to be His temple, inasmuch as we are rooted and built up in Christ, quickened with that life which belongs to him as the Head. Unless we are taken up into this unity of life as partakers of the Divine nature, we cannot be partakers of Christ's mediation, nor of the Father's guardian care.

It is this supernatural unity of the Body of Christ in which we profess our faith when reciting the Creed. This supernatural, Divine unity invests with a terrible character of sacrilege all the various forms of disunion which mar the outward appearance of Christendom. Alas! that Christians should be so unconscious of the Divine love which binds them together. We must not, however, think that this supernatural unity does not exist because of our divisions. However deep those divisions may be, they do not destroy this supernatural unity of the Body of Christ. We cannot be separated from this unity unless we are cut off from the Body of Christ altogether. Schisms mar the action of this supernatural unity in individuals, but they do not destroy it. In so far as we are personally guilty of schism, we are sinning against the Body of Christ, and rejecting its hold upon ourselves. Schism, however, causes an outward wound, so that both sides of a schism are affected by it. We cannot help the historical facts of schism. We must remember that, in spite of schism, we are one. The unity of the Spirit abides, however feeble may be the hold which any individuals may have upon the Body of Christ into which they were baptized. We must endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, as having been all of us together taken up in the Body of Christ, our common Head, to live with the life of God.

2. THE SPIRIT OF UNITY DOES NOT TAKE US UP THAT WE MAY ACT AS SEPARATE AGENTS, BUT IN THE UNITY OF THE LIFE OF GOD.

We are not, then, to think merely of our own personal good, as if the whole Church organization were subordinated to our individual interests, whether real or imaginary. On the contrary, we are all brought into the Body of Christ in order that Christ may be glorified; and we have to consider His glory as accomplished by His whole Body, not that limited and deceptive flickering of individual benefit which gratifies our personal desires at the expense of the members in their organized relationship to Him.

We are not to think of the Body as if different localities were broken off from one another, and there might be one Church in one place and another in another. The Church of Christ throughout all the world is one, as being united to Christ the Head. Christ's prayer is not that so many people may attain to heaven by sincerity in their respective beliefs, but that He may be the Law of life to all, in every generation.

The unity of the Father and the Son is set forth as the basis of the unity of the disciples. It is set forth more fully further on (ver. 21). The Holy Ghost is the Bond of the Divine unity. So the Holy Ghost must be the Bond of Church unity.

The sin of man forfeiting the presence of the Holy Ghost was the cause of all the divisions of the human race. The restoration of the Holy Ghost by the mediation of Christ is to unify the disciples

in His Holy Church. The one became many by sin; the many are to become one by holiness. This cannot be, save by an organism in which they are renovated and a power by which they are quickened. Natural piety may tranquillize external antagonisms, but it cannot restore vital unity. The unity which Christ desires is not the combination of human wills acting by agreement, but the exercise of Divine life acting by inspiration.

O that men would think more of the Communion of Saints in the Body of Christ, the glory to be revealed at the last day! How little ought we to be discouraged by the state of Christendom round about us, if we are really looking forward to be partakers eventually of the glory of the Body of Christ by the power of the Holy Ghost!

3. THE SPIRIT WHO PERFECTS FOR ETERNAL UNITY WILL ALSO SHELTER US FROM TEMPORAL DANGER.

Our Lord's prayer cannot fail. By our very divisions the Holy Ghost is working out the glorious unity of those, who, in the midst of these divisions, have learnt to live true to His inspirations. We cannot be sheltered from their evil by any external control. We must be perfected in unity by organic life. The Body of Christ is not held in unity by bandages or lifeless instruments of earth. The Body grows upon the unitive basis of joints and muscles by which it is nourished and developed.

As the life of any organic frame keeps it in unity, so that no external element finds its way into the

structure, whether animal or vegetable; so the Spirit of God keeps the Body of Christ safe amidst the dangers of its earthly surroundings. There is no possibility of the Church life being diluted with the world. The Church in the end will come forth in all the fulness of strength. Her life cannot be lost. Her final glory cannot be clouded. She will come forth in all her glory, having been kept by the Spirit of God, in the power of His Holy Name.

MEDITATION LXXXIII.

Christ's Ministerial Watchfulness.

While I was with them, I kept them in thy name which thou hast given me: and I guarded them.—St. John xvii. 12.

1. THE DIVINE NAME THE POWER OF HIS WATCHFUL CARE.

WHILE Christ was in the world, He kept them in the Father's Name. He acted as Man, but He acted in the power of the Divine life. The Divine life perfected His human action as being concomitant, but did not flow forth through that human action as transmissive.

So our Lord speaks of the 'corn of wheat abiding alone in the earth except it die' (John xii. 24). While His human nature retained the integrity of natural life, it could not give forth the Divine virtue which was within it. He could only act according to the limitations of human companionship.

But He acted towards them in the fulness of that Divine knowledge and love and power which belonged to Himself as the Son of God, although He had not power to make them the sons of God.

How perfect, how tender, how full of wisdom, had that watchfulness been! He had done all that God could do as an external Preserver. He had watched

their inward difficulties so as to keep them safe. He had not taken them out of a state of danger, either by removal or by communicating such power as would ensure their safety. They remained in the weakness of human nature, and He acted towards them as a human Guardian, although exercising the fulness of Divine sufficiency within Himself. He had watched so as to give them continually what they would be able to use. He acted ministerially in the Name of God.

2. MINISTERIAL DILIGENCE OF GUARDIANSHIP.

He was continually watching to see what could be done for them. Their inner weaknesses needed constant attention. But besides this, there was the outward enemy assailing them. He guarded them against him. He had guarded them by prayer (Luke vi. 12; xxii. 32). He had sent them forth with supernatural powers for their missionary work (Matt. x.). Satan had not prevailed against them. He guarded them so that He could render a good account to the Father. He has used the Father's Name in guarding them. Nothing less than a Divine power would have availed. That Divine power itself requires to be exercised with Divine sovereignty. While He was here He could act as their human Companion, exercising this power. But now that His human companionship is at an end, the Divine power leaves no trace behind. They remain in the weakness of the flesh, and are in as great need as ever. Their very selection makes

them the more exposed to Satan's violence—makes Satan specially anxious to have them, so as to sift them as wheat; but 'He that keepeth Israel neither slumbereth nor sleepeth.' He has kept them in safety until now. He will not be wanting to them while He is near them. In His own last meeting with His enemies, He said, 'Let these go their way, that' this 'His saying might be fulfilled, Of those whom Thou gavest Me I have not lost one' (John xviii. 8, 9). But the period of His ministry is fulfilled. He must henceforth leave them alone.

3. HIS MINISTRY NOW PASSES ON TO THE PARACLETE.

'I myself guarded them while I was with them as their Companion. Now I come to Thee. I can Myself do so no more. Henceforth I must act, not as man with Divine power, but as God in filial subjection to Thyself.' So throughout these verses He contrasts the human fidelity of His earthly ministry with the Divine power of His coming mediation. He does not lose the power of guarding them. He guards them with a higher power by losing His human limitations in the Divine subjection of filial unity. He acts in the Triune power by the exaltation of His Manhood. The Manhood, wherein His human actions originated while He was upon earth, gives place to the Divine Sonship as originating all that He does in heaven. Now the Holy Ghost proceeding from the Father will act through His Manhood as the transmissive Agent, lifting up His people to the Divine life. He is the

Mediator, in whose Divine Person the work of the covenant is sealed; but the Father is the primary Agent, subduing all things unto Him; and the Holy Ghost is the operative Agent, conveying through Him to all His members the gifts of life and light and love. The act of the Holy Ghost is not separate from the act of Christ, for they are one; but the act is the exercise of the Father's love through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, by the fellowship of the Holy Ghost.

MEDITATION LXXXIV.

The Son of Perdition.

I guarded them, and not one of them perished, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.—St. John xvii. 12.

1. THE SEED OF THE SERPENT.

THE son of perdition was lost, not for want of guardianship upon the part of Christ, but by reason of his own stubbornness. This was no fault of grace, for as yet the gift of renewing grace was not given. While Christ was in the world, His guardianship could only be external. This loss, therefore, implied no defect in the guardianship.

He was the son of perdition. He was not merely a slave of sin, longing to be set free. He clung to evil, having no aspirations for what was of another world. He was to be Esau who had sold his birth-right (Heb. xii. 16). He apparently desired the promised blessing of Messiah, otherwise he would not have joined the company of Christ's disciples. Yet he was not prepared for the Cross, for he found no place of repentance. His heart was in this world as Esau's was. He did not belong to the true Jacob, the children of faith, the seed of Abraham. Like Ahab, he sold himself to work wickedness. The final bribe was but the consummation of his

life. He had sold himself to a diabolical inspiration before he sold his Master to the Jews.

As our Lord said to the Jews, 'Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do,' so was it true of Judas.

The devil was 'a murderer from the beginning.' He slew our first parents by a falsehood. 'There is no truth in him.' Death is the power under which he holds mankind. They who accept the condition of death, living for this world, are his children. So Cain was of the wicked one, and slew his brother. Abel was righteous, looking for a Redeemer. Cain's works were evil. His very sacrifice was sin. It implied the sufficiency of this world instead of the necessity of dying to it. He brought only of the fruit of the ground, whereas without dying to the world, without the shedding of blood, there can be no remission.

The tares, the wild wheat of nature, fruitless since the Fall, are the children of the wicked one. There is a growth belonging to them, but it is for this world only.

None are doomed to be the children of the wicked one. It is a matter of will whether men will accept the life of faith, the seed of grace, or surrender themselves contentedly to this present world as the object of their hopes. It is their will to do the lusts of their father, and so they become enslaved. If they would come to the Son of God they would be made free, and receive the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Judas, therefore, was the son of perdition, not

by inevitable doom, but by his own choice. He did not fall because of any Divine predestination, nor by reason of any defect in Christ's protecting care. He was content to be what he was. Perhaps his self-righteousness blinded him to his habitual sin. He came to Christ as a Teacher, but he did not come to Him that he might have life.

2. THE OFFER OF REGENERATION REJECTED.

One might have supposed that his close connection with our Lord could not fail to open his eyes and soften his heart. When he had gone forth upon his mission, entrusted with miraculous powers, it would have seemed as if he must rise to a higher sense. But doubtless one great lesson which God would have us learn from him is just this, that no sublimity of surroundings will lift up a heart that retains its earthly motives. Doubtless it was with Judas as with Simon Magus. There was a consciousness of the supernatural world, but a desire to subordinate it to immediate self-aggrandizement. We may do the best and greatest works, but unless they are done for the glory of God, and with a sense of our own continuing unworthiness, they turn to our hurt rather than to our help.

It seems as if the teaching of the Holy Eucharist were the great turning-point in the life of Judas. He would not rise to the grateful acceptance of the Divine mystery of feeding on Christ's Body and Blood. Doubtless he was a man of abilities, which indeed led to his being entrusted with the office of

treasurer for the little company. He looked to worldly means rather than to Divine powers. What repelled the multitude repelled him. Bishop Westcott gives us the meaning of the name given to him. He was a devil (*διαβάλλον*), 'turning good into evil.'

He, therefore, used his nearness to Christ only so as to betray Christ. In how many ways may this be done by us!

3. SCRIPTURE FULFILLED BY THIS FORESEEN OBDURACY.

Our Lord does not mean that the prophecy necessitated the action of Judas. The act foreseen was the occasion of the prophecy. The prophecy was given in order that the foreseen act might be one of the evidences of Christ's truth.

It closes the first book of the Psalter. The traitor was 'the familiar and trusted friend' (Ps. xli. 9).

Our Lord was not deceived by Judas. He chose him although He knew how he would act. He chose him because he had the natural qualities suited for the office. For the fitness he was chosen, although his unfaithfulness was foreseen. It was a special dispensation of love and forbearance, which would give him the utmost opportunity of righting himself. God does not set any aside because He foresees their faults, but He puts us in such circumstances as are suited to make us rise out of them.

It was a warning to Judas when our Lord told the Apostles not to rejoice because the evil spirits were

subject to them, but rather because their own names were written in heaven. It was a warning to Judas when our Lord said, 'One of you is a devil.' It was a final warning when our Lord said, 'That thou doest, do quickly.' Judas, however, lived in his own self-satisfaction. His heart was upon the earth.

The fall of Judas was in accordance with a definite law of man's nature. It was foretold in Holy Scripture probably because there was nothing abnormal about it. It helps us to realize what is the relation of the fallen heart of man to God, that none can accept the truth unless they are of the truth, having a love of the truth.

The prophecy teaches us, also, how forbearingly we ought to act towards others, giving them every opportunity to recover themselves.

It shows us, also, that the Apostles, who were chosen for their office, and therefore had special qualifications, were not taken out of their natural frailty. We must never think that we are secure because of any reliance which God has placed in us. The closest intercourse with Christ demands a corresponding self-surrender to Christ and forgetfulness of self.

MEDITATION LXXXV.

Christ withdrawing from Personal Ministration.

But now I come to Thee ; and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.—St. John xvii. 13.

1. HIS RETURN FROM THE COMPLETED MINISTRY OF EARTH.

CHRIST is now returning to the Father from the world, having accomplished the work which the Father gave Him to do in the world. That work was done in the power of the Divine Name which He bore as the only begotten Son, but not in the sphere which belonged to Him as the only begotten Son. He has been acting in the bondage of earth. Hitherto He has not even acted with the legislative power which Moses exerted. He has been acting as a slave (Phil. ii. 7), whereas Moses was a servant (Heb. iii. 5). But, although acting thus, He all along asserted His own freedom as the Son of God from the legislation instituted by Moses. He is come as the Son to take charge over His own house (Heb. iii. 6). He learnt obedience by the things which He suffered (Heb. v. 8), so as to be an Example to all others ; but now He ascends to the Father, and claims the obedience from His own

people which He then exercised on their behalf. Being made perfect, He has become the Author of salvation to all them that obey Him, and ascends through the heavens (Heb. v. 14) to be the administrative λειτουργὸς of the heavenly sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man (Heb. viii. 2).

That tabernacle was pitched by Him in the fulness of His Divine power. It was pitched by Him as being the Word of God. 'Every house is builded by some one, but He that built all things is God' (Heb. iii. 4). The dispensation which Christ administers is not an impersonal fatality to which He has to yield Himself. Personality is the foundation of all that exists in the world, and so the Personality of God is the foundation of the world itself. Christ, therefore, does not merely ascend through the heavens to lose himself in the vagueness of spirituality such as might belong to the philosophy of an Oriental mysticism. He was with the Father, personally joined with Him in the creation of the world; and now, a Man, He comes to the Personal Father's Right Hand to receive the mediatorial kingdom, and to be a Priest upon His throne, exercising the nature proper to His Divine Sonship through the medium of His glorified Humanity. So will He reign 'as a Son over His own house; whose household are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end' (Heb. iii. 6).

God, then, will keep His people in safety by His Name, not as setting aside the action of His Incarnate

Son, but by accepting His Humanity. The Humanity of Christ as the medium of His action becomes the manifestation of the Triune Personality, and of the relationship of the Consubstantial Son to the Father in the unity of the Holy Ghost, by whose Personal action the Humanity of Christ is glorified, as He comes forth to sanctify the Church thereby.

2. HIS FINAL WORDS ARE SPOKEN FOR AN ABIDING PURPOSE.

This continued reiteration of the truth of His coming to the Father is for the purpose of comforting His disciples. He would not have them regard Him as lost to them, as the Israelites spake of Moses when he was in the cloud. He would not have them search for Him upon earth, as the sons of the prophets searched three days for Elijah (2 Kings iii. 17). At the end of the third day Jesus would not be found upon earth. He was going onward to the Father. When He showed Himself, it was with this explanation of His apparition: 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God' (John xx. 17).

The exaltation of Christ's Humanity was to Himself a personal joy. It was not the mere deliverance of a created substance from the pains of earthly existence. It was the development of the personal qualities of our human nature to the full responsiveness of the Divine Word, so as to be the adequate expression of His love to the Father, and to delight in receiving the welcome of the Father's love to

Himself. That love was the very substance of His Divine life, and now it is the reward of His human nature, crowning every act of His life of obedience with the ineffable sovereignty of Divine approval.

We are very apt to have unworthy ideas of our Lord's sufferings, as if we benefited by their vicarious acceptance, so as to be freed from the penalty of our sin, and that were all. But we must remember His human nature received an adequate recompense of joy for every moment of suffering endured by Him in the world. His human nature comes to the Father in every element that gives it a capacity of joy, whether of body, mind, or spirit.

Jesus praying alone, in this oblation of Himself to the Father, wishes His disciples to understand His full consciousness of whither He is going, and the joyousness with which He looks forward to this exaltation in the Father's love.

3. THE FAITHFUL ON EARTH MUST SHARE THE JOY OF HIS EXALTATION.

He desires that they shall have His joy fulfilled in themselves. As He, their Head, being upon earth, bore the burden of their sins, so now He would have His members share the glory of His mediatorial triumph and rejoice along with Him.

This is the true law of Christian joy, not that we are primarily to rejoice at our own deliverance, but in Christ's exaltation. If we would live true to Him, we must think of Him rather than of ourselves. It is His joy which we must learn to share—the joy

which He experiences in the Father's welcome and reward.

It is a defective consciousness of this which makes modern Christianity so feeble as it is. Our habits of thought with reference to the Atonement make Christ our servant rather than our redeeming Lord.

He acquired us for Himself that He might rejoice in us while we serve Him. He acquired us that we might each one of us, as members of His Body, carry out the special work which by His grace He calls us to do, so that in us He may be glorified. But, then, He is glorified in us, not as God is glorified in creation, by the simple action of His almighty power. Christ is glorified in His members by the joyous sympathy of co-operative love. We must rejoice in His joy, and feel His joy to be our own, so that all thought of individuality or selfishness passes away. The joy is His, though it is fulfilled in us.

But, then, what is His joy wherein we share? It is not the joy of omnipotence as a gratification of self-will, the consciousness of autocratic power, a joy derived from the subordinate creation.

Not such is the joy of Christ, nor our joy in Him.

His joy is the joy of the Father's Personal Divine love; the joy, not of created autoeracy, but of Divine subjection. His Humanity rejoices to be welcomed and rewarded as the Father's Son, with the infinity of eternal love flowing forth in the perfected consciousness of His human nature, made perfect through suffering, gladdened for ever with the

unction of Divine bliss, as He gazes upon Him whose Imago He is.

In coming to Him He finds the fulness of joy for evermore; and He requires us, His members, to rejoice along with Him. Therefore, in His great oblation of Himself, He 'gave thanks;' and He calls us to give thanks along with Him as the special act of our worship. We must contemplate Him rejoicing in the Father's love, that we may 'have His joy fulfilled in ourselves' while we are here, and may 'enter into the joy of our Lord' when He shall call us to Himself.

MEDITATION LXXXVI.

The Union of the Faithful with Christ.

I have given them thy word; and the world hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.—St. John xvii. 14.

I. CHRIST HAS GIVEN THEM THE FATHER'S WORD.

CHRIST has manifested to them God's Name (ver. 6), and has given them God's Word. He has already said that they have kept God's Word, and therefore implies that He had given it.

He has hitherto been speaking of the Divine Name, which He had manifested to them, and by whose power He has hitherto kept them.

He now goes on to speak of the Word, the Divine law of His incarnate life, which He has given them. They could not keep God's Name. They kept the Word by obedience. The Name kept them by power. 'The Name of the God of Jacob defend thee' (Ps. xx. 1). The Name would enable them to keep the Word, which they could not do of themselves.

The Name is a living power; the Word is a living law. They must be taken into the Name in order to keep the Word.

Christ, as being the Incarnate Word, has given this Word to them by drawing their affections to

Himself. All save him who was not of the truth had experienced the love of the truth, so as to hear His voice and be saved. We cannot receive this Word unless we love it, for it is the Word of love. 'He that loveth not, knoweth not God.'

He had also given them this Word by illuminating their intellect. 'To them it was given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God.' He had explained to them what He had spoken to others in parables. True, He had not yet given them the supernatural intellect, but He had enabled them to apprehend many truths which could not be naturally known. Wonderful were those three years of training, in which they had been the constant objects of His solicitude! Whatever their previous lack of learning, how marvellously must they have developed in intellectual power by constant daily intercourse with the mind of Christ!

But, then, here also Christ is speaking not only of what He had literally at that moment done for the eleven. He speaks as having done what His relation to His Church involved in the future. He had given Himself as the Word to be the Head of the Church, that so His Church might be filled with wisdom and spiritual understanding. He has united them to Himself. His Church shall be the pillar and ground of the truth. As they hold the Head, so will the Divine Name be to them a preserving power. He has brought them within the covenant of His mediation. He speaks of them as abiding true to that mediation, and keeping the Word. He looks up to the Father that He may glorify that

mediatorial covenant, and keep them in the Triune Name, whose power, by virtue of His Headship, flows through Himself to them.

2. THE WORLD HATES THEM AS BELONGING TO CHRIST.

The Word which Christ gave is the law of the Cross, whereby they should follow His steps. He sums up the future as if it were past: 'The world hated them.' It is an appeal from the standpoint of the future. He prays for those who have been faithful to Him in bearing the world's scorn. To the mind of Christ the future is as the past.

O, if we ever have to bear the world's hatred, let us remember that it is under this very plea that Jesus has pleaded for us. He has borne the world's hatred for us, and has prayed for us, as having borne the world's hatred for Him.

Christ does not specify any kind of hatred. It may be of various kinds and degrees. Enough that it arises from our identification with Christ. The world does not understand the life of Christ in the most ordinary of His saints any more than in Himself. We have to be prepared for this misunderstanding. Whether it be greater or less, the reward will be abundantly equivalent. St. James says, 'Whosoever will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God' (iv. 4). Surely he bore in mind what our Lord had said. St. John says in like manner, 'Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. We know that we have passed from death unto life,

because we love the brethren' (1 John iii. 13, 14). The world may tolerate, may admire, the Christian, but there must be, after all, a deep hatred, because the aims of the Christian life as such, the aims of the Word, are diametrically opposed to the aims of the world.

3. THE FATHER GIVES THE SPIRIT OF HIS SON TO KEEP THEM.

Christ is not of the world, because He abides in the unity of the Spirit of God. Neither are they of the world. The reason is the same. Christ has given Himself to them as the Word of the Father, and His Spirit rules their hearts. 'Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts.'

We must take care not to mistake the churlishness of our own nature for the supernatural unworldliness which the Spirit of God communicates; but we must be careful not to imagine that by any tact or refinement of our natural disposition we can obviate the antagonism which a life of true allegiance to Christ is sure to encounter. The opposition arises of necessity from the oppositeness of all our maxims. We may, indeed, see the objects which the world has at heart, because our nature is the same as that of the world; but our starting-point, our motive, is not the same. We are in the world, but our motive is behind us; a power altogether different from that of the world—a power from which the world shrinks. Our acts have their origin in the

Spirit of God. The world must feel all such supernatural motives to be destructive of its very essence. It would cease to be the world if it did recognize such motives. It is therefore opposed, and it cannot understand. The Spirit of the Word is our stay amidst the world's hatred. 'Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. . . . And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever' (1 John ii. 15, 17).

MEDITATION LXXXVII.

Preservation from the Wicked One.

I pray not that thou shouldest take them from the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil one.—St. John xvii. 15.

1. THE FAITHFUL ARE SHARERS IN CHRIST'S VICTORY OVER THE WORLD.

CHRIST does not inquire of God so that God should take the faithful out of the world. That would mean the annihilation of their human nature, whereas He desires its sanctification. He does not seek that they should be simply set at liberty by an act of omnipotence, but that they should triumph over the world by fellowship with Divine power.

Oriental philosophies look to man's perfection by eliminating his spiritual being from its material surroundings. Christ teaches us to believe in the resurrection of the flesh, and therefore the material nature is a necessary element of our attaining the end of our calling. 'This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith' (1 John v. 4). We have to 'present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God,' through Jesus Christ (Rom. xii. 1).

The nature, then, in which we have to 'resist the devil' (Jas. iv. 2) is essential to our 'drawing

near unto God.' It is true that the devil is a spiritual being, but it is through the flesh that we have to resist him. Even our spiritual sins, such as pride, belong not purely to our spiritual nature. It was by an act of the body that man fell, and so ever since that time 'the corruptible flesh weigheth down the incorruptible spirit.' Jesus does not desire that human nature should be destroyed by the elimination of man's spiritual, personal being from the natural shrine wherein it acts. It was infused into that material organism in order to be itself the restorative instrument to the material world, which was under the power of darkness and chaos. The light which shone forth on the first day of the world's restoration was to be eventually concentrated in human nature as its triumphant instrument, when the city of light should shine forth, having the glory of God, and the darkness of the fallen creature should be done away. Christ came, taking upon Himself our flesh, to accomplish the work in which Adam failed. He does not wish that mankind should be set aside. His own victory was to be not a simple overthrow of Satan's personal power by His own personal act, but an extension of His personal power by the dispensation of grace, so that His people shall fight as He has fought, and shall be 'more than conquerors' through His communicated strength. Otherwise the victory over the material world would not be won. Christ goes forth in His saints, the members of His body, from age to age, 'conquering and to conquer.' The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain

together. We are waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body, and the earnest expectation of the creature cannot anticipate our day of triumph, but shall be partaker in its glory when Christ's kingdom comes.

The Priesthood of Christ is a regenerative Priesthood, not a mere reconciliatory transaction. Indeed, it is the regenerative element which is specially set before us in the New Testament. We cannot be partakers of its atoning power except in so far as we are partakers of a new birth in Him. His oblation is representative and vicarious, but only with a view to being self-communicative, renovating, and Deific. They that eat of the sacrifice are partakers with the altar, and so we have no participation in the sacrifice of Christ's death except by feeding on Him. So in Holy Eucharist we show forth His death by eating His Flesh and drinking His Blood.

Jesus, therefore, does not seek to have His people taken out of the world, but, by their presence battling with the world, He seeks to have the world itself restored, delivered from the power of the evil one, who is now the prince of the world, and so shall be called forth 'the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness' (2 Pet. iii. 13).

2. THE WORLD LIES IN THE EVIL ONE.

What may be the nature of the relationship of this material world to the spiritual power which rules it we cannot tell. Probably, if it had been revealed to us, we should not be able to understand

it, for we have no real knowledge either of matter or of spirit. We know them only by their effects and accidents. Indeed, it is only by a form of speech that we can separate them in our minds. We cannot conceive of pure spirit as such. The purest spirit can only be thought of by us as a highly attenuated form of matter.

We cannot conceive what the spiritual nature of angels may be, nor can we conceive what our own spiritual nature is, although we are conscious of the soul operating through the body, but distinct from it.

Neither can we conceive what the nature of God is. The existence of pure, uncreated, unlimited, eternal power, the almighty act of the Divine life, is to us altogether inconceivable, although we can perceive that such a Being is the sole Foundation of the created, finite, transient world of phenomena.

As we cannot conceive the gulf between spiritual and material existence, so much less can we conceive the infinite gulf which separates a created spirit, such as the prince of this world, from God the Creator.

Yet material nature exists in the spiritual. That which has no spiritual consciousness for its attestation has no real existence.

It seems, then, that the very act of creating the heavens and the earth involved the creation of a spiritual power to whose consciousness the world should be subordinated. The fall of this power from obedience to God must, it would seem, have been the cause of that disorder and darkness of which the world needed to be delivered.

So 'the whole world lies in the evil one,' as St. John tells us (1 John v. 19). Christ has effected our deliverance, but we are still waiting for the redemption of our body, and this needs to be accomplished by the long-continued discipline of grace, whereby we have to work out our salvation; for it is Christ that worketh in us, both to will and to do of His good pleasure. So then we see how it is that in our baptism we are pledged to fight against sin, the world, and the devil—our own corrupt organism, the corrupt organism of the world to which our bodies belong, and the spiritual power which vitiates the whole material organism, except so far as it is taken out of his power by the sanctifying influence of the Body of Christ.

The material world is not originally evil, as Oriental philosophies teach; but what they teach is practically true for man's natural apprehension, because it is inherently evil by reason of the engulfing spirit of evil, the prince of this world. But then we do not attain to sanctification, as those philosophies teach, by separation from the material world, for we are to be sanctified by conquering it. It shall not be ultimately evil, but shall be the instrument of righteousness, being sanctified by the Word of God and prayer; and the purpose of our existence in the world as the members of Christ is that we may accomplish this victory, and ourselves be sanctified in body and soul while we are perfected through suffering.

3. THE SPIRIT SHALL KEEP THEM FROM THE EVIL ONE.

God will keep the people of Christ in His Name ; that is, by the communication of His own nature through the power of the indwelling Spirit. The Body of Christ is the medium of grace through which this Holy Spirit acts. That Spirit dwelling in Christ's members will keep them from the evil one, 'the spirit that still worketh in the children of disobedience' (Eph. ii. 2); that is, in those who obey not the gospel of Christ. We are not to think of life in this world as if it were evil, neutral, or holy. There is no such thing as neutrality. What is not subject to Christ is subject to Satan. We are either abiding in the power of darkness or in the kingdom of Christ, living as slaves to the evil one or else as the redeemed of the Lord. 'The weapons of our warfare are not carnal,' but spiritual, and 'mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds' (2 Cor. x. 4). We see, then, how essential is that continual law of warfare whereby the Church militant has to maintain her existence in the world. The power of the Holy Ghost will keep her from the evil one, but no easiness of worldly position or extent of worldly influence will enable her to do the work of Christ or attain to the consummation of His redeeming love.

Christ does not ask that His people should have peace or prosperity in the world, but that they should be 'kept by the power of God through faith

unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time,' then to receive the 'inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved for them in heaven' (1 Pet. i. 4, 5).

MEDITATION LXXXVIII.

Supernatural Life.

They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.—St. John xvii. 16.

1. CHRIST CAME INTO THE WORLD, BUT DID NOT RECEIVE THE ORIGIN OF HIS LIFE FROM WORLDLY BIRTH.

CHRIST is not of this world (*ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου*). He is the Eternal Son of the Father. So He said to the Jews, 'Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world' (John viii. 23).

'The first man is of earth, formed of clay: the second Man is the Lord from heaven' (1 Cor. xv. 47). The two natures are distinct in their origin. Although Christ has a body taken from beneath, yet is His Person heavenly and Divine. He did not bring the Godhead into flesh as the primary nature wherein He lived, but He took the Manhood into God, being eternally begotten of the Father.

Hence He came a clean thing out of an unclean, pure with the purity of God. Not merely did His desires and aspirations rise up to the higher world as their aim; they rose up thither because that higher world was their home. His motive power was from the Divine life.

Indeed, there can be no true aspirations after a nature higher than that which supplies our motive power. The soul cannot rise above itself, any more than water can rise to a higher level than its starting-point. Man may have dreams of a higher nature, but there can be no real motive unless there is a real contact of stimulating power. There can be no real aspiration without love, and no love without knowledge and experience. We may feel present troubles, but we cannot hope for what we do not know. The negative of our present difficulty does not supply the substantial or the positive for our desire.

Christ proceeded forth and came from God. He speaks that which He hath seen with His Father (John viii. 38, 42).

Christ speaks to the Father as belonging to Him, from whom He is eternally begotten. He knows the eternal truth, and as He speaks of it to man, so also He speaks to God in the fulness of Divine knowledge and love. This world He knows in its nothingness. He Himself is the Divine Instrument, the Word, whereby it was created out of nothing. He, therefore, has no desire for anything in this world. He only desires that what is of this world should be lifted up to a higher form of life, that it may be worthy of God. He came into the world, that the world through Him might be saved.

2. CHRIST WORKING WITH A DIVINE AIM.

If Christ were of the world, the world would love its own, but the world cannot desire the unseen things of God. 'They are foolishness to it, because they are spiritually discerned' (1 Cor. ii. 14). Christ, however, has come to 'speak of heavenly things' (John iii. 12), and to bring mankind to desire what it has not seen. Other reformers seek to make the world better, but have no power to eliminate its evil. Christ is come to create the world anew, to communicate a fresh aim to life by communicating a fresh power. So shall the world be saved. Salvation is a supernatural life.

He does not take the unregenerate world into the Divine Presence. The world would be incapable of rejoicing in God with the faculties which it now possesses. The spiritual element of human nature breathed into Adam at the beginning was forfeited at the Fall. Since that time the natural man has no more power of finding delight in God than a blind man could have in looking at a picture. 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God' (John iii. 3). The faithful who lived before Christ came did indeed rejoice in the promises, but 'they received them not.' They could not be made perfect without us (Heb. xi. 40); that is, not until the perfection of the Christian dispensation was initiated by the gift of the Holy Ghost from the risen Saviour. Christ came 'to perform the mercy promised to our forefathers, and to remember His holy covenant' (Luke i. 72).

He, therefore, is not of this world, and His work is not of this world. He is from God, and His work is Divine. He comes to be the Father of the world to come, giving a new life to His people. So is He 'become the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him' (Heb. v. 9). He does not see the reward of His labours in this world. Nothing of this world could be to Him a reward. He sees His work manifested in the glory of God. From God He came and to God He returns, and He raises His people out of this present world to be partakers of supernatural life.

3. THE FAITHFUL ARE TAKEN INTO HIS DIVINE LIFE, AND SHARE THE FATHER'S LOVE.

The faithful are not of this world. They are the children of faith. Their hearts cherish the remembrance of a higher life which their forefather Adam enjoyed while he was true to God, and they long for its restoration. They know that such communion with God cannot be attained by human effort. It must be God's gift to them. They are the children of faith. They looked for Christ to come not as the carnal Jews, who were eager for a temporal sovereignty, but the Son of God was the Object of their expectation—One who could really speak to God, and call Him, 'Thou art My Father, My God, and My strong Salvation,' so that God would recognize Him, and 'make Him His Firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth' (Ps. lxxxix. 26, 27).

They looked for the promises, and were not disappointed. Christ takes them not only under His protection, but to share His life. 'Because I live, ye shall live also.' Their blind longings for a better world shall be more than gratified by the vision of God, which is given them as their portion. By the teaching of the Holy Spirit which He gives to them they know themselves as belonging to the Eternal. Here they can be but 'strangers and pilgrims' (1 Pet. ii. 11). 'Their home is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ' (Phil. iii. 20).

So does our Lord claim His people for Himself, and present them to the Father, as being altogether separate from this evil world. They are 'of the truth, and they hear His voice.' These are they of whom He spake, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven' (Matt. v. 3).

MEDITATION LXXXIX.

The Truth.

Sanctify them in the truth.—St. John xvii. 17.

1. HOLINESS IS THE SUBSTANTIVE REALITY OF DIVINE LIFE.

THE Truth is another expression for the Name of God. The Name is that whereby God knows Himself eternally, the living consciousness of God. The Truth is that utterance whereby God makes Himself known. We may, perhaps, say that the Name is rather identified with the Person of the Father, and the Truth with the Person of God the Son, both as the Eternal Word and as the Incarnate Word, as the ideal object of the Creator's mind, and as the Creative Agent, Himself the perfect Image of the Father, and in His work giving embodiment to those true laws of being which, from initial germs, should make God's glory increasingly manifest as they become developed by the vital power that is given them.

This Truth is also called Love, which perhaps may be specially identified with the Person of the Holy Ghost, in whom the act of the Divine Name proceeds, according to the Truth of the Divine self-knowledge.

The Name, the Truth, the Love, of God are summed up in the characteristic of Holiness. God is the Thrice-Holy—Holy in His Name, Holy in His Truth, Holy in His action, His Love. Holiness in the creature is an acquired habit, a gift from God, whereby the creature is conformed to a pre-existent standard; but holiness is inherent in God. It proceeds from Him, is manifested in all His action. It is the eternal law of the interior relationships of the Godhead, and it is the typical law to which all creation must be conformed, and it is the quickening law whereby the Divine life operates in those who belong to Christ.

Morality admits of various degrees, as a form of conduct becoming habitual by action; but no creature can by continued action rise up to holiness. It is a gift from God, an infused energy, a communication of Divine life.

Such communication admits of various degrees, according to the purpose for which it is given; but holiness in itself is Divine, and therefore admits not of degrees. The prophets were holy in the exercise of their office. The Spirit of God spake by them, but did not make them holy by any communication of a holy nature. The Holy Ghost was not given to dwell with man until Christ was glorified.

The Church is holy because the Spirit of God, the Lord, the Life-giver, dwells in the Body of Christ, and quickens every one of His members. Every one of Christ's members is partaker of the holy nature of God. That presence of holiness in

each individual will depend for its manifestation upon co-operation of the outer man with the indwelling Spirit, but the holy nature is itself the same in all. The covenant of God is a covenant of truth and holiness, whether men are true to Him or no. It is a supernatural life.

2. THE WORLD IS FALSE, AND CONSEQUENTLY SINFUL.

As the truth of Christ is the living power of God whereby He is made known to us, so the falsehood of the world is the deadening sphere of existence, against which we have to struggle, if we would live in that eternal truth. The world of phenomena is in every way deceptive. The very word, 'phenomena,' implies as much. Things are not what they seem. In this outer world we deal with the outsides of things, not with their inner realities, but thus it is that we are led astray to our hurt.

If it were merely our outward bodies which came in contact with outward things, the harm would not be great. The evil is that our inmost nature is drawn out into the world of sense to take delight in what is apparently good, but really harmful, and thus the mischief of outward accident is changed into the moral evil of sin. The outer world gets dominion over our whole nature, our senses, our affections, our very reason. We are drawn away from the love of the eternal truth to seek gratification in that which is not worthy of love. The clouds of earthly delight obscure the

pure brightness of eternal truth. Our nature has been interiorly darkened by the loss of the indwelling light of God's Presence, and all the material world comes between us and the exterior manifestation of Divine truth. Our senses cannot rise beyond the atmosphere of the created world. They concur in blinding us to the Divine realities of the higher life, wherein we were intended to live as the children of the truth; whereas they ought, if we had proper eyesight, to be to us stones of ascent wherewith to climb to the height of knowledge, while gazing into the heaven far above with the clear perception of spiritual vision such as belongs to the children of God, created in His Image and partakers of the Divine Nature.

So are we enslaved by sin in this material universe. The mind, indeed, retains some consciousness of its original heavenly fellowship, but the falsity of the world, offering manifold gratifications to our outward sense, holds us captive. We are the slaves of sin.

3. SANCTIFICATION IS BY DELIVERANCE FROM THE WORLD'S DECEIT.

We cannot escape into freedom from the world's untruth. All the philosophies of successive ages have been attempts to get free from the evil which holds our minds imprisoned. All have been in vain. 'The world by wisdom knew not God.'

No amount of speculation as to nature could raise man to the fellowship of the Infinite, the

Absolute, the Personal Creator of the universe. He was not of the world, but the world was made by Him. Therefore the nature of the world could not convey any hint as to the truth of His nature. As well might a prisoner expect, by taking the measurements of his dungeon, to gain some knowledge of the sovereign to whom the castle belonged. There are, indeed, some tokens even in this our keep which may make us sure of the love, the wisdom, of Him who reigns on high. But while we thus learn to some little extent that He is worthy of love and worship, we are not helped any further. It was, therefore, necessary that God should send a Redeemer to deliver us from all the bondage of falsehood in which our intellect was imprisoned. He who is the Truth came into the world, the Son of God incarnate. The truth must make us free. 'If the Son shall make you free, then are ye free indeed.'

He does not merely give us a true spiritual philosophy, a plan of our prison-house, by which we may make our escape. He takes us by the hand and leads us. He leads us by a spiritual touch which illuminates our intellect, kindles our affections, and purifies our senses. He calls us to follow Himself through many a difficulty, but He by His Holy Spirit guides us into all truth.

So does He set us free from the deceits of the world. The truth has to be followed. It is not enough that we accept it. The truth is a law of life and power operative by the Spirit of love. We are rescued from the blindness and error of our slavery by being sanctified in the truth.

MEDITATION XC.

The Sanctifying Power of Truth.

Sanctify them in the truth : thy word is truth.—St. John xvii. 17.

1. THE FAITHFUL CALLED OUT OF THE WORLD, BUT NOT TAKEN OUT OF THE WORLD.

WE cannot live the supernatural life unless we are left for a while to be perfected amidst the temptations incident to our fallen nature in this lower world. To be established in the gifts of the higher life without such probation, would be the law of angelic, not of human, perfection. The universe of God's creation requires all the forms of life. He has created beings to whom evil is unknown, rejoicing in His own eternal sanctity. His creative power would not be fully exercised unless He created a world subject to our own conditions, in which holiness should triumph over evil by the struggle of faithful obedience.

The sanctification, therefore, of man consists in his acceptance of God's truth. That truth has to be worshipped and accepted by the rejection of all falsehood. Man has to rise above the deceitful world. 'O ye sons of men, how long will ye blaspheme Mine honour, and seek after falsehood?'

(Ps. iv. 2.) The proud heart of the natural man rejoices in the deceitful glory of this sinful world, and scorns the truth of God's Word, the honour of His eternal sovereignty, the holiness of His Name. Those to whom God reveals His truth must accept it as the law of their life.

That truth is a law of power. The law given by Moses was weak through the flesh. The law of the Spirit of life is powerful according to the Divine will for all who accept it.

A dead image of God would not be a true one. An inoperative law of God would not be a true utterance of His voice. His voice must speak with living power. His truth is the call of His love, and His love seeks from us not a conformity of conduct to an abstract will, but a loving correspondence of heart with His personal sanctity. They who are of the truth will, therefore, hear His voice, and they that hear shall live.

The sanctification of man requires the voluntary action of the heart accepting the Divine law, and the communication of the Eternal Spirit enabling the faithful to live true to it. We cannot attain to sanctification of any other kind. All else, however perfect in its external prosperity, would lack the truth of God's life and love. Christ is come to be the Mediator. Grace and truth are come by Jesus Christ. By grace the truth is made effectual in the individual heart. Man is not left in the powerlessness of his own sin to struggle after a holiness which he cannot attain. The faithful are made partakers of the promise given to the seed of Abraham. The

covenant of the old law had its promises, but they were earthly ones. Jesus is come as the Mediator of the New Testament, bearing in His own Person the fulfilment of all the promises of God. He is the Minister of the true sanctuary. Herein He acts as the Mediator, not to establish a covenant on earth, but to administer the glorious truth of the Divine, that in Him all the faithful may be sanctified and find blessing.

2. THE WORD WHICH CHRIST GAVE WAS A SUBSTANTIVE ENERGY COMING FROM THE FATHER.

The Word is the truth. The Word of promise is the Word of fulfilment. The utterance of God is the coming forth of the Divine love in the manifestation of its truth. God's Word is not a transitory speech. It is the embodiment within the sphere of those whom God addresses bringing out His hidden truth in manifestation before them. So at the Incarnation of Christ, at His Baptism, at His oblation on Calvary, He comes to accomplish the promises. All are summed up in Him. On His Person they all rest, and through Him they all flow on. 'All the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen.' The gift which God promised was not an external creature that He would call into existence. The gift of the Divine blessing was to rest upon Christ as the manifest Offspring, coming forth from the depth of the Divine Mind, and having the changeless truth of God's purpose within Himself as the very law of His Being. Christ would not

receive the promised blessing of the seed of Abraham by external appointment, but by inherent consubstantiality of Divine life.

'The Word so truly Thine' is the Word in whom the eternal truth of God speaks forth ineffably. The blessing which He receives is the blessing which He gives. He receives by giving. He gives that Blessing of Divine life to the Humanity which He assumes at the Incarnation, and to every individual of the faithful whom He incorporates into Himself. As they become members of the Incarnate Word, He receives in them that which, as the Only Begotten, He, the Mediator, gives to them. He speaks, not with sounds which pass away as the vibrations of time, but with the power of the Eternal Word, whose changeless utterance in the Divine glory is the joy of eternity.

3. WHAT CHRIST HAD GIVEN WAS TO BE DEVELOPED BY THE HOLY GHOST FOR THE SANCTIFICATION OF HIS PEOPLE.

Christ, the Incarnate Word, is the Truth in whom they are to be sanctified, but His sanctifying power cannot be exercised by Himself as Man. It can only be exercised by Him in His Divine Personality, and therefore by the Holy Ghost proceeding from Himself. This Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father, and therefore Christ appeals to the Father to effect the sanctification, and make the Holy Spirit, whose fulness anoints His Humanity, shine forth through Him. The Son can do nothing of Himself, that is,

by an action originating within Himself as a separate Personality. He can only give the Holy Ghost in the fellowship of the consubstantial Godhead.

Thus does the Spirit of Truth come forth in response to the intercession of Christ's Manhood, and in the power of the Eternal Godhead, according to the undivided Procession whereby He proceeds from the Father and the Son in the glory of the Triune love. Unchanging truth! exhaustless love! He effects a sanctification worthy of God. The mystery hidden from all ages is revealed by the Word of God. The creation is gathered out of the consequences of the Fall to rejoice for ever in the truth of the Eternal Sonship. The power of the Holy Ghost is given. The Word spoken of old is now given unto man as a law of Divine sublimity, and yet attainable to man in his weakness by the communication of grace. 'Be ye holy, for I am holy.'

MEDITATION XCI.

The Apostolic Commission.

As thou didst send me into the world, even so sent I them into the world.—St. John xvii. 18.

1. CHRIST SENDS FORTH HIS APOSTLES TO DO WHAT THE FATHER SENT HIM FORTH TO DO.

CHRIST is come with a commission from the Father, that in Himself, as the Word of the Father, the faithful may be sanctified. The same commission flows on from Himself to the Apostles. Christ commissions them. It is not a new commission which they receive, but a subordinate, representative, vicarious commission. Not a partial delegation, but a complete transmission of the authority which the Father has given to Christ. The commission is given to them as a complete body, not to one of their members as superior to the rest.

He has already named them His Apostles or Commissioners (Luke vi. 13). He sent them out with power to cast out unclean spirits, and to heal all manner of sickness and disease. They had power over the demons, but not yet power to give the Holy Ghost. Their commission was to develop with Christ's exercise of the commission given by the Father. So when he offered Himself in Holy

Eucharist, He commissioned them to 'do this in remembrance' of Himself. When He rose from the dead, He breathed on them and gave them the Holy Ghost. This gift, however, was only commensurate with His own risen life, not rising up to the fulness of His mediatorial kingdom. Therefore they were to wait until they were endued with power from on high. When He was about to ascend, and all power was now given to Him in heaven and in earth, He extended His commission to them, so that they were to go forth and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Triune Name; and thus, when He took His seat at the Right Hand of power, the Holy Ghost came down upon them, that they might act in the fulness of His kingdom, accomplishing the promise made to the Church Catholic, that all might receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Thus was the Apostolic commission of the Holy Church perfected by the ministry of the Spirit of which St. Paul speaks continually. As the Father sent Christ into the world, so did Christ send them.

Jesus here speaks of their Apostleship as a completed appointment. So throughout this prayer He speaks as having completed the Personal commission of the Father, which He now hands over to the Father, that He may carry on the work by the power of the Holy Ghost, whom these His chosen Apostles are to minister to His future Church.

He prays that they may be kept in the Triune Name of life-giving power, and sanctified by the truth; that truth by which He Himself is the very Word of the Father; that truth which is His own

Incarnate Presence, the sphere of the Holy Spirit's action and the well-spring of all Apostolical ministration.

2. CHRIST SENDS THEM FORTH IN THE POWER OF
THE SAME UNDIVIDED SPIRIT.

The identity of the Spirit is what constitutes the identity of the commission of the Apostles with the commission of Christ. The work which He initiated they were to perpetuate. As He was conceived by the Holy Ghost when He became Incarnate, so they received the Holy Ghost by being taken into Him. He breathed the Holy Ghost upon them from His own mouth. They were to call all others to have fellowship with themselves, as they had fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ, by the power of the indwelling Spirit. 'The promise is to you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call' (Acts ii. 39).

This Spirit would be a bond of unity among themselves, for they were not sent forth with separate commissions. Their united commission represented the Personal commission of Christ their Head. The full powers of this commission could not, therefore, be exercised save by the complete Apostolic body acting as one.

Hence we may see the grievous sacrilege which the disunion of Christendom presents. The Church does not depend for unity upon the outward union,

but the powers of the unity cannot be exercised save by all acting in concert.

Those acts which the Church performs by common agreement retain their Divine power in spite of the disunion which exists between various branches of the Church; but if the Church were acting thoroughly in unity, what vast powers of Divine life would spring up into exercise! We are not to be surprised that the action of the Church is feeble, when that unity of action is wanting which is the very condition of her commissioned authority. Rather we must wonder, and thankfully give praise, that she is permitted to accomplish as much in the world as we see her doing. The action of the Holy Ghost cannot be complete in the individual unless it be complete in the Church, all the members of the undivided Apostolate being partakers of the same commission, as all the faithful also are baptized into one Spirit.

3. HE SENDS THEM TO MEET THE SAME EXTERNAL ENEMIES.

Christ came forth to meet the world and die upon the Cross. They are to go forth into the same world, but they must be dead to it as He was. The message of life which they have to bear is the message of eternal life.

Jesus has already spoken of the hatred of the world which His Church must find. His language does not imply any prospect of a time when such hatred would cease. The Father has sent Him into

the world, and the world has hated Him. The world cannot welcome them any more than it had welcomed Him.

This chapter sets before us a very different idea of the Apostolic mission into the world from that which is present to our minds generally when we speak of missions and their success. We look for multitudes to testify to the Church with human applause. Jesus speaks of His Church being kept from the power of the evil one in the midst of a sinful world by the virtue of a supernatural life in the Triune Name.

MEDITATION XCII.

Sanctification for the Ministry.

And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.—St. John xvii. 19.

1. GOD'S NAME MUST BE SANCTIFIED IN CHRIST AND IN HIS CHURCH BEFORE THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST CAN COME.

THE spreading sanctification of Christ perfects the kingdom of Christ. 'Hallowed be Thy Name,' is the first petition. 'Thy kingdom come,' is the second. The kingdom of Christ is not merely a realm governed by laws of holiness, but quickened by a life of holiness. The holiness is not merely in the Head, but in the members. It is, however, of the Head. It spreads forth from the Head as the seat of Divine life. The kingdom cannot come in its completeness until the sanctification of the Head has been developed to the full extent of active necessity, and communicated accordingly to the members of the Body.

As God is the Source of life, so the life of Christ's Church must be conformable to the holiness of God. They must be holy that bear the vessels of the Lord. This holiness is not a holiness of presentation, fitting the thing presented to find acceptance, but it

is a holiness of appropriation, whereby God fits it for the accomplishment of His living Divine work. God's Name is hallowed in all that He uses.

This vitality spreads throughout the whole body. Life is not like a metal which has to be separated from the ore in which it is contained. It pervades the whole body, even though some members of the body may have to be cut off because they do not act worthy of it. All the sanctifying power comes from Christ, the Divine Head. Human nature does not share in it except through union with Him.

We cannot explain even in thought what may be the relationship of a finite creature to the infinite Divine glory, but we do know that Christ is the Image of God, and the Body of Christ is the eternal Temple of God. We are being builded together for the habitation of God by the Spirit. We cannot conceive the beginning of time as it issues from the eternity of the past. Nor can we conceive the adaptation of the finite to be the organ of infinite indwelling power. Nor can we conceive the development of time in the power of that infinite glory finding itself established with unending life in the eternity of the future.

These considerations belong not to religion, but to philosophy, and must equally defy all human explanation under any possible religious system.

We can, however, recognize the moral and spiritual glory of God, manifested in His action towards those whom He has called into union with Himself. We can recognize that the Divine glory does not dwarf itself to dwell within the creature,

but crowns the creature with communications of its own true majesty. The Incarnate God is One in His Personality, not by bringing of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of the Manhood into God.

2. CHRIST SANCTIFIED HIMSELF BY THE POWER OF THE HOLY GHOST PROCEEDING FROM HIMSELF.

The sanctification of Christ is a progressive sanctification, not of influence, but of development. The infinite sanctity of God dwelt in His eternal Person, and that which was conceived of Mary was 'a holy thing' from the very first moment, holy with the absolute holiness of the Divine Personality. As His human nature advanced to maturity, it could not become more holy than it was at the first moment. The Person of God the Son dwelt therein. As He developed the faculties of His human nature, assuming into union with Himself the unhallowed substances of earthly nourishment, He sanctified His growing nature by the Divine vitality of the Holy Spirit proceeding from Himself. The Procession of the Holy Ghost is one of the properties of His Divine Person—not an occasional energy, but a ceaseless, unchangeable relationship. Therefore by this Procession He sanctified His Humanity, so as to be worthy of His Divine Person. He did not receive sanctification from God as an external influence, but made it to spring up from within Himself as an exhaustless principle of self-consecration until His Humanity had attained that organic completeness wherein it was to rest. When He could

say, 'It is finished,' then would His natural Body begin to develop itself in His mystical Body, the Church. But the Church is not an abnormal outgrowth. It does not cling to Him as the ivy to the tree. It is a living development of His natural Humanity by the power of the Holy Ghost; not, indeed, according to the laws of natural or created life, but according to the special operation of the new and spiritual creation. His Body is the nucleus of the new heaven and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. This heavenly order of spiritual existences could not begin until that nucleus had been developed to its full extent. The new order of grace was to be replenished with the gifts of grace by which His perfected Humanity was sanctified. Every act of His life helped forward this development, and the merits of His earthly life thus consummated could put themselves forth in the mystical organism which was to be formed in living union with Himself during all the ages of the Christian dispensation.

3. THE APOSTLES REQUIRE THAT THE FATHER SHALL SANCTIFY THEM BY THE OPERATION OF THE SAME SPIRIT PROCEEDING FROM HIMSELF AND WORKING WITH THEM.

The Body of Christ was sanctified from within by the Spirit of Christ. The Apostles needed to be united to this Body in order to be partakers of this holiness. The progressive sanctification of the Church is a sanctification of influence, not of development.

The Church has no capacity of developing the energy of the Holy Ghost within herself. She can only receive such progressive sanctification as the circumstances of successive ages require by the influence of the Body of Christ, which is the nucleus of her spiritual life. The Apostles did not lose their natural humanity by being chosen into the Body of the second Adam. They had the life of flesh remaining, although the life of the Spirit was communicated. So is it with all subsequent ages. The Church takes the unregenerate race into union with itself, and communicates to these its members the supernatural life of Christ's Humanity.

This sanctification, therefore, is the operation of the Holy Ghost dwelling in them as in the Humanity of Christ, but sanctifying them by influence, inasmuch as He proceeds from Christ the Head, and not by development, as if He proceeded from their own personality.

Their sanctification is, therefore, attributed to God the Father, for the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father. The action of the Holy Ghost is not attributed to the Son, because it belongs to the further stage of the Christian dispensation, when the Son has taken His place at the Right Hand of the Father. The Son sanctified Himself by His own Divine power during His life of obedience, but the Father sanctifies the Church by sending the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, now that the Son of God, the Head of the Church, has taken His place on high, henceforth expecting until His foes be made His footstool.

It is the work of the Holy Ghost to develop the merits of Christ in their sanctifying influence throughout the Body of Christ, and when those merits have been adequately extended throughout His mystical Body, then, but not till then, will the number of God's elect be complete, so that the kingdom of Christ may come.

Thus will the work of sanctification be complete. All the traces of the unregenerate nature will be sloughed off, as it were. The Church will be delivered from all her imperfections. The Bride of Christ, His own true mystical Body, will shine out in glory without any defect. The city of the New Jerusalem will be seen coming down from heaven, having the glory of God, and the Lamb is the Light thereof.

MEDITATION XCIII.

The Self-Sanctification of the Mediator.

For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.
—St. John xvii. 19.

1. CHRIST'S HUMANITY WAS PASSIVELY HOLY BY DIVINE ASSUMPTION.

CHRIST'S Humanity was holy in its conception, for it was conceived by the Holy Ghost. The sinfulness of human nature in which it was conceived did not affect it. According to the intimation of prophecy, a clean thing was brought out of an unclean by Divine power. By His Divine conception Jesus was a living human substance in the midst of the dead race whom He vouchsafed to call His brethren. The Divine life, which was His own Personal Self, repelled by the power of the Holy Ghost all the taint of sin, which would otherwise have affected the substance which He took of the seed of fallen Adam.

This holiness, however, was a passive holiness, received by participation of the Divine nature. His Person was the active principle. The Holy Ghost proceeding from His Person was the power of sanctity.

As soon as He assumed it, the Body which He assumed became partaker of the active holiness of

His Divine Person. All His bodily functions were the instruments of His Divine will. The vital movements of His earliest Being had the Divine activity as their principle. They were not the mere action of an impersonal being. His human nature in its earliest acts of self-development corresponded with the Divine will of the Eternal Word. The Person of the Eternal Word was at once Giver and Receiver of that Holy Spirit which ruled the yet unformed Being of the Divine Child. As Son of God He gave. As Child of man He received. So did He grow.

2. IT REQUIRED A MERITORIOUS ACTIVE HOLINESS IN ORDER TO FIT IT FOR THE WORK WHICH HE HAD TO DO IN THE NAME OF GOD.

The Manhood thus was taken into God as the human structure developed. There was no development anterior to each successive stage of its assumption. There was no neutrality of human life. The holiness of God filled it day by day.

So we read that He advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man. The advance was not an educational advance by external teaching. It was a growth. The human faculties, as they grew in natural power, were ever filled with the infinite fulness of Divine life. His growth was not an acquisition of infused knowledge or strength. It was the development of an organism, intellectual, physical, and moral, by the spiritual perfection of His Divine Personality, which was incapable of

change. The complete Divine consciousness filled His Humanity as it increased in receptive power.

So throughout His life. Every act and word and thought brought out some human energy in fuller exercise. Every suffering was in Him not a penalty tending to death, but an occasion for the exercise of inherent vitality which death could not destroy. While His outward substance suffered the exhaustion of hunger, His inward nature met the suffering by a continuous exhibition of interior strength, sanctifying by the operation of the indwelling Spirit the bodily structure, which should rise with all the traces of this triumphant endurance in the glory of the Resurrection.

His obedience was not a mere transitory condition through which He passed. Every act of it and every pain developed the energetic response of His human nature in the fulness of its love, leaving its mark upon His bodily structure with the glory of an eternal life, as our acts, whether good or bad, leave their marks upon our natural frame. The difference in His case was that the mark was a mark of eternal sanctity living by the power of the Holy Ghost, whereas the marks of our natural habits, although they remain upon us, have neither vitality nor sanctity. Our natural frame passes under the dominion of death, unless we are made partakers of eternal life and resurrection-glory by communication from Him.

Every transient act and thought of Jesus lives on by His inherent immortality, perfecting His human nature with the cumulative perfection of

His whole life, so as to shine with imperishable merits as the reward of His lifelong struggle.

This acquisition of eternal merits, to be communicated from His risen Body to His saints as the law of a new life of righteousness, making them acceptable in Himself, was necessary for Him in order that He might do the work which God gave Him to do, and might really be found as the Lord our Righteousness.

3. THAT ACTIVE HOLINESS, GERMINALLY DEVELOPED IN CHRIST, WAS TO BE COMMUNICATED AS A LAW OF POWER TO SANCTIFY HIS CHURCH IN ALL HER FUTURE WORK.

That righteousness which was in Him had a self-communicative power, as His Person was Divine. Having attained to the full measure of human development and perfection in the thirty-three years which seem to be the proper limit of human growth, He by His death and resurrection passes into the sphere of Divine activity, setting Himself free from the limitations belonging to the conditions of external weakness in which He lived during the time of His humiliation.

These merits must have their reward, and their reward is the procreation of a new race living by their communicated power. None of His merits were accidental or superfluous. Every one must find its proper issue in the sanctification of some individual redeemed by His power, who is thus made partaker of His life. The Church in her fulness is thus the

manifestation of the accumulated merits of Christ as the Father of the world to come (Is. ix. 6). This seems to give us an indication as to the number of God's elect. It is some proportion between the redeemed multitude as recipients and the human acts of Divine merit wrought by Jesus as the Source of all the merits of His people, Head over all things to His Church.

We are baptized into His Body so as to be made the righteousness of God in Him. That righteousness is a complete gift to the baptized child. Our acts in later life may forfeit that righteousness if we are cut off from the Body of Christ by reason of our sin, or else those merits of Christ become within us germs of holy energy, infused habits of Divine grace enabling us to live true to the righteousness of faith, while by the discipline of life in the world Christ is formed within us, and His acts grow within us by spiritual power, making our nature conformable to Himself.

Thus Christ lives within us, for the natural habits of our sinful flesh die away, and are replaced by the supernatural habits of our regeneration. 'The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus makes us free from the law of sin and of death; for what' no written law 'could do, in that it' must be 'weak through the flesh, God sending His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the' Divine 'law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit' (Rom. viii. 2-4).

MEDITATION XCIV.

The Predestinated Church.

Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word.—St. John xvii. 20.

1. ALL AGES PRESENT TO THE MIND OF CHRIST.

THIS prayer speaks of the work of Christ in His Church as being already consummated. So here He looks upon all the future multitude of believers as being already complete. He surveys them with the prophetic vision of God—‘all who believe on Him through the Apostles’ word.’ He inquires for all of every generation, as the one High Priest interceding with untransmitted authority to the end of time.

Those merits which were to germinate in His mystical Body would find their requisite development amidst the varying circumstances of ages to come. His righteousness was not a formless power to carry us into heaven, as the whirlwind carried away the body of Elijah. His Personal acts and sufferings were to have correspondent spheres of exercise in His people, and thus the habits formed in His human nature by His own will would find special application, so as to be brought into exercise under the similar conditions to which His people

would be subjected, who thus would fill up in their bodies that which remaineth of the sufferings of Christ, for His Body's sake, which is the Church. As we see the habits of parents reproduced in their offspring, so the supernatural habits of the Body of Christ would cause His members to be assimilated to Himself as varying circumstances might give opportunity. The bodily nature would act in this case by the power of the Eternal Spirit sanctifying them, as the same Spirit was the law of holiness in Himself. The merits of Christ would thus have a special remedial power to meet the temptations which His people would have to bear from time to time. Every individual was present to the mind of Christ, and He looked forward to that individuality of grace and strength by which He would sustain every one of them in their need. Nothing in Him could be without its reward and proper consequence. We may each one of us look back to Him as bearing our sins in His own Body, not only as suffering in His innocence because we should have had to suffer in our guilt, but as providing a gift of grace whereby we may be raised out of the tyranny of our own sin, and made partakers of His holiness, with power communicated from Him to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord. 'He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied.' He has acquired unto Him a Church by His own blood, in whose sanctification and glory He finds the fulness of His delight.

2. THY WORD—THE WORD—THEIR WORD.

‘Thy Word is truth.’ This utterance is absolutely identical with the eternal purpose of God. By this Word, begotten of the Father, all things were created. All things came into being so as to be entirely conformable to the Father’s will, having their existence from His Almighty Word. He is the principle of all activity in the creature. Whatsoever acts true to the nature which it has received, must do so by being conformed to this creative Word. He is the mediatorial Principle of creation. Whatever speaks according to His dictate will find the ear of God ready to welcome. He is the harmonious Principle of creation. While all things act true to Him, they are true to one another. By union with Him, creation becomes identified with the Creator. Divergence from His guidance is the beginning of falsehood and death. He is the Word of life. The prince of this world became a murderer, and destroyed mankind, because He abode not in the truth, and did not keep the truth of God’s eternal law as the inspiration of His life (John viii. 44). His word became a lie (*ὅταν λαλήῃ τὸ ψεῦδος*), for it was the utterance of his own self-originated will (*ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων λαλεῖ*) speaking without reference to the creative Word which should have been his life. The devil is thus not only a liar (*ψεύστης ἐστὶ*), but the father of the falsehood (*καὶ ὁ πατὴρ αὐτοῦ*), because he refused to be the servant of God who is the Truth. All those must own him as their father who act of their own mind, content to do the lusts of him, their father

(τὰς ἐπιθυμίας τοῦ πατρὸς ὑμῶν θέλετε ποιεῖν), by acting in their own self-guided will. Jesus is the Word of God, of one substance with the Father, having the Father's truth abiding in Him, and communicating the Father's life. The prince of this world utters the word of self-will, which lacks the substantial truth of the Father's decree—beginning in emptiness, deceptive in expectation, ending in death.

There is, then, but one Word, the Eternal Word; one Speaker, the Eternal God. That Word has become flesh, and we must be taken into that Word so that the truth of God may abide in us. That Word speaking in our hearts must be the law of our life. So is the emptiness of our dead nature filled with the fulness of eternal life.

The Word of God speaks by the Apostolical ministry of the Church in the power of the Holy Ghost. The Apostles gave themselves 'to the Word of God and to prayer' (Acts vi. 4). So was their word the real onflow of the Divine Word. It was not merely an authenticated word that they spoke, but a word of living power. God spake by them. 'If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God' (1 Pet. iv. 11). This was the law of their ministry. The faithful were to be gathered in by the power of God's Word and Holy Spirit, not by words of human wisdom, arguments, or rhetoric, but as the Holy Ghost taught in the exercise of a heavenly ministry.

3. THE INTERCESSORY WORD EVER ACCOMPANYING THE MINISTERIAL WORD.

Thus does our Lord pray, so that the power of His prayer may give efficacy to the word of His Apostles, speaking in His Name to the end of time. This word of intercession includes the whole multitude of believers to the end of time.

The word that comes forth from God in promise, rises up to God in prayer. He who sends His Apostles to speak to His people, gathers His people unto Himself to present them to the Father. The authoritative benediction of His mediatorial kingdom has the continuous life of His primary intercession, wherewith He consecrated Himself to be the oblation on behalf of His people. We are not to think that we are in any less degree partakers of His original prayer because of the lapse of time. For us He prayed. To Him all ages are one. His Church is to Him the same amidst all the varying circumstances of her earthly condition. His merits are the living power whereby we are to meet the difficulties of each successive generation. His love, His truth, His power, are the same from the beginning to the end. His whole Church was present to His mind. He gathers all unto Himself in His prayer.

See before p.

MEDITATION XCV.

The Unity of the Holy Ghost.

That they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us.—St. John xvii. 21.

1. DIVINE UNITY THE LAW OF CHURCH UNITY.

THE Church is taken up out of the world into the Body of Christ. It is separated from the world by an interior law of life. That life is the unity of the Divine Name into which they were to be baptized, the power of the Holy Ghost.

The unity, therefore, is not a worldly unity, but a Divine. It is not less than it would be if it were worldly. It is infinitely more. It is much more than agreement in doctrine, practice, social relationship, domestic affection. It is the very unity of the Holy Ghost—that unity of indissoluble life wherein the Father and the Son dwell together as one God. It is an interpenetrative unity; not a mere unity of peace, order, cohesion, but of consubstantial identity.

‘In us.’ So does Jesus speak. This is a fuller expression than if He had used the singular number. ‘In Me’ might have implied a getting of all into His Humanity, while yet His Personal Divine life, wherein He is one with the Father, might have been unattained. His human Body has a unity

beyond that of natural organism by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, and His Body, extended in sacramental power, communicates this higher life, so that all who are baptized into His human Body are united in the higher unity of the Triune Name, into which they are made to drink by the power of the Holy Ghost which glorifies Him (1 Cor. xii. 13).

This unitive gift of the Holy Ghost is that for which our Lord here prays. We are not to doubt the reality of its communication because the sins of men mar its outward manifestation. We must take care that our consciousness of its reality overpowers the various human affections and infirmities by which we are tempted to sin against it. We must rise up to it as a law operative in our own will, because it is essential to our spiritual nature. Our spiritual life would be nought without it. To disparage or distrust it is a sacrilege, a sin against the Holy Ghost. All schisms arise from negligence of this great truth, because 'we are carnal, and walk as men.'

2. UNITY NOT ACCIDENTAL AND CONTEMPORANEOUS, BUT ESSENTIAL AND SUCCESSIVE.

The Body of Christ is one throughout all ages. We are not to think of the Church of any one age as if it were the true representative of the Body of Christ. The agreement of the Church in any one age does not suffice to constitute unity. The faithful departed are in the Body of Christ, and unity involves their participation. The Church cannot swerve

from the truth once for all delivered to the saints. We must be careful to maintain that which we have been taught from the beginning. So shall we 'continue in the Son and in the Father.'

We are not to think of unity as if it could spring up by man's agreement. It is the action of the Holy Ghost perpetuating the life of Christ in successive generations. The accidents of life are various, but it is the same Spirit who worketh from the beginning to the end. Those who are taken to their rest are taken away from the accidents of the outer struggle, but remain one with their brethren who are upon the earth. The interests of the Church do not vary, nor the truth which it has to inculcate. In the great day of regeneration, when the Church shall be seen in her fulness, it will be manifest how each generation has contributed to the great result. The Church grows, but not as an empire, so as to be measured by the area of power at any given period. The Church does not become greater by being more widely spread, more stablished by temporal influence, more distinguished by human wisdom. The Church is continually growing around the throne of Jesus as the faithful are gathered to their rest, and the unfaithful are eliminated from her numbers by death so as no longer to taint the sphere of her life.

3. NOT AN INITIAL AGREEMENT OF HUMAN WILL, BUT AN ETERNAL TRIUMPH OF DIVINE INSPIRATION.

So does the Body of Christ 'make increase of itself in love.' So is the Church 'growing to the

perfect man, the fulness of the measure of the stature of Christ.'

The unity of the Church is, indeed, formed out of multiplicity, but the many are made one in a different order from that in which they existed as the many. The many of mankind are made one in the unity of the Divine life of the Son of man. The multiplicity of human wills, and conflicting interests, comes to an end. The will of God rules all, and all live with one absorbing aim of life, the glory of God in Jesus Christ. In that glory there can be no self-seeking, no rivalry. None can desire glory as an individual possession, even of the highest kind. All must rejoice in the undivided glory of Christ the Head. It matters not through whom the glory has been effected. The power was the power of the One Spirit, not of the individual member. The centre of the glory is Christ in the totality of His members. Every member shares in the universal inspiration of joy, as all have shared, however unconsciously, in the universal inspiration of life. The action of all the members during the continuance of earthly life is a higher unity of power, gathering up all as one for the accomplishment of God's will. The joy of each of the members is the final consciousness of the unity of the same Spirit filling all with the sense of collective triumph. Man's sympathetic nature has been given him to fit him for this eventual development of his being. Solitary joy is selfishness, enfeebling, degrading. Community of joy is ennobling, strengthening as it enlarges the individual so to become identified with the larger

sphere of consciousness. So shall the individual man find his true, his perfect joy, eternally sanctified in the glory of Christ, not by personal aggrandizement, but by the loss of self in the Communion of Saints.

MEDITATION XCVI.

The Divine Glory of the Son.

And the glory which thou hast given 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.—St. John xvii. 22, 23.

1. THE UNDIVIDED GLORY A PERSONAL GIFT OF LIFE TO THE ETERNAL SON.

THE glory which the Father gives to the Son is the glory of the Divine nature; that nature which comes forth in the Person of the Holy Ghost, by eternal procession from the Father primarily, and from the Son equally but subordinately. So the Son is eternally begotten in the unity of the Holy Ghost.

The Godhead loses none of its glory in being given to the Son, for it is indivisible, eternal. Its glory is not accidental, but essential. It is not a relation of the Divine nature to other intelligences as winning their homage, but this glory is the vital self-knowledge of God. It is the source of all glory, of whatever kind it be, which other beings can possibly possess. It receives no increase by attestation from without, although it manifests itself as the all-controlling power by the response which it awakens from creatures round about. God giveth not His glory to another, and therefore we are not to think that the Son of God was admitted from

without to have any participation in this glory. This glory is His, because He has His eternal origin within its infinite majesty. He is begotten within this glory, so as to be one God with the Father, of one substance, power, and eternity. The glory as it proceeds from Him remains unchanged in its simple eternity. It knows neither increase nor loss, as the eternal, Divine act of life goes forth in the Person of the Holy Ghost. It does not exist under any finite conditions of space or time, but, containing all things within its own eternal purpose, it calls all created things into being, not so as to forfeit its own infinity by admitting them to any parallelism of co-ordinate relationship, but to manifest its infinity by the subordination of their local condition to its own mystery of super-local power.

‘As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself.’ The life, the power, the glory, are not separable from the Personality either of the Father or of the Son; neither are the Persons themselves separable one from the other. They live in the unity of the Holy Ghost.

2. THE ETERNAL GENERATION A GLORIFYING PRINCIPLE TO THE CHURCH.

The life which the Son receives eternally from the Father, He communicates to His Church by sacramental means of union with Himself. God hath given us eternal life in His Son. That life is given to the Church by the Procession of the

Holy Ghost, who is the Life of Christ's glorified Body, and therefore of His mystical Body.

This eternal life of the indwelling Godhead is not given to us as separate individuals, but as a collective Body. We are hereby partakers of the life of Christ, the glorified Head of the Body, and we are livingly united one with another. One by one we are admitted into this living Body, but we lose our separated individuality. The unity of the Church is a mysterious extension within the manifoldness of creation, developing the unity of God. Personality remains, but life is one. In proportion as we fail of this unity we fail of the Divine life. The Holy Church, indwelt by the Holy Ghost, is the Communion of Saints.

Separated individuality is done away, but the active relationship of the members of the Body of Christ remains. Separate agents there can be none, but all have their united responsibility to act under the guiding inspiration of Christ the Head.

From Him the members of the Body derive their action, as He Himself does from the Father. What is not done after the pattern of His will by the power of the Spirit is nought. His members cannot act except according to the law originated by Him, nor does He act otherwise than through them.

This law of life, acting thus divinely as a unitive inspiration to those who by the law of natural life exist and act as separate agents, carries with it the exercise of supernatural powers. The Body of Christ abiding in this unity of Divine Headship by the power of the Holy Ghost is an organism

altogether supernatural. It is not merely a society whose members live with a higher character of individual sanctity. It possesses, while acting in the integrity of its supernatural oneness, a super-human capacity as the representative of Christ.

This unity of life is not the mere unity of mutual agreement distinguishing any one generation of Christian people. It is the unity of the faithful of all ages, as being truly exhibited by those who are upon the earth at any given time—the unity of all with Christ the Head.

His enthronement at the Right Hand of God is the law of the Church's triumph (Ps. cx. 1). The glorious life of His Eternal Sonship is the vital principle of her power.

3. THE UNITY OF THE HOLY GHOST ITS ACTIVE CONSUMMATION.

This life, therefore, is effective throughout the Body of Christ by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost glorifying the whole Body. This gift of the Spirit is not a mere gift to persons, but to the whole Body. It acts through various individuals for separate manifestations, through some for sacraments, through others for prophecy, through others for miracles; but it is throughout a life of supernatural mystery in union with Jesus at the Right Hand of God, and His glory shows itself in the elevating power which invests the whole society with attributes of Godhead. The Holy Ghost is the Vicar of Christ, acting in His Body with personal efficiency to accomplish the will

of Christ, the personal Head, enthroned on high, but not separated by space, united with every branch of His Church by sacramental organization, and endowing each branch of His Church with spiritual powers according to the needs and fitness of each time. Hence we must expect that times of persecution will call forth special manifestations of the Holy Ghost, and that times of prosperity will make them less frequent. We must recognize the weakness of the individual man as distinguishable from the strength of the Spirit of Christ operating throughout His Body. We may even see with thankfulness, but without wonder, that the Holy Ghost acts through the Body of Christ when we might have supposed that the earthliness of His agents would have precluded His Divine manifestations. It is a very different thing to regard the individual as individually chosen to be the Divine agent in spite of his sins, and to regard the community as acting by the indwelling Spirit of power, in spite of the sins of individual members through whom it acts. True it is that the leading officials of the Church have their special vocation amidst the widespread influences of the Divine Spirit; but although they have their special work, yet the presence and operation of the Holy Ghost is not solely, or even chiefly, dependent upon them. The Holy Ghost dwells in the whole Body, and He may recognize the presence of some who are called to be saints of whom the Church around them may be quite unaware. God is glorified by hidden saints in His Church, even in the most degraded times.

There is a personal recuperative energy of the Holy Ghost which may be quite indefinable, acting through individuals altogether hid from sight, and we must not confound this with the sacramental organization, which under all circumstances is necessary for the maintenance of Church life. Such confusion is like confounding a healthy constitution with a vertebrate structure.

It is this presence of the Spirit of the enthroned Redeemer with the Church as the Body of Christ which ought to show itself in power, not necessarily of natural influence, but of supernatural efficiency. And this Divine personal life is able at any moment to reassert itself within the Church, however great from time to time may be the decay into which it has fallen. The holiness of the Church is not by the aggregation of separate saints. It is the consummation of the sanctity of Christ the Head operating undividedly through all, and making itself manifest in all according to the measure of every part.

MEDITATION XCVII.

Vital Unity in the Church.

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.—St. John xvii. 23.

1. OVERPOWERING THE DIVISIONS INCIDENT TO OUR PRESENT STATE OF CORRUPTION.

Thus, then, the Presence of the Holy Ghost as a living principle in the Body of Christ makes itself manifest, by gathering up the individual earthly members into the glorified Humanity of Jesus at the Right Hand of God. His Body must cleanse our bodies, and His Blood, the special seat of vital energy, must wash our souls, which were by nature dead through the corruption of our sinful blood as born from Adam.

This presence, therefore, ought to be victorious over the sins of individuals, and over the corruptions which the continual accretion of sinful personalities necessarily imports into the outward body of Christendom. The spiritual organization of the Church is being gradually formed within the multitude of those who are called to be saints. They have not to obey that call in order to prove themselves worthy of admission into the Church, but they are taken by the Holy Ghost into vital connection

with this organization, so that its holy incorporating power may purge from them the inheritance of evil which in any way taints their natural frames, whether of mind or body. Thus it is that St. Paul speaks, in writing to the Ephesians, of 'Christ sanctifying the Church' by progressive developments of active holiness, 'having cleansed it with the washing of water by the Word' (Eph. v. 26). That growing holiness whereby the Church is at last to be presented, glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but absolutely 'holy and without blemish,' is the work of the Spirit of Christ the Head. By this vital unity 'Christ is formed in the Church' universal (Gal. iv. 19). The Spirit of Christ upholds the Church in union with His glorified Body, making that Body fruitful within her for all works of holiness.

Whatever, therefore, may be the evils of Christendom at any time, the Body of Christ, by the power of the indwelling Spirit, supplies a constant recuperative force. That which is best in human nature needs to be transformed by the Deific virtue of the glorified Humanity, so that it shall be accepted of God, not for its own sake, but for the sake of Christ, and that which is worst in human nature is capable of being so transformed by the same immanence of Divine life, that the same virtue of Christ may be acknowledged in its triumph.

That which is true of each individual, is true of every age and country as a collection of individuals. They are not sanctified *for* Christ preparatorily, but *in* Christ mediatorially and *for* Christ

ultimately. The heavenly Jerusalem, the Bride of Christ, is being all along formed by the power of the Holy Ghost out of the very Body of Christ, as Eve from Adam. Christ is the Head Stone, the Living Stone whose life constitutes the lustre of all the lifeless material which in separate masses is brought to Him, that by the life-containing virtue of His perfect holiness they may all be unified in glory and sanctified in Divine power.

2. A PROGRESSIVE EVIDENCE TO THE WORLD OF CHRIST'S PERSONAL MISSION.

The growth of the Church as a society containing a supernatural life of holiness, although gathered out of the sinful multitude of mankind by gradual transformation, is an evidence to the world that Christ, who is the Head of the Church, has been commissioned by God to be the Author of a new organism. He might have proclaimed a doctrine which His disciples should keep with the exactest orthodoxy, or He might have left a law which His followers should observe as strictly as the children of Jonadab the son of Rechab, or, as in our own day, the Mohammedans in many parts observe the commands of the false prophet. This, however, would have proved nothing as to His own supernatural origin. Rather the strict observance of His teaching by the multitudes who professed allegiance to Him would have implied that His teaching, and therefore His origin, were within the sphere of natural life. The power of the Spirit communicated from Himself,

and triumphing over the rebellious natures of men in successive generations, not forcing all, but leading some, to newness of life, is evidence that He Himself, the Head, is possessed of a vital power distinct from the natural power of any human leader. He is shown to be the Son of God by the gentle influence of the Spirit of God, raising those who submit to His guidance to a consciousness of sanctity, an aim, a struggle, a victory, which necessitate their really dying to the sinful world.

It is equally true of individuals and of nations. Our regeneration in Christ is not proved by the sudden removal of temptations or inclinations to sin, but by the strength of Divine vitality; and this is made all the more evident by the rebellious violence of the fallen will which has to be overcome. This ought to be our great encouragement when tried by fierce assaults of the evil one, and conscious of our own weakness. We can triumph, we must seek by faith to triumph, through the Divine power of the Humanity of Christ into which we have been incorporated. Nothing short of this could 'set us free from the body of this death' (Rom. vii. 24). This Deific power has asserted itself in others before us, and will assert itself in us if we are faithful.

This Deific power of holiness, one and the same in all, shows the unity of the Church of Christ to be no mere unity of teaching, or expediency, or moral sense, or civilizing influence. The divisions and corruptions of Christendom, like the passions of individuals, show that there is a unity of Divine life belonging not to the Church as an earthly association,

but to Christ as the Son of God, the Head of the Church, conceived by the Holy Ghost, and by the same Eternal Spirit forming Himself anew amidst all the powers of evil, from which the Church as a natural body could only expect to find destruction.

The world 'perceives' this power all the more as time goes on. A sectarian unity would be no true ground of demonstration. The growth of the Church makes her vitality all the more manifest by her feebleness and her natural incapacity of struggle with the world. The victories of martyrs were an evidence which the world of a past age could receive. The victories of sanctity, in protest against the corruptions of each successive age, now that the world has become Christian—victories which assert themselves amidst the divisions and antagonisms which worldliness may generate in various forms—are the evidence of the Divine life of Christ the Head, and of His willingness to show Himself forth from age to age in His Deific powers until the Church 'attains to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God;' the unity which faith now, with its imperfect apprehension, acknowledges and cherishes, which shall be revealed in 'the perfect man' (Eph. iv. 13).

3. AN EVIDENCE THAT THE CHURCH HAS THE HOLY GHOST, THE SPIRIT OF ETERNAL LOVE, DWELLING WITHIN HER.

This supernatural vitality shows that the Son of God not only has this life in Himself, but that

He communicates it to all of His members. 'Thou hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me.' That love is the unity of the Holy Ghost, the bond of the Eternal Trinity, and the bond whereby the members of Christ's Humanity are taken up into the participation of the Divine nature.

The Church is not a society favoured by certain external tokens of Divine approval. On the contrary, she has to approve herself as bearing the ministry of God 'in much patience and afflictions' (2 Cor. vi. 4). Outward success, unless it be won by hard fight, is of itself an evidence of earthliness which the Church has to disprove. It is the capacity of enduring the Cross which is the real evidence of the life of the Crucified. This is one and the same in every age. Thus it is that the unity of the Spirit of Divine love is manifested.

Sects may bear a momentary pressure, and thrive for a brief period under opposition. As they thrive so they fail. There is an appearance of spiritual power at the outset. Perhaps there may be a reality of spiritual power in individuals. The life of the Church is not forfeited by schism, except in proportion to its guilt. Many belong to the Church, although for a time broken away from her external fellowship. But the aim of such bodies is measured by worldly success, and as that worldly success is attained, they relapse into worldliness. There is no 'fruit which remains' for good. Without the perfect organization of the Church there can be no permanence of corporate holiness. The Church may relapse, but in such relapse there will always be

a remnant of spiritual power. Every persecution through which the Church of any country has to pass is sure to develop holiness by reason of the Holy Spirit dwelling therein. And the recuperative power of the Church is no transient gleam of life. It results in abiding consequences of progressive energy which attest the spiritual reality of life, even though a period of decadence succeed again and again.

Thus is it shown how the Father, by the power of the Holy Ghost, is subduing all things to His Son enthroned on high, and how He gives forth His love in increasing security of covenanted truth—the operation of that same Comforter, to quicken the Church, His Body, with the eternal life of the only begotten Son, the Head.

MEDITATION XCVIII.

Heavenly Unity rising out of Earthly Division.

That they may be perfected into one.—St. John xvii. 23.

1. DIVISIONS BELONG TO THE WORLD OUT OF WHICH WE ARE CALLED.

THE unity of life which is effected by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in the Body of Christ is absolutely indestructible. Therefore we believe in the one Catholic and Apostolic Church. Whatever divisions there may be in Christendom, this unity remains in its Divine perfection. We often speak of the healing of divisions, but it is rather unity that is extended than divisions which are healed. The divisions of Christendom are not like cracks in masonry, to be made good by cement. They are like gashes in the animal frame, which presuppose a common vitality in order that the sundered portions may grow together. Unless there be an undivided life remaining on both sides, the wound in the flesh cannot be healed. The part which had not the vital action, or has lost it, cannot be absorbed into the living organism by the mechanical pressure of an external bandage.

That which is thus united can no longer remain with a twofold life-sphere. There was a unity of life temporarily suspended, and there must be a unity of life absolutely identifying when the breach is healed. The circulation of life must flow unimpeded. Unless this be so, the body does not regain its healthy action.

The separation was only of the material tissue. The life is one throughout.

So we must be careful not to think of any possible healing of divisions by mere external agreement, as if such union were an approximation to vital unity in the Church. Unless there is perfect fusion there can be no increase of vital power. We being many by natural individuality are one body in Christ by supernatural grace. The Spirit of God does not merely hold us together upon friendly terms by external grasp. It unites us all by the action of the infused Body of Christ by internal inspiration. Christ is in us, as God is in Christ by the operation of the Holy Ghost.

2. UNITY IS THE DIVINE LIFE OF THE GLORIFIED BODY, INTO WHICH WE AS INDIVIDUALS ARE GRADUALLY PERFECTED.

Divisions, therefore, affect the outward Body of Christ so far as it belongs to this world, but not that Body of Christ which gives the true essential form to all its parts. As individuals we are baptized into this essential organism of spiritual power. Churches, as collections of individuals, are the

embodiment of this power for their several members. The official organization of the Church is described by St. Paul under the designation of joints and bands, the bones and muscles, of the spiritual frame.

There can be no individual action of solitary members. Our position in the Body of Christ is that which is marked out for us by the providence of God, and nothing but the amputation of the branch can warrant us in withdrawing from it. Unless the branch require of us something which separates us from Christ, we must look to find Christ acting in His appointed covenant.

But the more we lay hold upon Christ as the underlying principle of our Church organization, the more shall we become strengthened by Him. The sacraments of grace nourish each individual, whatever may be the condition of others round about, but they act through the organism. Communities external to the ecclesiastical body of Christ may indeed have a certain participation of life, as in the natural frame there may be morbid growths, but feeble and unhealthy. We have to look forward to being all 'made perfect in one.'

Our unity in the Body of Christ in this world is probationary. Our participation in the eternal life is probationary. Its powers are given to us that we may use them. If we fail of their use, we are sloughed off as diseased flesh. The Body remains, and others must be admitted to that fellowship of life which we have forfeited. The Body was never partaker of our sins nor of our schisms.

As we are established into the unity of this

glorified Body we are 'made perfect into one,' according to our Lord's prayer. St. Paul describes this as being 'rooted and built up in Christ' (Col. ii. 7), 'rooted and grounded in love' (Eph. iii. 17), that is, the Spirit of life in the Body of Christ, since 'Christ dwells in our hearts,' the seat of vitality, 'by the covenant of faith.' So he bids the Philippians 'hold fast the unity' (Phil. ii. 2). This is that unity of the city of God which shall be revealed when all who have failed of being absorbed into it shall have been purged off from it. This is that unity which we must now contemplate as overpowering our own individuality, strengthening us to overcome our individual weakness, elevating us with the supernatural powers of Christ's glorified Body, cheering us with the illuminations of His Holy Spirit, encircling us with the conscious sympathy of the Communion of Saints, and calling us to realize by growing experience the hope of our calling, as it shall eventually be revealed at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

3. THE HEAVENLY JERUSALEM.

So is this heavenly city being gradually built towards its completion.

We must never think of our generation of Christendom as if it had any completeness in itself. The unity of the city for which we are waiting will comprise all that sleep in Jesus.

How should we be set free from the entanglements and anxieties of our own day if we appreciated the

unity of life in Christ wherein we are sharers with those who have been before us! How little should we despond as to the weakness of the Church militant if we remembered that its weakness is the very measure of the coming glory of the Church triumphant! How little should we care to count, number, or measure the capacities of natural struggle, if we bore in mind that multitude which no man can number who are waiting to welcome us, because they without us cannot have their perfect reward in the resurrection, waiting 'until their fellow-servants and brethren have been killed as they were' (Rev. vi. 11)! How should we scorn every triumph that was not in some way purchased with blood, as being but as a block of ice that must melt away, if it were built into the heavenly walls amidst the burning stones of sanctity! How should we set store by every suffering that would make our hearts beat true to the heart of the Crucified, so as to live in the acceptance of His glorifying vitality!

Manifold is the discipline of earth, but we have all to be proved that we may live with Christ.

O the unity of head and heart, of life and limb, of thought, of will, of suffering, sacrifice, toil, and triumph!

In that unity we must lose the finite multiplicity of our feebleness! In that unity we must find the all-comprehensive majesty of the Heavenly Bride!

MEDITATION XCIX.

The Divine Will of the Eternal Son.

Father, that which thou hast given me, I will that where I am, they also may be with me.—St. John xvii. 24.

1. NOT PRECARIOUS, BUT AUTHORITATIVE.

JESUS does not pray as a created worshipper must pray, submitting Himself to a possibility of refusal. He prays as the Eternal Son of God. He says, 'This is My will.' He utters His will as being coincident with the will of the Father.

He has, indeed, a human will which desires what is naturally good, but He submits that will to the larger determination of Divine necessity. He expresses it, for it is the duty of the creature to exercise any faculty which God has given, and therefore it would be no virtue to let the faculty of the will sink into aimlessness. It is a duty to desire what is naturally good, and it is a duty to express any such desire in prayer to God. But in His Passion He only utters that will in subjection. 'If it be possible, let this cup pass Me. Yet not as I will, but as Thou wilt.'

Now He is pleading for that which is the very purpose of His Incarnation. He is inquiring of God on behalf of His people, not as one in darkness, but

with a full knowledge of the joy that was set before Him in the redemption of His elect. He therefore expresses His will absolutely. 'This is God's will, even your sanctification:' so we are told by the Apostle (1 Thess. iv. 3). This was the will which Christ came to accomplish. This was His own will.

His human will concurred towards this great aim of His ministry. In the strength of His Divine will He could set aside the subordinate movements of His natural will, gathering them up from the immediate purposes of this transitory life to fix them upon the great purpose of winning His elect, as partakers of His own glory.

This utterance, however, is not the mere acceptance of the Divine will as an inevitable result. This co-operation of His own will with the will of God is the real effectuating power. God does not attach the salvation of the elect to the Passion of Christ simply as a mechanical result. It is a reward to the Redeemer. He desires. He asks. This reward is given in answer to His prayer. He puts this prayer forward as a claim. It is the fulfilment of the Eternal Word, of the Divine predestination, of the meritorious oblation, of the human longing.

No one but the Son of God could pray with this entire identification of his own will with the full scope of the Divine. Our will can only point to details which, however good in themselves, and abstractedly true to God's will, may yet be withheld by some accidental circumstances which violate the conditions of its accomplishment. Our prayers tend towards this great end according to our limited

individual apprehension. It is the 'I will' of Christ which sums up all with the full Divine authority of His mediatorial claim.

2. NOT SUGGESTIVE, BUT OBEIENT.

This will has its authoritative character from the very fact of the self-surrendering obedience which accompanies it. In the Garden Jesus says, 'Not as I will, but as Thou wilt.' So here He speaks as the Son to the Father: 'Father, I will.' He does speak as suggesting to the Father a wish which God might be loth to grant. He speaks to His Father as bearing upon Himself the Father's image, and therefore the title which He uses implies that His will is derived from the Father's will. His Divine will is not co-ordinate with the Father's will, but it is the filial expression of a will of absolute identity. The agreement is not a matter of coincidence, but of vital origination. The will which belongs to Him as the only begotten Son does not happen to desire the same which the Father desires, but the identity of desire is of its very essence. We may desire what God wills, or we may desire the opposite. Our own will is naturally blank, and can desire either way. The will of Christ is not so. 'The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do;' and so His will, taking into itself the whole created universe, desires that, and that only, which the Father desired when He created the world. He is the Word who created all things as the Father's mouthpiece. He knows the full purpose

of the creation, and His will looks forward to that consummation with the same power wherewith He called the worlds into being. The Father created all things by Him. He is the Father's Instrument in creation. He is the Father's Partner in eternal glory. He is the obedient Sufferer working out the Father's love. In all the infinite consequences of the kingdom of grace He contemplates the perfect goodness of the Divine predestination, and He desires what He sees to be the Father's desire.

3. NOT SEPARATE, BUT CONSUBSTANTIAL.

The Son beholds the Father in the eternity of His Divine Sonship. He needs not to learn the Father's will. He knows God's purpose in creation, and the renewal of that purpose with unimpaired sovereignty by the Incarnation.

As Man He gained an experience of suffering during His life of humiliation, but the Divine purpose was always present to His mind, as the nature of God is changeless. His will is, therefore, not affected by created accidents. It remains for ever in the truth of the consubstantial glory.

Other beings may confess the supreme goodness of God's will, although they may be unable to desire the necessary conditions whereby to bring it about. The Divine will of Jesus contemplates the will of the Father with absolute identity of scope, and therefore with absolute identity of detail, and therefore, also, with absolute identity of act. If His will acted separately from the Father's will, it would

lack the Divine infinity, and so the whole would be destroyed. A finite will could not desire what the infinite will determines. There must be a consubstantiality of living power, in order that the will of the Son should equal the will of the Father. The agreement, therefore, is not a result of argumentation, persuasion, conviction. It is the oneness of an undivided act. In the infinity of eternal consequence, and in the details of preliminary development, the will of the Son is absolutely one with the will of the Father. Our will can only be raised to such identity by the sanctifying illumination of the Holy Ghost given to us in Christ. The will of Christ Himself does not grow into increasing conformity with the Father's will, but He uses His Manhood for the purpose of expressing the absolute identity of will wherein He, to whom all judgment is committed as the Son of man, exercises sovereignty over all as the consubstantial Son of God.

MEDITATION C.

The Predestination attained.

Father, that which thou hast given me, I will that where I am, they also may be with me; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.—St. John xvii. 24.

1. THE EXALTATION OF THE FAITHFUL TO THE THRONE OF GOD.

JESUS desires to have His people along with Him, that they may contemplate His glory. That glory none can know except in proportion as they are admitted to share it. That glory is the joy of Jesus, because He is able to communicate it.

The heart of man, bound down to earth, delights in display. Nevertheless the things in which He boasts are not his own. He delights in the falsehood of seeming to be what he is not, as if the powers which surround him for a brief moment were evidence of his own interior greatness. Yet how does that love of display degrade mankind! The things in which he boasts himself are not worthy of being praised, and they only serve, after all, to show the emptiness of their owner, for they are not a part of his true being. He loses them in many ways. He dies, and they are gone.

But this joy of self-manifestation is a true consciousness of glory in Jesus. His created nature

has not the emptiness of the creature, for in Him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. All that is glorious is to be found in Him, and in Him that glory dwells, not by accidental possession, but by personal changelessness, inalienably, originatively, self-communicatingly. As God delights in creation for its manifestation of His inherent glory to be the joy of His creatures, finding themselves filled with joy while they drink into themselves the flood of exhaustless delight in the contemplation of the Infinite Godhead, so the Humanity of Christ, rejoicing Himself in the perfect Divine knowledge of the Father which is His eternal wisdom, rejoices to manifest the unsearchable riches, the treasures of wisdom and knowledge which are His birthright, so that His people may behold His glory and share therein as His true members.

That contemplation is no idle vision. Here the eye is not satisfied with seeing, for what it sees is only superficial, transitory, lifeless, unsustaining. The vision of Jesus in His glory fills the soul with satisfying delight, while yet the soul hungers more and more, and with the hungry capacity the perfect satisfaction ever grows, for that whereon it feeds is exhaustless. It is substantial. It is eternal. It is life-giving. It brings with it the wondrous glory of the omnipotence of God.

So does the Mediator find His own joy complete in the manifestation of Himself to His people. He shows to them His glory, and lifts them to Himself that they may share it.

As He calls His people one by one unto Himself

He makes His glory to stream forth upon them, and binds them in close union of imperishable life. He lifts them from the darkness of death, that they may be made glorious with the true light which His countenance reveals. As they live in Him, so He rejoices in them, while they experience the joy wherein His Manhood exults for ever, as the Word in whom the wisdom of the Father utters itself with ceaseless manifestation through the ages of eternity.

2. THE BEATIFIC VISION.

Thus are the blessed lifted up to be with Christ, and behold His glory, by a living participation of His Divine power. Their faculties expand by the contemplation. As they act in union with Him, they become strengthened by the action. As they learn the exhaustless truth of their joy in Him, they attain to a fuller consciousness of joy. All that He does they share. They love Him, for they drink His love into themselves. The discipline of earth is a school of faith whereby the faithful have to learn to love that which is above them, but the joy that follows is the enrapturing thrill of contemplation, whereby the mystery of God becomes the glorious portion of those who have purified themselves from the deceits of the fallen world.

So does the truth shine out before the children of the kingdom, in wisdom, strength, and joy, in fellowship of action and reciprocal delight of love, in manifoldness of manifestation and unweariedness of reception, in communication of Divine powers

from the Incarnate Son as the Head of the Body, and the acceptance by the Father of that ministry of filial love wherewith the multitude of the redeemed glorify Him in the presence of the heavenly host by the power of the Spirit of Christ.

In the beatific vision, the blessed ever behold the glory of God in all that the Divine life calls them to do. They behold the glory of Jesus, because Jesus has given it to them (ver. 22). The dispensation of grace, the ministry of the Spirit, the work of faith, the labour of love, the patience of hope, have prepared them for the inheritance of glory, for the sensibility of Divine consciousness, for the elasticity of Divine fellowship, for the love which thrills in blessed response to the movements of God, for the reposeful energy of the Creator's welcome.

We must seek to anticipate the joy of Jesus in showing to us all that He is, by becoming more and more conformed to His will, and losing the consciousness of everything that is outside of Him. As we behold the falsehood of the world, so shall we behold Him in His truth. We can but perish in the visions of the world. To see Jesus in His glory is to live for ever.

3. THE ETERNAL GLORY ONLY TO BE KNOWN BY PARTICIPATION OF ETERNAL LIFE.

This, then, is the very substance of eternal life, the contemplation, the knowledge, the experience of the Godhead, through the mediation of Christ, the Head of the Body. In whatever respect we live

with any aim outside of Him, we forfeit the glory which life absorbed in Him would stimulate within us.

How full of blessing are those difficulties of earthly life whereby our earthly hopes are clouded and our earthly fetters broken! Surely, if we could have a glimpse of that which is in store, we should cast away many an object of earthly reliance. We have to die to the world, not in despondency, but in hope. Ours must not be the darkness of a pessimistic philosophy, as if God's work in creation had failed, but the brightness of a hope that makes not ashamed, because the troubles of this present time develop in our hearts vast chasms of void darkness as receptacles of the glorious light which is to be our eternal portion. The more we feel the darkness for a moment, the more shall we find the correspondent brightness of Divine manifestation for ever. But faith must anticipate with living grasp the glory which is set before us. To droop by reason of the present sorrow is to die beneath its gloom, but to use the sorrows of earth in the fulness of faith is to live with the fulness of God. The vision of the life wherein we are to rejoice hereafter is not the mere sequence of condition by the completion of some cosmical change round about, but it is the perfected action of that living gaze of faith wherewith the individual soul has learnt to share in the victory of Christ. 'This is the victory that overcometh the world' (1 John v. 4).

'To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me on My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with the Father on His throne' (Rev. iii. 21).

MEDITATION CL.

The World's Need of a Mediator.

O righteous Father, the world knew thee not.—St. John xvii. 25.

1. THE RIGHTEOUSNESS IN WHOSE PRESENCE THE WORLD STANDS CONDEMNED.

THE Spirit will convict the world of repudiating the righteousness of God in rejecting Christ. He is the Righteous One in whom the righteousness of the Father shines forth. None can know the righteousness of God save by the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

The Son of God appeals to the Father's righteousness now that He is going to the Father, and looks forward to the Father's acceptance of His work. Now shall the righteousness of God be manifested, which is obscured by the predominance of evil in the world as it is now. God's righteousness cannot be vindicated until the present course of things has passed away. The interior convictions of Divine sanctity are awakened in those who love the truth by the gift of the Divine Spirit, but nothing short of the eventual triumph of good over evil will demonstrate to the world the righteous judgment of God (Rom. ii. 5). For that final manifestation we have to look. So now our Lord appeals to God as the Righteous

Father. He has fulfilled all righteousness in the submission of His earthly life, and now He looks for the Father to show His righteousness in accepting His work.

Without a Mediator there could be no true theodicy, no true explanation of the equity of God's providential government. There could be no Mediator save the only begotten Son. The righteousness of God could not be known unless the finite and the Infinite were brought into one. The finite may have glimpses, intimations, of Divine righteousness. Faith, worshipping God, is bound to accept the Divine righteousness as infinitely transcending all that would seem to finite apprehension to be righteous. The righteousness of God is greater, not less, than our conception. The promises of God in Christ set it before us as full of wondrous promises. In the presence of this righteousness we feel ourselves to be sinners. Christ bearing our sins in His own Body on the Tree shows us our sinfulness, for He manifests to us the love of God against which we have sinned. Unless we accept that love we cannot rise out of our sins, nor know them. Christ, accepted of the Father, manifests the righteousness of God with the essential glory of Divine power which those shall attain to share who seek it through His mediation.

2. THE WORLD NOT CAPABLE OF APPREHENDING GOD.

Divine righteousness is the outcome of the eternal love wherein the Son lives with the Father,

This is that glory which Jesus desired His people to see (ver. 24). 'Thou hast loved Me in righteousness, and the world hath not apprehended Thee.' The world cannot attain to that love, to behold that glory, for it can only read the glory of the Infinite through the modifications of the finite. Christ Himself knows the Father. Can His disciples, then, have the same knowledge? Not as yet. But they have apprehended the truth of Christ's mission from the Father. Therefore what they do not know they can believe.

Jesus, therefore, makes known to them the Father's Name, the Divine Triune glory wherein He lives with the Father. And why? It is in order that they may share His love. The apprehension of faith is to lead onward to the fruition of eternal participation.

The incapacity of nature is a temporary discipline ordained of God, but the blindness of heart which rejects the manifestation is a moral guilt for which man is responsible. 'No man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him' (Luke x. 22). This revelation is not vouchsafed by arbitrary selection, but as the reward of faith accepting that disciplinary incapacity and rising up to the promise.

The promised knowledge is, indeed, the absorption of the finite into the Infinite. So is love made perfect in Divine knowledge.

3. THE SIN OF SELF-SATISFIED WISDOM IN REJECTING THE MEDIATORIAL WISDOM.

The world remains in its ignorance because it rejects the revelation of Christ. Human pride desires that God shall conform His providence to human reason. God requires that man shall conform his life to 'the obedience of faith' (Rom. xvi. 26). 'After that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe' (1 Cor. i. 21). The gospel is called foolishness because it does not profess to answer all the difficulties which surround mankind in this present world. The wisdom of the world is more foolish, because it seeks to satisfy itself about questions which are in the nature of things beyond its grasp. 'The foolishness, therefore, of God is wiser than men' (1 Cor. i. 25), because this discipline of faith is leading man onward in moral progress to accept the principles by which the Divine wisdom shall eventually be discerned. Jesus is come as the Mediator, not merely to translate us unchanged from our present condition to another, but to fit us by gradual development of obedient faith to appreciate the glory which is in store for us. The sudden communication of Divine power would obliterate the moral nature of our manhood. By the discipline of faith we have to grow to the fulness of the Incarnate Wisdom, 'the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ' (Eph. iv. 13).

MEDITATION CII.

Faith in Christ's Commission.

I knew thee ; and these knew that thou didst send me.—St. John xvii. 25.

1. THE WISDOM OF THE CHURCH NOT BY PHILOSOPHY, BUT BY FAITH.

CHRIST is the Wisdom of the Father. In Him the Divine Wisdom takes human form. His Infinite Personality assumes finite expressions in our finite world, but does not lose its infinite relation to the Infinite Being of God. His Humanity always acted true to that infinite regulative power. The Humanity could not comprehend the Infinite, but it was always true to the Infinite. It ever acted in the power of that knowledge which belonged to the Word as consubstantial with the Father. All the thoughts of His Humanity had their origin in His Godhead, though they might receive their occasion from events belonging to His earthly experience.

He therefore speaks to the Father in the fulness of His Divine knowledge: 'I have known Thee.' No human, no created being, could put forward such a claim. By this expression He separates Himself from all creatures, from all the world.

His disciples could no more know God than the world could. They had not the world's moral

blindness, but they shared the incapacity belonging to the world as a finite creation. They could not attain to find out God by searching, but they had good warrant for accepting Christ as the accredited Messenger of God. He showed that He belonged to a higher world, and therefore they could receive His testimony respecting the Divine life. This education of faith was the introduction to the higher wisdom which should afterwards be infused by the Holy Ghost. 'Christ is made unto us Wisdom from God' (1 Cor. i. 30).

This higher wisdom is to be attained in no way but by union with Him. We must believe in Christ as our Teacher. Then we shall be ready to accept the Spirit of God whom He sends to be our Illuminator.

We must not think that now, in the high day of Christianity, we can know God by natural power, any more than men could do at the beginning. The intellectual incapacity remains the same. We must come to Christ to learn and seek the gift of the Holy Ghost given to us as His members, that we may know. Having received this Holy Spirit, we cannot advance in Divine knowledge save by His holy inspiration. Such knowledge as is merely intellectual belongs to the philosophy of earth, and fails to lift us up to the Divine fellowship. The fellowship of the Divine life, given to us in the ordinances of grace by Christ's appointment, communicates to us the spiritual and supernatural faculty of knowledge—'that we may know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent,'

2. NATURAL INCAPACITY OF INTELLECT LEADING TO THE MORAL KNOWLEDGE OF LOVE.

Our natural intellect can discover facts of natural science, but even here how limited is our apprehension of the universe! We may give names to the stars, and calculate some of their movements and distances, but we are powerless to apprehend even what we can put down on paper. The knowledge lies as dead within our minds as it does upon the written page.

So with the various forces of physical life. We may describe their operation; we cannot apprehend their essence.

We may detect the operation of some power that is hidden from our sight, but we cannot apprehend what that power really is.

How much less, then, can we apprehend the unseen glory of the Creator of all things, present everywhere by His power, but incapable of being contained in the whole universe of space, because His uncreated nature must be of a different order from all that is finite, limited whether in extent or in duration.

Our only wisdom is to know our ignorance of God, that we may accept what Christ has revealed to us concerning Him. We may be quite certain that whatever is truly told us of God must be at variance with all the laws by which the created and finite world is governed. Such a doctrine as the Trinity is more conceivable to us than any doctrine of the Divine unity which would be consistent with

material speculation. There must be in God a power inherent and unchangeable, altogether different from the powers which regulate the world which He created. All our knowledge of God must be stated under elementary factors derived from the finite world which He has created; but they must all be found in Him, acting with a power such as to set at nought the finite created powers of our natural experience.

If we would know God we must be taken up into the fellowship of God. It is only the Spirit who proceeds from God who can thus lift us up to God. Our moral and personal nature is capable of being lifted up into some fellowship with God, although our intellectual powers cannot in the nature of things be expanded to the apprehension of the infinite. Hence we see that God is to be known only in Christ by the gift of the Holy Ghost in the exercise of filial love. 'He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.'

3. THE PURIFICATION OF SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE.

The gift of the Spirit of Christ is, therefore, a gift of power enabling the faithful to rise up to a certain fellowship of action with God. Christ must be accepted as the Messenger, and His message consists in the announcement of Himself as the Mediator.

Those who accept Him are admitted to a participation of that knowledge which is inherent in Him. 'He makes known' to them 'the Name' of God, as

a moral, personal Power. He, as the Son of God, calls them to recognize God in His Fatherly relation. The eternal relationship which is His own towards the Father, He communicates to them. He has proclaimed to them God's Fatherly love, whereby the members of His covenant shall be welcomed. At present that knowledge has been given but imperfectly. He will give it to them more and more until they attain to share it with Himself, as the Spirit of God shall glorify them with Himself. 'The love wherewith Thou hast loved Me shall be in them, and I in them.' The indwelling of the Divine love is by the power of the Holy Ghost, who is the Bond of unity between the Father and the Son. The indwelling of Christ is the essence of His mediatorial function by which that Holy Spirit is communicated.

MEDITATION CIII.

Christ perpetually guiding His Church.

And I made known unto them thy name, and will make it known.—St. John xvii. 26.

1. CONTINUOUS SUPERNATURAL ILLUMINATION OF THE HOLY GHOST.

CHRIST says that He has declared, and will declare, God's Name to His people. This is not a mere declaration of continued care. The mode of manifestation would be different. He has declared the Father's Name by His own words, teaching the Apostles while He was with them. He will declare it by the power of the Holy Ghost when He is gone away, and this declaration will last to the end of time. What He does by the Holy Ghost is His own doing, as much as if He did it personally in the flesh. But what He does by the Holy Ghost acting upon the Right Hand of power is much more effectual than what He could do by His own Personal Presence here upon earth.

This continuous work of illumination would never cease. The revelation of God to man can never be a matter of the past. Unless it be going forward with an ever-present life, it must lose its truth. It is only as a power that God can be known,

and we cannot know a power by reading about it. We can only know it by experiencing it. So the teaching of the Holy Ghost is a power which comes to us from Christ. When He ascended up on high, He received gifts for men, and gave a ministry to His Church which should act in the power of the Holy Ghost. So we do not speak of the Holy Ghost simply as having come down from heaven. We pray to Him continually, 'Come, Holy Ghost.'

This teaching of the Holy Ghost will be one and the same throughout, although expanding with the needs of successive generations. The power of God's Name would be continually a fresh power. Coming by the breath of the Spirit from the lips of the glorified Saviour, this declaration of the Name of God would convey renewing and illuminating power. He teaches the quickened soul to know God, by shedding abroad the love of God in the heart. The soul comes to the knowledge of God by becoming identified with God. It is the unceasing work of the great Mediator thus to make God known by the gift of His Holy Spirit. That Spirit is His true voice upon earth by virtue of a continuous mission; but more than that—He comes in all the glory of the power which belongs to Christ by virtue of His exaltation from this our earthly sphere of life.

2. ETERNAL LIGHT, LIFE, LOVE.

So does the light of Divine truth shine upon the Church. 'Thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee' (Is. lx. 1). The mysteries

which baffle the human heart, the problems which sadden us with manifold perplexity, the experiences of sorrow which darken our path in this present world, shine forth under the illuminating power of God's Name. All is transformed. In present anxieties faith learns to rejoice with brighter hope. A light of Divine joy shines within which tells of eternal triumph to be attained by these struggles—a triumph, not of the human nature selfishly exulting in having gained a victory, but a triumph of the Divine nature, lifting up the earthly heart to the wondrous vision of heavenly truth.

This light is life. Jesus makes known the Name of God as the life of the soul. It is not merely the natural faculties which pass into an illuminated atmosphere. The heart gains a new faculty of perception. The brightness which would have paralyzed the natural sense is so communicated that it becomes the interior faculty of its own recognition. The soul taken into the Name of God, comes to see God as God sees Himself. The child of light rejoices in the growing joyousness of a life responsive to the blessedness wherein it contemplates God as its own true Father.

And this life is love. As Jesus has kept the Father's commandments and abides in His love, so He trains His members by the power of the Holy Ghost, calling them to live with the life of God, that they too may abide in His love, and abide with Him in the Father's love. Self is the basis of natural life, and it ends in death; but God is at once the basis of eternal life, so that none can live

therewith save for Him ; and He is the culminating development of eternal life, so that all who live find the true end of their being fully attained in the fruition of His love.

3. CHRIST DWELLING IN US BY THE LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT OF LOVE.

As the Holy Ghost communicates to us the nature of Christ, so He absorbs us into the Personality of Christ. Christ, the Head, dwells in us by the Holy Ghost, not only as a representative, but as a unitive power. Our own personality is not great enough to use the Divine nature. We have to grow up into Him in all things, that He may act in us and through us. His indwelling Presence communicates to us supernatural powers, and outshines all our natural infirmities, so that in the glory of His Personality we may be worthy of that Divine nature. The Divine nature cannot be communicated as an entity separable from His Personal Presence. We are regenerated along with Him, but in Him, so that we retain our regenerate life only by holding Him as the Head. The Church is not a society of men believing in Christ as an external object of adoration, but abiding in Christ as the ever-present Source of all actions, filled with His wisdom, thrilling with His joy. The life of the Church in union with Christ is as true and as perfect as the life of the Son of God in union with the Father.

The Holy Spirit of eternal love perfects this union indissolubly, so that God may be all in all,

and the whole creation, being delivered from the bondage of corruption, shall rejoice to have the ideal of the creative predestination accomplished in its own perfection by the incarnation of the Son of God, the Creative Word.

MEDITATION CIV.

Christ presenting His Church to the Father.

That the love wherewith thou lovedst me may be in them, and I in them.—St. John xvii. 26.

1. THE CONSUMMATED BODY OF THE FAITHFUL.

JESUS prays for His people. He brings them before God, as Joseph brought his two sons before Jacob. In them His work is summed up. In them He will still live on. Yes, to the end of time. 'These' of whom He speaks are not only the Apostles, but all the future multitude which shall be His disciples. He is leaving them in the world, but He leaves them to the Father's care. He does not regard His death as a fatal blow to the little company which He saw round about Him. He knows that His departure is a great crisis for them. It is to be an occasion of development, not of decay. He has instructed them to recognize Himself as having come from the Father in heaven. He looks up to the Father to bring them to the participation of the glory to which He Himself is returning.

He has come at the Father's bidding to show forth to them the Father's love. That love they have recognized. In that love He and they are one. To

know the Father's mission, to know the Father's Name, is to know the Father's love. If that has been made known to them, it must be an abiding revelation, deifying life. He has begun to train them in that love by the fellowship of earth. He will continue to lead them onward in the dispensation of grace; He longs to have them perfected in the unity of that love in the eternity of glory.

He prays not for one more than another. It is the whole company whom He has gathered out of the world because they recognized His Divine mission. It was the inspiration of love which opened their understandings to receive Him. By the glory of the Divine love illuminating their nature, He calls upon the Father to receive them. For their sakes He took upon Himself 'the Body of humiliation.' He appeals for the true end of His mission to be exhibited in them that they may be 'conformed to the Body of His glory, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself' (Phil. iii. 21).

2. THE DISCIPLES LIFTED UP BY HIM INTO HIGHER POWERS OF DIVINE LIFE.

They shall advance in His knowledge. To know the Divine Name with ever-increasing knowledge is to become increasingly absorbed in Him through whom that knowledge comes. The form of clay ceases to shroud the sense. The wisdom of the great Revealer, radiant with the glory of Divine experience, fills the soul and lifts it into the

inheritance of heaven. We belong to that which we know; and as we know God, we know ourselves as belonging to Him. And as we know Him, we lose all other knowledge; for nothing has any reality save as coming from Him, and abiding in Him, and manifesting some perfection which is eternally His own. To know as we are known! To know the love which loves us, and rise up to its demands! To say to all outside, I know you not! No more to heed the world's false visions, tempting snares, conventional emptiness, and degrading tyranny! To know God in full vision of His truth, the freedom of His infinite delight, the fulness of His never-cloying sweetness, the elevation of His Fatherly welcome! We must come to the Son of God, and He shall make us free. To know more and more that self can exist only for God, to be lost in Him, is to know more and more of the exhaustless fulness of the love which streams eternally from the Father to the Son.

3. THE BODY OF CHRIST SUSTAINED BY THE JOY OF HIS MANIFEST PRESENCE.

So would the Son of God lead His people onward in the knowledge of Himself as coming from the Father, and bearing the glory of the incommunicable Name. So would He lead us onward, by contemplating His eternal love, to share in all its truth. We for the Father's sake must welcome and love Him, and for His sake the Father loves and welcomes us. We welcome Him whom the Father has sent,

and the welcome must be transformed into adoring love. The Father loves from all eternity Him whom He has sent; and while the Son presents us to the Father, the predestinating love finds its perfect issue in the welcome of an unfathomable glory. The Person of the only begotten Son, clothed with the multitude of His redeemed, shines out in the mystery of the Divine consciousness, by the power of the Eternal Spirit, as the all-satisfying Object of the Creator's purpose, on whom must rest with ceaseless energy of joy the infinite well-pleasing of the Father's love.

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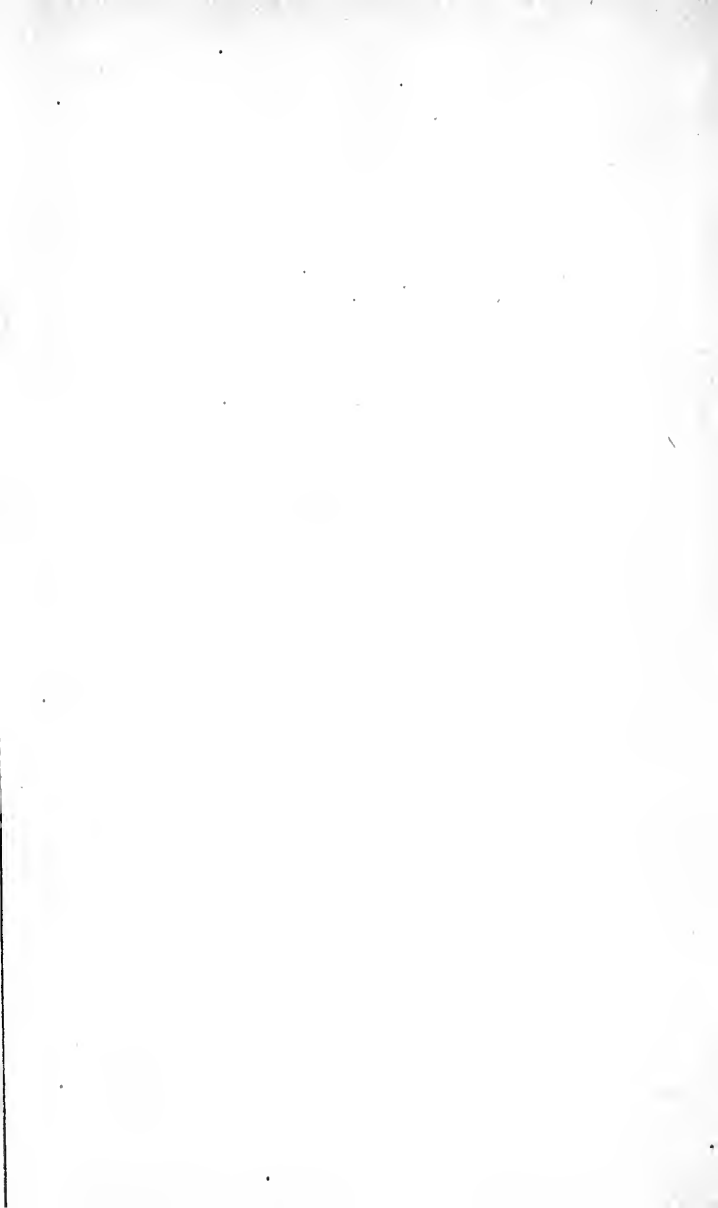
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