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ART. I.—DR. EBRARD, AND HIS POSITION ON THE CHURCH
QUESTION.

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THE subject before us for consideration, is, for a variety of reasons, an interesting one. Dr. Ebrard occupies a prominent position among the learned men of Germany; he is looked up to by many as the champion of the Reformed faith; and his works, which are numerous and various, extending almost over the entire range of theological science,* receive the respectful attention of the theological world. Special interest is attached to the inquiry by the two following circumstances. One is: that the system of Dogmatic Theology of

* What Dr. E. has written, as far as we can at present call to mind, is as follows: In the biblical department, exegetical works on books of both the Old and New Testaments, and one on biblical criticism. In the historical department, a complete history of the Church, and a doctrino-historical monograph of two volumes. In the systematic department, a system of Dogmatics; and in the practical also a complete work, embracing the Homiletics, Liturgies, Catechetics and the Pastoral care; besides which he has given to the public several elaborate independent liturgical and hymnological contributions. The last topic which, so far as we have learned, has been claiming his attention, and upon which he has been lecturing before the students at Erlangen, is the Physical Geography of Palestine.



ART. VI.—ONCE FOR ALL.

BY J. W. NEVIN, D.D.

Heb. x. 10. *By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*

FIRST PART.

THE whole Gospel centres in the death of Christ. Here, in a profound sense, we have the ground of redemption; because here only we have the atonement—the sacrifice which takes away sin, and through this the victory, at the same time, which makes room for life and immortality. He was put to death for our offences, and raised again for our justification (Rom. iv. 25). By dying He destroyed death, and him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; so as to deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage (Heb. ii. 14, 15).

In the passage before us (which is but the key note to a large part of the argument of the Epistle to which it belongs), the offering which Christ thus made of Himself for our sins is declared to have been *once for all*. In this character it may be considered under a threefold view.

I. RETROSPECTIVELY, or as related to the time going before it, the death of Christ was “once for all,” because it concluded and brought to an end the meaning and force of all older religious services looking in the same direction. It fulfilled the sense of these services, and thus made them to be no longer of any such effect as before, by now in the end of the ages actualizing in itself once and forever what they had been vainly striving to reach by their continuous repetition through all previous time.

It did this, in some measure, even for the false religions of Paganism. For false religions are never so false as to have in them no sort of truth whatever. They have their ground al-

ways in the original religious nature which is common alike to all men, and which can never be insensible altogether to its own deepest religious needs; however incompetent it may be, in our present fallen state, to say what the want involves or how it is to be met with proper redemption and help. Every false religion is in this way a dark dream of the hungering spirit, symbolizing through the fancy unreal forms of good answerable to its sense of vacuity and need—the projection of what is in the human subject only over into imaginary objective shapes, which are then embraced as the presence of the divine itself. This of course is a grand lie, a device of Satan for the delusion of the nations; but it has in it still a relation to the truth, though it be mainly as caricature only and perversion. And in virtue of this relation it is now (as it was well understood by the early Christian fathers), that there is room to speak even of the old Pagan religions as being in their way a preparation for the Gospel. True, the preparation was negative only, and not positive; but still in this view it carried in it a deep meaning, the burden of a magnificent though awful prophecy, we may say, which reached its fulfilment at last only when Shiloh came (the Desire of all nations, Hag. ii. 7) to whom the “gathering of the people” has since been (Gen. xlix. 10). The sense of all the old heathen worship thus found its proper end in the death of Christ. Its temples, altars, sacrifices, priest-hoods—whatever of negative dreamy instinct they may have had in them before—became here at once the baseless fabric of a vision, through the effulgence of the Sun of Righteousness rising on the world in its full power and glory.

But if the death of Christ fulfilled in this way the sense of Paganism, it carried with it still larger significance under the same view as the end and fulfilment of Judaism. Here religion was more than the voice of nature, and more than the projection of the mere human self. It was both positive and objective—based on actual revelations of truth from the eternal world, which were at the same time so many acts or deeds on the part of Jehovah, whereby He entered more and more really always into the historical movement of the world's life. In

such view, the institutions and services of the Old Testament had in them a certain measure both of truth and power, answerable to the truth and power of what religion is in the New Testament, and also of one order with this as far as it went. These Old Testament forms were not empty and hollow forms by any means. They had for their time a positive force, in the way of helping men and pleasing God. But still, as we know, they were only "the shadow of good things to come and not the very image of the things" themselves.

The Jewish religion was throughout a shadow or picture simply of the Christian religion. Such is the view taken of it everywhere in the New Testament; and the Epistle to the Hebrews, in particular, is full of it from beginning to end. Looking at the matter in this way, the truth and power of the Old Testament religion must be considered as being everywhere partial and relative only, and dependent on what was to follow by the coming of Christ; just as the dawn which precedes the rising of the sun is in fact dependent on the still unrisen sun itself; so that if Christ had not come, all would have been convicted of having been dream or phantasm only, and nothing more, from the beginning.

In the advent of the Saviour, all previous revelations reach their last full sense. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son" (Heb. i. 1, 2). That is the end of all His manifestations of Himself going before. And so all the Old Testament institutions, ministries and services end in Christ; not as if their relative significance had been of no account in its own time, but because "when that which is perfect is come then that which is in part must be done away."

The temple, with all its worship, fell away, and became of no worth, when the Lord of the temple stood Himself revealed in human form as the Word made flesh, the true full tabernacle of God among men, "the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His person."

The mediatorial offices and functions of the Levitical priest-

hood ceased in Him, who is a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec ("having neither beginning of days nor end of life"), the one only real Mediator between God and men.

And so it was with the sacrifices which the priests offered daily ministering in the temple. They were "offered year by year continually," just because they could not of themselves "make the comers thereunto perfect;" and because their ultimate sense and force lay always beyond themselves, in the great sacrifice which was to be offered up afterwards on Calvary. This offering of the body of Jesus Christ on the cross was once for all. It took up into itself the long progression of sacrifices going before, and ended it by making it at once and forever complete. The substance took the place of its shadows. The types came to a full pause, in their glorious antitype.

II. CIRCUMSPECTIVELY, or as related to all around and outside of itself at any given time, the death of Christ is "once for all," because it is an absolute and all sufficient sacrifice for the sins of men; which as such, can never need to be accompanied or followed by any other sacrifice or service having for its object the same end.

In this sense, the one offering of Christ excludes or shuts out the thought of any atonement for sin, any ground of righteousness and peace with God, other than that which is here presented to our faith. It needs no completion from beyond itself, no addition or supplement to itself: and it can bear no rivalry of its claims, no co-ordination of merit or worth, under any other form. It is the only and whole ground of our justification before God.

So if this sacrifice be rejected through the disobedience of unbelief, there is no room to conceive of any other coming in to supply its place. "If we sin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth," we are told Heb. x. 26, "*no more sacrifice for sins,*" but only the doom of certain perdition.

Not only are all sacrifices of other nature and kind shut out by the exclusiveness of this one offering for sin; it shuts out also the thought of all subsequent repetition of itself; since any

repetition of this sort must proceed on the assumption that the original offering was not absolutely complete, and so in a real and true sense once for all—in which view it would be a new sacrifice standing outside of the first, and dividing with it, at least, the credit of our salvation. The Old Testament sacrifices were “offered year by year continually” in this way; just because they had no power to make an end of sin. But in contrast with this precisely it is that it is said of Christ: “This man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever (one ever-during sacrifice), sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool”—the work of atonement being now complete, and needing no repetition to the end of time. “For by one offering He hath perfected FOREVER them that are sanctified” (Heb. x. 12–14). “Now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself” (Heb. ix. 26).

It is one charge against the Church of Rome, we know, that she teaches the need of such a repetition of the original sacrifice of Christ, and supposes it to take place perpetually in what is called the sacrifice of the mass. The Roman Church herself, of course, protests against this as a false construction of her sacramental doctrine; it must be confessed, however, that the doctrine has been so stated at times as to make it seem of this monstrous sense; and in this sense also, there would appear to be no doubt, it has been widely accepted by multitudes at least of the common people in her communion. So far as this now may actually be the case, there ought to be no hesitation in pronouncing it an unchristian error. And looking at the error simply in such naked expression, we are bound to say of it with the memorable 80th question of the Heidelberg Catechism, that it is at bottom “nothing else than a denial of the one sacrifice and passion of Jesus Christ.” Just as there can be but one Christ, and any supposed new incarnation of the eternal Word would reduce to nothing the significance of the first incarnation; so any supposed new propitiatory offering of Himself for our sins, on the part of the Saviour, must reduce to nothing in like manner the significance of the one offering He

has already accomplished for us by His death on the cross. That was, and is, and ever shall be, *Once for All*.

III. And thus we come to consider, in the third place, what this character of "once for all," here applied to the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, must be taken to mean PROSPECTIVELY, or as related to the time following it on to the end of the world.

Negatively, as we have just seen, it shuts out the idea of any other subsequent sacrifice: because by its own fullness, once accomplished, there could be no room ever after for any such service outside of itself. But this implies at once, as we may easily see, a continuously present relation on its own part to all following time; for only so could the fullness of the sacrifice be such as to leave no void, age after age, for the coming in of any other sacrifice. Positively then, and not alone negatively, in its relation to the future, the sacrifice which Christ made by Himself on the cross was once for all, because it was of perennial, ever-during force, and in such view had no end. Once made, it was made forever. The presence of it, and the power of it, run with unbroken force through the ages.

No one can study attentively the argument of the Epistle to the Hebrews without seeing that this is the main thought here in the writer's mind. The death of Christ ends the Old Testament sacrifices, and shuts out all other possible sacrifices, just for this reason, that it is, in its own order, of undying, inexhaustible force, and therefore not capable of being superseded by any other offering of similar form. This is the nerve of the entire argument; without which, indeed, it must be regarded as carrying with it no demonstrative power whatever.

And yet strange to say, there are those who, in regard to this point, perversely force on the Epistle to the Hebrews the very opposite of the sense which its argument here so plainly requires. They will have it, that "once for all" means, not "once and always," but simply "once and no more." The *once*, with them, is not an unending once—a once, that reaches perennially through the ages; but a poor finite, transitory once; a mere event in past history, that has come and gone; that was of old, and now is not; a once, which is done and left

behind, and with which the world has to do now only in the way of memory or thought.* All this to magnify, as they pretend, the oneness of Christ's sacrifice, by making it solitary and alone over against the notion of its being perpetuated in any way according to the supposed doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church. But such isolation, alas, turns the atonement in fact into an abstraction, and robs it in the end of all its proper living power.

The conception, indeed, rests in a false abstraction from the start. It sunders the sacrifice of Christ from His life, and holds it to be something which having been once made is no longer dependent on His presence for its force; being in this respect like a price paid, or an act done, by one man in behalf of others, which afterward holds no farther connection with his person, but is valid and efficacious of itself for all following time, even though the man himself should die, or while living should change his mind with regard to it altogether. Such a view of the atonement, we know, has not been uncommon. But it is a great and sore error. As such an abstraction, the atonement could not be of perennial, never dying force, in the sense in which it is declared to be so in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Such force it has, we are here expressly taught, only

* A strange way of magnifying the *Son of Man* certainly, which insists on making His human life so solitary, that it shall have no inward continuously historical relationship to the real life of humanity whatever, but shall float over it simply as an outward abstraction, touching it only here and there in a mechanical and magical way. How can the mediation of Christ stand us in stead as dying sinners, if its atoning, quickening, justifying and sanctifying powers be not of abiding force for us in the bosom of the living mediation itself, by which He stands continually between us and God? Those who cannot think of any such continued extension of the Mediatorial power and working of Christ (under a concrete and not simply abstract character in the Church), without running it at once into the notion of a crass materialistic pantheism, only show the shallowness and weakness of their own thinking, and have no right to burden their wretched monstrosity on what is here the clear truth of the Gospel itself. If even in the natural world the Divine Logos may work, and we are bound to believe *does* work (for by Him all things *consist*, Col. i. 17), with continually efficient power, and yet with no pantheistic confusion, in and through the powers of nature; why should it be counted at all paradoxical to conceive or speak of a like extension of His Mediatorial activities in the world of grace? It is not this but the opposite view, which is indeed hard for faith, however easy it may seem to be for mere notional fancy.

because it is no abstraction ; is not in any sense torn and sundered from the life of Christ Himself ; but stands perpetually in the presence and power of this life, and *therefore* is indestructible as the life itself. The sacrifice of Christ is once for all—never loses its force, never comes to an end—just because Christ Himself is once for all, and cannot come to an end or die. The atonement holds in the death of Christ, but only in this as swallowed up by the power of His victorious resurrection. It has no existence on the outside of His life, or as an event lying behind it in its present glorified form. It is part of His Mediatorial being as this now stands. It inheres perennially, or forever, in what He has become for us men, and for our salvation, through His descending first into the lower parts of the earth, and then ascending up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things (Eph. iv. 9, 10).

This precisely is the thought that underlies everywhere the argument of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Christ is greater than all men or angels, the only true Mediator between God and men. His priesthood is without succession, after the similitude of Melchisedec ; being constituted, we are told (Heb. vii. 16), not after the law of a carnal commandment (temporary, shadowy weak), but after the *power of an endless life*. This endless life it is, that imparts endless significance to His death as well as to all His work. His blood cleanseth from all sin, and has power sacrificially to “purge the conscience from dead works to serve the living God,” just because, in distinction from the blood of bulls and goats, it was poured forth through the eternal Spirit, or never-dying Divine life, which was in Him, and by which He offered Himself without spot to God (Heb. ix. 14). The eternal principle of the Redeemer's sacrifice makes it to be of undying efficacy and worth ; in virtue of which “He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He *ever liveth* to make intercession for them”—the power of the sacrifice holding on continually in the power of His risen and glorified life, and imparting to it its all-prevailing intercessory force (Heb. vii. 25).

And here it is now that our subject is found widening itself

suddenly into a still broader range of thought. As it is with the sacrifice of Christ in its relation to His life, so is it also with every part of His Mediatorial character and work. The whole Christian salvation rests continually in the power of His life. His offices and functions, His teachings and doings, are at large what they are, only through the fact of their appertaining to His blessed person; and in this view, then, they share also in the immortal being of His person, and are thus (like the offering of His body on the cross) once for all—or in other words, of never-ending, undying force.

“The words that I speak unto you” we hear Him saying—“they are spirit and they are life;” and to this we have the response of faith on the part of His disciples: “Thou hast words of eternal life”—words that breathe forth from this life, and breathe it into others—“and we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.” The words of Christ are not abstractions; they stream out through all time from the fountain of life in His person; they ray themselves forth continually from Him as the unquenchable Sun of righteousness; and therefore they are quick and powerful, and are said to “endure forever.”

And just in the same way are we to conceive of the works of Christ (His words themselves indeed are works); of what He has done for our salvation; of the mighty mediatorial acts, through which He has made room for our deliverance from death and our restoration to holiness and eternal life. These, too, are in no sense abstractions—things to be torn from His person, as if being once accomplished they could have their value afterward, without Him, in themselves. On the contrary, they inhere and abide forever in His glorified existence, and so work on through the ages; in this sense, “once for all;” once, as absolute; once, as final and conclusive; once, as needing no repetition; yet not once, as over and gone—but once, as coming to no end; because resident forever in the “power of an endless or indissoluble

life" (Heb. vii. 16); even the life of Him, "that liveth and was dead, and is now alive for evermore."*

SECOND PART.

It is under the view of the Gospel now given, especially, that we are enabled to make a proper comparison between two great reigning schemes or theories of Christianity, which are found continually dividing the sense of the Christian world between them, while yet it is not easy always to see, at particular points, wherein exactly their difference consists. The divergency starts in the sense they attach respectively to the word *once for all*, as it applies to the objective side of our salvation.

In one scheme, the facts which underlie the Christian redemption, the words and deeds by which Christ has made salvation possible for us, are eyed habitually as belonging in their own proper existence to the past rather than to the

* It seems a strange thing, certainly, that any should question at all the fundamental significance of Christ's life, in this view. Yet there are those who do so; and who even go so far as to make it a point of orthodoxy, that the ground power of the Gospel shall be taken to hold in something taught or done by the Saviour, rather than in the very person of the Saviour Himself. The Unitarian dreams of a doctrine of life and immortality revealed by Christ in this way, as something out of Himself and more than Himself. But this is not the Gospel. The word of a common man may be true, and his act may have force, apart from his own poor being. Not so with Christ. In Him, truth and being, action and life, are one. The law was given by Moses; externally, mediately, instrumentally; he did not make it, and it stood not at all in his person. But grace and truth, we are told, came by Jesus Christ, shining forth from His Mediatorial being itself "as the glory of the only begotten of the Father." He was Himself at the first, and is still, the "life and immortality" which He has brought to light. Here Unitarianism breaks down at once and forever. But here also must break down any scheme of Christianity, which turns any part of Christ's mediatory work into the character of a fact no longer dependent on His person. The atonement itself, wrought out by the death of Christ, draws all its force from His Mediatorial life, and is of enduring efficacy only in and through this life; being, in such view, *κατὰ δύναμιν ζωῆς ἀκατάλυτου*. The Mediatorial life of Christ is the overflowing fountain of all His grace toward the world in other forms. This is the great thought in which Calvin so much abounds, especially when discoursing of the Lord's Supper; namely, Christ Himself made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption (1 Cor. i. 30); the human life or flesh of the Mediator a reservoir of ever living grace, forth from which only are derived to men all the benefits of the Christian salvation to the end of time.

present. They have been once (faith consists in believing *that*), but they are not now; only the knowledge and memory of them remains, as of other simply historical events. In this way, they become abstractions. They are sundered from the present life of Christ; and are taken to have their worth once for all in themselves, and as lying behind what He has now become altogether. They work upon us thus, it is supposed, only as doctrines apprehended through our thinking. To conceive of them as in any way living still—as being in any sense still just what they were at the first, “quick and powerful” (Heb. iv. 12), “spirit and life”—is felt to be mystical, if not absolutely superstitious. It is easy to see how, for this sort of thinking, the “powers of the world to come” (which in Heb. vi. 5 are plainly forces resident in the Christian economy itself this side the grave) must in the end lose their objective significance entirely, and resolve themselves into the notion of mere subjective workings of the human spirit, wrought upon by the Spirit of God. We are all more or less familiar with Christianity in this form. It has no faith in the Church as a Christian mystery, and shrinks from the acknowledgment of any saving virtue in God’s Sacraments. It is of course constitutionally unliturgical; as it can see no meaning either in the Church Year. It is not able to say the Creed without mental reservation. Yet it claims to be spiritual, beyond others; and studiously affects an exclusive right to the title *Evangelical!*

The other scheme is that way of looking at the Gospel which we have now under consideration; where the accomplished facts of redemption are felt to be at hand still in the abiding life of Him through whom they have been accomplished, and the perennial mystery of the incarnation (the real coming of Christ in the flesh) is seen to impart a like perennial character (the *once* an undying *now*) to all the mysteries which are brought to pass by it, and so are comprehended in it forever. The universal mediation of the Gospel stands once and always in the person of the One Mediator between God and man, our Lord Jesus Christ, who is “the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.” There can be no mediatorial function or work out-

side of His mediatorial life. His acts of redemption are forever established in Himself, the Incarnate Word; and holding there, they are not, and cannot possibly be, thoughts or memories merely, things past and gone; they are not dead acts, but acts that live always, and carry with them life-giving power; just because they have their seat perpetually in that "Eternal Life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us," by the coming of Christ into the world.*

The mediation of Christ did not come to an end with His earthly life. It still goes forward, and in doing so involves in itself still the value and force of all that was accomplished by His death. All must admit this, who call themselves Christians; even those who see in the historical Gospel mainly the memory only of past facts, cut off from the present life of the Saviour Himself. He ever liveth, they say, to make intercession for us, in the presence of God, on the basis of His past earthly work. But here again their way of sundering act and life in the Mediatorial mystery is found to land us in new ab-

* The difference of these two schemes forms at bottom the real issue, between what is called our Mercersburg theology (rightly understanding itself) and the various foes that "compass it about like bees." Other questions belonging to the general controversy are only of secondary account. This is the main question, the root of all the rest. The controversy among Episcopalians between high church and low church, as generally maintained, is not just the same thing. That is ecclesiastical, rather than theological; and the ecclesiasticism, through want of a true church theology, becomes too often offensively pedantic. It is quite common for those who affect to be high churchmen in this poor way, to be quite as lean in their divinity as the low churchmen they do battle with on the opposite side. But what can any question of bishops, liturgies, or sacraments be worth, apart from the question of the perennial powers of Christianity, as comprehended once for all in the living person of the Redeemer? It is humiliating, that it should be so hard to engage serious attention to what is here plainly of such fundamental account for all right Christian doctrine and life. The only controversialists who have pretended at all thus far to meet our theology at this radical point, have been the respected German brethren, Dr. Ruetenik, of Cleveland, and Professor Dorner, of Berlin. Our other censors and critics, as a general thing, have not been able yet, with regard to it, to get beyond the merest balderdash and bosh. Only think of the Princeton Review, of which one might have expected better things, thrown open lately (by such responsible editors as Charles Hodge, D. D., and Lyman H. Atwater, D. D.), to the unintelligible nonsense of the Rev. A. S. Vaughan!

straction—the last error, we may say, being still worse if possible than the first. For now the resurrection state of the Saviour is sublimated into a state above and beyond the world altogether; and this again is so attenuated for the view of faith as to be hardly itself distinguishable at last from a Gnostic phantom. The atonement made on Calvary eighteen centuries ago, and the intercession now going forward on the strength of it, far above all heavens, in this abstract way, are alike doctrines only for this scheme, rather than actual historical life-facts, and are in danger always of losing their objective reality in the swimming mists of a mere subjective idealism.

It is not thus that the continued working of the glorified Son of Man for the redemption of the world, is set before us in the New Testament. Here His whole past mediation is represented as taken up into the power of His whole present mediation (all being in truth but one and the same Eternal Life), and as going along with it continually to the end of time; while this entire mediation, at the same time, is not exercised simply in the heavens, but reaches down into the living history of men here on earth, as really and truly as any other powers that have to do with the world's life. It is a mediation, not for God only but also for man; and which therefore, while it touches God, must touch man likewise in his present earthly and mortal state. How else should it be for him any true mediatorial salvation at all?

In dying, and rising again from the dead, Christ passed into a new order of existence (no longer "in the flesh," St. Peter tells us, 1 Pet. iii. 18, but "in the spirit"); which, however, amounted in no sense to a sundering of Himself, from the life of the human world as He had made Himself one with it in becoming man. His resurrection served only to bring Him more intimately and deeply into the heart of this life, and to make Him in this way the principle of redemption for it more powerfully and efficaciously than before. "I will not leave you orphans," we hear Him saying; "I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more; but ye see

Me: because I live, ye shall live also" (John xiv. 18, 19). "Because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth; 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 depart, I will send Him unto you" (John xvi. 6, 7). This is plain. The going away of Christ was to be His coming back again in the full power of the Holy Ghost; who in such new form could not come till after His death and glorification (John vii. 39); and in and by whose presence then He was to be Himself afterwards more efficaciously among men than before, in the exercise of all His Mediatorial functions and powers. So with St. Paul everywhere, the lifting up of Christ far above all heavens, is only the full letting down of Christ again into the bosom of the world, for the purposes of its new creation (Eph. iv. 8-13). The achievements of redemption wrought out by Him previously—in His life of temptation and sorrow, in His atoning death and passion, in His descent to hades, in His resurrection, in His glorious ascension—were not left behind in this exaltation; they went along with it, and belong to it still; and are thus once for all in what He has become through it, namely, Head over all things to the Church—"from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

The Mediatorial working of Christ in the world, then, is something more than the memory simply of what He has done in it centuries ago (in the Wilderness—on Tabor—on Calvary—on Olivet); something more than the doctrine merely of what He is supposed to have been doing in the heavenly world all centuries since, as our intercessor and advocate at the right hand of God. It is indeed, in an important sense, a celestial, more than simply terrestrial agency; it holds in the heavens, in an order of being above and beyond nature; but it is not that only; it joins itself also with the actual life of men here on earth, and takes hold of it in the most real and constant way.

It is working always in the world itself, on to the end of time.

And where is it now, we may ask, that Christ thus works continuously among men, causing them to "taste the good word of God and the powers of the world to come," in His character of Mediator and Redeemer?

To this the general answer is, of course, sufficiently plain. Christ works thus in the Spirit. His Mediatorial presence among men is mediated by the power of the Holy Ghost.

But where, we may ask again, have we the presence of the Holy Ghost, as thus mediating for the world the Mediatorial presence and working of the glorified Christ?

Not certainly in the constitution of nature as such; nor yet in the general life of man in its simply natural view. The Spirit of God does indeed breathe in the powers of nature; and enters also, with a still higher inspiration, into all that is good or great, in the moral world—the general world of human intelligence and thought. For "there is a spirit in man," we are told, "and the inspiration (or inbreathing) of the Almighty giveth them understanding." But all this belongs still only to the order of nature, and falls short immeasurably of what the presence of the Holy Ghost in the world has come to be through the Gospel, as the fruit of our Saviour's glorification at the right hand of God. Here we have the same Holy Ghost as before; but the mode of His existence and working in the world is altogether new. It belongs not to the old creation, to what may be called the simply natural relationship of God to the world; but is the result of the new supernatural order of grace in Christ, through which room has been made for a far more intimate union of God with man than before. It is only the Holy Ghost under this new mode of existence, then, that can be said to constitute the sphere of Christ's Mediatorial activity in the world. This is the Promise of the Father; the fountal Gift of Pentecost, from which stream forth all other gifts and graces of the Gospel; the home, where the powers of the world to come dwell and make themselves felt objectively through all time; the Holy Ghost of the Apostles' Creed.

The Spirit of God, thus, in and by which our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, now works in the world, is not the Divine Spirit at large in its relations to the human spirit; and these general relations are not the home and medium of His glorified presence among men.

To say differently, would be to break down the distinction between nature and grace, and to resolve the conception of what the New Testament calls the "powers of the world to come," into a sublimation simply of the powers of the present world. The order of nature is not, and cannot be, as such, the order of grace; not because the Holy Ghost is wanting altogether in the order of nature; for He is there always, in fact, working powerfully in a mode of presence answerable to its constitution; but because the order of grace is the result of a new and higher mode of His presence, made possible only through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

This order of grace thus necessarily distinct from the order of nature and transcending it, though holding always in the bosom of it—the home at once of the Spirit, proceeding from the glorified Mediator, and of the glorified Mediator Himself—must have, no less necessarily, an objective constitution of its own, just as really as the order of nature with which it is supernaturally joined.

In such view it becomes a necessary *object* of Christian faith, and forms for it in fact the mystery of the Holy Catholic Church; while it determines, at the same time, the necessary place and sequence of this article, standing just where it does in the Christian Creed.*

* Why is the Church in the Creed at all, if it be not an objective mystery like the other articles of this glorious old symbol? Those who turn it into anything less, as all unchurchly and rationalistic religionists do, may be sure that they are not in right agreement here, or elsewhere, with the original Christian faith. The mystery of the Church is *postulated* for this faith always, by what goes before in the grand movement of redemption: in which view then also, the faith itself looks not directly and first of all to any given or actually existing form of the Church historically considered, but to the general necessity of it rather as flowing from the gift of the Holy Ghost. Not so, however, as by any means to stop with such mere idea of the Church, making out of it only an invisible abstraction. Faith eyes first the ideal necessity of the Church; but only through this to reach out, then, toward the ap-

The Church then, apprehended in this way, is the peculiar sphere of Christ's continuous Mediatorial presence and working in the world to the end of time. Hence it is called His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all. He works indeed only in and by the Holy Ghost; but the Holy Ghost is no abstraction; the Holy Ghost is a mode of actual Divine existence among men, following supernaturally the glorification of the Saviour, and having for itself objectively its own supernatural home in the general flow of the world's life; and this home is the Church. The Mediatorial working of Christ is not in the order of nature, but in the order of grace. He is Head over *all* things to the Church it is true, and bends the powers of nature, both physical and spiritual, to the purposes of His higher kingdom; but the power by which He does this is more than natural, and more than simply humanitarian. It is the-anthropic; and holds exclusively in the relation, which Christ bears always, through His Spirit, to the Holy Catholic Church.

And here it is, accordingly, that room is made for the full verification of the great word ONCE FOR ALL, as it applies of right not only to the original offering of our Saviour's body for sin—the central fact of the Christian redemption—but to all the offices and functions also of His Mediatorial Life. All these endure, and work enduringly (like the powers of nature in *their* order and way, Ps. cxix. 89–91), not only in heaven, but also on the earth, and among men, in that glorious constitution of grace which we call the Church, and which the universal Christian world has acknowledged with one mouth through all ages, as being one of the grand cardinal mysteries of the Creed.

prehension of its actual existence in the world. Let no one say that this is visionary mysticism. My belief that "God is in history," does not depend on my being able to see and show that history is everywhere full of His presence; there is very much in it that looks empirically all the other way. On the contrary, my belief in the general truth goes first (a postulate of religion); to such extent that without it, I can never either seek or find the verification of it in any actual history whatever. And just so it is with our faith in the Church. No one ever found the Church as an object of faith outwardly, no one ever seriously sought to find it in this way, for whom it was not in the first place an object of faith inwardly—an *a priori* postulated necessity of the Christian Creed itself.

Here the Christian sacrifice never ceases. Alas for us, if it did! The one "pure offering" of Calvary (Mal. i. 11) reaches through the ages; not as a theorem or doctrine simply—much less as a brazen-serpent type or symbol only—but as the very presence itself of an endlessly efficacious atoning *power*, which is able through faith to "purge the conscience from dead works to serve the living God" (Heb. ix. 14).

The Christian sacrifice—in this way not new, but undying and perennial—involves necessarily the idea also of a perennial Christian altar. So it is argued in the Epistle to the Hebrews xiii. 10; where of course no material altar is meant, like that belonging to the Jewish temple; while yet it is plain from the whole tenor of the Epistle that Christianity is regarded as possessing here, as well as elsewhere, the abiding essence and substance of what belonged to Judaism in shadow only and transitory outward form.

So the mediation of Christ at large, based on His sacrifice, is a perpetual living mediation in and through the Church (that is, in and through the Holy Ghost, whose Christ-wrought presence in the world forms now the presence and very being of the Church); this holding to Christ in truth, according to St. Paul, the relation of body to head, and being in a wonderful mystery thus, the organ and medium of His whole Mediatorial action among men (Eph. i. 18–23; iv. 16).

"He hath washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father" (Rev. i. 6). This does not mean that we are made typical kings and priests simply—of one sort with the adumbrations generally of the Old Testament; nor yet that we are made metaphorical kings and priests only, figuring with mere outward resemblance the kingly and priestly dignity of Christ. It means unquestionably that we are made kings and priests, in virtue of our mystical union with Christ Himself; whereby because He lives, *we* also live (His life drawing our life on after it, away out to the resurrection of the last day); and whereby, then, the Mediatorial fullness of His life, in His prophetic, priestly, and kingly offices, is not confined to Himself, but is

made to pass over to His people; so that they also, in their measure and proportion, repeat and carry forward, as it were, the power of these several offices in their own lives.* “In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily,” according to the Apostle; and we are “complete in Him”—our fullness is derived and led forth evermore from His fullness (Philip. ii. 9, 10).

And as it is here with individual believers, according to their measure of capacity and power, so is it also still more with the life of the Church collectively taken. The ministries and services of the Church, flowing from Christ, partake in their degree of the prophetic, priestly and kingly character of Christ Himself. He works in them, and through them, by the power of the Holy Ghost (perennially, one age after another), for the ends of His kingdom.†

* This is beautifully set forth in the 52d Question of The Heidelberg Catechism; where, after notice taken in the previous Question of the prophetic, priestly, and kingly offices comprehended in the title *Christ* or *Anointed* as applied to our blessed Redeemer, it is asked further: “But why art thou called a Christian?” To this then the answer follows: “Because by faith I am a member of Christ, and thus a partaker of His anointing”—His life in this way conveying over into mine a portion of its own Mediatorial quality and power; “in order that I also may confess His name”—as a *prophet*; “may present myself a living sacrifice of thankfulness to Him”—as a *priest*; “and may with free conscience fight against sin and the devil in this life, and hereafter, in eternity, reign with Him over all creatures”—as a *king*. This is bold language on the part of the Catechism; but who will say that it goes beyond the sense of either St. John, St. Peter, or St. Paul?

† “The Christian ministry no priesthood” is a favorite point for ringing charges upon, with those who think to dignify the one only Mediatorship of Christ, by allowing it no egress from His own person, no outworking force in the actual life of His body, the Church. Two tracts have fallen in my way lately, from the opposite camps of Episcopacy—high church and low church—both harmoniously (though inconsistently) concurrent on this theme. Now it is true that the title *priest* in the Anglican ministry is only an accident, a corruption of the word *presbyter*; and there is a bad affectation in the way it is now mouthed by the Romanizing ritualists. Neither is it fitting in itself, to distinguish Christian ministers by the standing title of priests, any more than it would be to distinguish them by the standing title of prophets or kings. But it is another matter altogether to deny the existence of a priestly quality of any sort, in the powers and offices of the Christian ministry. Those who do so, are themselves generally willing to allow it something of a kingly and prophetic character. But why should it be supposed to derogate from the *Oneness* of Christ's Mediatorship, to allow a ministerial constitution of its priestly force in the Church, any more than to allow a continuation in this way of its pro-

And what a flood of light, finally, all this throws on the doctrine of the Christian sacraments. Where the powers of redemption are regarded simply as facts thought of in a far off past, or in a far off heaven, the sacraments representing them can never be in relation to them more than mere outward signs, as they are taken to be in all unchurchly Christianity. The old definition may indeed still be retained, *The visible sign of an invisible grace*; but this will be eviscerated sacrilegiously of its true sense, and made to mean just its own opposite—a visible sign, namely, having in it no grace whatever: on the contrary, looking clear away from itself always to grace somewhere else, a past experience, perhaps, or it may be only the general mercy of the Gospel. But how all is at once changed, when the whole “grace of God which bringeth salvation” is apprehended as a supernatural presence objectively at hand once for all, through the continuous mediation of Christ in the Church! Then room is made for seeing how the outward side of the sacrament, by Divine constitution (not human fancy), may indeed enshrine the inward side as an actual object—*exhibiting* thus the invisible in the visible; so that it shall be possible for faith—not bodily sense nor natural understanding—to lay hold of the first as a grace really present in the last. So apprehended, a sacrament is of course always a mystery; which it never is at all in the other view. It is the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever, made to look out upon us for the moment through the transient covering of sense.

Universally, we may say, the Christian Creed has to do with ever-living realities, which have their enduring supernatural existence in the undying Mediatorial life of our Lord and

phetical force (teaching), or of its kingly force (church government and discipline); all, of course, effectual at last for the purposes of His kingdom only through His own Spirit? How else indeed, we may well ask, can any earnest be made with that “universal priesthood of believers,” which all unchurchly religionists find it so easy to roll as a sweet morsel under their tongues? If this is to be anything more than a single humanitarian distinction (of one sort with the slang of Masonic brotherhoods, liberalists, friends of light, *et id genus omni*), it must come in some way by derivation from the general life of Christ in the Church: But how can this be, if there be not the presence of a priestly character, first of all, in the life of the Church itself under such general view, and so then also in all its heaven-ordained ministries and powers?

Saviour Jesus Christ. The things that we believe in the Creed are not dead things—not memories, doctrines, or abstractions; but the powers of a higher world, near to us and surrounding us at all times, through the glorified presence of the Son of Man working by His Spirit in the Church.

Working by His Spirit, we say, in the Church—not otherwise and elsewhere. This, let it be well considered in conclusion, involves a double circumscription and bounding; a bounding of the sphere of Christ's activity in one view, and then a bounding of the sphere of the Spirit's activity in another view. The two mutually determine each other. Christ works where the Spirit makes room for His working, and the Spirit is present for this purpose only where Christ causes Him to be present. For it is not the Spirit at large which thus mediates Christ, but only the Spirit of Christ Himself, the Spirit which is through Him and by Him as the Mediator between God and men, the *Man Christ Jesus*. There is, as we have seen, a wider mode of the Spirit's presence in the world, which is not dependent in the same way on the mystery of the incarnation; and that too, in its own order, is not without the presence of Christ; for everywhere, and in every mode of existence, the procession of the Holy Ghost, as the Creed has it, is from the Son no less than from the Father. As the eternal Logos or Word, Christ works in and through the working of the Spirit in the universal world of nature; according to that ancient oracle: "By the Word of Jehovah were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the Breath of His mouth." He works also in the inspirations or breathings of the Spirit, which enter into all that is high and great, whether theoretical or practical, in the natural human mind; according to that other sublime word: "In Him was life, and the life was the *light* of men." But all this in His character of the eternal Logos only, and as something back of the incarnation before it took place, or on the outside of it, and beyond it, now that it has become a glorious fact. His proper Mediatorial working is not in and by the Spirit under any such general cosmical or simply psychological view; it is circumscribed by the new relations into which He has come with the

world's life in becoming Himself man, and is held bound to the special sphere of what the presence of the Spirit among men is now in virtue of these relations. His Mediatorial presence in the world bounds the presence of the Spirit in this new mode of existence; while this, thus bounded and circumscribed (in distinction from all wider spheres of its operative power in the world), bounds at the same time the Mediatorial life from which it proceeds; constituting in this way the medium through which the glorified Son of Man continues to work among men ("Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world"), the objective home of His presence, an order of grace embosomed in the surrounding order of nature—in a word, the Church, which is His body, *τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσι πληρουμένου.*

This distinction is so plain, that it is wonderful it should ever be overlooked. The Spirit of which we hear such great things in the New Testament, and which is set forth in the Creed as the fountain of the Church and all the grace comprehended in it (from the one baptism for the remission of sins out to the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting), is everywhere, not the Holy Ghost in general, but only the Holy Ghost under the new form of being, in which He has come to be among men since our human nature, in the person of Christ, passed through death, and became gloriously enthroned with Him "on the right hand of the majesty on high." And so then, there can be for us also no true evangelical being in the Spirit (birth of the Spirit, John iii. 5-8; fellowship of the Spirit, Philip. ii. 1; praying in the Spirit, Eph. vi. 18; walking in the Spirit, Gal. v. 16), which is not brought to pass through our inward conjunction in some way with the Spirit of the risen and glorified Redeemer, working in this specific form, and with such objective presence, in the Church.

Religion may be spiritual, eminently spiritual indeed, in the common acceptation of the term, without this. It may be so on the outside of Christianity altogether; as among Mohammedans, Deists, and sentimental abstractionists generally. It has been so, largely, among heretical Christian sects in all ages.

Heresy indeed has a wonderful inborn tendency always, to "begin at least in the spirit" in this way, even where it may afterwards "end in the flesh." And so it is possible also, and alas not uncommon, in the use of mainly orthodox forms of confession and belief, to resolve the power of the Gospel to a large extent into the idea of a simple sublimation or lifting up of the human spirit, through the thought of what is taken to be the general working of God's Spirit, without any reference whatever to the specific character of the Holy Ghost as mediated and brought near to men through the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in the flesh.

We may have a spirituality of this sort, that shall seem to go at times beyond the sober exercises of piety in the other form; a spirituality that shall affect to be borne above the world of sense altogether, in the way of direct communication with God; a spirituality that shall claim just on this ground to be the very power of inward, vital, experimental godliness (evangelical religion in its proper sense); while all that differs from it in the way of making earnest with the great objective verities and facts of the gospel, is denounced by it as at once unspiritual and unevangelical, a religion of forms rather than a religion of true faith.

There is a false spirituality thus, as well as a true spirituality, in the life of religion; the one the counterfeit and simulation only, in a lower sphere (human, or it may be even diabolical), of what the other is in a higher sphere; and between these, of course, it is of the utmost consequence that we should be able to make a proper distinction.

Hence that word of St. John: "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John iv. 1-3). These false prophets were spiritualistic; eminently so in their way; they felt themselves moved too by a spirit of some sort (generic and objective), which was wider than their own spirit. But both they and their inspiring genius must be proved. Try the spirits, says the aged Apostle, whether they *be of God*. And for this purpose, he offers a simple touchstone or test; decisive for the nascent Gnosticism of his own time, and no less decisive

for the pseudo-spiritualism of all later times. It is no other, in truth than that which we have had under consideration in this whole discussion; namely, the perennial undying objectivity of the Christian salvation, as holding from first to last, with the force of an endless *Now*, in the Mediatorial Life of the Incarnate Word. Here it is—dictated by Him who is the Spirit of all truth: “Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God; and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God.” That is the criterion; the owning, or not owning, of the incarnation, as the abiding medium of the presence of Christ’s Spirit in the world. For coming only through this medium, it is not possible that the Spirit of Christ, the Holy Ghost of the Gospel, should not cause the standing reality of the mystery to be felt also by every human spirit brought under His quickening and sanctifying grace.

Only the spirituality, then, which involves such a yielding of the soul to the objective force of the incarnation, and which sees this in the beginning, and the continuous ground also, of all that belongs to the Christian redemption, can be considered to be the fruit of this Spirit, and so the work of God. Any other spirituality, claiming to be evangelical, however high it may soar in its own way, is but a false spiritualism, not only different from but positively against the truth. “This is that spirit of antichrist,” it is said, “whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now, already, is it in the world.” The spirit of antichrist, in this view, is one; while there are, we are told, many antichrists: all resolving themselves however into this, that they own not the Holy Ghost in His only true Christian form as mediated by the coming of Christ in the flesh, but pretend to have a more spiritual Christianity in some other way; which is thus, then, substituted for the only true way of the Gospel, and set up against it also under its own name.

All false spirituality roots itself here ultimately in the denial of the great mystery of godliness, the manifestation of God in the flesh; either as open infidelity, Jewish or Pagan, seeing in it only foolishness and an offence (1 Cor. i. 23); or else as

heresy, Ebionitic or Gnostic, sundering the Divine life of Christ from His human life, by making Him to be either mere man or else no man whatever, but only the show of a man ; the result in both cases being the same, that is, nothing, less than the dissipation of His true mediatorial personality into thin air.

This is the generic spirit of antichrist, which had begun to work in the way of a false Gnosticizing Christology, in the Church, before the last of the Apostles was dead ; which has been the secret soul of all pseudo-evangelicalism since ; and of which we may say, looking at our own time, "it is even now in the world," more completely disguised, it may be, as an angel of light, than ever before. For what less than this have we, in fact, in the reigning humanitarianism of the present age, which we find so much bent everywhere on resolving the "powers of the world to come" into a mere exaltation of the powers of the world that now is (physical, social, scientific, industrial, civilizational, educational, politico-economical, and what not), outside of the Mediatorial mystery altogether ! We have only to try it by the old touchstone, the simple but potent Ithuriel spear of St. John. It owns not *ex animo* the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. The constitution of Christ's person, is not for it the principle of all Christian faith. In one word, it has no power to feel itself at home in the APOSTLES' CREED.