

suffering, part was already in the past, while part was yet in the future, and therefore lacking. This the Apostle, for his part, was making up. Nay; he actually gloried in suffering, because, first, Christ—according to the prophets saying, “In all their affliction He was afflicted”—was suffering in fellowship and sympathy with him, and next, not a stroke fell on him that did not, by his patient endurance, tend to the spiritual growth of the “Body of Christ, which was His Church,” because bearing its unanswerable witness to the continued presence in it of its ascended Head.

“His Body.” Such is Paul’s favorite illustration of the origin, attributes and functions of the Christian Church. Other similes describe special features. It is a “building,” of which Christ is the corner, the Apostles and Prophets the chief foundation stones; a “temple,” consecrated by the indwelling of the living God; a “household,” in which God is the common Father, and Christ the elder brother, “the first-born among many brethren;” a “field,” God’s “husbandry,” yielding, alas! both tares and wheat; the “Bride” of Christ, wedded to Him in bonds which even death has no power to dissolve or annul. But to this figure of a “Body,” of which Christ is the “Head,” he turns with a special fondness, as at once the truest and most exhaustive.

But what, brethren, can I say of this Body which others have not already said, more wisely?

I. Truism though it be, yet prevalent ignorance necessitates the frequent statement that it is a *spiritual* body, and this on various grounds: (1) because not, according to some, the creature of circumstances, nor, as others, the product of voluntary effort and association, but rather the special creation of that Divine Being through whom the active energy of the God-