

The Self-denial of the Cross.

— Christ pleased not Himself.—*Rom. xv. 3.*

It may be necessary at the commencement to guard the text against misapplication. It must not be understood as teaching that Christ was opposed to undertaking the work of our redemption, and of bearing the suffering which it entailed. This He voluntarily undertook, for there can be no dissensions or differences of opinion or sentiment between the persons of the Holy Trinity; all three, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, will the salvation of man, and each performs His part in the mighty plan. What the Apostle here asserts is, that Christ did not consult his own ease or pleasure, but cheerfully gave up all consideration of self, and gave Himself entirely to the work of benefiting others. Instead of consulting His own glory in Heaven He laid it aside and took up His abode on earth; and having done that He, instead of seeking His own ease and comfort, voluntarily endured hardship, suffering reproaches, scorn, scourging, and death itself, for the benefit of others; yea, and those his enemies. And this fact St. Paul alludes to in the words of the text, for the purpose of adding weight to the arguments and exhortations of the preceding chapter, his argument being, that if Christ acted thus, we who bear His name and profess to be His followers ought to do the same: more particularly, should we be ready to bear with the weaknesses of each other as members of Christ's body the Church.

This subject of forgetfulness of self and consideration for others I purpose discussing briefly as a fit and practical conclusion to this course of sermons.

Self-denial is an essential part of Christianity. It was, as we have just observed, founded by self-denial. It has been, and is still to be propagated by self-denial; and without self-denial it cannot thrive. This truth our Lord taught, not by example only, but also by precept. "From that time forth," says St. Matthew, "began Jesus to show unto His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." And when Peter, to whom, with the rest of the disciples, this was unwelcome news, began to expostulate with Him, He not only rebuked him for so doing, but proceeded