

the expanse of our brows. The fact that worshippers meet in solemn assembly is itself a tribute to the unseen Presence ; and the absence of any form or image of Deity, and of the charms of art, witnesses to the beauty of holiness which alone attracts Him, and before the glory of which mere æsthetic splendors are the mockery of tinsel. You cannot gild gold. The purity of worship implies, therefore, a certain indifference to mere worldly art, as stars are lost sight of at sunrise.

2. The Church of the Acts is a working centre, where disciples rally in order to radiate—concentration, then diffusion. Service is not enjoined, but assumed as a necessity of the new nature. Stagnation is death ; life is motion, action, power in exercise. The spring compels the stream ; the lamp that burns, shines ; doing is the proof and fruit of being, and giving is the sign and pledge of living. A self-centred existence is a dead sea. Inpour without outflow turns even living waters into bitterness and decay.

3. The primitive Church was a school both of truth and life. The young convert came there to grow and to learn ; from the “ rudiments ” or first “ principles ” of the Gospel, to move onward and upward until the last lesson is learned in doctrine and duty, in serving and suffering ; and, when graduated from this preparatory school, to enter that higher university where study never ends, and there is no graduating class and no alumni. Hence God gave the Church-school an inspired text-book, and the Author Himself as Teacher, who makes each true pupil an illustrated, illuminated edition of the text-book.

4. The New Testament Church is also a home, and, as such, a model of ideal social relations, exhibiting a social equality elsewhere unknown. In every true home Love is the leveller of all invidious distinctions, using not the iron flail of Talus, but the soft hand of an angel, herself stooping to serve ; in whose unselfish ministry is allowed a new distinction—a partiality for need and helplessness. Thought and care find a focus in the sick and aged, the crippled and suffering. The world courts those who can give ; Love gives most where she cannot receive. And so God meant His Church to be the ideal home, with a warm hearth, a full board, a soft bed, a close embrace, for all who come within its doors.

Such a church must see its social mission, from its very fitness for such mission ; its every aspect is vocal with aptitude for service to society. Even the worship which seems to terminate and ultimate upon God and the worshipping soul, is a witness to the world, mightier than words. Work is service, and schooling is training for work by lessons in living, whose goal is usefulness ; finding out one's powers and sphere, and getting full equipment, the measure of manly stature and the panoply of the warrior. And the home ! What is that but the ideal democracy, with no caste lines of wealth or poverty, culture or ignorance, high life or low life ; where to come is to be welcome, and where want and woe find free and loving ministries !

The Church of to-day will never fulfil her social mission without a re-