

is the only method by which they can be accurately ascertained, might we not suppose that the majority of the human race consider themselves ushered into this wonderful existence, armed with all the powers, bodily and mental, by which the nature of man is distinguished, just that they might possess themselves of greater wealth, or power, might sit at more sumptuous tables, own larger estates, and have more to serve and obey them, than others? Is it not, for the most part, on such things as these that the life of man is expended? "All seek their own."

It is not merely in a state of barbarism that man has prostituted his life to such ignoble purposes. It is done in the most enlightened and *Christian* nations. It is the sin of *man*, wherever placed, and with whatever advantages, or disadvantages, he may be surrounded. Even the *church*, though professing a religion whose main feature consists in denying *self* for the sake of some higher good, is as deeply involved in this guilt as the world. The members of the church have, with few exceptions, devoted their active life on earth to the pursuit of the same objects with the men of the world, and have, equally with them, considered their life spent to good purpose, if these objects have been attained.

This defection on the part of the church has been attended with the most lamentable consequences. For, had the error in question been confined to worldly men, there would still have been room for doubts to arise respecting it. But since the church, which, in all Christian countries, enjoys the high prerogative of fixing the standard of public morals, has given it the sanction of her example, it has, as a necessary consequence, set these doubts completely at rest; and induced