

In other words, the most solemn office and the deepest mystery of the Christian Church gather around the cross, and the Crucified. The same witness is borne by the hymnody of the Church Catholic throughout the ages. The death of Christ has been the theme of Christian song during the persecutions of the early Church when they sang praises to their dying Lord in the catacombs, until the day of the modern revival and the Salvation Army. Take away the death of Christ and the best hymns of the Christian Church are without significance. It was with deep insight that Sir John Bowring, British consul general at Canton, China, wrote in 1823:

“In the cross of Christ I glory,  
 Towering o’er the wrecks of time;  
 All the light of sacred story  
 Gathers round its head sublime.”

The Church of the Redeemed when they sing the new song, still celebrate the old, old story.

“And I looked, and heard what seemed to be the voices of countless angels on every side of the throne, and of the living creatures and the Elders. Their number was myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, and in loud voices they were singing. It is fitting that the Lamb which has been offered in sacrifice should receive all power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing. And as for every created thing in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and everything that was in any of these, I heard them say,

“To Him who is seated on the throne,  
 And to the Lamb,  
 Be ascribed all blessing and honor  
 And glory and might  
 Until the Ages of the Ages!”