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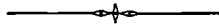
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entreaty was made that the English Church should do something towards helping them to educate their priesthood, as had been already done in the case of the Chaldæan Christians.

We learn from the "Handbook of Foreign Missions" that the American Presbyterians have been for many years busy in Armenia, with a view to extending a knowledge of Gospel truth among the inhabitants. They have been working in the country for about half a century, and have built many churches and schools. They have also four colleges for higher education. In connection with this mission there are about 11,000 adherents. This work has been much interfered with by the present disturbances. What seems to be really wanting, however, is a movement towards elevating and purifying the native Church itself; but all efforts in this direction must be suspended until we know what is to be the fate of this unfortunate country. Just now there seems to be a danger lest Armenia itself, with its venerable church, should be wiped out of existence as an independent nationality through sheer brute force and cruelty. As a recent article in the *Spectator* says: "It is, as we conceive, quite one of the chances of the present day that the ancient Armenian people, who are as Aryan as the ancient Persians or ourselves, may pass from the face of the earth, dying finally of Turkish violence and European betrayal."¹

J. A. CARR, LL.D.



ART. III.—THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH CATHOLIC.

THE discussions which have been so rife during the last year or two concerning the unity of Christendom, and the kind of action by which union might be promoted amongst the separated bodies of Christians, have necessarily involved assumptions as to what the nature of the Church is; and they have also stimulated inquiry into the authority and the truth of such assumptions. We in England may be said to have inherited two principal definitions of the Church of Christ. 1. The Church is defined by some as consisting of the aggregate of those Christian communions which have preserved a valid succession from the Apostles, and which may, on that account, be regarded as representing the one Catholic Church of the earliest ages. 2. It is defined by others as consisting of all the persons, belonging to any communion, whom God sees to be truly converted and to have the right character of

¹ *Spectator*, November 30, 1895.

believers in Christ. These persons are sometimes said to constitute the "invisible" Church—not that they are themselves invisible, for they are as visible as their fellow-Christians—but because they are a select portion of those who outwardly profess to be Christians, and no man can claim to see with certainty who they are that belong to this select portion. The view of the Church which I am about to advocate, as having advantages for present thought and action over these two, and as the true Apostolic view, may be thus summarily stated :

The Church is a Divine structure, consisting of Christ the Head, and of men as His ideal members : this ideal Divine organism is not identical with any existing society or combination of societies, but is the order and life which all Christian societies and their members imperfectly and inadequately represent, and into which it is appointed to them to grow, and the spiritual reality which binds them all in one.

The difficulties which make it hard for any Christians to apply their doctrine of the Church to the actual circumstances of Christendom are so well known that I need only touch upon them briefly. The Roman Catholic position has the advantage—so highly estimated as an attribute of doctrine at the present time—of being the most definite. The Church of Christ is the Papal Church, and the definition of the Papal Church is that it is governed by the absolute authority of the Pope. A Roman Catholic might hold that view with entire comfort if there were no other Christians besides Roman Catholics in the world. But what is he to make of the non-Papal Christian bodies—of our poor Church of England, for one ? At the opposite pole, the view of Evangelical Protestants—that the Church of Christ consists of all truly converted Christians in every communion—has also a certain simplicity. I need not dwell on the arguments which may be brought against it : the chief real difficulty which besets it in our day goes to the heart of it. The belief in a class of converted Christians, separated by a change of nature from the fellow-Christians who look so like them, has almost ceased to be a living one. The Congregationalist inherits the doctrine that he and the fellow-members of his congregation know themselves and each other to belong to such a class ; but it is hard for him to hold it. He will protest that he does not pretend to decide who are true believers and who are not ; but he would also prefer not to have to answer the question whether there is a division between the true and the nominal believers—in fact and in God's sight—so deep that all on one side of it belong to the body of Christ, and all on the other side of it are separate from Christ. Anglican Catholics have their own difficulties. Making much of succession, they cannot help

being impressed by the prestige of the Roman Church, which—if the question of corruption of doctrine and practice be put aside—must be admitted to hold the best position in Christendom as representing the old undivided Church. Many Anglicans, as we know, have been disturbed by doubts whether a Church openly rebelling against the see of Rome and excommunicated by that see, like our own, may not have cut itself off from the Church Catholic. If they fall back on doctrine and practice, and are convinced that the pretensions of the Pope are extravagant, and that in many other things Rome has wandered far from the ways of the primitive Church, they seem to be constituting themselves judges, and to be approaching dangerously near to the position of the Protestant bodies which care nothing for succession, but are ready to maintain, as they do with various degrees of plausibility, that each of them is the most faithful representative of Apostolical Christianity. These Protestant bodies must be a perpetual difficulty to the High Anglican of to-day. He knows something of them, and he is constrained to confess that they seem to be endowed with every Christian quality. The Protestant communities have learning, saintliness, zeal; they abound in good works; the devotion they show to Christ is rewarded with remarkable successes in the converting of the heathen; but they have not the Apostolical succession; therefore, they do not belong to the Church Catholic—that is, to the body of Christ. What can this mean and imply? Will Christ say to them, “I never knew you”? If not, what sort of relation have they to Christ? Is the spirit of Christ given as freely outside the Church as within it?—to those who do not belong to His body as to His members?

To the philosophical observer, contemplating Christianity from the outside, there is no problem in the multitude and variety of the Christian communions. He is familiar with the tendencies to variation, and can trace with more or less of sureness how each of these bodies began to diverge, and by what causes it has been led to become what it is. It may interest him to make out how much there is of common Christianity in the creeds and sentiments and practices of all these sections and subsections of Christendom. But we Christians are not so free. We inherit this name of the Church; and the idea of a One Church clings to our Christian minds, and refuses to be over-powered and extinguished by all the divisions which force themselves on our notice. This tenacity of the idea of the Church depends, as we may see, on our belief in *Christ*. All who believe in Christ as at the Father's right hand are obliged to think of Him as the Elder Brother of a family, the head of a body or society, the King of

a commonwealth. The One Lord gives a necessary unity of some kind to those who belong to Him.

And this is precisely the view of the Church which we find in the New Testament. The Church there is a dependency of Christ. The unity of the Church is not derived from any circumscribing line. It depends on Christ the Head.

All Christians, including the Roman Catholics, in their appeal to the past and to authority reach back and up ultimately to the New Testament. In this volume we find the words of Christ and His Apostles, the history of the beginnings of the Church, the rock whence we were hewn, the hole of the pit whence we were digged. The Roman Catholics claim, indeed, that the Church has been developed, and that this development has been under Divine guidance, and that the Church of to-day enjoys the advantages of delegated Divine authority as much as the Church of the Apostolic days—a claim which represents, in a perverted form, what ought to be the universal faith of Christians; but this claim does not bar the appeal to the New Testament as preserving for us the original and essential principles of Christianity and of the Church.

Going back, then, along the lines of the historical Church till we cross the threshold of the New Testament, we come upon the Church as the Apostles found it, and left it. At the close of the Apostolic age there were a number of societies scattered over the cities of the Roman world, the members of which had accepted Jesus the Crucified as Lord and Saviour, and had been moved by a Spirit which they believed to have come from heaven, from the Father and the Son. They had all been baptized into the name of Jesus—that is, into the name of the Son and the Father and the Spirit. They had received the Gospel, directly or indirectly, from the Apostles, or Envoys, of Jesus Christ—the Twelve and St. Paul—and they were under the absolute authority of the Apostles. Every society had for administration and guidance under the Supreme Authority elders or overseers appointed by the Apostles, and in general some ministers or servers also to do practical work. All these societies counted themselves branches of one body, as being all united to Christ, the one Head, and as being moved by the same Spirit. In addition to the one baptism by which every member was received into the body, all the members were accustomed to meet regularly for fellowship, and at their regular meetings they partook of a sacred ceremonial meal—the same in all the societies—which fed a common union to Christ. The name “Church” (*ecclesia*) came into use for each society and for the whole body. We read constantly of the “Church” and the “Churches,” and of the

“brethren,” the “saints,” the “called,” the “faithful,” who are the members of the Church. Besides what they were told concerning Jesus Christ by their teachers, the believers were taught that the body to which they belonged came into existence on a certain Day of Pentecost, through the action of an overpowering Spirit, which brought thousands of strangers into joyous brotherhood and partnership.

It is obvious that a line might easily have been drawn round this Apostolic Church. Let this be conceded to those who insist that some circumscription must be found for the Church, to separate it from the rest of mankind. The Church consisted of all the Churches, and those of the members who had been admitted by the baptism, and had not separated themselves or been separated from the communion, which were the badges of the society. There were no Protestants, no Nonconformists, no sects of heretics, in the age of the New Testament. But there were many persons included amongst the members of the Church whom we are surprised to find the Apostles allowing to remain within the fellowship. St. Paul, it is evident, could not have thought of the body of Christ as having its sanctity created by the faith or graces of its members. He refers to misbelieving, to immoral, to insubordinate Christians, without showing any desire to drive them out of the Church. He nowhere gives the least hint of making a distinction in his own mind between the truly converted as constituting the body of Christ and the other merely professing Christians as not belonging to the body. Believing, as he did, in the holiness of the Church, he could not have regarded this holiness as identical with, or dependent upon, the purity and devoutness of its actual members.

St. Paul may be said to be the theological exponent of the doctrine of the Church amongst the New Testament writers; and his account of the Church is chiefly to be found in the Epistle to the Ephesians. In the first half of the epistle he sets forth the calling of Christians, and in the second half the duties which spring out of the calling. The idea of the Church is closely associated with the calling—the calling being the expression of the eternal Divine purpose. The Apostle saw in Christ God choosing men to be His children, holy and without blemish, before Him in love. That this purpose might be carried out, the Son of God was manifested, died, was raised to the Father’s right hand, to be the Head of this family of God. Everyone who accepted the Gospel was taken into this family; was joined to Christ as a member of His body. But the reality and perfectness of the family, the society, the body, were in God’s purpose and idea. That which St. Paul saw in the Church was what God had made and was making. And

he could, therefore, contemplate the Church without qualification as a perfect body with perfect members. The actual Christians and their societies had all sorts of deformities and weaknesses. But it was God's design that individual members and the several Churches should grow into the perfection of the ideal Church, of the family which God had prepared, of the body which was the proper fulness or completion of the Divine Head. The various institutions and provisions of Christian Church life were given in order that the actual imperfect members might be nourished, and trained, and adjusted into their proper forms and places.

I do not deny that there is a certain difficulty in forming a mental conception of this ideal Church—a Church which is more real than any actual society, because it is God's purpose and creation; but the difficulty seems to me to be of the same kind with that of all our truest theological thoughts. And I offer two or three considerations which may perhaps diminish the difficulty: (1) Christ, contemplated as we know Him, has the ideal Church, so to say, attached to Him. It makes a great difference whether we are looking about for a separate Divine Church on the earth, or are letting Christ in heaven suggest and bring home to us the Church, which is His body. Christ evidently sought to hinder His followers from thinking of Him by Himself. He desired to be associated by them, on the one hand with the Father, on the other hand with mankind. It was a main part of the purpose of His coming, that He should attach men to Himself, and Himself to men. We know Him most truly when we contemplate Him as the Son of the Father and the Head of His body. And the body, thus regarded as completing Christ, becomes easily to our minds ideal, spiritual, prophetic; a vision of what should be and is to be, not made by our imaginations, but discerned in the will of God by our faith. (2) Again, it may be helpful to place the Church by the side of the kingdom of Christ, or of God, or of heaven. During the last generation or two we have been learning how much Christians have lost by falling into a way of identifying the kingdom of heaven with happiness after death. It is generally recognised now that the establishment of the heavenly kingdom on the earth is the key to the Gospel narrative. It is sometimes said that the kingdom of Christ is the Church; and there is substantial truth, I think, in the identification. The kingdom by no means occupies in the Acts and the Epistles the place which it does in the Gospels; and where it does occur, we might sometimes, perhaps, without injury to the sense, substitute the Church for it. But this could not always be done. The name retains its own proper meaning, and suggests the ideas associated with a kingdom

and commonwealth. It should set us thinking of the King, Christ the representative of God, the Son of the Father; of the laws, which are the impulses of the Spirit of Christ; of the franchises and possessions, which are spiritual; of the subjects, who are admitted into it and bound to be loyal to its authority and brotherly with their fellow-citizens; of the territory, which is the world of human feeling and action. We are referring to the same condition of things, whether we speak of Christ as the head of His body, the Church, or as the Prince of the heavenly kingdom. And it seems to me that the idea of the heavenly kingdom, with Christ reigning in it upon the earth as King of kings and Lord of lords, does not demand or invite that circumscription and definition of its subjects which the idea of the Church has been thought to make necessary. (3) A third consideration is, that a parallel may be found for the ideal Church, and the actual Church or Churches in the ideal Christian and the actual man. Take such statements as those of St. John: "Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither knoweth Him." "Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin, because His seed abideth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God." A reader who knows the actual only must be perplexed by such sayings; he will understand the Apostle as implying that there are certain persons, the truly regenerate, who never fall into sin; as dividing mankind between the class of sinless persons, the children of God, and the class of sinners, the children of the devil. But he finds the same Apostle protesting: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." What St. John means is, that the true son of God does not sin, and cannot sin. He knows that in the actual human beings whom the Father has called His children, there is also another nature different from that of the child of God. What St. John wishes to impress upon his Christian reader is that, when he sins, he is denying his true self, is violating the nature which he has received of the Father. It is right and well that sinful human beings should be called children of God; it is most desirable that every Christian should account himself as a son of God. There is always the true man, of God's making, accompanying the imperfect sinning man; and to this ideal man the actual man must strive to conform himself. As Milton says in his grand style: "He that holds himself in reverence and due esteem, both for the dignity of God's image upon him and for the price of his redemption, which he thinks is visibly marked upon his forehead, accounts himself both a fit person to do the noblest and godliest deeds, and also much better worth than to deject and defile, with

such a debasement and such a pollution as sin is, himself so highly ransomed and ennobled to a new friendship and filial relation with God" ("The Reason of Church Government," chap. iii.). It seems not unlikely that when our Lord said of little children, "Their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven," He meant by the "angel" the spiritual double, the ideal heavenly form, of the earthly person.

If, then, we think of the One Catholic and Apostolic Church as the ideal Divinely-created organic structure into which actual Churches and their earthly members are to grow, how shall we be led to regard existing Christendom and its many Christian communions?

1. Our faith will be less shocked and disturbed by the split-up condition of Christendom. I say "less," than if we felt ourselves bound to identify the Bride of Christ with some one of the existing communions, or with the aggregate of so many of them, or with a body of select persons more or less hidden in them. There must be much to trouble us in the sight of Christian bodies disowning each other, as there is in the defects and faults of every Christian body, and in the immense non-Christian world still unconquered at the end of the nineteenth century. But we shall not refuse to see some advantages—as we often have to recognise with thankfulness good coming out of evil—that appear to result from separation and diversity. Functions and powers of the kingdom of God, which might have been otherwise dormant, have been developed through the special energies and special adjustments to environment set going by the separateness of communions. The Christianity of the world may be perceived to be larger and richer than it might be if it were the religion of a single well-disciplined body. We are freed from the painful supposed duty of judging and disowning great Christian societies, and are encouraged, on the contrary, to discern all the good we can in them.

2. It is natural to members of the Church of England to value highly succession and order and authoritative institutions. Whilst there is nothing to forbid our admitting that the Church of Rome has advantages not possessed by ourselves or by the non-Episcopalian communions, we may reasonably congratulate ourselves on having Episcopacy with an unbroken succession, the Sacraments, the inheritance of the Christian literature of all ages. It may rightly seem to us a great gain that Christian Churches should be as national as possible. We may hold and contend that the kingdom of Christ is best established in any part of the earth where the ancient order has been preserved and the organized nation of the land worships God and cleaves to Christ in a Church of its own.

But all that we may be obliged to protest against and to condemn in the Churches of Rome or of Eastern Europe will not bind us to "unchurch" them, or to pronounce them separated from Christ.

3. But we shall follow the whole stress of the New Testament in looking reverently for the fruits of the Spirit, in person and society, and holding them to be trustworthy credentials of fellowship with Christ. Christ bade His followers "beware of false prophets": how were they to discern them? Did Christ say, "Take care that anyone who undertakes to teach and guide you shall show himself to be authorized by Me, or by the Apostles whom I commission as My representatives"? The criterion He gave was, "By their fruits ye shall know them." Nothing could be more marked or definite than the commission which Christ gave to the Twelve. They knew themselves to have His commission, and they felt even their number to be important, and as the Twelve they ruled the Pentecostal Church. But if Christ had charged His followers, "Listen to no one but the Twelve, or those whom the Twelve may ordain," they would have been bound to treat St. Paul as a false prophet. Saul of Tarsus did, indeed, excite suspicion and misgivings in the Twelve and their adherents. He appeared outside of Christ's order, rendered no allegiance to the Twelve, took his stand on the commission he had received in a vision, and claimed to be known and judged by his fruits. His credentials, he boldly declared, were the Churches he founded—these and his own manifest integrity and devotion. The irregular Apostle did a greater work in spreading the kingdom of Christ than all the regular Apostles together. It is important, however, to notice that St. Paul was not indifferent to the unity of the Church. He laboured zealously and successfully to keep his Churches in fellowship with those of the Twelve. What more impressive testimony could we have than St. Paul and his work, that by the will of Christ there should be room amongst Christians for unauthorized service and leadership? Christ made solemn choice and appointment of the Twelve, and then, without giving any explanation or notice to the Twelve, sent a thirteenth, whom they were to accept as a colleague against their first surprise and misgivings, because they could not help seeing that he was doing Christ's work and had the Spirit with him. Such warrant have we for acknowledging the presence of Christ and the Spirit with the Christian societies which reject one part or another of the traditional order of the Church. We know these societies by their fruits.

4. Our own Church we may thankfully and reverently perceive to have a peculiarly important place amongst the aggre-

gate of the Christian bodies. It is a great Church, with special privileges, and we may humbly hope that its work in the world is not altogether unworthy of it. But it is further important through the middle place in which it stands. If an unfriendly critic might taunt the Church of England with being neither one thing nor the other, neither loyally Catholic nor frankly Protestant, we shall prefer to believe that it is both. And it may be for the advantage of Christendom that we should not throw in our lot either with those to whom succession and order are everything, or with those to whom a Church is a collection of persons who happen to agree in the deductions they draw from the New Testament.

5. Lastly, if the perfect Church of Christ is represented on the earth by these many inadequate and fragmentary and transitory bodies which profess loyalty to the one Lord and Saviour, and if each of the bodies has life and truth in proportion to its real loyalty to Christ the Head, then the royal road to unity must be through each drawing closer to Christ as a member to the Head. To be open to the light of Christ and so to drop errors, to study what the Son of man will approve in policy and conduct, to weigh interests and values in the scales of God, to understand that the aim of all Christians and of all Christian societies must be to grow into perfect fellowship with Christ—these are the ways of progress for the bettering of each Church in itself and for the unity of Church to Church.

J. LLEWELYN DAVIES.



ART. IV.—HOW TO SAVE VOLUNTARY SCHOOLS.

“It behoves every ratepayer, who wishes to keep down his rate-bill . . . to bestir himself in time to prevent his fleece from being cut utterly short.”—LORD SALISBURY, Nov. 19.

THAT the average cost of elementary education “has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished,” is the cry of the groaning ratepayer over probably the whole area of England and Wales. It may be worth while to sketch the modest beginnings, and contrast them with the enormous progress of that career of costliness of which the end is not yet in sight. In 1870 Voluntary Schools alone existed, and were educating at 25s. 6d. per head. In 1872 that charge had risen to 27s. odd. Why? Because School Boards had in the meanwhile got to their work with a will, and were already spending 28s. per head, thus forcing up the scale of expense for the others. In 1894 Board School charges reached over 48s. 9d. per head, and had forced up the voluntarists to spend nearly