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ARTICLE I.—*Œuvres divers de Fénelon*.—Paris: Chez Lefèvre, 1844.

WE are no friends to Popery; to its doctrines, institutions, and ceremonies; and hesitate not to regard it as the great scheme of the evil one for frustrating the leading objects of Revelation. We repel with indignation her claims to infallibility; we abhor her despotism and tyranny; we regard as mere Paganized Christianity many of her rites and observances; we esteem, as unscriptural and irrational, much of her theology as consecrated by the Council of Trent. We have embraced all proper opportunities to oppose its errors and corruptions, its false doctrines and evil practices; and shall continue to do it as long as we have power to “contend for the faith once delivered to the saints.”

But while we thus bear our decided testimony against the Church of Rome, does it imply an excision of *all* the members of its communion? Should there not be a distinction between the dogmas of a church viewed in its corporate authority, and the character of its members considered in their private capacity? Adopting the test which our Saviour gives, “by their fruits ye shall know them,” we are bound to admit that many in that community have “brought forth the fruits of the Spirit,”

respects, is known to the world; for it still lives, and will live, until it has accomplished its mission. He has done enough to facilitate the labours of subsequent grammarians.. As a man, he was firm, persevering, open, affable, and kind. His pupils, who are numerous, and many of them distinguished in the fields of science and literature, revere his memory; and from what we are told of his Christian character, we may hope that he is now

ἔνθα μακάρων
 Νᾶσον ἁκεανίδες
 Αὔραι περιπνέουσιν.

“Where round the island of the blest
 The ocean breezes play.”—*Pindar Ol. 2, 120.*

ART. V.—*Idea of the Church.*

IN that symbol of faith adopted by the whole Christian world, commonly called the Apostles' Creed, the Church is declared to be “the communion of saints.” In analyzing the idea of the Church here presented, it may be proper to state, first, what is not included in it; and secondly, what it does really embrace.

It is obvious that the Church, considered as the communion of saints, does not necessarily include the idea of a visible society organized under one definite form. A kingdom is a political society governed by a king; an aristocracy is such a society governed by a privileged class; a democracy is a political organization having the power centred in the people. The very terms suggest these ideas. There can be no kingdom without a king, and no aristocracy without a privileged class. There may, however, be a communion of saints without a visible head, without prelates, without a democratic covenant. In other words, the Church, as defined in the creed, is not a monarchy, an aristocracy, or a democracy. It may be either, all, or neither. It is not, however, presented as a visible organization, to which the form is essential, as in the case of the human societies just mentioned.

Again, the conception of the Church as the communion of saints, does not include the idea of any external organization. The bond of union may be spiritual. There may be communion without external organized union. The Church, therefore, according to this view, is not essentially a visible society; it is not a corporation which ceases to exist if the external bond of union be dissolved. It may be proper that such union should exist; it may be true that it has always existed; but it is not necessary. The Church, as such, is not a visible society. All visible union, all external organization, may cease, and yet, so long as there are saints who have communion, the Church exists, if the Church is the communion of saints. That communion may be in faith, in love, in obedience to a common Lord. It may have its origin in something deeper still; in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, even the Spirit of Christ, by which every member is united to Christ, and all the members are joined in one body. This is an union far more real, a communion far more intimate, than subsists between the members of any visible society as such. So far, therefore, is the Apostles' Creed from representing the Church as a monarchy, an aristocracy, or a democracy; so far is it from setting forth the Church as a visible society of one specific form, that it does not present it under the idea of an external society at all. The saints may exist, they may have communion, the Church may continue under any external organization, or without any visible organization whatever.

What is affirmed in the above cited definition is, first, that the Church consists of saints; and, secondly, of saints in communion—that is, so united as to form one body. To determine, therefore, the true idea of the Church, it is only necessary to ascertain who are meant by the “saints,” and the nature of their communion, or the essential bond by which they are united.

The word ἅγιος, *saint*, signifies holy, worthy of reverence, pure, in the sense of freedom either from guilt, or from moral pollution. The word ἁγιαζέω means to render holy, or sacred; to cleanse from guilt, as by a sacrifice; or from moral defilement, by the renewing of the heart. The saints, therefore, according to the scriptural meaning of the term, are those who

have been cleansed from guilt or justified, who have been inwardly renewed or sanctified, and who have been separated from the world and consecrated to God. Of such the Church consists. If a man is not justified, sanctified, and consecrated to God, he is not a saint, and therefore does not belong to the Church, which is the communion of saints.

Under the old dispensation, the whole nation of the Hebrews was called holy, as separated from the idolatrous nations around them, and consecrated to God. The Israelites were also called the children of God, as the recipients of his peculiar favours. These expressions had reference rather to external relations and privileges than to internal character. In the New Testament, however, they are applied only to the true people of God. None are there called saints but the sanctified in Christ Jesus. None are called the children of God, but those born of the Spirit, who being children are heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ of a heavenly inheritance. When, therefore, it is said that the Church consists of saints, the meaning is not that it consists of all who are externally consecrated to God, irrespective of their moral character, but that it consists of true Christians or sincere believers.

As to the bond by which the saints are united so as to become a church, it cannot be anything external, because that may and always does unite those who are not saints. The bond, whatever it is, must be peculiar to the saints; it must be something to which their justification, sanctification, and access to God are due. This can be nothing less than their relation to Christ. It is in virtue of union with him that men become saints, or are justified, sanctified, and brought nigh to God. They are one body in Christ Jesus. The bond of union between Christ and his people is the Holy Spirit, who dwells in him and in them. He is the head, they are the members of his body, the Church, which is one body, because pervaded and animated by one Spirit. The proximate and essential bond of union between the saints, that which gives rise to their communion, and makes them the Church or body of Christ, is, therefore, the indwelling of the Holy Ghost.

Such, then, is the true idea of the Church, or, what is the same thing, the idea of the true Church. It is the communion

of saints, the body of those who are united to Christ by the indwelling of his Spirit. The two essential points included in this definition are, that the Church consists of saints, and that the bond of their union is not external organization, but the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. These, therefore, are the two points to be established. As, however, the one involves the other, they need not be considered separately. The same arguments which prove the one, prove also the other.

By this statement, it is not meant that the word *church* is not properly used in various senses. The object of inquiry is not the usage of a word, but the true idea of a thing; not how the word church is employed, but what the Church itself is. Who compose the Church? What is essential to the existence of that body, to which the attributes, the promises, the prerogatives of the Church belong? On the decision of that question rests the solution of all other questions in controversy between Romanists and Protestants.

The mode of verifying the true idea of the Church.—The holy Scriptures are on this, as on all other matters of faith or practice, our only infallible rule. We may confirm our interpretation of the Scriptures from various sources, especially from the current judgment of the Church, but the real foundation of our faith is to be sought in the word of God itself. The teachings of the Scriptures concerning the nature of the Church, are both direct and indirect. They didactically assert what the Church is, and they teach such things respecting it, as necessarily lead to a certain conception of its nature.

We may learn from the Bible the true idea of the Church, in the first place, from the use of the word itself. Under all the various applications of the term, that which is essential to the idea will be found to be expressed. In the second place, the equivalent or descriptive terms employed to express the same idea, reveal its nature. In the third place, the attributes ascribed to the Church in the word of God, determine its nature. If those attributes can be affirmed only of a visible society, then the Church must, as to its essence, be such a society. If, on the other hand, they belong only to the communion of saints, then none but saints constitute the Church. These attributes must all be included in the idea of the Church.

They are but different phases or manifestations of its nature. They can all, therefore, be traced back to it, or evolved from it. If the Church is the body of those who are united to Christ by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, then the indwelling of the Spirit must make the Church holy, visible, perpetual, one, catholic. All these attributes must be referable to that one thing to which the Church owes its nature. In the fourth place, the promises and prerogatives which belong to the Church, teach us very plainly whether it is an external society, or a communion of saints. In the fifth place, there is a necessary connection between a certain scheme of doctrine and a certain theory of the Church. It is admitted that the Church includes all who are in Christ, all who are saints. It is also admitted that all who are in Christ are in the Church. The question, therefore, Who are in the Church? must depend upon the answer to the question, Who are in Christ? or how do we become united to him?

Finally, as the true doctrine concerning the way of salvation leads to the true theory of the Church, we may expect to see that theory asserted and taught in all ages. However corrupted and overlaid it may be, as other doctrines have been, it will be found still preserved and capable of being recognized under all these perversions. The testimony of the Church itself will, therefore, be found to be in favour of the true doctrine as to what the Church is.

The full exposition of these topics would require a treatise by itself. The evidence in favour of the true doctrine concerning the Church, even in the imperfect manner in which it is unfolded in this article, is to be sought through all the following pages, and not exclusively under one particular head. All that is now intended is to present a general view of the principal arguments in support of the doctrine, that the Church consists of saints or true Christians, and that the essential bond of their union is not external organization, but the indwelling of the Holy Ghost.

Argument from the scriptural use of the word Church.—The word *ἐκκλησία* from *ἐκκαλεω*, *evocare*, means an assembly or body of men evoked, or called out and together. It was used to designate the public assembly of the people, among the Greeks,

collected for the transaction of business. It is applied to the tumultuous assembly called together in Ephesus, by the outcries of Demetrius, Acts xix. 39. It is used for those who are called out of the world, by the gospel, so as to form a distinct class. It was not the Helotes at Athens who heard the proclamation of the heralds, but the people who actually assembled, who constituted the ἐκκλησία of that city. In like manner it is not those who merely hear the call of the gospel, who constitute the Church, but those who obey the call. Thousands of the Jews and Gentiles, in the age of the apostles, heard the gospel, received its invitations, but remained Jews and idolaters. Those only who obeyed the invitation, and separated themselves from their former connections, and entered into a new relation and communion, made up the Church of that day. In all the various applications, therefore, of the word ἐκκλησία in the New Testament, we find it uniformly used as a collective term for the κλητοί or ἐκλεκτοί, that is, for those who obey the gospel call, and who are thus selected and separated, as a distinct class from the rest of the world. Sometimes the term includes all who have already, or who shall hereafter accept the call of God. This is the sense of the word in Eph. iii. 10, where it is said to be the purpose of God to manifest unto principalities and powers, by the Church, his manifold wisdom; and in Eph. v. 25, 26, where it is said, that Christ loved the Church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. Sometimes the word is used for the people of God indefinitely, as when it is said of Paul, he persecuted the Church; or when we are commanded to give no offence to the Church. The word is very commonly used in this sense, as when we speak of the progress of the Church, or pray for the Church. It is not any specific, organized body, that is commonly intended in such expressions, but the kingdom of Christ indefinitely. Sometimes it is used for any number of the called, collectively considered, united together by some common bond. Thus we hear of the Church in the house of Priscilla and Aquila, the Church in the house of Nymphas, the Church in the house of Philemon; the Church of Jerusalem,

of Antioch, of Corinth, &c. In all these cases, the meaning of the word is the same. It is always used as a collective term for the *κληροί*, either for the whole number, or for any portion of them considered as a whole. The Church of God is the whole number of the elect; the Church of Corinth is the whole number of the called in that city. An organized body may be a Church, and their organization may be the reason for their being considered as a whole or as a unit. But it is not their organization that makes them a Church. The multitude of believers in Corinth, organized or dispersed, is the Church of Corinth, just as the whole multitude of saints in heaven and on earth is the Church of God. It is not organization, but evocation, the actual calling out and separating from others, that makes the Church.

The nature of the Church, therefore, must depend on the nature of the gospel call. If that call is merely or essentially to the outward profession of certain doctrines, or to baptism, or to any thing external, then the Church must consist of all who make that profession, or are baptized. But if the call of the gospel is to repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, then none obey that call but those who repent and believe, and the Church must consist of penitent believers. It cannot require proof that the call of the gospel is to faith and repentance. The great apostle tells us he received his apostleship to the obedience of faith, among all nations, *i. e.*, to bring them to that obedience which consists in faith. He calls those who heard him to witness that he had not failed to testify both to the Jews and also to the Gentiles, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. No one was admitted by the apostles to the Church, or recognized as of the number of "the called," who did not profess faith and repentance, and such has been the law and practice of the Church ever since. There can, therefore, be no doubt on this subject. What the apostles did, and what all ministers, since their day, have been commissioned to do, is to preach the gospel; to offer men salvation on the condition of faith and repentance. Those who obeyed that call were baptized, and recognized as constituent members of the Church; those who rejected it, who refused to repent and believe, were not mem-

bers, they were not in fact "called," and by that divine vocation separated from the world. It would, therefore, be as unreasonable to call the inhabitants of a country an army, because they heard the call to arms, as to call all who hear but do not obey the gospel, the Church. The army consists of those who actually enrol themselves as soldiers; and the Church consists of those who actually repent and believe, in obedience to the call of the gospel.

This conclusion, to which we are led by the very nature of the call by which the Church is constituted, is confirmed by the unvarying usage of the New Testament. Every ἐκκλησία is composed of the κλητοί, of those called out and assembled. But the word κλητοί, as applied to Christians, is never used in the New Testament, except in reference to true believers. If, therefore, the Church consists of "the called," it must consist of true believers. That such is the usage of the word "called" in the New Testament, is abundantly evident. In Rom. i. 6, believers are designated the κλητοί Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, *Christ's called ones*. In Rom. viii. 28, all things are said to work together for good, τοῖς κατὰ πρόθεσιν κλητοῖς, *to the called according to purpose*. In 1 Cor. i. 2, 24, we find the same use of the word. The gospel is said to be foolishness to the Greeks, and a stumbling-block to the Jews, but to "the called," it is declared to be the wisdom of God and power of God. The called are distinguished as those to whom the gospel is effectual. Jude addresses believers as the sanctified by the Father, the preserved in Christ Jesus, and "called." In Rev. xvii. 14, the triumphant followers of the Lamb are called κλητοὶ καὶ ἐκλεκτοὶ καὶ πιστοί. The doctrinal usage of the word κλητοί is, therefore, not a matter of doubt. None but those who truly repent and believe, are ever called κλητοί, and, as the ἐκκλησία consists of the κλητοί, the Church must consist of true believers. This conclusion is confirmed by a reference to analogous terms applied to believers. As they are κλητοί, because the subjects of a divine κλήσις, or vocation, so they are ἐκλεκτοί, Rom. viii. 23; 1 Pet. i. 2; ἡγιασμένοι, 1 Cor. i. 1; Jude 1; Heb. x. 10; προορισθέντες, Eph. i. 11; σωζόμενοι, 1 Cor. i. 18; 2 Cor. ii. 15; 2 Thess. ii. 11; τεταγμένοι εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον, Acts xiii. 48. All these terms have reference to that divine agency, to that call, choice, separation, or appointment,

by which men are made true believers, and they are never applied to any other class.

The use of the cognate words, *καλέω* and *κλησις*, goes to confirm the conclusion as to the meaning of the word *κλητοί*. When used in reference to the act of God, in calling men by the gospel, they always designate a call that is effectual, so that the subjects of that vocation become the true children of God. Thus, in Rom. viii. 30, whom he calls, them he also justifies, whom he justifies, them he also glorifies. All the called, therefore, (the *κλητοί*, the *ἐκκλησία*), are justified and glorified. In Rom. ix. 24, the vessels of mercy are said to be those whom God calls. In 1 Cor. i. 9, believers are said to be called into fellowship of the Son of God. In the same chapter the apostle says: "Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are *called*," *i. e.* converted and made the true children of God. In 1 Cor. vii. the word is used nine times in the same way. In Gal. i. 15, Paul says, speaking of God, "who has called me by his grace." See, also, Gal. v. 8, 13; Eph. iv. 4; Col. iii. 15; 1 Thess. ii. 12; v. 24; 1 Tim. vi. 12; 2 Tim. i. 9. It is said believers are called, not according to their works, but according to the purpose and grace of God given them in Christ Jesus, before the world began. In Heb. ix. 5, Christ is said to have died that the called, *οἱ κεκλημένοι*, might receive the eternal inheritance. In 1 Pet. ii. 9, believers are described as a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people, whom God hath called out of darkness into his marvellous light. In the salutation prefixed to his second Epistle, this apostle wishes all good to those whom God had called by his glorious power.

In proof that the word *κλησις* is constantly used in reference to the effectual call of God, see Rom. xi. 29; 1 Cor. i. 26; Eph. i. 18, iv. 1; Phil. iii. 14; Heb. iii. 1; 2 Pet. i. 10.

From these considerations it is clear that the *κλητοί* or *called*, are the effectually called, those who really obey the gospel, and by repentance and faith are separated from the world. And as it is admitted that the *ἐκκλησία* is a collective term for the *κλητοί*, it follows that none but true believers constitute the Church, or that the Church is the communion of saints. The word in the New Testament is never used except in reference

to the company of true believers. This consideration alone is sufficient to determine the nature of the Church.

To this argument it is indeed objected, that as the apostles addressed all the Christians of Antioch, Corinth, or Ephesus, as constituting the Church in those cities, and as among them there were many hypocrites, therefore the word Church designates a body of professors, whether sincere or insincere. The fact is admitted, that all the professors of the true religion in Corinth, without reference to their character, are called the church of Corinth. This, however, is no answer to the preceding argument. It determines nothing as to the nature of the Church. It does not prove it to be an external society, composed of sincere and insincere professors of the true religion. All the professors in Corinth are called saints, sanctified in Christ Jesus, the saved, the children of God, the faithful, believers, &c., &c. Does this prove that there are good and bad saints, holy and unholy sanctified persons, believing and unbelieving believers, or men who are at the same time children of God and children of the devil? Their being called believers does not prove that they were all believers; neither does their being called the Church prove that they were all members of the Church. They are designated according to their profession. In professing to be members of the Church, they professed to be believers, to be saints, and faithful brethren, and this proves that the Church consists of true believers. This will appear more clearly from the following.

Argument from the terms used as equivalents for the word Church.

Those epistles in the New Testament which are addressed to churches, are addressed to believers, saints, the children of God. These latter terms, therefore, are equivalent to the former. The conclusion to be drawn from this fact is, that the Church consists of believers. In the same sense, and in no other, in which infidels may be called believers, and wicked men saints, in the same sense may they be said to be included in the Church. If they are not really believers, they are not the Church. They are not constituent members of the company of believers.

The force of this argument will appear from a reference to the salutations prefixed to these epistles. The epistle to the Romans, for example, is addressed to "the called of Jesus Christ," "the beloved of God," "called to be saints." The epistles to the Corinthians are addressed "to the Church of God which is at Corinth." Who are they? "The sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints," the worshippers of Christ. The Ephesian Church is addressed as "the saints who are in Ephesus, and the faithful in Christ Jesus." The Philippians are called "saints and faithful brethren in Christ." Peter addressed his first Epistle to "the elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ;" *i. e.*, to those who, being elected to obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, are sanctified by the Spirit. His second Epistle is directed to those who had obtained like precious faith with the apostle himself, through (or in) the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

From this collation it appears, that to call any body of men a Church, is to call them saints, sanctified in Christ Jesus, elected to obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Christ, partakers of the same precious faith with the apostles, the beloved of God, and faithful brethren. The inference from this fact is inevitable. The Church consists of those to whom these terms are applicable.

The only way by which this argument can be evaded is, by saying that the faith here spoken of is mere speculative faith, the sanctification intended is mere external consecration; the sonship referred to, is merely adoption to external privileges, or a church state. This objection, however, is completely obviated by the contents of these epistles. The persons to whom these terms are applied, and who are represented as constituting the Church, are described as really holy in heart and life; not mere professors of the true faith, but true believers; not merely the recipients of certain privileges, but the children of God and heirs of eternal life.

The members of the Church in Corinth are declared to be in fellowship with Jesus Christ, chosen of God, inhabited by his Spirit, washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the

Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. That the faith which Paul attributes to the members of the Church in Rome, and the sonship of which he represents them as partakers, were not speculative or external, is evident, because he says, those who believe have peace with God, rejoice in hope of his glory and have his love shed abroad in their hearts. Those who are in Christ, he says, are not only free from condemnation, but walk after the Spirit, and are spiritually minded. Being the sons of God, they are led by the Spirit, they have the spirit of adoption, and are joint heirs with Jesus Christ of a heavenly inheritance. The members of the Church in Ephesus were faithful brethren in Christ Jesus, sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, quickened and raised from spiritual death, and made to sit in heavenly places. All those in Colosse who are designated as the Church, are described as reconciled unto God, the recipients of Christ, who were complete in him, all whose sins are pardoned. The Church in Thessalonica consisted of those whose work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope, Paul joyfully remembered, and of whose election of God he was well assured. They were children of the light and of the day, whom God had appointed to the obtaining of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. The churches to whom Peter wrote consisted of those who had been begotten again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Christ from the dead. Though they had not seen the Saviour, they loved him, and believing on him, rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory. They had purified their souls unto unfeigned love of the brethren, having been born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God. Those whom John recognized as members of the Church he says had received an anointing of the Holy one, which abode with them, teaching them the truth. They were the sons of God, who had overcome the world, who believing in Christ had eternal life.

From all this, it is evident that the terms, believers, saints, children of God, the sanctified, the justified, and the like, are equivalent to the collective term Church, so that any company of men addressed as a Church, are always addressed as saints, faithful brethren, partakers of the Holy Ghost, and children

of God. The Church, therefore, consists exclusively of such. That these terms do not express merely a professed faith or external consecration is evident, because those to whom they are applied are declared to be no longer unjust, extortioners, thieves, drunkards, covetous, revilers, or adulterers, but to be led by the Spirit to the belief and obedience of the truth. The Church, therefore, consists of believers; and if it consists of believers, it consists of those who have peace with God, and have overcome the world.

It is not to be inferred from the fact that all the members of the Christian societies in Rome, Corinth, and Ephesus, are addressed as believers, that they all had true faith. But we can infer, that since what is said of them is said of them as believers, it had no application to those who were without faith. In like manner, though all are addressed as belonging to the Church, what is said of the Church had no application to those who were not really its members. Addressing a body of professed believers, as believers, does not prove them to be all sincere; neither does addressing a body of men as a Church, prove that they all belong to the Church. In both cases they are addressed according to their profession. If it is a fatal error to transfer what is said in Scripture of believers, to mere professors, to apply to nominal what is said of true Christians, it is no less fatal to apply what is said of the Church to those who are only by profession its members. It is no more proper to infer that the Church consists of the promiscuous multitude of sincere and insincere professors of the true faith, from the fact that all the professors, good and bad, in Corinth, are called the Church, than it would be to infer that they were all saints and children of God, because they are all so denominated. It is enough to determine the true nature of the Church, that none are ever addressed as its members, who are not, at the same time, addressed as true saints and sincere believers.

Argument from the descriptions of the Church.—The descriptions of the Church given in the word of God, apply to none but true believers, and therefore true believers constitute the Church. These descriptions relate either to the relation which the Church sustains to Christ, or to the character of its members, or to its future destiny. The argument is,

that none but true believers bear that relation to Christ, which the Church is said to sustain to him; none but believers possess the character ascribed to members of the Church; and none but believers are heirs of those blessings which are in reserve for the Church. If all this is so, it follows that the Church consists of those who truly believe. It will not be necessary to keep these points distinct, because in many passages of Scripture, the relation which the Church bears to Christ, the character of its members, and its destiny, are all brought into view.

1. The Church is described as the body of Christ. Eph. i. 22; iv. 15, 16; Col. i. 18. The relation expressed by this designation, includes subjection, dependence, participation of the same life, sympathy, and community. Those who are the body of Christ, are dependent upon him and subject to him, as the human body to its head. They are partakers of his life. The human body is animated by one soul, and has one vital principle. This is the precise truth which the Scriptures teach in reference to the Church as the body of Christ. It is his body, because animated by his Spirit, so that if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his, Rom. viii. 9; for it is by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, 1 Cor. xii. 13. The distinguishing characteristic of the members of Christ's body, is the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. They are therefore called *πνευματικοί*, men having the Spirit. They are led by the Spirit. They are spiritually minded. All this is true of sincere believers alone. It is not true of the promiscuous body of professors, nor of the members of any visible society, as such, and therefore no such visible society is the body of Christ. What is said of the body of Christ, is not true of any external organized corporation on earth, and, therefore, the two cannot be identical.

Again, as the body sympathizes with the head, and the members sympathize one with another, so all the members of Christ's body sympathize with him, and with each other. This sympathy is not merely a duty, it is a fact. Where it does not exist, there membership in Christ's body does not exist. All, therefore, who are members of Christ's body feel his glory to be their own, his triumph to be their vic-

tory. They love those whom he loves, and they hate what he hates. Finally, as the human head and body have a common destiny, so have Christ and his Church. As it partakes of his life, it shall participate in his glory. The members of his body suffer with him here, and shall reign with him hereafter.

It is to degrade and destroy the gospel to apply this description of the Church as the body of Christ, to the mass of nominal Christians, the visible Church, which consists of "all sorts of men." No such visible society is animated by his Spirit, is a partaker of his life, and heir of his glory. It is to obliterate the distinction between holiness and sin, between the Church and the world, between the children of God and the children of the devil, to apply what the Bible says of the body of Christ to any promiscuous society of saints and sinners.

2. The Church is declared to be the temple of God, because he dwells in it by his Spirit. That temple is composed of living stones. 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5. Know ye not, says the apostle to the Corinthians, that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you? 1 Cor. vi. 19. The inference from this description of the Church is, that it is composed of those in whom the Spirit of God dwells; but the Spirit of God dwells only in true believers, and therefore the Church consists of such believers.

3. The Church is the family of God. Those, therefore, who are not the children of God are not members of his Church. The wicked are declared to be the children of the devil; they therefore cannot be the children of God. Those only are his children who have the spirit of adoption; and being children, are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. Rom. viii. 16, 17.

4. The Church is the flock of Christ; its members are his sheep. He knows them, leads them, feeds them, and lays down his life for them. They were given to him by the Father, and no one is able to pluck them out of his hand. They know his voice and follow him, but a stranger they will not follow. John x. This description of the Church as the flock of Christ, is applicable only to saints or true believers, and therefore they alone constitute his Church.

5. The Church is the bride of Christ; the object of his pecu-

liar love, for which he gave himself, that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing. No man, saith the Scripture, ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church. Eph. v. 25—30. It is not true, according to the Bible, that any but true Christians are the objects of this peculiar love of Christ, and therefore they alone constitute that Church which is his bride.

According to the Scriptures, then, the Church consists of those who are in Christ, to whom he is made wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; of those who are his body, in whom he dwells by his Spirit; of those who are the family of God, the children of his grace; of those who, as living stones, compose that temple in which God dwells, and who rest on that elect, tried, precious corner-stone, which God has laid in Zion; of those who are the bride of Christ, purchased by his blood, sanctified by his word, sacraments, and Spirit, to be presented at last before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. These descriptions of the Church are inapplicable to any external visible society as such; to the Church of Rome, the Church of England, or the Presbyterian Church. The only Church of which these things are true, is the communion of saints, the body of true Christians.

Arguments from the attributes of the Church.—The great question at issue on this whole subject is, whether we are to conceive of the Church, in its essential character, as an external society, or as the communion of saints. One method of deciding this question, is by a reference to the acknowledged attributes of the Church. If those attributes belong only to a visible society, then the Church must be such a society. But if they can be predicated only of the communion of saints, then the Church is a spiritual body, and not an external, visible society.

The Church is the body of Christ, in which he dwells by his Spirit. It is in virtue of this indwelling of the Spirit, that the Church is what she is, and all that she is. To this source her holiness, unity, and perpetuity, are to be referred, and under these attributes all others are comprehended.

First then, as to holiness. The Church considered as the

communion of saints, is holy. Where the Spirit of God is, there is holiness. If, therefore, the Spirit dwells in the Church, the Church must be holy, not merely nominally, but really; not merely because her founder, her doctrines, her institutions are holy, but because her members are personally holy. They are, and must be, holy brethren, saints, the sanctified in Christ Jesus, beloved of God. They are led by the Spirit, and mind the things of the Spirit. The indwelling of the Spirit produces this personal holiness, and that separation from the world and consecration to God, which make the Church a holy nation, a peculiar people, zealous of good works. The Church is defined to be a company of believers, the *cætus fidelium*. To say that the Church is holy, is to say that that company of men and women who compose the Church, is holy. It is a contradiction to say that "all sorts of men," thieves, murderers, drunkards, the unjust, the rapacious, and the covetous, enter into the composition of a society whose essential attribute is holiness. To say that a man is unjust, is to say that he is not holy, and to say that he is not holy, is to say that he is not one of a company of saints. If then we conceive of the Church as the communion of saints, as the body of Christ, in which the Holy Spirit dwells as the source of its life, we see that the Church is and must be holy. It must be inwardly pure, that is, its members must be regenerated men, and it must be really separated from the world, and consecrated to God. These are the two ideas included in the scriptural sense of holiness, and in both these senses the Church is truly holy. But in neither sense can holiness be predicated of any external visible society as such. No such society is really pure, nor is it really separated from the world, and devoted to God. This is evident from the most superficial observation. It is plain that neither the Roman, the Greek, the English, nor the Presbyterian Church, falls within the definition of the Church, as the *cætus sanctorum*, or company of believers. No one of these societies is holy, they are all more or less corrupt and worldly. Their church state does not in the least depend on the moral character of their members, if the Church is essentially an external society. Such a society may sink to the lowest degree of corruption, and yet be a church, provided it

retain its external integrity. Of no such a society, however, is holiness an attribute, and all history and daily observation concur in their testimony as to this fact. If, therefore, no community of which holiness is not an attribute can be the Church, it follows, that no external society, composed of "all sorts of men," can be the holy, catholic Church. Those, therefore, who regard the Church as an external society, are forced to deny that the Church is holy. They all assert that it is composed of hypocrites and unrenewed men, as well as of saints. Thus, for example, Bellarmine defines the Church to be "the society of men united by the profession of the same Christian faith, and the communion of the same sacraments, under the government of legitimate pastors, and especially of the only vicar of Christ here on earth, the Roman Pontiff."* By the first clause of this definition he excludes all who do not profess the true faith, such as Jews, Mohammedans, Pagans, and heretics; by the second, all the unbaptized and the excommunicated; by the third, all schismatics, *i. e.*, all who do not submit to legitimate pastors, (prelates,) especially to the Pope. All other classes of men, he adds, are included in the Church, *etiamsi reprobi, scelesti et impii sint*. The main point of difference between the Romish and Protestant theories of the Church, he says, is that the latter requires internal virtues in order to Church membership, but the former requires nothing beyond outward profession, for the Church, he adds, is just as much an external society as the Roman people, the kingdom of France, or the republic of Venice.†

The Oxford theory of the Church differs from the Romish only in excluding subjection to the Pope as one of its essential characteristics. The Church is defined to be "The whole society of Christians throughout the world, including all those who profess their belief in Christ, and who are subject to lawful

* Lib. III. c. ii. col. 108. *Cætum hominum ejusdem Christianæ fidei professione, et corundem sacramentorum communionem colligatum, sub regimine legitimorum pastorum, ac præcipue unius Christi in terris vicarii Romani Pontificis.*

† Nos autem . . . non putamus requiri ullam internam virtutem, sed tantum professionem fidei et sacramentorum communionem, quæ sensu ipso percipitur. Ecclesia enim est cætus hominum ita visibilis et palpabilis, ut est cætus populi Romani, vel regnum Galliæ, aut respublica Venetorum.—*Ibid*, col. 109.

pastors.”* By Christians, in this definition, are meant nominal, or professed Christians. According to this view, neither inward regeneration, nor “visible sanctity of life, is requisite for admission to the Church of Christ.” “The Scriptures and the universal Church appoint,” it is said, “only one mode in which Christians are to be made members of the Church. It is baptism, which renders us, by divine right, members of the Church, and entitles us to all the privileges of the faithful.”† Again, when speaking of baptism, which thus secures a divine right to all the privileges of the faithful, it is said, there is no “mention of regeneration, sanctity, real piety, visible or invisible, as prerequisite to its reception.”‡ Holiness, therefore, is denied to be an attribute of the Church in any proper sense of the term. This denial is the unavoidable consequence of regarding the Church as a visible society, analogous to an earthly kingdom. As holiness is not necessary to citizenship in the kingdom of Spain, or republic of Venice, holiness is not an attribute of either of those communities. Neither Spain nor Venice is, as such, holy. And if the Church, in its true essential character, be a visible society, of which men become members by mere profession, and without holiness, then holiness is not an attribute of the Church. But, as by common consent the Church is holy, a theory of its nature which excludes this attribute, must be both unscriptural and uncatholic, and therefore false.

No false theory can be consistent. If, therefore, the theory of the Church which represents it as an external society of professors, is false, we may expect to see its advocates falling continually into suicidal contradictions. The whole Romish or ritual system is founded on the assumption, that the attributes and prerogatives ascribed in Scripture to the Church, belong to the visible Church, irrespective of the character of its members. Nothing is required for admission into that society, but profession of its faith, reception of its sacraments, and submission to its legitimate rulers. If a whole nation of Pagans or Mohammedans should submit to these external conditions, they would be true members of the Church, though ignorant

* Palmer on the Church, Amer. edition, vol. i. p. 28.

† Palmer. Vol. i. p. 144.

‡ Palmer. Vol. i. p. 377.

of its doctrines, though destitute of faith, and sunk in moral corruption. To this society the attributes of holiness, unity and perpetuity, belong; this society, thus constituted of "all sorts of men," has the prerogative authoritatively to teach, and to bind and loose; and the teaching and discipline of this society, Christ has promised to ratify in heaven. The absurdities and enormities, however, which flow from this theory, are so glaring and atrocious, that few of its advocates have the nerve to look them in the face. As we have seen, it is a contradiction to call a society composed of "all sorts of men," holy. Those who teach, therefore, that the Church is such a society, sometimes say that holiness is not a condition of membership; in other words, is not an attribute of the Church; and sometimes, that none but the holy are really in the Church, that the wicked are not its true members. But, if this be so, as holiness has its seat in the heart, no man can tell certainly who are holy, and therefore no one can tell who are the real members of the Church, or who actually constitute the body of Christ, which we are required to join and to obey. The Church, therefore, if it consists only of the holy, is not an external society, and the whole ritual system falls to the ground.

Neither Romish nor Anglican writers can escape from these contradictions. Augustin says, the Church is a living body, in which there are both a soul and body. Some members are of the Church in both respects, being united to Christ, as well externally as internally. These are the living members of the Church; others are of the soul, but not of the body—that is, they have faith and love, without external communion with the Church. Others, again, are of the body and not of the soul—that is, they have no true faith. These last, he says, are as the hairs, or nails, or evil humours of the human body.* According to Augustin, then, the wicked are not true members of the Church; their relation to it is altogether external. They no more make up the Church, than the scurf or hair on the surface of the skin make up the human body. This representation is in entire accordance with the Protestant doctrine, that

† In Breviculo Collationis. Collat. iii.

the Church is a communion of saints, and that none but the holy are its true members. It expressly contradicts the Romish and Oxford theory, that the Church consists of all sorts of men; and that the baptized, no matter what their character, if they submit to their legitimate pastors, are by divine right constituent portions of the Church; and that none who do not receive the sacraments, and who are not thus subject, can be members of the body of Christ. Yet this doctrine of Augustin, so inconsistent with their own, is conceded by Romish writers. They speak of the relation of the wicked to the Church as merely external or nominal, as a dead branch to a tree, or as chaff to the wheat. So, also, does Mr. Palmer,* who says: "It is generally allowed that the wicked belong only externally to the Church." Again: "That the ungodly, whether secret or manifest, do not really belong to the Church, considered as to its invisible character—namely, as consisting of its essential and permanent members, the elect, predestinated, and sanctified, who are known to God only, I admit."† That is, he admits his whole theory to be untenable. He admits, after all, that the wicked "do not really belong to the Church," and therefore, that the real or true Church consists of the sanctified in Christ Jesus. What is said of the wheat is surely not true of the chaff; and what the Bible says of the Church is not true of the wicked. Yet all Romanism, all ritualism, rests on the assumption, that what is said of the wheat is true of the chaff—that what is said of the communion of saints, is true of a body composed of all sorts of men. The argument, then, here is, that, as holiness is an attribute of the Church, no body which is not holy can be the Church. No external visible society, as such, is holy; and, therefore, the Church, of which the Scriptures speak, is not a visible society, but the communion of saints.

The same argument may be drawn from the other attributes of the Church. It is conceded that unity is one of its essential attributes. The Church is one, as there is, and can be but one body of Christ. The Church as the communion of saints is

* On the Church. Vol. i. p. 28.

† Ibid. p. 143.

one; as an external society it is not one; therefore, the Church is the company of believers, and not an external society.

The unity of the Church is threefold. 1. Spiritual, the unity of faith and of communion. 2. Comprehensive; the Church is one as it is catholic, embracing all the people of God. 3. Historical; it is the same Church in all ages. In all these senses, the Church considered as the communion of saints, is one; in no one of these senses can unity be predicated of the Church as visible.

The Church, considered as the communion of saints, is one in faith. The Spirit of God leads his people into all truth. He takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto them. They are all taught of God. The anointing which they have received abideth with them, and teacheth them all things, and is truth. 1 John ii. 27. Under this teaching of the Spirit, which is promised to all believers, and which is with and by the word, they are all led to the knowledge and belief of all necessary truth. And within the limits of such necessary truths, all true Christians, the whole *cœtus sanctorum*, or body of believers, are one. In all ages and in all nations, wherever there are true Christians, you find they have, as to all essential matters, one and the same faith.

The Holy Ghost is the spirit of love as well as of truth, and therefore all those in whom he dwells are one in affection as well as in faith. They have the same inward experience, the same conviction of sin, the same repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the same love of holiness, and desire after conformity to the image of God. There is, therefore, an inward fellowship or congeniality between them, which proves them to be one Spirit. They all stand in the same relation to God and Christ; they constitute one family, of which God is the Father; one kingdom, of which Christ is the Lord. They have a common interest and common expectation. The triumph of the Redeemer's kingdom is the common joy and triumph of all his people. They have, therefore, the fellowship which belongs to the subjects of the same king, to the children of the same family, and to the members of the same body. If one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; and if one member rejoices, all the members rejoice with it. This

sympathy is an essential characteristic of the body of Christ. Those who do not possess this affection and fellow-feeling for his members, are none of his. This inward spiritual communion expresses itself outwardly, not only in acts of kindness, but especially and appropriately in all acts of Christian fellowship. True believers are disposed to recognize each other as such, to unite as Christians in the service of their common Lord, and to make one joint profession before the world of their allegiance to him. In this, the highest and truest sense, the Church is one. It is one body in Christ Jesus. He dwells by his Spirit in all his members, and thus unites them as one living whole, leading all to the belief of the same truths, and binding all in the bond of peace. This is the unity of which the apostle speaks: "There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." Such is the unity which belongs to the Church; it does not belong to any external society, and therefore no such society can be the Church to which the attributes and prerogatives of the body of Christ belong.

In proof that spiritual unity cannot be predicated of the external Church, it is sufficient to refer to the obvious fact, that the Holy Spirit, the ground and bond of that unity, does not dwell in all the members of that Church. Wherever he dwells there are the fruits of holiness, and as those fruits are not found in all who profess to be Christians, the Spirit does not dwell in them so as to unite them to the body of Christ. The consequence is, they have neither the unity of faith nor of communion.

As to the unity of faith, it is undeniable that all Christian societies do not even profess the same faith. While all unite in certain doctrines, they each profess or deny what the others regard as fatal error or necessary truth. The Greek, Latin, and Protestant Churches do not regard themselves as one in faith. Each declares the others to be heretical. But this is not all. Unity of faith does not exist within the pale of these several churches. In each of them all grades and kinds of doctrine, from atheism to orthodoxy, are entertained. No one doubts this. It would be preposterous to assert that all the

members of the Latin Church hold the public faith of that society. The great body of them do not know what that faith is, and multitudes among them are infidels. Neither can any one pretend that the standards of the English, Dutch, or Prussian Church, express the faith of all their members. It is a notorious and admitted fact, that every form of religious faith and infidelity is to be found among the members of those societies. Unity of faith, therefore, is one of the attributes of the true Church, which, with no show of truth or reason, can be predicated of any external society calling itself the Church of God.

The case is no less plain with regard to communion. The societies constituting the visible Church, do not maintain Christian communion. They do not all recognize each other as brethren, nor do they unite in the offices of Christian worship and fellowship. On the contrary, they, in many cases, mutually excommunicate each other. The Greek, Latin, and Protestant Churches, each stands aloof. They are separate communions, having no ecclesiastical fellowship whatever. This kind of separation, however, is not so entirely inconsistent with the communion of saints, as the absence of brotherly love, and the presence of all unholy affections, which characterize to so great an extent these nominal Christians. If it be true that there is a warm sympathy, a real brotherly affection, between all the members of Christ's body, then nothing can be plainer than that the great mass of nominal Christians are not members of that body. The unity of the Spirit, the bond of perfectness, true Christian love, does not unite the members of any extended visible society into one holy brotherhood; and therefore no such society is the Church of Christ.

Romanists answer this argument by vehement assertion. They first degrade the idea of unity into that of outward connection. So that men profess the same faith, they are united in faith, even though many of them be heretics or infidels. If they receive the same sacraments and submit to the same rulers, they are in Christian communion, even though they bite and devour one another. They, then, boldly assert that the Church is confined to themselves; that Greeks, Anglicans, Lutherans, and Reformed, are out of the Church. To make it appear that

the Church, in their view of its nature, is one in faith and in communion, they deny that any body of men, or any individual, belongs to the Church, who does not profess their faith and submit to their discipline. Thus even the false, deteriorated idea of unity, which they claim, can be predicated of the Church only by denying the Christian name to more than one half of Christendom.

The answer given to this argument by Anglicans of the Oxford school, is still less satisfactory. They admit that the Church is one in faith and communion, that either heresy or schism is destructive of all saving connection with the body of Christ. To all appearance, however, the Church of England does not hold the faith of the Church of Rome, nor is she in ecclesiastical communion with her Latin sister. She is also almost as widely separated from the Greek and Oriental Churches. How low must the idea of unity be brought down, to make it embrace all these conflicting bodies! The Oxford writers, therefore, in order to save their church standing, are obliged, first, to teach with Rome that unity of the Church is merely in appearance or profession; secondly, that England and Rome do not differ as to matters of faith; and, thirdly, that notwithstanding their mutual denunciations, and, on the part of Rome, of the most formal act of excommunication, they are still in communion. The unity of communion therefore, is, according to their doctrine, compatible with non-communion and mutual excommunication. It is, however, a contradiction in terms, to assert that the Churches of Rome and England, in a state of absolute schism in reference to each other, are yet one in faith and communion. The essential attribute of unity, therefore, cannot be predicated of the external Church, either as to doctrine or as to fellowship.

The second form of unity is catholicity. The Church is one, because it embraces all the people of God. This was the prominent idea of unity in the early centuries of the Christian era. The Church is one, because there is none other. Those out of the Church are, therefore, out of Christ, they are not members of his body, nor partakers of his Spirit. This is the universal faith of Christendom. All denominations, in all ages, have, agreeably to the plain teaching of the Scriptures, and the very

nature of the gospel, maintained that there is no salvation out of the Church; in other words, that the Church is catholic, embracing all the people of God in all parts of the world. Of course it depends on our idea of the Church, whether this attribute of comprehensive unity belongs to it or not. If the Church is essentially a visible monarchical society, of which the Bishop of Rome is the head, then there can be no true religion and no salvation out of the pale of that society. To admit the possibility of men being saved who are not subject to the Pope, is to admit that they can be saved out of the Church; and to say they can be saved out of the Church, is to say they can be saved out of Christ, which no Christians admit. If the Church is a visible aristocratical society, under the government of prelates having succession, then the unity of the Church implies, that that those only who are subject to such prelates are within its pale. There can, therefore, be neither true religion nor salvation except among prelatists. This is a conclusion which flows unavoidably from the idea of the Church as an external visible society. Neither Romanists nor Anglicans shrink from this conclusion. They avow the premises and the inevitable sequence. Mr. Palmer says: "It is not, indeed, to be supposed or believed for a moment, that divine grace would permit the the really holy and justified members of Christ to fall from the way of life. He would only permit the unsanctified, the enemies of Christ, to sever themselves from that fountain where his Spirit is given freely."* This he says in commenting on a dictum of Augustin, "Let us hold it as a thing unshaken and firm, that no good men can divide themselves from the Church."† He further quotes Irenæus, as saying that God has placed every operation of his Spirit in the Church, so that none have the Spirit but those who are in the Church, "for where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God; and where the Spirit of God is, there also the Church and every grace exist."‡ Cyprian is urged as another authority, who says: "Whosoever, divorced from the Church, is united to an adulteress, is separated from

* Palmer on the Church. Vol. i. p. 69.

† *Inconcussum firmumque teneamus, nullos bonos ab ea (ecclesia) se posse dividere.*—*Adv. Parmenian.* Lib. iii. ch. 5.

‡ *Adv. Hæres.* iii. 24, p. 223.

the Church's promises; nor shall that man attain the rewards of Christ, who relinquishes his Church. He is a stranger, he is profane, he is an enemy."* All this is undoubtedly true. It is true, as Augustin says, that the good cannot divide themselves from the Church; it is true, as Irenæus says, where the Church is, there the Spirit of God is; and where the Spirit is, there the Church is. This is the favourite motto of Protestants. It is also true, as Cyprian says, that he who is separated from the Church, is separated from Christ. This brings the nature of the Church down to a palpable matter of fact. Are there any fruits of the Spirit, any repentance, faith, and holy living, among those who do not obey the Pope? If so, then the Church is not a monarchy, of which the Pope is the head. Is there any true religion, are there any of the people of God who are not subject to prelates? If so, then the Church is not a society subject to bishops having succession. These are questions which can be easily answered. It is, indeed, impossible, in every particular case, to discriminate between true and false professors of religion; but still, as a class, we can distinguish good men from bad men, the children of God from the children of this world. Men do not gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles. By their fruit we can know them. A wolf may indeed at times appear in sheep's clothing, nevertheless, men can distinguish sheep from wolves. We can therefore determine, with full assurance, whether it is true, as the Romish theory of the Church requires, that there is no religion among Protestants, whether all the seemingly pious men of the English Church, for example, are mere hypocrites. This is a question about which no rational man has any doubt, and, therefore, we see not how any such man can fail to see that the Romish theory of the Church is false. It is contradicted by notorious facts. With like assurance we decide against the Anglican theory, because if that theory is true, then there is no religion, and never has been any, out of the pale of the Episcopal Church. It is, however, equivalent to a confession that we ourselves are destitute of the Spirit of Christ, to refuse to recognize as his people the thou-

* *De Unitate*, p. 254.

sands of Presbyterians, Lutherans, and Reformed, who have lived for his service, and died to his glory. Here the ritual theory of the Church breaks down entirely. If the Church is an external society, that society must include all good men, all the children of God in the world. No such society does embrace all such men, and, therefore, the Church is not a visible society. It is a communion of saints. The very fact that a man is a saint, a child of God that is born of the Spirit, makes him a member of the Church. To say, therefore, with Augustin, that no good man can leave the Church, is only to say that the good will love and cleave to each other; to say, with Irenæus, that where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church, is to say the presence of the Spirit makes the Church; and to say with Cyprian, that he who is separated from the Church, is separated from Christ, is only saying, that if a man love not his brother whom he hath seen, he cannot love God whom he hath not seen. If the Church is the communion of saints, it includes all saints; it has catholic unity because it embraces all the children of God. And to say there is no salvation out of the Church, in this sense of the word, is only saying there is no salvation for the wicked, for the unrenewed and unsanctified. But to say there is no piety and no salvation out of the papal or prelatie Church, is very much like doing despite unto the Spirit of God; it is to say of multitudes of true Christians, what the Pharisees said of our Lord; "They cast out devils by Beelzebub, the chief of devils." That is, it is denying the well authenticated work of the Spirit, and attributing to some other and some evil source, what is really the operation of the Holy Ghost. Wherever the Spirit of God is, there the Church is; and as the Spirit is not only within, but without all external church organizations, so the Church itself cannot be limited to any visible society.

The historical unity of the Church is its perpetuity; its remaining one and the same in all ages. In this sense, also, the true Church is one. It is now what it was in the days of the apostles. It has continued the same without interruption, from the beginning, and is to continue until the final consummation; for the gates of hell can never prevail against it. About this there is no dispute; all Christians admit the Church

to be in this sense perpetual. In asserting the historical unity, or uninterrupted continuance of the Church, all must maintain the unbroken continuance of every thing which, according to their several theories, is essential to its existence. If the Church is a visible society, professing the true faith, and subject to lawful prelates, and especially to the Pope of Rome, then the perpetuity of the Church supposes the continued existence of such a society, thus organized, always professing the true faith, and always subject to its lawful rulers. There must therefore, always be an external visible society; that society must profess the truth; there must always be prelates legitimately consecrated, and a lawful pope. If, according to the Anglican theory, the Church is precisely what Romanists declare it to be, except subjection to the pope, then its perpetuity involves all the particulars above mentioned, except the continued recognition of the headship of the bishop of Rome. If, on the other hand, the Church is a company of believers, if it is the communion of saints, all that is essential to its perpetuity is that there should always be believers. It is not necessary they should be externally organized, much less is it necessary that they should be organized in any prescribed form. It is not necessary that any line of officers should be uninterruptedly continued; much less is it necessary that those officers should be prelates or popes. All that God has promised, and all that we have a right to expect, is, that the true worshippers of the Lord Jesus shall never entirely fail. They may be few and scattered; they may be even unknown to each other, and, in a great measure, to the world; they may be as the seven thousand in the days of the prophet Elijah, who had not bowed the knee unto Baal; still, so long as they exist, the Church, considered as the communion of saints, the mystical body of Christ on earth, continues to exist.

The argument from this source, in favour of the Protestant theory of the Church, is, that in no other sense is the Church perpetual. No existing external society has continued uninterruptedly to profess the true faith. Rome was at one time Arian, at another Pelagian, at another, according to the judgment of the Church of England, idolatrous. All Latin churches were subject to the instability of the Church of Rome. No

existing eastern Church has continued the same in its doctrines, from the times of the apostles to the present time. That there has been an interrupted succession of popes and prelates validly consecrated, is admitted to be a matter of faith, and not of sight. From the nature of the case it does not admit of historical proof. The chances, humanly speaking, are as a million to one against it. If it is assumed, it must be on the ground of the supposed necessity of such succession to the perpetuity of the Church, which is a matter of promise. But the Church can exist without a pope, without prelates, yea, without presbyters, if in its essential nature it is the communion of saints. There is, therefore, no promise of an uninterrupted succession of validly ordained church-officers, and consequently no foundation for faith in any such succession. In the absence of any such promise, the historical argument against "apostolic succession," becomes overwhelming and unanswerable.

We must allow the attributes of the Church to determine our conception of its nature. If no external society is perpetual; if every existing visible Church has more than once apostatized from the faith, then the Church must be something which can continue in the midst of the general defection of all external societies; then external organization is not essential to the Church, much less can any particular mode of organization be essential to its existence. The only Church which is holy, which is one, which is catholic, apostolic, and perpetual, is the communion of saints, the company of faithful men, the mystical body of Christ, whose only essential bond of union is the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. That Spirit, however, always produces faith and love, so that all in whom he dwells are united in faith and Christian fellowship. And as, in virtue of the divine promise, the Spirit is to remain constantly gathering in the people of God, until Christ comes the second time, so the Church can never fail. The attributes, then, of holiness, unity, and perpetuity, do not belong to any external society, and therefore no such society can be the Church. They are all found, in their strictest sense and highest measure, in the communion of saints, and therefore, the saints constitute the one, holy, apostolic, Catholic Church.

Argument from the promises and prerogatives of the Church.—The Scriptures abound with promises addressed to the Church, and they ascribe certain prerogatives to it. From the character of these promises and prerogatives, we may infer the nature of the Church.

1. The most comprehensive of the promises in question, is that of the continued presence of Christ, by the indwelling of his Spirit. This promise is often given in express terms, and is involved in the description of the Church as the body of Christ and the temple of God. It is not his body, neither is it the temple of God, without the presence of the Spirit. The presence of God is not inoperative. It is like the presence of light and heat, or of knowledge and love, which of necessity manifest themselves by their effects. In like manner, and by a like necessity, the presence of God is manifested by holiness, righteousness, and peace. He is not, where these graces are not; just as certainly as light is not present in the midst of darkness. The promise of God to his Church is, *Lo, I am with you always*; in every age and in every part of the world; so that where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church; and where the Church is, there is the Spirit. The presence promised is, therefore, a perpetual presence. It is also universal. God does not promise to be with the officers of the Church to the exclusion of the members; nor with some members to the exclusion of others. The soul is not in the head of the human body, to the exclusion of the limbs; nor is it in the eyes and ears, to the exclusion of the hands or feet. So long as it is in the body at all, it is in the whole body. In like manner the promised presence of God with his Church relates to all its members.

If this is so, if God has promised to be with his Church; if his presence is operative; if it is perpetual and all-pervading, then it is plain that this promise was never made to any external society, for to no such society has it ever been fulfilled. No such society has had the persistency in truth and holiness, which the divine presence of necessity secures. If in one age it professes the truth, in another it professes error. If at one time its members appear holy, at another they are most manifestly corrupt. Or, if some manifest the presence of the Spirit, others give evidence that they are not under his influence. It

is, therefore, just as plain that God is not always present with the external Church, as that the sun is not always above our horizon. The nominal Church would correspond with the real, the visible with the invisible, if the promise of the divine presence belonged to the former. With his own people God is always present; they, therefore, must constitute that Church to whom the promise of his presence belongs.

2. The promise of divine teaching is made to the Church. This is included in the promise of the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of truth, the source of light and knowledge, wherever he dwells. Christ, when about to leave the world, promised his disciples that he would send them the Spirit, to guide them into all truth. With regard to this promise it is to be remarked, 1. That it is made to all the members of the Church. It is not the peculium of its officers, for it is expressly said, Ye shall be all taught of God. And the apostle John says to all believers, Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. 2. It relates only to necessary truths. God has not promised to teach his people all science, nor has he promised to render them infallible in matters of religion. All he has promised, is to teach them whatever is necessary to their salvation, and to qualify them for the work to which they are called. 3. This divine teaching is effectual and abiding. "The anointing," says the apostle, "which ye have received of him, abideth with you." Those who are taught of God, therefore, continue in the knowledge and acknowledgment of the truth.

That such divine teaching is not promised to any external society, is plain; 1. Because all the constituent members of no such society are thus divinely taught. The visible Church includes "all sorts of men," good and bad, ignorant and enlightened, heterodox and orthodox, believing and infidel. Of the members of that society, therefore, that is not true which the Scriptures declare to be true, with regard to the members of the Church. They are not all taught of God. 2. Within the pale of every external, and especially of every denominational Church, there is heresy, either secret or avowed. But the teaching of God, as has been shown, precludes the possibility of fundamental error. There may be great diversity of views on many points of doctrine, but as to every thing necessary to sal-

vation, all the members of the body of Christ must agree. It is, however, notorious and avowed, that in the Church of Scotland, of England, and of Rome, all forms of doctrine, from the purest scriptural faith down to the lowest scepticism, are to be found; therefore, no such society can be the Church to which this divine teaching is promised. 3. The teaching of God being perpetual, securing constancy in the acknowledgment of the truth, none but those who continue in the truth can belong to the Church to which that teaching is promised. This fidelity is an attribute of the invisible Church alone, and therefore the communion of saints is the body to which this promise is made.

3. A third promise is that of divine protection. By this promise the Church is secured from internal decay and from external destruction. Its enemies are numerous and powerful; they are ever on the watch, and most insidious in their attacks. Without the constant protection of her divine Sovereign, the Church would soon entirely perish. This promise is made to every individual member of the Church. They are all the members of his body, and his body, redeemed and sanctified, can never perish. No man, he says, shall ever pluck them out of his hand. They may be sorely tempted; they may be seduced into many errors, and even into sin; but Satan shall not triumph over them. They may be persecuted, and driven into the caverns and dens of the earth, but though cast down, they are never forsaken.

That this promise of protection is not made to the external Church is plain, 1. Because multitudes included within the pale of that Church are not the subjects of this divine protection. 2. The external Church has not been preserved from apostacy. Both before and since the advent of Christ, idolatry or false doctrine has been introduced and tolerated by the official organs of that Church. 3. A society dispersed is, for the time being, destroyed. Its organization being dissolved, it ceases to exist as a society. From such disorganization or dispersion, the visible Church has not been protected, and therefore it cannot be the body to which this promise of protection belongs.

4. We find in the Scriptures frequent assurances that the Church is to extend from sea to sea, from the rising to the set-

ting of the sun; that all nations and people are to flow unto it. These promises the Jews referred to their theocracy. Jerusalem was to be the capital of the world; the King of Zion was to be the King of the whole earth, and all nations were to be subject to the Jews. Judaizing Christians interpret these same predictions as securing the universal prevalence of the theocratic Church, with its pope or prelates. In opposition to both, the Redeemer said: My kingdom is not of this world. His apostles also taught that the kingdom of God consists in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. The extension of the Church, therefore, consists in the prevalence of love to God and man, of the worship and service of the Lord Jesus Christ. It matters not how the saints may be associated; it is not their association, but their faith and love that makes them the Church, and as they multiply and spread, so does the Church extend. All the fond anticipations of the Jews, founded on a false interpretation of the divine promises, were dissipated by the advent of a Messiah whose kingdom is not of this world. History is not less effectually refuting the ritual theory of the Church, by showing that piety, the worship and obedience of Christ, the true kingdom of God, is extending far beyond the limits which that theory would assign to the dominion of the Redeemer.

5. The great promise made to the Church is holiness and salvation. Christ, it is said, loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. This and similar passages, plainly teach that holiness and salvation are promised to every member of the Church. This is obvious; 1. Because these are blessings of which individuals alone are susceptible. It is not a community or society, as such, that is redeemed, regenerated, sanctified, and saved. Persons, and not communities, are the subjects of these blessings. 2. This follows from the relation of the Church to Christ as his body. The members of the Church are members of Christ. They are in him, partakers of his life, and the subjects of his grace. 3. It is, in fact, a conceded point. It is the common doctrine

of all Christians, that out of the Church there is no salvation, and within the Church there is no perdition. It is the doctrine of all ritualists, that those who die in communion with the Church are saved. To this conclusion they are unavoidably led by what the Scriptures teach concerning the Church, as the body of Christ, and temple of God. Protestants admit the justice of the conclusion. They acknowledge that the Bible as plainly teaches that every member of the Church shall be saved, as that every penitent believer shall be admitted into heaven. If this is so, as both parties virtually concede, it determines the nature of the Church. If all the members of the Church are saved, the Church must consist exclusively of saints, and not "of all sorts of men."

Membership in the Church being thus inseparably connected with salvation, to represent the Church as a visible society, is—

1. To make the salvation of men to depend upon their external relation, entirely irrespective of their moral character.
2. It is to promise salvation to multitudes against whom God denounces wrath.
3. It is to denounce wrath on many to whom God promises salvation.
4. It therefore utterly destroys the nature of true religion.

The argument for the true doctrine concerning the Church, derived from the divine promises, is this. Those promises, according to the Scriptures, are made to the humble, the penitent and believing; the Church, therefore, must consist exclusively of the regenerated. Those to whom the promises of divine presence, guidance, protection, and salvation, are made, cannot be a promiscuous multitude of all sorts of men. That theory of the Church, therefore, which makes it an external society, is necessarily destructive of religion and morality. Of religion, because it teaches that our relation to God depends on outward circumstances, and not on the state of the heart and character of the life. If, by an external rite or outward profession, we are made "members of Christ," "the children of God," and "inheritors of the kingdom of heaven;" if we are thus united to that body to which all the promises are made; and if our connection with the Church or body of Christ, can be dissolved only by heresy, schism, or excommunication, then of necessity religion is mere formalism, Church membership is the only con-

dition of salvation, and Church ceremonies the only exercises of piety.

This natural tendency of the theory in question is, indeed, in many minds, counteracted by opposing influences. Men who have access to the Bible, cannot altogether resist the power of its truths. They are thus often saved, in a measure, from the perverting influence of their false views of the Church. The whole tendency, however, of such error, is to evil. It perverts one's views of the nature of religion, and of the conditions of salvation. It leads men to substitute for real piety the indulgence of religious sentiment. They expend on the Church as an æsthetic idea, or as represented in a cathedral, the awe, the reverence, the varied emotions, which simulate the fear of God and love of his excellence. This kind of religion often satisfies those whose consciences are too much enlightened, and whose tastes are too much refined, to allow them to make full use of the theory that the visible Church is the body of Christ, and all its members the children of God.

This doctrine is no less destructive of morality than of religion. How can it be otherwise, if all the promises of God are made to men, not as penitent and holy, but as members of an external society; and if membership in that society requires, as Bellarmine and Mr. Palmer, Oxford and Rome, teach, no internal virtue whatever? This injurious tendency of Ritualism is not a matter of logical inference merely. It is abundantly demonstrated by history. The ancient Jews believed that God had made a covenant which secured the salvation of all the natural descendants of Abraham, upon condition of their adherence to the external theocracy. They might be punished for their sins, but, according to their doctrine, no circumcised Israelite ever entered hell. The effect of this doctrine was manifest in their whole spirit and character. External connection with the Church, and practice of its rites and ceremonies, constituted their religion. They would not eat with unwashed hands, nor pray unless towards Jerusalem; but they would devour widows' houses, and, for a pretence, make long prayers. They were whited sepulchres, fair in the sight of men, but within full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness. The same effect has been produced by the doctrine which makes salvation depend

upon connection with a visible society, in the Greek and Latin Churches. Ecclesiastical services have taken the place of spiritual worship. Corruption of morals has gone hand in hand with the decline of religion. The wicked are allowed to retain their standing in the Church, and are led to consider themselves as perfectly safe so long as embraced within its communion; and no matter what their crimes, they are committed to the dust "in the sure hope of a blessed resurrection."

There is one effect of this false theory of the Church, which ought to be specially noticed. It is the parent of bigotry, religious pride combined with malignity. Those who cry, The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are we, are an abomination in the sight of God. That this spirit is the legitimate fruit of the ritual theory is plain. That theory leads a particular class of men to regard themselves, on the ground of their external relations, as the special favourites of heaven. It is of course admitted that a sense of God's favour, the assurance of his love, is the fountain of all holy affections and right actions. Hence the Bible is filled with the declarations of his love for his people; and hence the Holy Spirit is sent to shed abroad his love in their hearts. The assurance of the divine favour, however, produces holiness, only when we have right apprehensions of God, and of the way in which his love comes to be exercised towards us. When we see that he is of purer eyes than to look upon sin; that it is only for Christ's sake he is propitious to the guilty; that the love and indulgence of sin are proof that we are not the objects of his favour, the more we see of our unworthiness, the more grateful are we for his undeserved love, and the more desirous to be conformed to his image. But when men believe they are the favourites of God, because members of a particular society, that no matter what their personal character, they are objects of God's special love, then the natural and inevitable effect is pride, contempt, intolerance, malignity, and, when they dare, persecution. The empirical proof of the truth of this remark is found in the history of the Jews, of the Brahmins, of the Mohammedans, and of the Christian Church. It is to be found in the practical effect of the doctrine in question, wherever it has prevailed. The Jews regarded themselves as the peculiar favourites of

God in virtue of their descent from Abraham, and irrespective of their personal character. This belief rendered them proud, contemptuous, intolerant, and malignant towards all beyond their exclusive circle. In the Christian Church we always find the same spirit connected with this doctrine, expressed under one set of circumstances by anathemas, enforced by the rack and stake; under another, by denying the mercy of God to the penitent and believing, if not subject to "pastors having succession;" by setting up exclusive claims to be the Church of God; by contemptuous language and deportment towards their fellow Christians; and, as in the case of Mr. Palmer, with the open avowal of the right and duty of persecution.

Such are the legitimate effects of this theory; effects which it has never failed to produce. It is essentially Antinomian in its tendency, destructive of true religion, and injurious to holy living, and therefore cannot be in accordance with the word and will of God.

The only answer given to this fatal objection is an evasion. Ritualists abandon *pro hac vice* their theory. They teach, that to the visible Church, Christ has promised his constant presence, his guidance, his protection, and his saving grace; and that in order to membership in this Church, no internal virtue is required, no regeneration, piety, sanctity, visible or invisible. But when it is objected, that if the promises are made to the visible Church, they are made to the wicked, for the wicked are within the pale of that Church, they answer, "The wicked are not really in the Church;" the Church really consists of "the elect, the predestinated, the sanctified."* As soon, however, as this difficulty is out of sight, they return to their theory, and make the Church to consist "of all sorts of men." This temporary admission of the truth, does not counteract the tendency of the constant inculcation of the doctrine that membership in that body to which the promises are made, is secured by external profession. Wherever that doctrine is taught, there the very essence of Antinomianism is inculcated, and there the fruits of Antinomianism never fail to appear.

* Palmer on the Church, I. pp. 28, 58.

The same argument, afforded by a consideration of the promises made to the Church to determine its nature, flows from a consideration of its prerogatives. Those prerogatives are the authority to teach, and the right to exercise discipline. These are included in the power of the keys. This is not the place for any formal exhibition of the nature and limitations of this power. To construct the argument to be now presented, it is only necessary to assume what all Christians concede. Christ has given his Church the authority to teach, and to bind and loose. He has promised to ratify her decisions, and to enforce her judgments. In this general statement all denominations of Christians agree. Our present question is, To whom does this power belong? To the Church, of course. But is it to the visible Church, as such, irrespective of the spiritual state of its members, or is it to the Church considered as the communion of saints? The answer to this question makes all the difference between Popery and Protestantism, between the Inquisition and the liberty wherewith Christ has made his people free.

The prerogative in question does not belong to the visible Church, or to its superior officers, but to the company of believers and their appropriate organs; 1. Because it presupposes the presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is only because the Church is the organ of the Spirit of Christ, and therefore only so far as it is his organ, that the teaching of the Church is the teaching of Christ, or that her decisions will be ratified in heaven. It has, however, been abundantly proved from the word of God, that the Holy Spirit dwells only in true believers; they only are his organs, and therefore it is only the teaching and discipline of his own people, as guided by his Spirit, that Christ has promised to ratify. To them alone belongs the prerogative in question, and to any external body, only on the assumption of their being, and only as far as they are what they profess to be, the true children of God. No external visible body, as such, is so far the organ of the Holy Spirit, that its teachings are the teaching of Christ, and its decisions his judgments. No such body is, therefore, the Church to which the power of doctrine, and the key of the kingdom of heaven have been committed.

2. As it is undeniable that the visible Church is always a mixed body, and often controlled in its action by wicked or worldly men, if Christ had promised to ratify the teaching and discipline of that body, he would be bound to sanction what was contrary to his own word and Spirit. It is certain that unrenewed men are governed by the spirit of the world, or by that spirit which works in the children of disobedience, and it is no less certain that the visible Church has often been composed, in great measure, of unrenewed men; if, therefore, to them has been committed this prerogative, then the people of God are, by Christ's own command, bound to obey the world and those governed by its spirit. If wicked men, whether in the Church or out of it, cast us out of their communion, because of the opposition between us and them, it is nothing more than the judgment of the world. It is neither the judgment of Christ, nor of his Church. But if true believers refuse us their fellowship, because of our opposition to them as believers, it is a very different matter. It is one thing to be rejected by the wicked because they are wicked, and quite another to be cast off by the good because they are good. It is only the judgment of his own people, and even of his own people, only as they submit to the guidance of his own Spirit, (*i. e.*, of his people as his people,) that Christ has promised to ratify in heaven. The condemnation of Christ himself by the Jewish Church, of Athanasius by the Church of the fifth century, of Protestants by the Church of Rome, was but the judgment of the world, and of him who is the god of this world.

3. If the power of the keys is, as ritualists teach, committed to the chief officers of the Church as a visible society, if it is their official prerogative, then there can be no such thing as the right of private judgment. Such a right can have no place in the presence of the Spirit of God. If the chief officers of the Church, without regard to their character, are the organs of that Spirit, then all private Christians are bound to submit without hesitation to all their decisions. This, as is well known, is the doctrine and practice of all those churches which hold that the promises and prerogatives pertaining to the Church, belong to the Church as a visible society. All private judgment, all private responsibility, are done away. But according

to the Scriptures, it is the duty of every Christian to try the spirits whether they be of God, to reject an apostle, or an angel from heaven, should he deny the faith, and of that denial such Christian is of necessity the judge. Faith, moreover, is an act for which every man is personally responsible; his salvation depends upon his believing the truth. He must, therefore, have the right to believe God, let the chief officers of the Church teach what they may. The right of private judgment is, therefore, a divine right. It is incompatible with the ritual theory of the Church, but perfectly consistent with the Protestant doctrine that the Church is the communion of saints. The latter is consequently the true doctrine.

4. The fact that the teaching of the visible Church has so often been contradictory and heretical, that council is against council, one age against another age, one part of the Church against another part, is a clear proof that the prerogative of authoritative teaching was never given by Christ to any such erring body. And the fact that the external Church has so often excommunicated and persecuted the true people of God, is proof positive that hers are not the decisions which are always ratified in heaven.

There are many difficult questions respecting the "power of the keys," which are not here alluded to. All that is now necessary, is to show that this is a prerogative which cannot belong to the visible Church as such. It can belong to her only so far as she is the organ of the Church invisible, to which all the attributes, the promises and prerogatives of the true Church are to be referred. And no more wicked or more disastrous mistake has ever been made, than to transfer to the visible society of professors of the true religion, subject to bishops having succession, the promises and prerogatives of the body of Christ. It is to attribute to the world the attributes of the Church; to the kingdom of darkness the prerogatives of the kingdom of light. It is to ascribe to wickedness the character and blessedness of goodness. Every such historical Church has been the world baptized; all the men of a generation, or of a nation, are included in the pale of such a communion. If they are the Church, who are the world? If they are the kingdom of light, who constitute the kingdom of darkness? To teach that

the promises and prerogatives of the Church belong to these visible societies, is to teach that they belong to the world, organized under a particular form and called by a new name.

(To be continued.)

ART. VI.—*On the Correspondence between Prophecy and History.*

THE argument from prophecy, whatever be its rank among the proofs of inspiration, is admitted upon all hands to have some advantages peculiar to itself, arising partly from its very nature, partly from the form in which it is presented to the mind. As compared with miracles, it has the advantage of appealing to a surer test, or, at least, one less susceptible of being tampered with, as well as to a wider sphere of witnesses, the evidence not only remaining unimpaired, but actually growing stronger with the lapse of time. Yet, notwithstanding these advantages, this source of proof is less and less resorted to, at least in such a manner as to give it its legitimate effect, that of corroborating and confirming the internal tokens of divinity with which the word of God is pregnant. This has arisen, in a great degree, from a twofold perversion of the prophecies, the first of which consists in bestowing on the unfulfilled predictions that degree and kind of attention which is due only to those already verified; the other in transferring the attention from enlarged and comprehensive views of the prophetic Scripture to minute and disputable points, the importance of which bears no proportion to their darkness and complexity.

Hence, some have hastily inferred that this whole species of inquiry is unprofitable, and that it is better to content ourselves with the historical, and doctrinal, and practical instructions of the Bible, and let prophecy alone, as a superfluous, if not a dangerous auxiliary to the other grounds of our belief in the divine authority of Scripture. This may be a sound and wise conclusion with respect to certain forms of prophetic interpretation and dispute. But we cannot shut our eyes upon the whole range of prophetic

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ARTICLE I.—*Idea of the Church.*

[Concluded from the April number.]

The doctrinal argument.—The relation between theology and ecclesiology is so intimate, that the one of necessity determines the other. The Protestant scheme of the doctrines of Christianity unavoidably leads to the Protestant theory of the Church; and the Romish system of doctrine, with a like necessity, leads to the Romish view of the nature of the Church. This being the case, all the arguments, which sustain the true doctrine concerning the plan of salvation, are conclusive in favour of the true theory of the Church. This is the real strength of the Protestant cause. The doctrines of Christianity are not only revealed with far more distinctness than the nature of the Church, but they enter so deeply into the experience of Christians that they cannot be renounced. Every evangelical believer, therefore, feels, when called upon to embrace the Ritual doctrine concerning the Church, that he is called upon to renounce his entire faith, so far, at least, as the method of salvation is concerned.

If we leave mysticism out of view, there are three radical forms of doctrine, with which are connected corresponding views of the nature of the Church. The first of these forms is

the Rationalistic, which more or less completely banishes the supernatural element from Christianity. Some Rationalists deny even the supernatural origin of the gospel. Others, while they admit that Christianity is an immediate revelation from God, make its doctrines as little mysterious as possible. Matters of faith are brought, as much as may be, down to the comprehension of the human reason, and accommodated, as far as possible, to the desires of the human heart. According to this system, the moral state of man is but little affected by the fall, either as to his character or powers. The conditions of acceptance with God are acts of virtue; and the only assistance needed or granted is the moral influence of the truths and institutions of Christianity. These three points embrace the distinctive features of that system of Rationalism, which, under the names of Pelagianism and low Arminianism, has so extensively prevailed.

To those who hold this view of the nature of Christianity, the Church can be nothing supernatural. The epithet *mystical*, as applied to it, can have no sense. There are, however, three views of the nature of the Church, one or another of which is commonly embraced by those who hold this system of doctrine. 1. That the Church is simply a voluntary society; founded, it may be, by Christ, and therefore having so far a divine origin, but differing in nothing essential from other voluntary associations of men. It has the same, and no higher powers; its members can modify it at pleasure, prescribing whatever mode of organization and conditions of membership they see fit; and it enjoys no special promise of the divine guidance and protection.

2. A second theory is the Erastian. This system denies that the Church is a self-governing society, having its own laws, prerogatives, and officers. It is regarded as a mere phase of the State. The State has for its end the general good, and therefore has the right to regulate every institution which has the public good for its object. As it organizes and controls an army for the protection of its subjects, and a system of schools for their instruction in secular knowledge; so it has a right to determine what religious doctrines shall be taught, and to commission those who are to teach them.

3. A third theory takes somewhat higher ground. The Church is a divine institution; an external society, with its doctrine, organization, and worship, prescribed by Christ. To it all the promises belong. There is no covenant mercy to any out of its pale; though "the uncovenanted mercies of God" are, by the advocates of this doctrine, commonly regarded as abundantly sufficient for all moral and sincere men, especially among the heathen. The Church, however, is a kind of peerage, an aristocratic and exclusive circle. This peculiar distinction, however, of the members of this society, does not depend on any supernatural grace connected with its services. It is much more analogous to the peculiar privileges of the aristocracy, where an order of nobility exists. Being a member of that privileged class, neither supposes a man to be better, nor does it render him better, than other men. Or it is analogous to the ancient theocracy. It was not because descent from Abraham made a man a saint, or that the rite of circumcision changed the moral character, that the Jews regarded themselves as the exclusive favourites of heaven. It was simply because they belonged to a community to which God had, as they assumed, promised his saving goodness. This is the common high-church theory of the Church, as distinguished from Ritualism, which is a higher and more mystic doctrine, and supposes that the Spirit of God is in all the members of the Church, considered as an external society. High-churchism, of the character just referred to, proceeds on the denial of all experimental religion. It supposes that the conditions of salvation are a reputable mode of life, and fellowship with the church organized in a certain way, and having a regular succession.

The second comprehensive form of Christian doctrine is called Ritualism, because it makes the rites of the Church the exclusive channels of grace and salvation. This system admits the doctrines of the fall and of original sin, of the Trinity, of redemption, and of grace. But it teaches 1. That the benefits of redemption, and especially the grace of the Holy Spirit, are not communicated in any other way than by means of the sacraments. 2. That the sacraments, when properly administered, always convey grace to those who do not interpose the obstacle of mortal sin. 3. That it is only the sacraments

administered by duly authorized ministers in communion with the Church, which have this saving efficacy.

According to this view of the method of salvation, it necessarily follows that the visible Church is a storehouse and channel of grace; that all out of its pale perish, and that all within its communion are saved. Ritualists teach that Christ gave the Holy Spirit, and the power to forgive sin, to his apostles. The apostles committed these gifts to prelates as their successors. The prelates, in unbroken succession, preserve these powers in the Church, and commit to priests, by the imposition of their hands, the ability to render the sacraments efficacious, and to grant absolution for sin. Every man, therefore, in baptism, is both justified and sanctified. He is translated from a state of sin and condemnation into a state of habitual grace. Grace is strengthened by the rite of confirmation, and by receiving the eucharist. It is lost by mortal sins, and then can only be restored by the sacrament of penance, which includes contrition, confession (to a priest), and satisfaction on the part of the penitent, and absolution on the part of the priest. The only method, according to this system, by which we can become united with Christ, and partakers of his redemption, is by union with the visible Church. This system places the salvation of men in the hands of the clergy, and enables them to sell pardon and holiness for money, or for obedience. This is the "mystery of iniquity" which has exalted itself, or rather enabled antichrist to exalt himself, in the temple of God; showing himself as God; claiming the prerogatives, and the obedience which belong to God alone. The whole Romish system of doctrine is true, if this theory of the Church be true; and this theory of the Church is false, if the theology on which it is founded be false.

The third system of doctrine is the evangelical, which teaches 1. That all men, in consequence of the fall of Adam, are in a helpless state of sin and misery. 2. That the eternal Son of God, having assumed our nature, and having been made under the law, has brought in everlasting righteousness. 3. That this righteousness, with all the benefits of redemption, is freely offered to all men. 4. That it is by faith in Christ that we become united to him, and that he dwells in us by his

Spirit. 5. That all who, by the power of the Spirit of God, are thus united to Christ by faith, are partakers of justification, adoption, and sanctification, together with all the benefits which do, here and hereafter, either accompany or flow from them. 6. That union with the visible church, and participation of the sacraments, are not the indispensable conditions of our union with Christ, neither are they the means of communicating, in the first instance, his benefits and grace, but rather the appointed means by which our union with Christ is acknowledged, and from time to time strengthened and renewed.

It is conceded that the Church is the body of Christ, and therefore consists of those who are in Christ; and as, according to the evangelical system, faith is the means of union with Christ, it follows: 1. That none but believers are in the Church; and 2. That all true believers are as such and for that reason alone, members of the Church of Christ. 3. The Church, therefore, in its true idea or essential nature, is not a visible society, but the company of faithful men—the *cætus sanctorum*, or the communion of saints. The turning point, therefore, between the two systems, that on which all other matters in dispute between Ritualists and the Evangelical, Romanists and Protestants, depend, is the answer to the question, What unites us to Christ? If we are united to Christ by faith, then all believers are in Christ, and constitute the Church. If we can come to Christ only by union with the visible Church, and through the ministrations of the priesthood, then the whole Romish theory of the Church must be conceded. Many Ritualists freely admit that the above-mentioned question is the hinge of the whole controversy. Thus, Archdeacon Manning says: “Here in fact is the question:—Is the Church a means to an end, or is it a separable consequence of that end which may be otherwise effected? Are we, by means of the Church, made partakers of Christ; or being otherwise made partakers of Christ, are we, as it may be or not, made partakers of the Church? Or again, are we, by means of baptism, made partakers of Christ; or, being otherwise made partakers of Christ, are we, as it may be or not, made partakers of baptism?”* This is indeed the question, Are we made partakers

* Unity of the Church, New York edition, p. 233.

of Christ by a personal act of faith, or by union with the visible Church?

The Protestant answer to that question may be given in the language of Hooker, "That which linketh Christ to us is his mere mercy and love towards us; that which tieth us to him, is our faith in the promised salvation revealed in the word of truth."* In proof of this point it may be remarked, 1. The Scriptures teach concerning those who are in Christ, what is true of none others than true believers. There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ, Rom. viii. 1. If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature, 2 Cor. v. 17. To those in Christ, he is made of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, 1 Cor. i. 30. They are sure of eternal life or a blessed resurrection, 1 Cor. xv. 22. They are quickened, reconciled to God and forgiven, Col. ii. 11-14. These things are not true of unbelievers, and therefore none but believers are in Christ, and faith and not union with the visible Church unites us to him. 2. To be in Christ means the same as Christ being in us, or the Spirit of Christ dwelling in us. But these forms of expression are applicable to none but true believers. Therefore to be in Christ implies the possession of truth faith. 3. The Scriptures teach that our union with Christ is not an external connection, but is vital and saving. It is analogous to the union between Adam and his posterity. As all in Adam die, in all Christ shall be made alive. It is like the union between the vine and branches, or between the head and members of the same body. All who are in Christ are partakers of his Spirit and life; hence it is productive of all the effects above ascribed to it, viz., justification, sanctification, sonship, and eternal life. See Gal. iii. 26. 4. All these saving benefits which are ascribed to union with Christ, are also ascribed to faith. Therefore faith is the bond of that union. We are saved by faith, we are justified by faith, we are sanctified by faith, we are the sons of God by faith, Eph. iii. 17; Gal. iii. 26, &c. Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God, 1 John iv. 15. We receive the promise of the Spirit by faith, Gal. iii. 14. Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Son of God, is born of God, 1 John

* Sermon on Jude.

v. 1. Wherever there is genuine faith, there, according to the Scriptures, are found in greater or less degree, peace with God, access into his presence, hope of his glory, assurance of his love, purity of heart and victory over the world. The faith which has all this power is not a mere historical assent to the gospel, but a cordial acquiescence in its truths, founded on the testimony of God with and by the truth through his Spirit. From these considerations it is abundantly evident that none are in Christ but true believers; and, as it is conceded that the Church consists of those who are in Christ, it must consist of true believers.

The gospel is a message from God to individual sinners. It calls each man to repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. These are personal duties. They cannot be performed by one man for another; by the priest for the people. Every man must repent for himself, and believe for himself. And to all and every one, no matter who, or where he is, in the midst of a Christian community and within the pale of the visible Church, or a benighted heathen poring over the inspired page, with no other teacher than the Holy Spirit, to all, without exception, the divine promise is, "Whosoever believeth shall be saved." Christ says to every human being to whom his gospel comes, "He that believeth on me hath everlasting life." The Bible declares that the way of access to God through Jesus Christ is now open to all. We do not need any mediating priest. Our only priest is Jesus the Son of God, who, having by the one offering up of himself, purged away our sins, is set down on the right hand of the majesty on high, where he ever lives to make intercession for us. Having such an high priest, we are authorized and commanded to come boldly unto the throne of grace, to obtain mercy and find grace to help in every time of need.

Romanism (Ritualism in all its forms,) denies all this. It denies that the way of access to God is thus thrown open. It says to the trembling sinner, who would draw near to God, "Stand back, you have not the right of entrance. I, the priest, must go for you, and obtain the blessings you need. Your only access to Christ and God is through me." Here again, in another form, we have the turning point between Protestantism

and Romanism. "Is the Christian ministry a priesthood? or, are all believers priests, as having, through Christ, immediate access unto God?" It is written with beams, not of solar, but of celestial brightness, to which nothing but the god of this world* can blind the eyes of men, that by Christ we all have access, through one Spirit, unto the Father. As soon therefore, as the Scriptures became accessible to the people, this was one of the truths which commanded universal assent. It will be remembered that at the time of the Reformation, the three radical points in which all Protestants united, were 1. The denial of the authority of tradition as part of the rule of faith. 2. The denial of the priesthood of the Christian ministry. 3. The denial of the authority of the Pope. With these three protestations against error, was of course connected the affirmation of the opposite truths, 1. That the word of God, as contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only infallible rule of faith and practice. 2. That Jesus Christ is the only priest or mediator between God and man, and that through him every believer has free access unto God, and is therefore a member of the universal priesthood of the saints. 3. That Jesus Christ is the only head of the Church. The denial of any one of these points is a denial of Protestantism. The second is the more immediately connected with the method of salvation, and is on that account, it may be, the most important. What the apostle says, Gal. v. 2—4, concerning circumcision, may be said of the doctrine that ministers are priests. Paul tells the Galatians that if they were circumcised, Christ should profit them nothing. If they were circumcised, they were bound to do the whole law. Christ had become of none effect to them; they had fallen from grace. Circumcision was not an isolated service, it was part of a whole system. That system was a legal one, and of necessity opposed to the system of grace. Those, therefore, who were circumcised, did thereby renounce the whole doctrine of gratuitous salvation, through Christ the Redeemer. In like manner, the doctrine of the priesthood of the Christian ministry, is an inseparable part of the Ritual system. If that one doctrine be adopted, the whole system is adopted. If any

* See 2 Cor. vi.

man comes to God through a human priest, he thereby rejects the whole Protestant doctrine of the priesthood of Christ, and of the way of salvation through him. The Anglican, or Oxford system, therefore, which admits the authority of tradition, and the priesthood of the Christian ministry, is essentially antagonistic to Protestantism. All its sympathies, all its logical tendencies, and all its affinities, are with Rome. It is but Romanism spoiled. And as we have chemistry and astronomy for children, so Puseyism is Popery for babes.

The nature of the Church is then determined by the nature of the gospel. The Church, by common consent, consists of those who are in Christ. The condition of union with Christ is, therefore, the condition of membership in the Church. If we become the members of Christ and partakers of his salvation, by an external connection with a visible society, and if there is no other way of union with him, then of course that body to which the attributes, promises, and prerogatives of the Church belong, is in its essential nature a visible society. But if, on the other hand, the Bible teaches that a faith which works by love and purifies the heart, is the bond of union with Christ, then a man may be in the visible Church and yet not in Christ, and he may be in Christ, and yet not in the visible Church. The visible Church, therefore, and those who are in the Church, are not conterminous; they are not different designations for the the same class of persons. The attributes, promises, and prerogatives which belong to those in Christ, do not belong to the visible Church. This is the sum of the Protestant doctrine on the nature of the Church. It is a company of believers; faith is therefore the condition of membership, and none but believers are members of that Church which is the body of Christ.

The Historical Argument.—The history of the Idea of the Church would be one of the most interesting chapters of a history of doctrine. Such a history would naturally divide itself into the following periods: 1. The apostolic period. 2. The transition period, during which the attributes of the true Church came to be gradually transferred to the external society of professed believers. 3. The period of the com-

plete ascendancy of the Ritual theory of the Church:—and 4. The Reformation period. Such a history would fill a volume. Our design is merely to exhibit the nature of the argument in favour of the true doctrine concerning the Church, as drawn from the history of that doctrine.

The truth was taught in its purity by the apostles; that truth was gradually obscured; it was, however, never lost, but was preserved under all the corruptions heaped upon it; and in God's appointed time was revived in its original brightness. As this is true of all the great doctrines of the Gospel, especially of those which relate to the nature of man, and to the method of salvation, so it is no less true with regard to the doctrine of the Church.

We have seen that during the apostolic period the Church was regarded as a company of faithful men, a *cœtus sanctorum*, or body of saints, and that true faith was the indispensable condition of membership, so that none but believers were considered to belong to the Church, and all believers were regarded as within its pale. The very word *ἐκκλησία*, during this period, was never used except as a collective term for the *κλητοί*; for those whom God, by his word and Spirit, had called out of the world or kingdom of Satan, into the kingdom of his dear Son. None, therefore, were ever addressed as members of the Church, who were not also called believers, saints, the sanctified in Christ Jesus, the children of God, and heirs of eternal life. They were all described as members of the body of Christ, in whom he dwells by his Spirit, and who, therefore, are the temple of God. They constitute the family of God, the flock of the good Shepherd, and the bride of Christ. They are holy because the Spirit of God dwells in them. They are also united by that Spirit into one body, having the same faith, the same hope, the same baptism, the same Lord, and the same God. They are, therefore, bound together in the bonds of Christian fellowship and love. To them God has promised his continued presence to guide them into the knowledge and belief of the truth; to protect them from all their enemies, from without and from within; and to keep them through faith unto eternal life. During this whole period it was taught that there is but one Mediator between God and man, and one High Priest of

our profession, Jesus, the Son of God, who has passed through the heavens, and who ever lives to make intercession for us. Through him all men were exhorted to draw near to God with full assurance of faith, because we all have access through him by one Spirit, unto the Father. For we are all the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ. Believers, therefore, are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. They, and they alone, constitute that body of which all these attributes are predicated, and to which all these promises are made.

Such being the nature of the Church, as it is described in the apostolic writings, it follows of course that all out of the Church perish, and all within the Church are saved. This, therefore, is a doctrine most clearly revealed in Scripture. The Church consists of believers; all believers are within the Church; faith is the indispensable condition of salvation. These are plain scriptural truths, and they of course include the doctrine that salvation is confined to the limits of the true Church; i. e., it is confined to the holy, to those who exercise repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. This was the doctrine concerning the Church which prevailed during the apostolic period.

The transition period cannot be marked off by precise limits. It is difficult and unnecessary to say definitely where it begins or where it ends. The characteristic of this period, as the name imports, is indistinctness. No one definite conception of the Church is presented and adhered to. Sometimes it is represented as consisting of true believers, sometimes of all who professed to be Christians. The distinction between the visible and invisible, the nominal and true Church, is neither formally inculcated nor explicitly denied. It is sometimes recognized and sometimes overlooked. It is here as with the doctrines of sin, grace, and redemption; we sometimes meet with the clearest declarations of the truth, and at others with the no less unequivocal assertion of error. "The general character of the period" (before Cyprian,) says Rothe, "is that of indistinctness. We constantly meet with a conception of the Church in which variable and inconsistent representations are combined. One is soon perplexed when he endeavours to reduce the declarations of the fathers of this period to any consistent

theory. We often find the same fathers, either overlooking or directly denying consequences, which flow with logical necessity from the principles which they elsewhere advance; so that it is impossible to arrive at any precise apprehension of their idea of the Church."*

By the common consent of Christians the Church is one, catholic, holy, and apostolical. We find, therefore, these attributes, in all their modifications, freely ascribed to the Church by the fathers of the first three centuries. By the Church, however, they often meant the aggregate of believers; this is the true idea of the Church. In this sense all the attributes above mentioned do truly belong to it. But as believers actually and visibly exist in this world, as they manifest themselves to be believers by the profession of their faith; by their union in the worship of Christ; and by their holy life in obedience to his commands, the body of those who professed to be believers was called the Church. To the aggregate then of these professors of the true faith, all the attributes of the Church were referred. This was a very natural process, and had the semblance of scriptural authority in its behalf. In the Bible all who profess to believe are called believers, and everything that is, or can be predicated of believers, is predicated of such professors. From this, however, it is not to be inferred that the attributes of believers belong to unbelievers. The only thing this scriptural usage teaches us is that the Church consists of believers; and that all that is predicated of the Church is ascribed to it as so constituted. The fathers, however, went one step beyond the usage of Scripture. They not merely addressed professed believers as believers, and spoke of the aggregate of such professors as the Church, but they transferred to the body of professors the attributes which belonged to the body of believers. Even this was in their day a much more venial error than it is in ours. For the great body of professors were at first, and especially in times of persecution, sincere believers; and the distinction between the visible Church and the world, was then the distinction between Christianity and heathenism. It was natural, therefore, to

* *Rothe's Anfänge der Christlichen Kirche und ihrer verfassung.* I Bd. s. 575.

speak of this band of united and suffering Christians, separated from their idolatrous countrymen, as indeed the Church of which unity, catholicity, and holiness could be predicated, and out of whose pale there is no salvation. It is also to be remembered that it was mainly in opposition to heretics, that the fathers claimed for the body of professors the attributes of the true Church. They could say, with full propriety, that out of the pale of the visible Church there is no salvation, because out of that pale there was then no saving truth. All were in the visible Church except the heathen and heretics, who denied all of Christianity but its name. The Church, therefore, in the sense of these early fathers, included all who professed faith in the true gospel; and, therefore, their claiming for such professors the attributes of the true Church, is something very different from the conduct of those who, in our day, set up that claim in behalf of a small portion of the professed followers of Christ.

There was, however, during this period, a constant manifestation of a consciousness that something was wrong about this doctrine of the Church. There was a manifest incongruity between the empirical or actual Church, and the Church as described in Scriptures. According to the Bible, the members of the Church were members of Christ's body; they were filled with his Spirit, and were united with each other, not only outwardly, in the same society, but inwardly, in the bonds of Christian love. In experience, however, it was found that multitudes were members of the Church, who were not members of Christ, and who were entirely destitute of his Spirit. As the Church increased in numbers, and especially when outward peace had for a while prevailed, it was found that this incongruity between the actual and the true Church, became more and more apparent.

There were three methods of meeting this difficulty, all of which were adopted. 1. A distinction was made between the visible Church and the true Church. It was denied that every man was a Christian who chose to assume the Christian name, or join in the services of the Christian Church. It was urged that the same distinction must be made here, that Scripture and reason make in all similar cases, between the sincere and

insincere, the nominal and real. It was held to be preposterous and fatal to affirm of nominal Christians all that was said of true believers. It was therefore denied that the attributes and promises belonging to the Church pertained to any but the living members of Christ's body. This is the true doctrine, and differs in no essential particular from the doctrine afterwards revived at the Reformation, and universally adopted by Protestants. It was substantially their distinction between the visible and invisible Church. This was the method adopted by Origen, and afterwards by Augustin. The former makes the distinction between the external Church and the *κεῖνος ἐκκλησία*, the real Church. The latter consists of the holy, and it is of them only that what is said and promised in Scripture concerning the Church, is to be understood.* The latter distinguished between the *Corpus Christi verum* and the *corpus Christi simulatum*, between the true and the nominal Church. Only the holy really belong to the Church. The wicked are in it only in appearance. He illustrates this idea in various ways. The holy constitute the Church as the temple of God; they are the living stones of which it is composed. The wicked make no part of it, but are simply externally attached to it. The saints are the wheat, the wicked are the chaff; the latter are no more the Church than chaff is wheat. The human body consists of bone and muscle; the evil humours which circulate within it, make no part of the body. Augustin uses these and similar illustrations to teach just what Protestants teach, that the Church consists of true believers, and that the attributes, promises, and prerogatives of the Church, belong to the communion of saints, and to any external society only so far as it conforms to that idea.† To Augustin the same objec-

* See the proof passages as cited by Rothe in his *Anfänge der Christlichen Kirche*, Bd. i. s. 616, Hase's *Dogmatik*, s. 352. Baumgarten Crusius, *Dogmengeschichte* ii. s. 360.

† *Augustin, de Doctrina Chr.* iii. 45. Non revera Domini corpus est, quod cum illo non erit in æternum, sed dicendum fuit de Domini corpore *vero* atque *permixto*, aut *vero* atque *simulato*, quia non solum in æternum, verum etiam nunc hypocritæ non cum illo esse dicendi sunt, quamvis in ejus esse videantur ecclesia.

De Baptismo contra Donatistas l. vi. § 5. Habere autem baptismum et tradere et accipere malos nequaquam in melius commutatos, et de scripturis canonicis

tion was made by the Donatists that is now made by Romanists against Protestants, viz: that the distinction between the Church visible and invisible supposes there are two churches. He answered the objection, just as Protestants do, by saying there is but one Church, the wicked are not in the Church; that the distinction between sincere and insincere Christians, docs not suppose there are two gospels or two Christs. It is one and the same Church that appears on earth, with many impenitent men attached to it in external communion, which in heaven is to appear in its true character.

2. A second method adopted to reconcile the actual with the ideal Church, the visible with the invisible, was the exercise of discipline. The Scriptures clearly teach that the Church consists of true believers. As soon, then, as the doctrine began to prevail, that all that the Scriptures say of the Church applies to the society of professed believers, a strenuous endeavour was made, and long continued to make that society correspond to the Scriptural account of the Church. None but those considered saints were admitted; all who gave evidence of not being saints were cast out: The period when the discipline of the Church was most severe, viz: the end of the second and the first half of the third century, was precisely the transition

et de Cypriani literis satis, ut arbitror, demonstravimus: *quos non pertinere ad sanctam Ecclesiam Dei, quamvis intus esse videantur, ex hoc apertissime apparet, quia isti sunt avari, raptores, seneratores, invidi, malevoli et cetera hujusmodi; illa autem columba unica, pudica et casta, sponsa sine macula et ruga, hortus conclusus.*

Though Augustin adopted substantially Cyprian's theory of the Church, yet it is apparent he did not adopt the fundamental principle on which that theory rested, or at least to which it led. To the question, What constitutes membership in that body to which the attributes and prerogatives of the Church belong? Cyprian, or at least those who adopted his theory, answered, Baptism and subjection to regular bishops. This is the Romish and Ritual answer. Protestants say, Faith, whose fruit is a holy life. And this is Augustin's answer. This is the turning point. According to the one view, the Church consists of "all sorts of men;" according to the other, it consists of believers. That this is Augustin's doctrine is beyond dispute. *De Unitate Eccl.* § 74, he says: *Et multi tales (openly wicked) sunt in sacramentorum communione cum ecclesia, et tamen non sunt in ecclesia.* In the same connection he teaches that a man who is reconciled to the visible Church is not inserted in the Church, unless his heart be changed. And in like manner, if any one within the outward Church is opposed to the truth, he ceases to be a member without and before any excommunication.

period of which we are now speaking; the period in which the attributes and prerogatives of the true Church came to be ascribed to the society of professing Christians. To this source is also to be referred the rise of the Novatians, and afterwards of the Donatists. These schismatics assumed, 1. That the external Church is the true Church. They overlooked the distinction between the visible and invisible Church. 2. They insisted, therefore, that the outward Church should consist only of saints. 3. They held that any society which admitted the unrenewed to their communion, ceased to be a Church, because it ceased to be holy. 4. They, therefore, refused all communion with such societies, and maintained that they alone constituted the Church of God on earth. There is no doubt that many of the best men of their respective periods belonged to these dissenters. Their object was most praiseworthy. They desired to secure the holiness of the external Church; but as all their efforts arose from a false theory, they came to nothing. The external society of professing Christians is not the body of Christ, and all attempts to make it appear as such must fail.*

* On this whole subject, see in Neander's History of the Church, his account of the Novatian and Donatist schisms. As to the former, he says: "Novatian, and his opponents were involved in the same fundamental error, and differed only in the application of it. It was the fundamental error of confounding the notions of the visible and the invisible Church. Hence was it, that Novatian transferring the predicate of purity and unspotted holiness, which belongs to the invisible Church, the community of the saints as such, to the visible form in which the visible Church appears, drew the conclusion, that every community which suffered unclean members to remain in it, ceased to be any longer a true Church. But the opponents of Novatian, who started with the same fundamental error, differ from him only in laying at the basis of their speculations the notion of the Church as mediated by a succession of bishops." Vol. i. p. 247, Torrey's Translation. Again, vol. ii. p. 203, when speaking of the Donatists, the author says: "Both parties were involved in the same grand mistake with regard to the conception of the Church, by their habit of confounding the notions of the invisible and of the visible Church with each other." Hence the Catholic fathers maintained, that separated from the one visible Church, with its succession of bishops, there is no salvation. And hence, too, on their side, the Donatists maintained that any community which tolerated unclean members, ceased to be a true Christian Church." See the following pages for Neander's criticism on the "confused mixture of conceptions" as to the nature of the Church, manifested in Augustin's controversy with the Donatists. How near Augustin came, however, to the true doctrine is shown by Neander, in p. 212.

A third method of getting over the difficulty was unhappily adopted and sanctioned. The whole theory of the Church was altered and corrupted. It was assumed that all the attributes of the Church belonged to the visible society of professed Christians. It was, however, apparent that such society did not possess these attributes according to the scriptural account of their nature. The view taken, therefore, of the nature of these attributes was changed. As the visible Church did not suit the attributes of the true Church, the attributes were made to suit the Church. According to the Scriptures, the Church is one as the body of Christ, animated by one Spirit, and having the same faith and love. In this sense the external Church was not one; and, therefore, unity was made to consist in something external and visible. The Church is holy; but the external Church was seen to be impure. The holiness of the Church was therefore made to consist, not in holiness, but in the power to make holy. The Church is catholic, because it includes all saints; but this was made to mean that out of the pale of an external society, there is no salvation even for the most orthodox and exemplary of men. Thus every thing was corrupted and degraded by those who insisted on transferring to the society of professed believers, what the Scriptures say of the Church.

It was, however, only by degrees, and under the stress of external circumstances, that this false theory was introduced and adopted. At first Christians found themselves in the presence of none but Jews and heathen. The Church, as distinguished from them, was composed of believers in Christ. Its bond of union was a common faith. It was catholic, because it included all professed believers. It was exclusive, because none out of Christ could be saved.

The case was not materially different when Christians found themselves confronted with heretics. In opposition to heretics it could still be said, as the early fathers did say, that the Church was one, catholic, exclusive, and apostolic. Heresies were novelties. Those who adopted them departed from the Church, because they renounced the faith which all Christians professed, and which is essential to the Christian character.

Soon, however, men separated from the main body of Chris-

tians, who professed the same faith, who had the same sacraments and form of government. Were these schismatics in the Church? Could everything which the fathers had affirmed of the whole body of believers, as opposed to Jews, pagans, and heretics, be still affirmed of the majority of professing Christians, in opposition to schismatics? If so, it must be in a sense entirely new. Here, therefore, was the true turning point. A theory of unity, catholicity, and apostolicity, was now gradually framed so as to suit this new emergency. The unity of the Church could no longer be placed where the Bible places it, in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, nor in the profession of the same faith, nor in having the same sacraments, nor in the same form of government. All these the Novatians and Donatists had, as well as others. The only difference between them and others was, that they were in communion with different bishops. The bond of unity must therefore lie in the episcopate; not in the office, for that both had, but in its true succession. Every other attribute was subjected to a like perversion. The Bible says there is no salvation out of the Church, for the Church includes all the saints. The early fathers said there was no salvation out of the Church, for there were none out of the Church but heathen and heretics. It was a very different matter, however, when Cyprian came to deny salvation to his brethren holding the same faith, and giving the same evidence of being in Christ, with himself. To them he says there is no salvation, because they were not in communion with the right bishop. There must be some adequate reason for this. Why could not the Novatians be saved? The gospel declares that all who are in Christ, all who are partakers of his Spirit, shall be saved. If, therefore, there is no salvation but to those in communion with certain bishops, it must be because there can be no union with Christ, and no participation of the Holy Spirit, except through such bishops. Thus the whole theory and nature of the Church was changed. Instead of every man having access to God through Jesus Christ, and being made a partaker of the Holy Ghost in virtue of union with Christ, the Spirit is given exclusively to the bishops, and to others mechanically or magically by episcopal ministrations. This was the perversion of the true doctrine effected by Cyprian. The

bishops are the Church. The Church is one because the episcopate is one. The Church is holy because the bishops have the power to give the Holy Ghost. There is no salvation out of the Church; because none can receive the Spirit but through the bishops. In all this Cyprian was doubtless sincere. He had been led to the conviction that all the attributes and promises pertaining to the Church belong to the visible society of professed believers. So long as that society embraced all who professed to be Christians, the incongruity involved in this theory, though great, was not so apparent. But when some of the best men of the age came, on conscientious, though mistaken grounds, to separate from the external communion of their brethren, and when they were declared to be out of Christ, and destitute of his Spirit, because out of communion with the dominant party, it became necessary in order to justify such a judgment, to assume such a theory of the Church as should exclude from its pale, and from all fellowship with Christ, those who were not obedient to bishops regularly descended from the apostles. This was the parent corruption, the fruitful source of almost all the other evils which have afflicted the Church.*

* See Neander's account of the Novatian and Donatist controversies, and his estimate of Cyprian and Augustin. Of the former, he says: "In bringing the episcopal system to its completion, we have seen the important part acted by Cyprian, bishop of Carthage. Not less important was his agency in converting the Church into an outward system of mediation, and confounding together the Old and New Testament positions generally. In this regard, his work, *De Unitate Ecclesiæ*, written after the middle of the third century, amidst the divisions with which he had to contend, constitutes an epoch. . . . His chain of ideas is this: Christ communicated to the apostles, the apostles to the bishops by ordination, the power of the Holy Ghost; by the succession of bishops, the power of the Holy Ghost, whence alone all religious acts can receive their efficacy, is extended through the channel of this outward transmission, to all times. Thus is preserved in this organism of the Church, ever unfolding itself with a living progression, that divine life, which, flowing from the fountain-head through this point of mediation, is thus distributed to all the members united with the organic whole; and whosoever breaks off his outward connection with this outward organism, does, by so doing, exclude himself from participating in that divine life, and from the way of salvation. No one, by himself alone, can, by faith in the Saviour, have any share in the divine life that flows from him; no one can, by faith alone, secure to himself all the blessings of God's kingdom; but all this remains necessarily mediated through these organs and the connection with them—the connection with the Catholic church, derived from Christ, through the succession of bishops. . . . The Church, once conceived as wholly outward, it must also be conceived

It is plain from this brief survey, that the theory concerning the Church passed, during the first few centuries, through these several stages. The apostles represented it as consisting of true believers; many of the fathers considered it as including all the professors of the true religion, as distinguished from Jews, pagans, and heretics; and then it came to be regarded as consisting of those professors of the true religion who were subject to bishops having succession; and to such society of professors all the attributes, promises, and prerogatives belonging to the true Church were referred. As, however, it was seen that such attributes did not in fact belong to the society of professed believers, some made the distinction between the visible and invisible Church, referring these attributes and promises only to the latter; others endeavoured to make the one identical with the other; and others perverted the nature of these attributes to make them answer to their preconceived conception of the Church.

The third period of the history of the doctrine of the Church bears the same relation to the preceding, that a tree bears to a sapling. The one arose out of the other by a simple process

as having necessary outward unity; and this principle being established, it came next to be thought necessary to settle on some outward representation of this outward unity, at some determinate point. This was at first a thing wholly vague and undefined; but it was the germ from whence sprang the papal monarchy of the middle ages." Vol. i. p. 210.

See also Rothe's *Anfänge*, i. § 64. It was Cyprian, he says, who took the decisive step of asserting that "separation from the empirical catholic Church was, in itself, separation from the fellowship of Christians, and thereby a forfeiture of the benefits of redemption, and of union with Christ; in other words, that the attributes of the Christian Church belong to the empirical or visible Church," p. 636. The exposition which Rothe gives of the gradual development of this theory is the more trustworthy, as he himself holds a doctrine for which he finds no such appropriate expression as the language of the philosophical Romanist, Mæhler. Thus, p. 289, he says, "The central point of the conception of the Catholic Church, is the thought, that in a definite human society, in an essential manner, redemption has become a historical potency, and the Redeemer has attained a real historical existence and efficiency, and no where else; or in the appropriate language of Mæhler (*Symbolik*, s. 334,) that in a definite human society and only therein, the incarnation of the divine Logos is continued and constantly advances." This those conversant with the subject will recognize as the precise idea of the Church, given by a large class of the disciples of Schleiermacher in Germany and in this country. It is one, it seems, which the strictest Romanist can adopt.

of development. After the principle was once established that the outward Church is the true Church, that all the attributes and prerogatives of the mystical body of Christ, belong to the society of his professed disciples, the whole Papal system follows, by a sort of logical necessity. Thus, if the visible Church is one, it must have a visible head; and that head must be the centre of unity; separation from him must be separation from the Church. The bond of union between the several provinces, or states of a kingdom, is not language, customs, laws, but the king. Subjection to him is the essential condition of membership. Whatever regard a man may profess to the laws or to the inhabitants of a kingdom, he does not belong to it unless he recognizes the authority of its head. The same thing is true with regard to the Church. If its unity is external; if it is one as a visible kingdom, it must have one head; and submission to that head must be the essential condition of membership in that kingdom. This is only one step in advance of the doctrine of Cyprian. At first the unity of the Church was made to rest on the indwelling of the Spirit, producing unity of faith and fellowship. Next, it was conceived of as belonging to the external body of professors as distinguished from infidels and heretics. But when orthodox men separated from this external society, Cyprian asserted they were not of the Church. Why not? They had the same faith, the same sacraments, and the same discipline or polity, but they were not subject to legitimate bishops. Soon, however, apostolic bishops separated. What was to be said now? Some other external bond of unity than the episcopate became essential, if the external unity of the Church was to be preserved. For the very same reason, and with quite as much show of right as Cyprian said no man was in the Church who was not subject to a regularly consecrated bishop, did Gregory say, no bishop was in the Church who is not subject to the Pope. The papal monarchy of the middle ages was, therefore, the natural product of Cyprian's theory of the Church.

The second great distinguishing feature of the doctrine concerning the Church, during this period, was the assumed priesthood of the Christian ministry. This also was a necessary deduction from principles already established.

It has been seen how the notion that the attributes of the true Church belong to the visible society, lead to the perverted views of the nature of those attributes. The Church is holy; but the members of the external Church are in many cases corrupt. The holiness of the Church, therefore, was made to consist, not in the purity of its members, but in its power to render holy. But as schismatics were not in the Church, they had not this power. They had, however, the truth, sacraments, and bishops. They had everything but the succession. Hence, in order to exclude them from the Church, and to deny to them the power to render holy, it became necessary to confine this power to bishops having succession. The holiness of the Church, however, in whatever it consists, or wherever it resides, is of course connected with the presence of the Holy Spirit. If that holiness, therefore, consists in the power to make holy, and if that power resides in the bishops having succession, it follows that the Holy Spirit must dwell in them. Hence the doctrine that the Spirit was given to the apostles, and by them to their official successors, the prelates, in whom he dwells, and who, in virtue of that indwelling, have power to confer grace by the imposition of hands. Such grace is conferred in ordination, by which power is conveyed to render the sacraments efficacious. Thus far the theory was wrought out in the preceding period.

This theory inevitably led to the doctrine, that Christian ministers are priests. A priest is a mediator, one who approaches God in behalf of those who have not themselves liberty of access. He is also one who procures remission of sin and acceptance with God for others by means of sacrifices. This is the office assigned to the ministry by the theory above mentioned. The mass of men who hear the gospel, are required, instead of going to God through Christ, in the exercise of penitence and faith each one for himself, to go to the ministers of the church, through whom alone they can find access to Christ. The benefits which these ministers are supposed to obtain are such as none but priests can procure. Those benefits are the remission of sins, and the consequent gift of the grace of God. It is only through the sacraments as administered by them that the merits of Christ are conveyed

to the soul, or the sanctifying influences of his Spirit imparted. One at least of the sacraments must therefore assume the character of a propitiatory sacrifice. The main thing, however, is that the theory which supposes the Holy Spirit to dwell in the bishops, and to be by them communicated in ordination, which ordination is necessary to the efficacy of the sacraments, of necessity devolves on the ministry the essential prerogatives of a priesthood. They become the mediators of the people, and through them alone are the remission of sins and the grace of God to be procured. This is not only the logical connection, but the historical relation of these doctrines. The doctrine that ministers are priests did follow in the order of time as well as in the order of logic, the doctrine of the Spirit being given to the clergy in distinction from the people. From this latter doctrine also followed the immense distinction which came to be made between the clergy and the laity. And no wonder. Here was a set of men in whom the Spirit of God dwelt; by whom alone his presence and influence in the world were continued, and through whom alone his benefits could be obtained. Such men might well be looked up to as holy. It became all other men to bow at their feet, and submit to their commands. What were any worldly distinctions compared to these spiritual prerogatives! What would any earthly monarch give comparable to what the poorest priest could grant to the proudest noble! That noble's dependence on his sovereign from whom he held his lands, was nothing compared to his own dependence on his priest, from whom he looked for heaven. This view of the nature of the Church and of the ministry, necessarily led to the domination of the clergy, and gave them a controlling ascendancy in all the concerns of life, civil and religious. If ministers are priests—if access to Christ, the remission of sins, and the grace of God can only be obtained through them, they are our legitimate and absolute masters.

The third characteristic of this period was the full development of the doctrine of the Church as an infallible teacher. It is plain from the New Testament that Christ did commission his Church to teach all nations; that he promised to her his presence and assistance in the discharge of this duty; that he declared his purpose to sanction in heaven what his Church

taught on earth; and assured his disciples that he would give the Holy Spirit to guide them into the knowledge of the truth, and to give effect to their instructions. It is universally conceded that the prerogative and ability of the Church to teach, depend upon the presence of the Holy Spirit. It is only so far as she is the organ of the Holy Ghost that her teaching is the teaching of Christ, or that obedience to her is obedience to him.

This being the case, the prerogative in question must belong to the body of Christ, in whom he dwells by his Spirit, whose minds he enlightens, and whose lives he governs. It is the communion of saints, the body of true Christians, which he has set as the light of the world, a pillar of cloud and of fire for the guidance of all the generations of men. But as soon as the doctrine was established, that the Holy Ghost is the peculium of the bishops, then, of course, this prerogative of teaching was claimed as their peculiar right. It belongs to them, not in virtue of their character, but of their office. It is not because they are united to Christ, and the subjects of spiritual illumination, but simply because they are the regular successors of the apostles, that they are the organs of the Spirit. They may be personally heretical or infidel; they may be unholy in heart and life, they are none the less the men whom Christ has promised to guide in teaching, and whose instructions all the faithful are bound, on the peril of salvation, to receive and obey. This is the obvious, the unavoidable, and the actual sequence of the doctrine that the bishops are the successors of the apostles, and the class to whom the command to teach and the promise of the Holy Ghost were given.

Not only does the theory of the Church under consideration, depart from Scripture, in making the bishops, instead of the true people of God, the subjects of the promised guidance of the Spirit, but it perverts the nature of that guidance. What Christ promised is spiritual illumination. He promised to send his Spirit to convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; to make men sensible of their just exposure to condemnation; to reveal to them his glory, so as to satisfy them of his righteousness in claiming to be the Son of God and the only Saviour of the world, and to convince them of the

certain overthrow and final destruction of Satan and his kingdom. Flesh and blood were not to reveal those things unto believers. They were to be taught of God; they were to have an unction from the Holy One, which should teach them the truth, and that no lie is of the truth. This, however, was no more a promise of infallibility than the promise of grace was a promise of perfection, or the assurance of consolation was a guaranty of perfect blessedness. All that the promise of divine teaching secured was saving knowledge of the truth, and perseverance in its belief and profession. In this sense, and to this extent, the Spirit guides all believers into the knowledge of the truth, so that dissent from them (of course as to what they have thus been taught of God) is dissent from God himself. But this by no means satisfied the advocates of the Romish theory of the Church. Divine illumination of all believers is not what that theory demands, but infallibility in the teachers of the visible Church. If separation from the bishops was separation from the source of holiness, it was no less a separation from the source of truth. If the Spirit dwells in them so as to render them the source of the sanctifying power of the sacraments, it must render them also the sure instructors of the Church in matters of faith. The Church is designed to preserve the doctrines of Christianity, and to extend its saving influence. For this end the Holy Ghost is granted to the bishops to render them infallible as teachers, as well as effective as regenerators. Separation from them, therefore, is at once separation from the truth and saving power of the gospel.

The bishops of any one age therefore cannot err in matters of faith. Their teaching is for the existing generation the teaching of God. Of course, the bishops of a preceding age were alike infallible; and so of every age up to the times of the apostles. It is this teaching of the successive generations of bishops which constitutes tradition, which in the language of the council of Trent, is to be received *pari pietate*, as of equal authority with the written word of God.

This completes the theory. The Church is an external kingdom, having a visible head, who is the centre of unity. Separation from him is, of necessity, separation from the

Church. When Christ left the world, he constituted this Church his representative. It is only therein that he is accessible and operative here on earth. To the Church are entrusted his prerogatives as prophet, priest, and king. She has absolute authority, infallible knowledge, and the priestly power of mediation and atonement. All these powers centre in the bishops, who rule, teach, and impart the Holy Spirit to all who are in the Church. Disobedience to them is rebellion against Christ; dissent from their teaching is heresy; separation from them is schism, a crime more certainly deadly than murder. The apostles were a set of inspired men, invested with plenary power over the Church, infallible as teachers, and having the sole power to communicate the Holy Ghost. Peter was their head and the bond of union between them. This is the form Christ gave his Church, and without which it cannot exist. There is still a body of infallible teachers invested with plenary power as rulers and priests, and there is still a supreme bishop to give unity to the whole. This is the simple, the logical, and sublime theory of the Church, gradually elaborated after the days of Cyprian, and which has had such a powerful and enduring hold upon the minds of men.

Against this system the Reformation was a protest. The Reformers protested, first, against the fundamental error of the whole theory, viz: That the visible Church is in such a sense the true Church; that the attributes, promises, and prerogatives pertaining to the latter belong to the former. In opposition to this doctrine, they maintained that the Church consists of true believers; that it is a company of faithful men, a communion of saints, to which no man belongs who is not a true child of God. Secondly, they, of course, protested against the supremacy of the Pope, denying that the unity of the Church was that of a visible monarchy. Thirdly, they protested against the doctrine that the Spirit is promised to the bishops to render them infallible as teachers, and make their instructions as handed down by tradition a constituent part of the rule of faith and practice. Fourthly, they protested against the doctrine that ministers are priests, through whom alone men can obtain either pardon or grace. They maintained, on the contrary, that Christ having washed us from our sins in his

own blood, hath made us all priests, because, through him we all have access, by one Spirit, unto the Father. This is the essential character of the protest entered by all the Churches of the Reformation. In proof of this it will be sufficient to advert briefly to the teachings of those Churches, in their symbolical books, as to the nature of the Church.

The Lutheran Church was the eldest daughter of the Reformation, and on this subject her standards are very explicit. Aug. Con. § vii. "The Church is a congregation of saints, in which the gospel is properly taught, and the sacraments rightly administered. And to the true unity of the Church, agreement in the doctrine of the gospel, and the administration of the sacraments is sufficient." § viii. "Although the Church is properly a congregation of saints and of true believers, yet, as in this life many hypocrites and wicked persons are included, it is lawful to use the sacraments administered by wicked men."*

The fourth head of the apology of the Augsburg Confession is a defence of the definition of the Church as the congregation of saints. After saying and proving that it was so defined in Scripture, it refers to the language of the creed, "which requires us to believe that there is a holy catholic church." But the wicked are not the Church. And the next clause, "communion of saints," is added to explain what the Church is, viz: "the congregation of saints, having fellowship in the same gospel or doctrine, and in the same Holy Spirit, who renews, sanctifies, and governs their hearts."

Again: "Although, therefore, hypocrites and evil men are connected with the Church by external rites, yet when the Church is defined, it is necessary to describe it as the true body of Christ, that which is in name and reality the Church." "If the Church, which is the true kingdom of Christ, is distinguished from the kingdom of the devil, it is clear that the wicked, who are in the kingdom of the devil, are not the Church,

* Hase's *Libri Symbolici Ecclesie Evangelicæ. Est autem ecclesia congregatio sanctorum, in qua evangelium recte docetur et recte administrantur sacramenta. Et ad veram unitatem ecclesie satis est consentire de doctrina evangelii et administratione sacramentorum.*

Quamquam ecclesia proprie sit congregatio sanctorum et vere credentium, tamen cum in hac vita multi hypocritæ et mali admixti sint, licet uti sacramentis, quæ per malos administrantur. p. 11.

although in this life, since the kingdom of Christ is not revealed, they are mixed with the Church, and bear office therein."*

"The creed speaks of the Church as catholic, that we may not conceive of it as an external polity of a certain nation, but as consisting of men scattered throughout the world, who agree in doctrine, and have the same Christ, the same Holy Spirit, whether they have the same human traditions or not."†

The Lutheran theologians, with one accord, adhere to this doctrine concerning the Church. By Calovius it is defined as "cœtus fidelium, qui sub uno capite Christo per verbum et sacramenta collectus alitur et conservatur per eadem ad æternam salutem." Hollazius says the Church is regarded, 1, in its true nature, as the company of saints united to Christ their head by faith, and constituting his one mystical and living body; 2, improperly for all those professing the true faith, believers and hypocrites. The former is the Church invisible, and the latter the visible Church.‡ Gerhard says to the same effect, "Our view of the nature of the Church is clearly exhibited in the Augsburg Confession, viz: that the Church, pro-

* Sic definit ecclesiam et articulus in Symbolo, qui jubet nos credere, quod sit sancta catholica ecclesia. Impii vero non sunt sancta ecclesia. Et videtur additum, quod sequitur, sanctorum communio, ut exponeretur, quid significet ecclesia, nempe congregationem sanctorum, qui habent inter se societatem ejusdem evangelii, seu doctrinæ, et ejusdem Spiritus Sancti, qui corda eorum renovat, sanctificat et gubernat. *Ibid.* p. 145.

† Catholicam Ecclesiam dicit [Symb. App.,] ne intelligamus, ecclesiam esse politiam externam certarum gentium, sed magis homines sparsos per totum orbem, qui de evangelio consentiunt, et habent eundem Christum, eundem Spiritum Sanctum, et eadem sacramenta, sive habeant easdem traditiones humanas, sive dissimiles. Et in hanc sententiam multa leguntur apud patres. Hieronymus enim ait: Qui ergo peccator est aliqua sorde maculatus, de ecclesia Christi non potest appellari, nec Christo subiectus dici. *Ibid.* 156. See also Articuli Smalcaldici xii. De Ecclesia. Nequaquam largimur ipsis, quod sint ecclesia, quia revera non sunt ecclesia; non etiam audiemus ea, quæ nomine ecclesiæ vel mandant, vel vetant. Nam (Deo sit gratia) puer septem annorum novit hodie, quid sit ecclesia, nempe credentes, sancti, oviculæ audientes vocem pastoris sui. Sic enim orant pueri: Credo sanctam ecclesiam Catholicam sive Christianam. Hæc sanctitas non consistit in amiculo linteo, insigni verticali, veste talari, et aliis ipsorum ceremoniis, contra sacram scripturam excogitatis, sed in verbo Dei et vera fide.

‡ Hase's *Hutterus Redivivus*, p. 316.

perly speaking, is the congregation of saints and true believers, with which, however, in this life many hypocrites and un-renewed men are externally united." *

The Reformed Church in this matter agrees perfectly with the Lutheran. Indeed as this was a subject of constant controversy between Protestants and Romanists, it seems hardly worth while to appeal to any particular assertions. Bellarmine sets it forth as the doctrine of all Protestants "that only the just and pious pertain to the true Church." "If," he adds, "those destitute of inward faith neither are nor can be in the Church, there is an end of all dispute between us and heretics as to the visibility of the Church." † The Lutherans, he says, define the Church to be "the congregation of saints who truly believe and obey God," and the Reformed, as consisting of believers predestinated to eternal life. A distinction, in this case, without a difference. In opposition to the views of both classes of Protestants, he asserts the Church to consist of all the professors of the true faith, whether sincere or insincere, who are united in the participation of the same sacraments, and subjection to the same pastors, and especially to the Pope, as vicar of Christ.

We find the doctrine of the Reformed Churches clearly stated in all their confessions of faith. In the Second Helvetic Confession, the seventeenth chapter is devoted to the exposition of this subject. The Church is declared to be "a company of believers, called out from the world, or collected, i. e., a communion of saints, who, through the word and Spirit, truly acknowledge and rightly worship the true God, in Christ the Saviour, and who, through faith, participate in all the benefits freely offered through Christ." "It is of them that the article in the creed, 'I believe in the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints,' is to be understood." . . . "All who are numbered in the Church are not saints, or true living members

* *Loci Theologici*, tom. xi. p. 159.

† The Protestants, he says, teach "solos justos et pios ad ecclesiam veram pertinere. . . . Si ii, qui fide interna carent, non sunt, nec esse possunt in ecclesia, nulla erit inter nos et hæreticos, amplius quæstio de ecclesiæ visibilitate. *Disputationes de Ecclesia*, lib. iii. c. x. col. 139.

of the Church." . . . "Such, though they simulate piety, are not of the Church."*

In the Belgic Confession, art. 27, it is said, "We believe one catholic or universal Church, which is the congregation of saints, or company of true believers, who look for their entire salvation in Christ alone, being washed by his blood, sanctified and sealed by his Spirit." Art. 29. "We do not here speak of the company of hypocrites, who, although they may be mixed with the good in the Church, are not of it, though (corpore) externally they are in it."†

In the Geneva Catechism, it is asked, "What is the Church? Answer—The society of believers whom God hath predestinated to eternal life."‡

In the Gallican Confession, the 27th article contains these words: "We affirm that the Church is the company of believers, who agree in following the word of God, and in the exercise of true religion," &c.§

In the Heidelberg Catechism the question: "What believest thou concerning the Holy Catholic Church of Christ?" is answered, "I believe that the Son of God, from the beginning

* *Oportet omnino semper fuisse, nunc esse, et ad finem usque seculi futuram esse Ecclesiam, id est, e mundo evocatum vel collectum cœtum fidelium, sanctorum inquam omnium communionem, eorum videlicet, qui Deum verum, in Christo servatore, per verbum et Spiritum sanctum, vere cognoscunt et rite colunt, denique omnibus bonis per Christum gratuito oblati fide participant. . . . De quibus omnino intelligendus est Symboli articulus, Credo sanctam ecclesiam catholicam, sanctorum communionem.*

Rursus non omnes qui numerantur in ecclesia, sancti et viva atque vera sunt ecclesiæ membra. Sunt enim hypocritæ multi, qui foris verbum Dei audiunt, et sacramenta palam percipiunt . . . sed intus vera Spiritus illuminatione, et fide animique sinceritate, et finali perseverantia destituuntur. . . . Dum hi simulant pietatem, licet ex ecclesia non sint, numerantur tamen in ecclesia. Niemeyer's *Collectio Confessionum*, pp. 499 and 504.

† Conf. Belg. art. 27. Credimus unicam ecclesiam catholicam seu universalem, quæ est congregatio sancta seu cœtus omnium vere fidelium christianorum, qui totam suam salutem in uno Jesu Christo expectant, sanguine ipsius abluti et per Spiritum ejus sanctificati atque obsignati. Art. 29. Nequaquam hic de hypocritarum cœtu loquimur, qui quanquam bonis in ecclesia permixti sint, de ecclesia non sunt, etiamsi corpore in ea sint.

‡ Quid est Ecclesia?

Corpus ac Societas fidelium, quos Deus ad vitam æternam prædestinavit.

§ Conf. Gall. art. xxvii. Affirmamus ex Dei verbo, ecclesiam esse fidelium, cœtum, qui in verbo Dei sequendo, et pura religione colenda consentiunt. . . .

to the end of the world, from the whole human family collects, defends and preserves for himself by his word and Spirit, a company chosen unto eternal life, and that I am and always will remain a living member of that Church.”*

The standards of the Church of England teach the same doctrine. The Church is declared to be a “company of faithful men;” or as in the communion service, “the blessed company of faithful people.” This definition is expanded in the homily for Whit-Sunday: “The true Church is an universal congregation or fellowship of God’s faithful and clect people, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.” Bishop Ridley, with whom agree all the other English reformers, says: “That Church which is Christ’s body, and of which he is the head, standeth only of living stones and true Christians, not only in name and title, but inwardly in heart and in truth.”† Hooker says: “Because the only object which separateth ours from other religions is Jesus Christ, in whom none but the Church doth believe, and whom none but the Church doth worship; we find that, accordingly, the apostles do everywhere distinguish hereby the Church from infidels and from Jews, ‘accounting them which call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to be his Church.’ If we go lower, we shall but add unto this certain casual and variable accidents, which are not properly of the being, but make only for the happier and better being of the Church of God, either in deed, or in men’s opinions or councils.”‡

Dr. Jackson, another of the lights of the Church of England, says: “The Catholic Church, in the prime sense, consists only of such men as are actual and indissoluble members of Christ’s mystical body, or of such as have the Catholic faith not only

* *Quid credis de sancta et Catholica Christi ecclesia? Credo Filium Dei, ab initio mundi ad finem usque, tibi, ex universo genere humano, cœtum ad vitam æternam clectum, per Spiritum suum et verbum, in vera fide consentientem, colligere, tueri, ac servare: meque vivum ejus cœtus membrum esse, et perpetuo mansurum.*

† Ridley’s Works. Parker’s Society edition, p. 126.

‡ *Ecclesiastical Polity*, book v. § 68. See also the opening of the third book, where a full exposition is given of the Protestant, or evangelical theory of the Church.

sown in their brains or understanding.”* Again, “Unto the attributes or prerogatives bestowed on the Church in the Apostles’, or Nicene creed, or unto the promises annexed unto it in the Scriptures, the visible Church, as we say, taken in the Roman sense, hath no claim or title, save only in reversion and by reflection; that is, the true mystical body of Christ is only instated in the blessings, prerogatives, or promises made unto the Church,” p. 34. Dr. Jackson’s book is devoted to the proof of that point. According to him and to the Protestant faith, it is the company of true believers, the communion of saints, and no external organized society, which is one, holy, catholic, and apostolical; to which the prerogatives of teaching and discipline, or power of the keys belong, and which Christ has promised to guide, keep, and save.

That this is the common doctrine of Protestants the above extracts are sufficient to prove, were any one disposed to question a fact so notorious. Winer, in his comparative view of the doctrines of the various Christian churches, says: “The Catholics make the Church the community which Christ has founded upon earth, consisting of those baptized in his name and united under the Pope as his vicar and visible head of the Church. Protestants, on the contrary, make the Church the communion of saints; that is, of the pious who truly believe in Christ, and among whom the gospel is purely preached, and the sacraments properly administered. The latter conceive of the Church according to inward or spiritual marks, ideally, and exclude from it those destitute of piety; the former, on the other hand, regard the Church as something outwardly existing, whose members are divided into two classes, the good and the bad. The bond, which, according to the Protestant doctrine, unites the members of the Church together, is living faith or true piety; according to the Romish doctrine, it is the confession made in baptism.”† Romanists are obliged to repre-

* Treatise of the Holy Catholic Faith and Church, Philadelphia edition, p. 152.

† Die Katholiken nennen Kirche Christi die von Christus auf erden gegründete, unter seinem stellvertreter, dem Papste, als sichtbarem Oberhaupte, vereinigte Gemeinschaft der auf Christus getauften; die Protestanten dagegen die Gemeinschaft der Heiligen, d. h. der an Christum wahrhaft glaubenden Frommen, in welcher das Evangelium lauter verkündigt und die sacramente recht verwaltet

sent the Church as a visible society, if they would prove the Church of Rome, as it actually exists, to be identical with the Church of Christ; and Protestantism destroys itself, if it acknowledges the Church of Christ, in its essential nature, to be an external institution."*

The history of the doctrine of the Church, even as imperfectly sketched above, serves to confirm the true view of its nature. Almost all the great practical doctrines of the gospel, after having been presented in their purity by the apostles, were gradually deteriorated until they came to be almost entirely perverted; and then, by the interposition of God, they were rescued from the load of corruption under which they were buried, and exhibited anew in their original brightness. During the whole period of declension, however, these doctrines never ceased to be recognized. They were not only distinctly apprehended and openly avowed, by here and there a chosen witness, but they underlay the religious experience of thousands, who never framed them into doctrinal propositions; and they gave form and character to the very corruptions of which they were the subjects. These corruptions were not so much errors entirely foreign to the gospel, as perverted forms of truth. A leper is still a man; and the lineaments of the human form may be traced under all the disfiguring effects of disease. So the truth is always to be discerned under the grossest corruptions to which it has been subject. When the Church of the middle ages taught that there could be no regeneration or holiness but by means of certain rites, this was not a denial of the necessity of grace, but a false view of the mode and conditions of the Spirit's operations. When it was taught that pil-

werden. Letztere fassen also die Kirche nach inneren (geistigen) merkmalen in idealem sinne, und schliessen von ihr die Unfrommen aus; ersteren dagegen ist die Kirche etwas sinnlich Existerendes, und ihre Glieder theilen sich in Fromme und Unfromme. Das Band, welches die Mitglieder der Kirche als solche zusammenhält, ist somit nach Protestanten, Lehrbegriffe der lebendige glaube (die Christliche Frömmigkeit,) nach Katholiken das auf die Taufe gegründete äusserliche Bekenntniss. Darstellung, s. 166.

* Als äusserliche, sichtbare Gemeinschaft muss der Catholicismus die Kirche betrachten, wenn er die Römische Kirche in ihrem empirischem Bestehen als identisch mit der Kirche Christi erweisen will; so wie der Protestantismus sich selbst vernichtete, wenn er die Kirche Christi ihrem wesen nach als äusserliche Anstalt anerkennen wollte. *Ibid.*

grimaces and penances obtained the pardon of sins, it was still asserted that they were the means of securing an interest in the merits of Christ, to whom all their efficacy was referred. When the priest interposed himself between the sinner and God, it was not that he dared to deny the priesthood of Christ, but that he assumed that Christ's priesthood was exercised through the Church. Behind these fearful corruptions, therefore, which hid the truth from the view of the people, were still to be discerned the great doctrines of the Bible. As this is true with regard to other points, it is no less true with regard to the doctrine of the Church. All the corruptions of that doctrine, great and destructive as they have proved, are but perversions of the truth. They are all deformed exhibitions of the idea that the Church is the communion of saints, composed of the true people of God, so that none are his people who are out of its pale, and that all within it are his children. This doctrine is not only openly asserted by witnesses of the truth in all ages, but it evidently lies at the foundation of the whole Romish or hierarchical theory. Those who deny, are still forced to teach the truth. Their very error is but truth defaced.

In proof of this it will be sufficient to advert to the following particulars. 1. Ritualists always speak of the Church as holy. Its members are addressed as "the faithful." They are described as believers, as the children of God, the disciples of Christ. No pastoral letter, no prelatial charge, no papal missive, assumes any other language in addressing the members of the Church. It is instinctively taken for granted that the Church consists of believers, and therefore all within its pale are addressed as such. This could not be, if the Church were a visible society, consisting of all sorts of persons. It is simply because in its true and essential character it is a communion of saints, that all its members are addressed as saints. They profess faith and piety in professing to be members of the Church.

2. In all ages of the Church, and in all parts of the world, in the times of the apostles, before the rise of the papacy, and since the establishment of the Pope's dominion, the profession of repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ,

has ever been made the condition of admission into the Church. Men have differed as to the nature of faith and repentance; they have had conflicting views as to what is Christianity, but they have agreed in demanding a profession of Christianity of those whom they admit as members of the Christian Church. This demand, however, proceeds on the assumption that the Church consists of Christians. Why else must a man profess to be a Christian, in order to his admission among its members?

3. The liturgies of all churches are constructed on the true theory of the nature of the Church. They all assume that to be a member of the Church is to be a true Christian and an heir of salvation, and that to be out of the Church is to be in a state of alienation from God. Even infants dying unbaptized are denied Christian burial. Baptism is regarded as uniting them to the Church, and hence it is assumed to confer regeneration, justification, and a title to eternal life. All who continue in the communion of the Church, do, in the prayers and offices in which they engage, use the language of Christians. The Church puts into their mouths the confessions, and professions, which none but the true children of God can use with sincerity; and when they die, they are committed to the grave as Christians, in the sure hope of a blessed resurrection. Those separated from the Church by excommunication or schism, are treated as out of the state of salvation. Reconciliation to the Church is, in all these prescribed formularies, represented as involving reconciliation to God. It is vain, therefore, for Ritualists to deny the Protestant doctrine of the Church. Their own liturgies condemn them. The Church, in all her solemn services, assumes to be just what Protestants declare her to be, a company of believers, a communion of saints, and not a promiscuous assembly of believers and unbelievers, of children of God and children of Satan.

After this evidence, derived from the general consciousness of the Church, it is hardly worth while to refer to the testimony of individuals. It is, however, of interest to remark, that although a false theory may, under the stress of inward and outward influences, be adopted as a theory, the truth still extorts an unwilling testimony even from its opponents. We have

seen how Cyprian and Augustin were induced, as the only available argument against the schismatics of their day, to make the external Church the possessor of the attributes and prerogatives of the body of Christ; and yet both those fathers frequently avowed the opposite doctrine.* So in every age, wherever there is any evidence of spiritual religion, there is evidence of a conviction that the promiscuous body of nominal Christians, is not that Church of which so much is said, and to which so much is promised in the word of God. All the forerunners of the Reformation were the advocates of the true doctrine concerning the Church. And the most determined Romanists are forced to make admissions fatal to the whole Ritual theory. Even the Romish Catechism says, the relation of the wicked to the Church is that of the chaff to the wheat.† Every definition of the Church, however, is a definition of the wheat. Our whole controversy with Romanists is, that they insist on ascribing the attributes of the wheat indiscriminately and equally to the wheat and the chaff.

The Protestant doctrine on this subject can hardly be stated with greater precision than in the *Enchiridion of Christian Instruction*, published by the Romish Provincial Synod of Cologne. "The Church militant," it is there said, "is to be considered in a twofold light: in the first place strictly; as when we say those are in the Church, who are so in the house of God, that they themselves are the house of God, or temple of the Holy Spirit, who constitute the new Jerusalem descending out of heaven, prepared of God, constructed of living stones, concerning whom the apostle says: We being many

* Cyprian Epist. 55. Domine, ad quem ibimus? verba vitæ æternæ habes, et nos credimus et cognovimus, quoniam tu es Filius Dei vivi, significans scilicet et ostendens eos qui a Christo recesserint, culpa sua perire; ecclesiam tamen quæ in Christum credat, et quæ semel id quod cognoverat teneat, nunquam ab eo discedere, et eos esse ecclesiam, qui in domo Dei permanent; plantationem vero plantatam a Deo Patre non esse, quos videmus non frumenti stabilitate solidari, sed tanquam paleas dissipantis inimici spiritu ventilari.

† Catechismus Romanus. Quamvis autem bonos et malos ad ecclesiam pertinere catholica fides vere et constanter affirmet, ex iisdem fidei regulis fidelibus explicandum est, utriusque partis diversam admodum rationem esse; ut enim paleæ cum frumento in arca confusæ sunt, vel interdum membra varie intermortua corpori conjuncta, ita etiam mali in ecclesia continentur. Ch. x. Qu. 7.

are one body in Christ Jesus; whom, in another place, he calls a people cleansed from all iniquity, acceptable to God, zealous of good works. The Church, thus considered, is known only unto God, as the apostle says: The Lord knoweth them that are his.* The doctrine of this passage is, that true believers constitute the Church. It is of them the body of Christ, to which the attributes of the Church belong, consists. This is all that Protestants contended for.

Hofmeister, a Romish theologian, admits that Melancthon's doctrine that "the Church properly and primarily signifies the congregation of the righteous who truly believe in Christ and are sanctified by his Spirit," is undoubtedly orthodox.†

Mr. Palmer says: "It is generally allowed that the wicked belong only externally to the Church."‡ Again: "That the ungodly, whether secret or manifest, do not really belong to the Church, considered as to its invisible character—namely, as consisting of its essential and permanent members, the elect, predestinate, and sanctified, who are known unto God only, I admit."§

Möehler, the most philosophical of the modern advocates of Romanism, endeavours to unite with the Romish theory the entirely incongruous element of an invisible, as distinguished from the visible, Church. The former consists of true believers, and is after all the true Church. It by no means follows, he says, because a man professes the true faith, that he is "absolutely a member of the true Church." "The Catholics hold that besides the true visible Church, there is a true invisible Church, and that a man may be excluded from the latter, while he is included in the former." It is of the members of this invisible Church, he says: "It is not to be doubted that Christ

* Enchirid. Christian. Institut. fol. 65, quoted by Dr. Jackson in his Treatise on the Church, p. 51.

† Quoted by Gerhard, Loci Theolog. tom. xi. p. 59.

‡ Treatise on the Church, vol. i. p. 28. He refers in a note to Field on the Church, b. 1. chap. 7-8., and adds, "The Romish Theologians generally concur in the same doctrine. Tournely says, Solos electos ac justos ad nobiliorem ecclesiæ partem, quæ anima ipsius dicitur et in virtutibus consistit, reprobos vero et malos ad illius dumtaxat corpus, hoc est externam fidei professionem ac eorundem sacramentorum participationem pertinere. De Eccl. qu. 1. art. 2."

§ *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 143.

maintains his Church in vigour by means of those who live by faith in him, who belong to him in spirit and heart, and who long for his appearing. It is not to be doubted these are the bearers of his truth, and that without them it would certainly be forgotten or corrupted, or merged into empty formalism. It is assuredly these, the members of the invisible Church, who have been transformed into the image of Christ, who are the supporters of the visible Church. The wicked in the Church, the unbelieving formalists, dead members on the body of Christ, could not for a day sustain the Church even in its outward form.*

The true doctrine concerning the Church, may, therefore, be fairly said to have universal consent in its favour. It has forced itself on the recognition even of its opponents. It can be traced through all ages, and is visible under all the corruptions to which it has been subjected. It has been distinctly avowed by all the witnesses of the truth, and unwillingly or unconsciously admitted by those most interested in denying it. The very pretensions and usurpations of the visible Church, are founded on the assumption that the true Church is the communion of saints, the body of Christ, animated by his Spirit. Such, therefore, is its true nature; and this is the point in which all the controversies between Romanists and Protestants meet, and in which they find their true solution.

Recapitulation.—That body to which the attributes, promises,

* Auch ist nicht zu zweifeln, dass Christus seine Kirche mittels Derjenigen in siegreichen Kraft erhält, die in seinen glauben leben, ihm mit geist und sinn angehören, und seiner wiederkunft sich erfreuen; es ist nicht zu zweifeln, dass diese die Träger seiner Wahrheit sind, und dass ohne sie dieselbe zuverlässig vergessen, in lauter Irrthum übergehen, oder in hohles, leeres Formelwesen sich verwandeln würde. Ia gewiss Diese, die Unsichtbaren, die in das Bild Christi Uebergangenen und Vergöttlichten sind die Träger der sichtbaren Kirche; die Bösen in der Kirche, die Ungläubigen, die Scheinheiligen, todtte Glieder am Leibe Christi würden keinen Tag die Kirche, selbst in ihrer Aeusserlichkeit zu bewahren vermögen. "Symbolik, oder Darstellung der dogmatischen gegensätze der Katholiken und Protestanten." Sixth edition, p. 425.

"Various as are the oppositions and distinctions, by which these separating principle of the Reformation may be characterized, it is really the doctrine concerning the essence of the Church where the difference is concentrated, where the one party must affirm what the other must deny; and whence alone all other points of difference can be understood in their true import.—Baur's *Gegensatz des Katholicismus und Protestantismus*, p. 537.

and prerogatives of the Church belong, is not a visible organized society, but the communion of saints, the blessed company of faithful people, scattered abroad through the earth. This is proved, 1. From the constant use of the word *church* in the New Testament. According to the Scriptures, all mankind are in a estate of sin and misery. To redeem them from that condition, God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life. By his word and Spirit he calls men to repent of their sins, and to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who obey this vocation (*κλησις*) are "the called;" (*οἱ κλητοί, οἱ ἐκλεκτοί*) a people called out of the world, distinguished from Jews, Pagans, and all others who do not obey this heavenly vocation. They constitute the Church. In its Christian, or religious sense, the word *Church*, always in Scripture designates the called collectively considered; either the whole number of them in heaven and on earth, or all on earth considered as a whole, or all in a particular city, or even in a family. It is not disputed that the *ἐκκλησία* consists of the *κλητοί*, and it cannot be disputed that the *κλητοί* are those who obey the call to repentance and faith. The Church, therefore, consists of penitent believers.

2. Hence every body of men addressed in Scripture as a Church, are called believers, saints, the sanctified in Christ Jesus, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling. They are the children of God, the faithful in Christ Jesus. The fact that any man is in the Church is a sufficient reason, in the view of the sacred writers, for addressing him as a believer. It is true many profess to be believers, who have not faith; and it is equally true that many profess to be members of the Church, who are not its members. But it is nevertheless plain that in professing to be a member of the Church, a man does profess to be a believer, and therefore the Church consists of believers. That is its idea. That the faith assumed to exist in all who constitute the Church, is not mere speculative assent; and that the sonship attributed to its members, is not an external adoption, is evident, because all who are addressed as believers and the sons of God, are also addressed as in fellowship with Christ, and partakers of his Spirit. They

are said to be washed, sanctified, and justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. The wicked are called the Church, or are said to be included in it, in no other sense, and on no other grounds, than that they are called saints, and are said to be the children of God and partakers of eternal life. They are denominated according to their profession, and not their real character.

3. All the descriptions given of the Church in the Bible, suppose it to consist of true believers, for to no others are those descriptions applicable. No others stand in the relation to Christ which the Church is said to sustain to him. The Church is his body; it is a partaker of his life, animated by his Spirit, and indissolubly associated with him in suffering and in glory. This is true of none but sincere believers. The Church is the temple of God; none but those in whom God dwells by his Spirit, can constitute that temple. Wherever the Spirit of God dwells there is knowledge, holiness, and peace. The ignorant, the unholy, and the despairing or slavish, are therefore not his temple. The Church is the family of God; it is composed of his children. But none are the children of God but those who have the Spirit of adoption, who love, reverence, trust, and obey their heavenly Father, and therefore none others belong to the Church which is his family. The Church is the flock of Christ; it consists of his sheep, who hear his voice, who follow his steps, and confide in his protection. The Church is the bride of Christ, it consists of those who love him and devote themselves to his service; of those whom he loves, and for whom he gave himself that he might sanctify and cleanse them, and present them to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing. Such descriptions can be applied to none but true believers, and therefore such believers constitute the Church of which the Scriptures thus speak.

4. The attributes which belong to the Church can be predicated of none but true believers, and therefore they must constitute the Church. The Church is holy; it is a communion of saints. Hypocrites and unbelievers are not holy, and consequently are not members of that holy communion. The holiness attributed to the Church in Scripture, includes inward

purity and outward consecration to God. In neither of these senses can holiness be predicated of any who are not true believers. None others are renewed after the image of God in righteousness and true holiness; and none others are really consecrated to his service. The men of the world are devoted to the world; they do not belong to the peculiar people whom God has called out of the world and set apart for himself.

None but true believers have that unity of faith which belongs to the Church, and which is the effect of the teaching of the divine Spirit. No others are united in those bonds of love and fellowship, with which the Spirit of God binds together the members of Christ's body. None others have that sympathy with their Head and with their fellow members which invariably and necessarily follows from union with Christ. This communion of saints is the holy, catholic Church: all within its pale are saved, and all beyond it perish. It includes all the holy, all who are in Christ, all true believers, wherever they may be found, of every name or denomination. To this mystical body of Christ alone belongs that perpetuity which is an attribute of the Church. This is the Church which is apostolical, or historically one. It is one and the same Church which the apostles founded. It traces up its descent to Christ, the Head, without a breach or flaw. It has never ceased to be. It has never ceased to be holy and to be orthodox. Though often dispersed and hidden from the sight of men, it has continued in the sight of God, who has ever reserved to himself a company that never bowed the knee unto Baal. Every external Church has lapsed from faith and purity. But the true Church lives on, in mystic union with its Head, receiving and giving life, from age to age.

5. The promises made to the Church have never been, and, according to the Scriptures, never can be fulfilled to any other class of persons than true believers. Therefore, the Church must consist of such believers. Christ has promised to be with his Church to the end of the world, to guide it by his Spirit into the belief and obedience of the truth; to guard it from all the assaults of Satan, preserving it from inward corruption and outward apostacy; thus keeping it by his mighty power, through faith, unto eternal life. To all the members of

his body, he gives these assurances of instruction, sanctification, and salvation. If the Church therefore is an external society, of which all professors of the true religion are members, irrespective of their character, then all such professors must not only be saved, but they must be assumed, contrary to the fact, to be holy and orthodox.

As our Lord has promised to be ever present with his Church, guiding her by his Spirit into the knowledge of his truth, and making her his organ in the instruction of the nations, he has also promised to authenticate her doctrines, and to ratify her decisions. The teaching of the true people of God, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is the teaching of Christ. Those in communion with them, are in communion with God; and they who have no fellowship with the saints, have no fellowship with Christ. The teaching of no external society, however, is the teaching of Christ, nor does communion with any such society imply communion with God. Therefore no such society can be the Church.

6. The Church, as is conceded, consists of those who are in Christ. Whatever, therefore, is the condition of union with Christ, is the condition of membership in the Church. It is one of the plainest of all the doctrines of the Bible, that faith is the bond of union with Christ in such sense, that no unbeliever is united to him, and that all who have faith are the members of his body. Consequently if the Church consists of those who are in Christ, it consists of true believers. If Christ, by his once offering up of himself, has purged away our sins, and opened for us free access unto God; if every man, in any part of the world, who hears the gospel, is authorized at once to draw near to God, with full assurance of pardon, sanctification, and eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord, then must the Church embrace all such true believers. Nothing can be necessary to union with the body, but union with the head. We need no other priest than Christ to bring us near to God. We need no other mediator or advocate. Our access to the Father and to the merits of the Redeemer, is not suspended on the ministrations of any human priesthood; but we all have access, through Christ, by one Spirit, unto God. None, therefore, can be excluded from the Church, who by faith is united to Christ and reconciled to God; and faith

being essential to union with Christ, it is essential to membership in the Church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

7. This has really been the faith of God's people in all ages. This view of the nature of the Church is clearly presented in the Scriptures; it was retained uncorrupted for a while, and when a different view was gradually introduced and established, the true doctrine was still not only often asserted and defended, but was unavoidably and unconsciously admitted by those who most strenuously denied it. That the Church consists of true believers is conceded by the Church demanding the profession of faith and repentance from all those whom she admits to membership. It is conceded by her always addressing her members as believers. It is implied in all her services for the living and over the dead, that those within her pale are the children of God and fellow heirs with Jesus Christ, and all out of her communion are without God and without hope in the world. By the whole Church, as of necessity, the avowal is made in every age and in every language, that the Church is the communion of saints, the blessed company of faithful people. This doctrine is holy and healthful. It tends to promote holiness and brotherly love. It is the palladium of civil and religious liberty. It elevates the people from thralldom to the priesthood, by teaching that Christ has made us all kings and priests unto God. As this doctrine demands true faith, sincere repentance, and holy living, as the conditions of membership in the Church, and denies the possibility of the impenitent and unbelieving being members of Christ's body, it has always been asserted when the Church was pure, and overlooked or denied when the Church became corrupt.

If, on the other hand, the Church is an external society, and profession and submission are the conditions of membership, then it follows: 1. That all the members of this society will be saved. 2. That all out of its communion must perish.

But as salvation supposes faith, holiness, and the forgiveness of sin, it follows that this society must possess exclusively the truth, the means of purification, and the power to forgive sins. This supposes: 1. That the Church is infallible. 2. That her sacraments confer grace *ex opere operato*. 3. That her officers can absolve from sin.

These attributes and prerogatives of this external body, presuppose: 1. That the Holy Spirit dwells in the bishops in virtue of their office and succession, guiding them into all truth. 2. That the gift of the Spirit is conveyed by the imposition of their hands, and that by "the grace of orders" thus imparted, the sacraments are rendered efficacious as channels of grace, and power is given to forgive sin. 3. That Christian ministers are truly priests, the mediators of the people, who can come to God only through them.

The visible Church is thus Christ. What she teaches he teaches; what she decides, he ratifies; what she does, he renders effectual. The same obedience, trust, and reverence are, therefore, due to the Church as to Christ, because he pervades and controls all her actions by his Spirit; or, as the philosophical school of Romanists and Protestants unite in saying, because the Logos is incarnate in the Church. Departure, therefore, from the doctrine of the visible Church, in any point, is heresy; separation from her is, of necessity, separation from Christ. From all this follows: 1. On the part of the people, the duty of absolute submission. Any disobedience to the Church is rebellion against Christ. 2. On the part of the Church, the ability and the right to rule with sovereign authority over all persons and things. Any infallible body is, of necessity, supreme. It must have the right to determine the sphere within which its judgments are to be regarded as the judgments of God. The State is consequently entirely subordinate to an infallible Church. It must and ought to be so. 3. It also follows from these premises that persecution is a duty. Heresy is not only a sin against God, but a crime against society. Liberty of conscience and the right of private judgment suppose an essential equality among men in their means of knowing the truth. In the presence of an infallible Church we can have no more right to judge for ourselves, than in the presence of God. The Church, therefore, having the ability, infallibly, to determine what is heresy, is bound to suppress it.*

* This is so obvious a deduction, that even Mr. Palmer, though nominally a Protestant, insists that it is right to suppress false doctrine and dissent by the power of the sword.

It thus appears that everything depends on the answer given to the question, What is the Church? If the attributes, prerogatives, and promises which pertain to the body of Christ, belong to the external visible society of professing Christians, then the whole Romish system follows by a logical necessity. Anglicanism is an illogical abortion. It violates the principle of its own life. There is no *via media* between Protestantism and Popery; and there is no middle ground between Popery and the universal theocracy of Hildebrand. It is absurd that men should contend with God, or with God's vicegerent. If the salvation of all men is in the hands of the priesthood, and if that priesthood is infallibly guided in all their decisions as to matters of faith and practice, then, by the two most commanding of human motives, conscience and the desire of salvation, are men held in absolute subjection. If this doctrine is true, all half-way measures are paltry tamperings with immortal interests.

This portentous system has not only the power of logical consistency, it overawes the imagination by its magnificence. Think of a body of men infallible as teachers and judges; the dispensers of the Holy Ghost, regenerating all who come to them, filling them with the Spirit of God by the imposition of hands, gathering round them a society, all whose members are the children of God and the heirs of eternal life; a society which stands out as a refuge to all nations and from all evils, guided by Christ's own vicar, to whom all kings are but children, conscience bound, on the peril of eternal perdition, to implicit obedience. What does the millennium, or Christ reigning personally on earth, promise more than this?

Another element of power in this system is its verisimilitude—its likeness to the truth. Bossuet says: The Church is visible, the Church is perpetual, the Church teaches the truth, are the three immovable pillars of Romanism. No Protestant denies either of these propositions. All that Romanists assert of the Church is, in one sense, true. It is true, the Church is one, is holy, is divinely guided, is perpetual, is visible, that out of her pale there is no salvation, and within it no perdition. All this is true, and therefore has the power of truth over the reason, the heart, and conscience. It is true of the Church, but not

of what they call the Church, which is only one form of the world. It is, however, by this verisimilitude, this truth-like sound and appearance, that Romanism exerts its power. So Satan takes the form of an angel of light, so like, and yet so different.

Just in proportion to the logical consistency and magnificence of this system, if true, are its concrete enormity and horror, if false. Then for infallible guides we have erring men; for truth, heresy; for holiness, sin; for regeneration, outward cleaning; for salvation, the more certain perdition; for the Lord Jesus Christ, the real Teacher, Sanctifier and Redeemer, antichrist, who deceives, degrades, and enslaves the nations by pretending to be Christ, while he is really the man of sin, and son of perdition. The doctrine then that the Church is a visible organized society, whose rulers, in virtue of their office, are authorized to determine what all men must believe and do, and have the power to forgive sin, which forgiveness can only be obtained through their absolution, granted on specific confession, is the constituent principle of that power which has debauched and enslaved the world; the power which sits in the temple of God, declaring itself to be God, claiming divine power and divine homage. It is the mystery of iniquity, sustained by the working of Satan, with all power, the power of logic, the power of plausibility, the power of superstition, the power of an evil conscience, the power of the sword, and the power of lying wonders. It is a power which has held and will hold the world in subjection, until the Lord shall consume it with the Spirit of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming.

Objections.—Of the objections commonly urged against the doctrine that the Church is the communion of saints, consisting of true believers, those only which demand notice in this connection are—First, that as the societies at Ephesus, Corinth and Rome were undoubtedly churches, and as they were composed of insincere, as well as sincere professors of faith, it follows that the Church does not consist exclusively of true believers. This objection has already been answered. The fact referred to proves only that those who profess to be members of the Church, are addressed and treated as members. In the same manner those who professed to be believers, saints, the children of God, are constantly in Scripture addressed as

being what they professed to be. If therefore addressing a body of men as a Church, proves that they are really its constituent members, addressing them as believers and saints must prove they all have true faith, and are really holy. The objection, therefore, is founded on a false assumption, viz: that men are always what they are addressed as being; and it would prove far more than the objector is willing to admit, viz: that all the members of the external Church are saints and believers, and would thus establish the very doctrine the objection is adduced to refute.

A second and more plausible objection is founded upon those parables of our Lord, in which the kingdom of heaven is compared to a net containing fish, good and bad, and to a field in which tares grow together with the wheat. As the Church and kingdom of heaven are assumed to be the same, it is inferred that if the one includes good and bad, so must also the other.

In answer to this objection it may be remarked, in the first place, that it is founded on a false assumption. The terms "kingdom of God" and "Church," are not equivalent. Many things are said of the one, which cannot be said of the other. It cannot be said of the Church that it consists not in meat and drink, but in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Nor can it be said that the Church is within us; neither are we commanded to seek first the Church; nor is the Church said to be at hand. All these forms of expression occur in reference to the kingdom of God, but are inapplicable to the Church. It is evident, therefore, that is not safe to conclude that something is true of the Church, simply because it is a parcel of the kingdom of God.

Again, it is a sound rule in the interpretation of parables, not to infer from them what they were not designed to teach. The parable of the ten virgins was designed to enforce the duty of watchfulness. We are not to infer from five of the virgins being wise and five foolish, that just one half of professing Christians are to be saved, and one half lost. Nor can we fairly conclude, from the foolish virgins having lamps, oil, and light as well as the wise, that true believers can fall from grace. Whether these things are so, cannot be determined by this parable, because these are evidently not what Christ intended

to teach. As, therefore, the parables in question were not intended to teach us the condition of membership in the kingdom of heaven, they cannot decide that point. In one place Christ asserts didactically, that regeneration by the Holy Spirit is essential to admission into his kingdom; shall we infer in direct opposition to this assertion, that his kingdom includes both the regenerate and unregenerate, because he compares it to a net containing fishes, good and bad? Certainly not, because the comparison was not designed to teach us what is the condition of membership in his kingdom. This, however, is the precise point in dispute. What is the Church? What is the condition of membership in the body of Christ? Does his body consist of all the baptized, or of all true believers? As our Lord did not intend to answer these questions in those parables, they do not answer them. The design of each particular parable, is to be learned from the occasion on which it was delivered, and from its contents. That respecting the tares and the wheat, was evidently intended to teach that as God has not given us the power to inspect the heart, or to discriminate between the sincere and insincere professors of religion, he has not imposed on us the obligation to do so. That is his work. We must allow both to grow on together until the harvest, when he will effect the separation. This surely does not teach that what the Scriptures say of the wheat is to be understood of the tares. Others of these parables are obviously designed to teach that external profession or relations cannot secure the blessings of the kingdom of God. It is not every one who says, Lord, Lord, who is to be admitted into his presence. These parables teach that many of those who profess to be the disciples, and who, in the eyes of men, constitute his kingdom, are none of his. This is a very important lesson, but if we were to infer from the figure in which it is inculcated, that mere profession does make men members of Christ's kingdom, we should infer the very opposite from what he intended to teach. To learn the condition of membership in that kingdom, we must turn to those passages which are designed to teach us that point, to those which professedly set forth the nature of that kingdom, and the terms of admission into it.

This suggests a third remark in answer to the above objec-

tion. Whenever the kingdom of God means the same thing as the Church, it is expressly taught that admission into it depends on saving faith, or an inward spiritual change, and not on external rites or profession. The ancient prophets having predicted that after the rise and fall of other kingdoms, the God of heaven would set up a kingdom, the establishment of that kingdom became to his ancient people an object of expectation and desire. They were, however, greatly mistaken both as to its nature and the terms of admission into it. They had much the same notion of the kingdom of God that ritualists now have of the Church. They expected it to be, in its essential character, an external organization, and the condition of membership to be descent from Abraham, or the rite of circumcision. Our Lord did not simply modify this conception, by teaching that his kingdom, instead of being a visible organization, with kings and nobles, was to be such an organization, with cardinals and bishops; and that instead of circumcision, baptism was to secure membership. He presented a radically different idea of its whole nature. He taught that it was to be a spiritual kingdom, that it was to have its seat in the heart, its Sovereign being the invisible God in Christ; its laws such as relate to the conscience; its service the obedience of faith; its rewards eternal life. It is true he imposed upon his people the duty of confession, and other obligations which implied their manifestation to the world, and their external union among themselves. But these are mere incidents. His kingdom no more consists in these externals, than the nature of man in his name or colour. The kingdom of Christ is therefore spiritual, not only as opposed to secular, but as distinguished from external organization. Such organization is not the Church. The Bible speaks as familiarly of the kingdom of Satan as of the kingdom of Christ; men may be translated from the former to the latter without any change of their external relations. The kingdom of darkness is not a visible society, neither is the kingdom of light. Still the children of darkness are visible, being known by their works; they unite, and plan, and labour to promote their master's kingdom. In like manner the children of light are visible, being known by their fruits; they unite for the worship of Christ and the promotion of his cause. No one,

however, infers from the visibility of the wicked, that the kingdom of Satan as such is a visible society; neither can it be inferred from like premises that the kingdom of Christ is an external society. The question, which kingdom a man belongs to, the kingdom of Christ or the kingdom of Satan, the Church or the world, does not depend on any thing external, but on the state of his heart. It is a contradiction to say, the kingdom of Satan consists of good and bad, of the renewed and the unrenewed. It is no less a contradiction to say that the kingdom of Christ consists of the wicked and the good, the sincere and the insincere. The very idea of the one kingdom is that it consists of those who obey Satan, and that of the other that it is composed of those who obey Christ. If it is a contradiction to say there are good wicked men; it is no less a contradiction to say there are wicked good men. If Satan's kingdom consists of the wicked, Christ's kingdom consists of the good. Accordingly, whenever our Lord states the condition of admission into his kingdom, he declares it to be a change of heart, without which, he says, it is impossible any should enter it. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit; marvel not that I said unto you, Ye must be born again." Whatever else this passage teaches, it certainly asserts the absolute necessity of an inward spiritual birth in order to membership in Christ's kingdom. If it be said that this spiritual birth is inseparable from baptism, and therefore, the baptized constitute the Church or kingdom of Christ, we answer, this concedes the whole question. If baptism regenerates, imparts a new spiritual nature, and makes men the children of God, and thus secures for them admission into the kingdom of God, or the Church, then of course that kingdom, in consisting of the baptized, consists of the regenerate; which is all Protestants contend for.

On another occasion the disciples came to our Lord, and asked: "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" He answered, "Verily, I say unto you, except ye be converted and

become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." There are no passages of an opposite character to those just quoted. That is, there are none which deny the necessity of this inward change, this true conversion unto God, in order to admission into his kingdom. There are none which teach that outward profession, or baptism, secures membership in that kingdom. The whole Bible asserts, that whether a man be circumcised or uncircumcised, baptized or unbaptized, unless he be born of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. "For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." Paul, therefore, says, that no unholy person has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Eph. v. 5.; Gal. v. 21.; 1 Cor. vi. 7-10. Wherever, therefore, the kingdom of God is synonymous with the Church, it is represented as consisting of those who recognize and obey Christ as their king, i. e., of true believers.

With this uniform representation of Scripture, the parables of our Lord are perfectly consistent. Those parables are to be interpreted just as we explain the language of the apostles to the Churches to which they wrote. They addressed those Churches as consisting of faithful brethren, of the children of God, of the sanctified in Christ Jesus, and yet they exhort them to cast out their unholy or impure members. This does not mean that a company of believers, consists partly of unbelievers; or that a communion of saints consists partly of the unsanctified. It merely means that those who profess to be saints and are manifestly wicked should be disowned as saints. The same principle, viz: that men are designated according to their profession, marks the parables of our Lord. Those who profess to be his kingdom are called his kingdom. His saying, that his kingdom is like a net containing fish, good and bad, does not teach that the members of Satan's kingdom are also members of the kingdom of Christ. It simply teaches that among those who profess to be his subjects, and to constitute his kingdom, some are sincere and some are insincere, and that the separation between the two classes cannot be made until the last day.