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A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

The Church of the Future.

BY THE RIGHT REV. J. W. DIGGLE, D.D., BISHOP OF CARLISLE.

I.

ALL Church-people are not true Christians; but all true Christians are Church-people. They belong to Christ, who is the Divine Head of the Church; and, therefore, they belong to His Body, which is the Church itself. People may be formally attached to the Body of Christ without being vitalized and nourished by the Head, as dead branches may still hang on to a living tree; but if they are nourished by the Head, then they cannot but belong vitally to the Body, just as every leaf or branch, so long as it assimilates sap, belongs vitally to the tree. There is no truer definition of the Church of Christ than this: they in whom the Christ dwells and who themselves dwell in the Christ. "Wherever Jesus Christ is," says Ignatius in his Epistle to the Smyrnæans, "is the Catholic Church."

And as this is the best definition of the Church—I in them and they in Me—so the truest definition of schism is separation from the Christ. Every dead leaf or dead twig, although apparently part of the tree, is to all intents and purposes cut off from it. There is no vital connection between a dead branch and a living tree, notwithstanding their outward and visible bond. In like manner every dead Christian is essentially disconnected from the Christ—the Christ does not live in him, and he does not live in the Christ. To all appearances he may still be a Churchman; but in fact and truth he is a separatist and schismatic. For real schism, like real faith, is not an outward thing, a thing of mere appearance. Both are inward realities: the one is an affection, the other a disaffection, of the heart.

In all ages men have been prone to regard both religion and irreligion too much as external matters. There is no error against which our Lord and His Apostles set their faces more resolutely than this. They taught incessantly that religion is spirit and truth, not letter and tradition. The organizations of

religion are external ; but its life is inward, the operation of the Spirit of God within the deepest consciousness of man. It is the same with Churchmanship. There is undoubtedly a visible Catholic Church, just as there is a visible collective humanity. But as in collective humanity there are many kindreds, races, tribes, and tongues, so in the Catholic Church there are many communities, denominations, congregations. Every congregation of faithful Christians is a Church of Christ ; and the sum total of these congregations is Christ's Holy Catholic Church. The visibility of the Catholic Church cannot consist in uniformity of organization. For if uniformity of organization were an indispensable note of the Catholic Church, then, obviously, seeing that uniformity of organization exists only within the limits of the several branches of the Church, the Catholic Church would either be non-existent, or else reducible to the confines of single denominations, which is contrary both to the comprehensive character of the Church and to the general experience of Christians. In like manner it is clear that, however desirable and good for other reasons episcopacy may be, yet even episcopacy is not of the essence of the Catholicity of Christ's Church. For, apart from the uncertainty of the origin of episcopacy, and the diversity of views held by scholars on its character and extent, as sanctioned by the New Testament, there is one great outstanding fact concerning episcopacy which is of supreme and cardinal importance—viz., the fact that God Himself does not limit His gracious operations within its bounds. He pours richly, and without stint, His showers of blessing upon non-episcopal Churches. He inspires psalmists and prophets within their gates. He rears saints within their sanctuaries—saints compared with whom some of the saints canonized in episcopal calendars are saints of meagre saintliness. In prisons non-episcopal martyrs have testified by their sufferings to Christ's sustaining presence. In missionary lands they have rejoicingly died for their Redeemer. Never in the history of non-episcopal Churches, such as Presbyterianism and Methodism, have such dishonour and shame been brought upon the Gospel of our

Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ as, through many centuries, that Gospel suffered at the hands of the all-dominant episcopal Church. I believe profoundly in episcopacy—its ancient descent, its continuity, its priceless historic worth—but I would rather renounce episcopacy than profanely seek to limit the Church of Christ to its boundaries, or describe non-episcopalians as schismatics, or deny them a rightful and noble inheritance in the gifts and graces of the true Catholic Church. To do this would seem to me to be fighting against God, and to ban those whom He quite manifestly blesses.

If, then, the visibility of the Catholic Church consists neither in episcopacy nor uniformity of organization, in what does it consist? Our Lord has left us in no doubt whatever as to the right answer to this searching question. He told His disciples that men would know, recognize, and acknowledge them by their fruits. As of a tree, so also of a Church, the Divine test, the test which God approves, and even the world admits, is the test of fruit. Christ's own test of discipleship was fruit; and no better test of Churchmanship can be found. There is no mistaking the presence of the Holy Spirit, whether in an individual or a society. Wherever the fruit of the Spirit is—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance—there the Spirit is; and where the Spirit is, there also is the essence of the Catholic Church. This essence may embody itself in diversities of ordinances and organizations; but being all of one and the same Spirit, they are also of one and the same Church—that Church which, in the New Testament, is called the Body of Christ, and is the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. No community, however ancient its descent or compact its organization, is coterminous with the Church of the Living God which does not reckon among its members all the faithful in Christ Jesus. The Church is the fulness of the Christ, and includes all those who are filled with Him. • The visibility of the Church is made manifest by the fidelity of its members to the Christ, and the fulness of the Christ in them.

Other definitions of the Church, many in number, theologians

of various schools have attempted to formulate. Some of these definitions approach more or less closely to New Testament definitions. But assuredly the New Testament definitions are the truest and the best. And the essence of the New Testament definitions, though differing in their form of expression, is always the same. A particular Church may be a Church in a house, or a Church in a city, or a Church in a province; but the Church, the complete Church, is the Body of Christ, comprising all these particular members. He is the Head of all alike, and all compacted together in Him, and from Him receiving their life and power, form the glorious aggregate of His Holy Catholic Church.

In common parlance, the word "Catholic" has lost its original, and only real, significance. Frequently, indeed, the word is used to express an artificial meaning entirely contrary to its real meaning. The real meaning of Catholic is universal; yet one of its common applications is fundamentally partial. All such expressions as Roman Catholic and Anglo-Catholic are, as ordinarily used, contradictions in terms. We might as rightly talk of fragmentary wholes, or particular universals, as of Catholics adjectivally limited in any way. Romanists clearly perceive this absurdity, and consequently reject it. Although subject to Rome, they style themselves simply Catholics. By this they mean, and intend to declare, that Papal subjection is an indispensable note of Catholicity. In this declaration they set themselves against God; for nowhere has God declared the Pope to be the head of His Church on earth. On the contrary, as all men know, He abundantly blesses those who have renounced this headship. Similarly with Anglo-Catholics. If by this term be signified merely and exclusively English Episcopalians, then is the term doubly misused. First because it denies Catholic Churchmanship to non-Episcopalians, thus thrusting from the fold of Christ those whom Christ, by His evident embrace, includes; and secondly by prefixing a restrictive limit to a universal word. If, however, by the term Anglo-Catholicism be signified that branch of the Catholic Church whose mother-

land is England, and if in that branch be included non-Episcopalian as well as Episcopalian Christians, then, indeed, the term is both intelligible and true. As, also, would be Roman Catholicism, as signifying that branch of the Catholic Church whose centre is Rome ; or Greek Catholics whose chief patriarch dwells at Constantinople ; or Lutheran Catholics whose great Confession is that of Augsburg ; or American Catholics whose realm is beyond our setting sun ; or Presbyterian Catholics who acknowledge not monarchical episcopacy ; or Baptist, or Methodist, or Congregational, or Calvinist, or Jansenist Catholics, or any other member of the glorious Body incorporated into, and living in, the life of the Divine Head, Jesus Christ, the Catholic Lord of the Catholic Church. All Churchmanship narrower than the Gospel is human Churchmanship and partial. That alone is Divinely ordered and Catholic Churchmanship which includes all those who, being baptized with water and the Holy Ghost, call Jesus Lord, and depart from iniquity.

It seems part of the grand mission of the Church of England in the present age to proclaim, without ceasing and with intense conviction, this true Catholicity of the Church of Christ. No other branch of the Catholic Church has the same opportunities as the Church of England for the fulfilment of this mission. The Roman Church has vast historical prestige, wonderful capacity for organization, whole armies of fervid men and women, separated by celibacy to lifelong devotion to the Roman cause ; a power truly marvellous of claiming the strong by austerity and satisfying the weak by accommodation ; a way of appealing to the artistic and æsthetic senses which no other Christian Communion can surpass. Even the errors and heresies of the Roman Church, which are manifold and in some instances appalling, have been fashioned with consummate skill to minister to the frailties, and assuage the fears, and tranquillize the disquietudes, and settle the doubts, and solace the yearnings, and cherish the hopes, of restless, aspiring, weary, imaginative, sin-laden souls. The worship of the Blessed Virgin and the cult of angels seems to bring a far-off God quite near, and to soften

with pity the awe of His majesty. This worship seems also to add the love of celestial motherhood to that of the Heavenly Fatherhood. This sweet and gentle sense of celestial motherhood means much—how much none can imagine who have not seen desolate orphans melting in tears on their knees before the shrine of some pathetic Madonna. Then, too, the Confessional, although its inevitable tendency is to weaken the will, to supersede the sovereignty of conscience, and to confuse both the sense of sin and the conditions of pardon, is yet a welcome outlet for the griefs and burdens of heavy hearts, especially hearts strongly emotional and but slightly under the sway of reason's sceptre. The very penances imposed by the absolving priest yield a kind of satisfaction and solace to the wretched and remorseful, while the absolution itself, uttered with audible voice into listening ears, seems to multitudes, especially of the poor and ignorant, more real and palpable than promises made long centuries ago by the Redeemer Himself and His inspired Apostles.

Again, submission to authority is an indestructible element in human nature. It pervades every department of human life. Its fruits are sometimes good, sometimes evil. It is the key to the power of fashion; one secret of the lawyer's and doctor's influence; a large factor in the potency of the Press; part of our composite social cement; one of the many foundations of all Governments; and the whole and only basis of priestcraft in every form and every age, whether pagan, Jewish, or Christian. If vast multitudes of men, and still vaster multitudes of women, did not love to be led, to be told definitely and authoritatively what to think, where to go, whom to believe, what to do, priestcraft would be impossible. The strength of the priest lies wholly in the weakness of his followers. To this craving for authoritative direction, which is one of the most common frailties of fallen human nature, the Roman Church ministers with incomparable skill and effect. She cherishes the instinct assiduously from their earliest years in the children of her Communion. She forbids her members to read books or cultivate

companionships which might disturb their acquiescence in her authority. She does not encourage even free Bible-reading. According to the well-known dictum, the business of the Bible is to prove what the Church has decreed should be taught. To the Roman Church mixed marriages are anathema. Her services are all in the one dead language sanctioned by ecclesiastical authority, and not in the people's living vernacular. To aggrandize priestly authoritativeness, to magnify and exalt its supremacy over thought and belief, sculpture, painting, music, worship, lights, incense, vestments, every art and all manner of subtle and mighty devices, have been summoned to its service. Right wonderful and amazing are the lengths to which human credulity will run when unrestrained by reason. The human mind is, as it were, hypnotized by credulity. It loses its independence. It sees through others' eyes, and is dominated by their suggestions. How otherwise can we account for the acceptance of tenets like those of Indulgences, Purgatory, Transubstantiation, and Infallibility; the purchase of God's free pardon in Christ, or even the temporal concomitants of that pardon, for money; the deliverance of disembodied souls by prayers paid for at tariff prices; the working in the Lord's Supper of a perpetual miracle which has neither revelation, nor reason, nor mercy as its sanction; the assertion of an unerring Papal wisdom to which all Christian history gives a flat contradiction? It cannot be denied that each of these tenets appeals with mighty force to some great hunger in men—the hunger to buy off the consequences of their evil doings, the hunger to help the dead, the hunger for signs, the hunger for the settlement of doubts, for escape from the torments of hard thinking, for intellectual peace even at the risk of intellectual stagnation. And yet the true appeasement of such hunger does not lie with anodynes which merely lull its pains without really satisfying its wants.

Thus it comes to pass that with all its amazing skill, its splendid organization, its marvellous accommodation to the strong yearnings and the weak cravings of mankind,

the Christianity of the future cannot possibly belong to the Roman Church. Time and truth are both against it, and their resistance must ultimately prove invincible. For several centuries the Papacy has been fighting a losing battle. Time was when the Pope laid Emperors prostrate at his feet, transferred crowns; claimed territorial jurisdiction over newly discovered islands and continents, and possessed much more than a nominal suzerainty over the entire Christian world. Now he is voluntary prisoner within the walls of his own palace, and does not reign over a single city or province even in Italy itself. Time was when his Bulls and excommunications and anathemas made monarchs tremble and peoples quake for fear. Now they have no practical effect whatever over a large part of the Christian world. Time was when the Papal Inquisition was the most fearful of all terrors. Now if man, woman, or child, were tortured or burnt for disloyalty to Papal decrees, the whole civilized world would rise in revolt against the infamy. Time was when in a great part of Europe no place of education could flourish, no religious service be held, no religious book openly read, without the concurrence and approval of the Roman authorities. Now in the most powerful realms of the Christian world Universities and schools, religious services, and all departments of literature, are wholly independent of Papal connection; while in countries still acknowledging the Roman obedience there is a great loosening of chains and an increasing fervour for emancipation. I write none of these things in a spirit of contention, far less of unkindly exultation—though, indeed, with profound thankfulness—but merely as plain, incontrovertible evidence of the decay of Papal authority, its estrangement from the progress of humanity, its incapacity either to stem the tide of human thought or to direct it. A Church weighted with the dogma of Transubstantiation, bound with the fetters of Tridentine decrees, capable of believing in its own infallibility, whose rulers are all priests and monks, in the settlement of whose religious doctrines and the administration of whose ecclesiastical affairs the laity have neither voice nor vote, the

essence of whose government is an ecclesiastical absolutism, can never be the Church of the future. As the latest centuries prove, time is against it.

And as time is against it, so also is truth. As the sovereignty of ecclesiastical absolutism is fast drawing to its end, so that of superstition is tottering. There has ever been much religious and spiritual truth in the Roman Church, as on some supreme occasions in the strife against the unbridled licentiousness of the rich and strong, and the tyranny of the irresponsible despots of the Middle Ages, there has also been much moral force of sublime grandeur. However wide our eyes be opened to the heresies, the superstitions, the domineering autocracy, the priestly despotism of the Roman Church, it is wrong to close them to the better and nobler aspects of its history, its missionary zeal, its strivings for the faith, its preservation of literary treasures, its care for the sick, its pity for the poor, its self-sacrifice in times of plague and pestilence, its frequent resistance to secular tyranny, its devotion to children, its general culture of domestic piety, the vast learning of some of its doctors, the sweet and gentle simplicity of many of its saints. It is part of the glory of truth to pay unstinted homage to goodness wherever found. No right cause is aided by blind and ungenerous advocates.

Still, while acknowledging to the full the goodness displayed and the truth maintained by the Roman Church, yet it must be confessed that this goodness is so overloaded with evils, and this truth with errors, that the resultant effect has been to make the Roman Church one of the greatest impediments to human progress and one of the greatest foes of Christ's religion. The proof of this is found in the unquestionable fact that the nations still dominated by Papal control are the backward nations of the civilized world—not one of them is in the van of liberty and enlightenment; and in the further fact that not a single dogma distinctive of the Roman faith—Transubstantiation, a celibate ministry, the treasury of merits, Auricular Confession, Indulgences, the necessity for priestly absolution and priestly mediation, Pur-

gatory, Masses for the Dead, the co-ordination of tradition with Holy Scripture, Communion in one kind only, Infallibility, and other such things—was taught either by Christ or His Apostles. Not one of these dogmas forms part of Christ's religion as revealed and taught in the New Testament Scriptures. On the contrary, each of them is opposed sometimes to the letter, and invariably to the spirit, of that religion. The essence of Christ's religion is free redemption from sin to the contrite believer, direct and personal access through Him, the only Mediator, to the Father; the personal indwelling, emancipation, and illumination of the Holy Ghost in the faithful; the union of God with man and man with God in the Incarnate Christ; the abolition in Him of death, and in Him also the manifestation of immortality; the absolute certainty of our ultimate responsibility and account to God for the lives we are living here and now, together with the rights and duties, the fears and hopes, the warnings and joys, the solace and strength, which flow, of necessity, from the heavenly fountains of this most glorious religion.

It is true that, in the course of the ages, ordinances may be rightly established, and truths rightly developed, which are seldom mentioned, or not even mentioned at all, in the New Testament. The silence of Scripture is not of itself sufficient to rule out of court a Christian usage or a Christian ordinance, else would many good customs of all Churches be open to condemnation. If the silence of Scripture were of itself decisive, not only would the surplice go, but the Genevan gown also would go with it, and no Christian minister would be styled "reverend." The New Testament contains no specific liturgical rules, no particular and exclusive methods of Church government, no complete and universal forms of worship, no codes of ecclesiastical canons, not even any fully systematized creed or confession of faith. And why? Because the Church of Christ is not a fixed and dead machine, but a living society. And it is essential that a living society, like every other form of life, should be in correspondence with its environment, capable of

development and adaptation to changing circumstances and growing needs, otherwise its inevitable doom would be speedy death. In Church organizations incapacity for readjustment is practically equivalent to uselessness. If a custom, once perhaps venerable and beneficent, grows obsolete or mischievous, the Church of Christ can retain no such custom. On the other hand, if a custom, upon which Scripture is silent, has been proved by experience good and wholesome, the silence of Scripture is no barrier to the adoption and practice of that custom. Even the forms and language in which doctrinal verities are presented may rightly vary from age to age, and terms be rightly used, such as Incarnation, Trinity, and the like, which are not found in Scripture at all.

But in all such developments of Christian doctrine, all such readjustments of Christian ordinances, all such changes of Christian usages or Church government, at least three conditions must be fulfilled, otherwise great floods of error and superstition will sweep disastrously over the vineyards of the Lord. (1) No development of doctrine may run contrary to revelation and reason. (2) No readjustments may change the Scriptural proportions of the faith. (3) No ecclesiastical custom and no form of Church government may be out of line with New Testament teachings. Within the compass of these conditions a living Church has full liberty to ordain its government, settle its constitution, define its membership, arrange its worship, and proclaim its doctrines. But beyond that compass no branch of the Church of Christ has either right or power to go. God is not the Author of confusion. He cannot lie. The truths which He revealed at the birth of Christianity He cannot contradict at any subsequent period of its life and growth. Our Lord graciously promised that the Spirit of Truth should guide His disciples into all the truth—truth ever growing, developing, bursting forth into new forms of blossom and fruit with the procession of the suns. But it is of the essence of truth to be in harmony with itself. Truth cannot contradict truth. What-ever contradicts truth is error.

The reason, therefore, why Roman developments must be rejected is not that Scripture is silent concerning them, but because they are out of line with Scripture, destroy the true proportion of the faith, and in not a few instances run clean contrary to Scripture, as in the case of Transubstantiation, Communion in one kind, compulsory Confession and priestly Absolution, obligatory fasting before partaking of the Communion, the bondage put on the Bible, the homage paid to tradition, Infallibility, and the like. When you are reading Roman manuals, you are often not only reading what goes beyond Scripture, but what is not in the same plane with it—something at once incommensurate and irreconcilable with it. So, too, with the Roman Mass. It does not merely go beyond the New Testament on lines of development permissible and congruous : it goes against it, runs in the opposite direction, contradicts and overthrows it. Night is not more different from day than the trend of Roman teaching is different from the New Testament, or the atmosphere of Roman worship from that of the primitive Church. It is as if in the physical world you had changed the source of light or the centre of gravity ; had made the sun dependent on the moon and apples to fall away from the earth. Seeing that every development of Romanism, in whatever direction, whether in medieval or modern times, is nothing other than the extension of priestly power, the magnifying of priestly prerogative, the assertion of priestly privilege, the dominion of priestly will, the aggrandisement of priestly tutelage on earth, and the assumption of priestly authority after death in the world to come, it is certain that Romanism does not hold the pass to the religious realms of the future. Its pivot is the priest. On that pivot all its special doctrines, methods of worship, and forms of administration turn. Remove that pivot from its chariot-wheels and the chariot will not only come to a standstill, but will become a wreck, crushed to pieces under the weight of its own load.

That pivot is being quickly loosened by every onward movement in every part of the world. From the days when the art

of printing with movable metal types was invented, and Bacon's "Novum Organum" was published, and political freedom gained a sure foothold, and scientific methods of testing authority and doubting appearances and demanding facts were established, and education passed from the control of ecclesiastics—above all, when the Bible was emancipated and its ideals began under the Spirit of God to exercise their sway over the spirits of men—the despotism of priestcraft has been gradually crumbling towards its fall. Desperate efforts have been made, and are still being made, to avert the catastrophe. The Tridentine authorities have fulminated their anathemas. The Jesuits have exercised all their subtlety, and have endured amazing sacrifices, to influence the Press, to capture politicians and magnates and rulers. Infallibility has been proclaimed. With masterly skill the wealthy and the clerically minded have been proselytized. Devoted ladies have grandly spent themselves in schools of every grade, in hospitals and slums, to sustain the decaying edifice. Even liberty itself, of which priestcraft is the unappeasable foe, has in these latter days been summoned to her adversary's succour, so piteous has grown the plight of that adversary. In former days the policy of priestcraft did not suffer its adversaries to live; by oppression and cruelty, by force and fire, it sought to exterminate them. That policy has ignominiously failed, and the craft which once sought the lives of others is now compelled to solicit from those others its own liberty to live. Nor should that liberty be denied it, so long as the liberty is not so abused as to be a menace to the general good. Truth is strong enough to let error run free, so long as error does not wantonly pervert its freedom to bring truth into bondage. There does not seem to me, at least, any danger that Roman errors can ever again reinstate the power of priestcraft to an extent destructive of liberty. The forces against it are too many and strong. Multitudes upon multitudes of the members of the Roman Church would rebel against any return to the ancient tyrannies. But apart from this, the whole movement of the world is towards freedom—intellectual and

spiritual freedom. That movement is resistless as the flowing tide, or as the sun rising in his strength and glory. Priestcraft being a determined foe of this intellectual and spiritual freedom, and the Roman form of religion being inseparable from priestcraft—the craft that puts the priest between the soul and the Saviour—it is impossible that the Roman form of religion can be the religion of the future. The religion of the future will be the religion which comes into the closest and most direct contact with the living Christ, which moves and has its being, works and worships, serves mankind and glorifies God, through the might and power of personal communion with Him—not through the mediation of official priests, but by the personal indwelling of the Holy Ghost.

(To be continued.)



A Vision of Service.

BY THE VEN. ARCHDEACON MOULE, B.D.

THE following significant words occur at the close of the Encyclical Letter from the Archbishops and Bishops, issued after the Lambeth Conference, August, 1908: "The brightness of Christ's light is in the scene before us, as we think of the Church thus showing forth in the world, with ever-increasing clearness, the glory and happiness of service. But the vision is not bounded by the horizon of the world; its true meaning is not known until we raise our eyes above the scenes of time."

Further back, in the preamble, the Bishops speak of "The clear shining of this great hope of service," and of the field of service, "wide and various as the world." The preamble then glories in the blessedness and dignity of service in the world; the peroration lifts and stretches our gaze "beyond the horizon of the world and above the scenes of time."