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subject with which my letter deals constantly before him, and that he sympathizes with the object in view, though the wisest means to the end need much careful thought and foresight. He then informs me that he is taking steps, in conjunction with those who have most experience in the matter, to initiate some experiments with this view.

Other bishops also, like Bishop Moorhouse of Manchester, have expressed the desire that "all Christian communions should unite in social work which presses equally and urgently upon them all."

JOHN B. PATON, D.D.

(*To be concluded.*)



### ART. III.—THE NATIONAL CHURCH AND UNITY.

IN the February number of this magazine there appeared an article by the Right Hon. Mr. Justice Warren, entitled "The Catholic Church—Schism." In that article the learned writer very properly condemns the indiscriminate application of the opprobrious term "schismatics" to members of the various non-episcopalian bodies which form part of Protestant Christendom. "Sin," too, and "sinful," are ugly words; and it is quite right that the dogmatic use of them in reference to the action of individual Christians in matters ecclesiastical should be strongly deprecated. But because we dare not positively assert that a particular act of physical separation from a Christian community is *sinful*, we are not, therefore, precluded from pronouncing it unjustifiable; still less are we necessarily bound to admit that it is justifiable. Mr. Justice Warren lays down that physical schism is sinful when a man, in opposition to the voice of his conscience, abandons one ecclesiastical unit and resorts to another; but it is not sinful when a man does so in obedience to the voice of his judgment and conscience. That proposition can only be maintained on the footing that there are no such things as sins of ignorance; and that, however uninformed or misinformed a man's conscience may be, he does not commit sin if he follows its dictates. The truth or otherwise of this premiss must depend on the meaning which we assign to the word "sin." It is clearly not true if we employ that word as the equivalent of the Greek *ἀμαρτία*. The judgment and conscience of an individual are no infallible criteria of the abstract rightfulness of his action in the matter of schism, any more than in other particulars of conduct. Mr. Justice Warren himself stigmatizes as schismatics Newman and Manning, and their associates,

who left the Church of England for the Church of Rome. Yet we have no ground for asserting that these men were not fully as conscientious as seceders in the opposite direction, whom he pronounces not guilty of the sin of schism, and upon whom we should pass the same verdict, though for a different reason. The fact is that, leaving out of the question the debateable idea of "sin," the lawfulness or unlawfulness of schism must depend, not upon the state of enlightenment of the person who commits it, but upon whether or not it is in accordance with the will of God, the perfect standard of right. It is His will in the matter which we must endeavour to find out from the inspired teaching of Scripture, and from the reason or instinct which He has implanted in us.

Approaching the subject, then, from this point of view, we stand upon common ground in affirming our belief in "One Catholic Church." Mr. Justice Warren has occupied upwards of five pages in showing that this Church is an invisible entity. The simple fact that it consists in part of all the true followers of Christ since the foundation of Christianity, and in part of all His true followers yet unborn until the end of time, suffices, without more, to prove that it belongs to the category of things heavenly and spiritual, and not of things earthly and visible. This, however, furnishes no ground for the assumption that the external unity of that portion of the Church which for the time being is militant here in earth, is a matter of indifference. The inference is all the other way. No Christian doubts that, according to the Divine purpose, the spiritual Church, the actual body of Christ, is one and indivisible. Consequently, our daily supplication that the will of God may be done in earth as it is in heaven, must include the petition that the visible representation of the Church on earth may resemble the invisible archetype which exists in the realm of spirit, or heaven, not only in holiness, but also in oneness. And what we pray for in our hearts, we are bound to labour for with our heads and hands, and to promote in our lives.

Mr. Justice Warren's argument that we cannot apply St. Paul's reproof of divisions to the question of physical or organic separation from a Church is certainly remarkable. The Apostle, no doubt, applies the word *σχίσμα*, not to external separations, but to internal divisions in the Church, and we have no record of his having, in express terms, condemned organic disunion. But the reason for the omission is perceived and admitted by Mr. Justice Warren himself. No such disunion ever took place, or was even dreamt of in the Apostle's lifetime. The Corinthian Christians who said "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," had not split into different communions. It was to members of the same Church

that the remonstrance was addressed, "Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or, were ye baptized into the name of Paul?" Christians at that period, in whatever land or city they might be, regarded themselves, and were regarded by their co-religionists, as members of one body and one communion. Can we, for a moment, suppose that if a section of the Corinthian Christians had separated organically from their fellows, and claimed to form a separate Church, St. Paul would not have denounced their conduct in language equally strong, or rather, in fact, stronger than that which he used respecting their internal dissensions? Is it intolerable for a Christian to call himself "of Paul" while he continues in the same communion with his more large-hearted and right-minded brethren, but perfectly venial for him to dub himself "of Wesley," if he separates organically from them?

An appeal to the New Testament on the subject of secession from the visible Church is not encouraging to its apologists. Allusion is once made to it in the sacred writings. It appears to have occurred after St. Paul's death; or, at any rate, there is no trace of his ever having been cognizant of it. We know not whether the seceders formed another professedly Christian community, or fell away altogether from the faith. But the verdict passed upon them by St. John, is that "they went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us."

When we bear in mind the language of the Epistles as to there being one body, and our being members of one body, and similar expressions, and when, moreover, we consider the natural fitness of things, we cannot doubt that organic visible disunion among Christians, or what Canon Hammond calls polychurchism, is, in the abstract, unlawful. This reflection clearly imposes upon us the duty of endeavouring to remove it, and to eradicate all the causes which lead to its existence and promote its growth. But we are not therefore compelled to affirm that, under the actual state of ecclesiastical affairs, any particular Christian body or individual is acting unlawfully in remaining at present in a state of separation from some other Christian body. We recognise that slavery is morally unlawful, and the recognition of its unlawfulness lays us under the obligation of suppressing it wherever the opportunity of so doing occurs. But we are not thereby driven to the untenable conclusion that the Christians of the early centuries, not to speak of later times, acted unlawfully or committed sin in owning slaves. It is the same with ecclesiastical disunion. Persons who are born and bred in a state of schism are not

responsible for the cleavage which exists between them and the bulk of their fellow-Christians.

Moreover, in the case not only of those who perpetuate the schism of their ancestors, but also in the case of those who originally separate, the question always arises whether the blame of the schism lies wholly at the door of those who secede, or of the Church from which they separate, or is apportionable. The allocation of blame in particular cases is no doubt difficult, but there are certain general principles on which it will properly proceed. One of these is that an individual is not warranted in seceding from a Church which *permits* its members to profess or practise what he considers untrue or sinful, if it does not at the same time *require* them to do so. This principle has been often lost sight of by impetuous and self-willed partisans. But it was fully recognised by John Wesley, who wrote in 1778: "They that leave the Church leave us. . . . We believe it to be utterly unlawful to separate from the Church unless sinful terms of communion were imposed." The principle was also loyally acted upon by our reformers, who never, even under the most trying circumstances, attempted an ecclesiastical secession. In the days of Queen Mary, when the Roman Mass was the only permitted communion office in our Church, Ridley declared: "As for the Church, I am not angry with it, and I never refused to go to it to pray with the people, to hear the Word of God, and to do all other things whatsoever may agree with the Word of God." And this sentiment was fully endorsed by Latimer (Ridley's Works, Parker Society Edition, Cambridge, 1841, pp. 137-140).

On the other hand, if the Church positively requires of her members what some cannot conscientiously agree to, they have, of course, no alternative but to submit to excommunication and dissociation from her. And even in the most ideal state of things there would probably be always some professing Christians whose idiosyncrasies drove them into this position. The visible Church, if it were a united whole, would clearly have to impose certain terms of belief and discipline as conditions of its membership, and, while it remains disunited, each portion of it must do the same. An individual who should find himself conscientiously unable to accept the requisite terms of communion must, as an honest man, remain outside, whether the body imposing the terms be a worldwide Church or only a fragment of Christendom. But the rightfulness or wrongfulness of his conduct would depend, not on his honesty of purpose, but on whether the terms in question were, in fact, justifiable or the reverse. And of this we cannot admit him to be himself the infallible arbiter. We must

judge his action, and approve or condemn it according as his objections to the conditions of Church membership appear to us reasonable or the contrary. On this point judgments will, of course, vary, and an opinion upon it will be more easily formed under certain circumstances than under others. So long as the predominant section of the Catholic Church in the West imposes as conditions of communion the acceptance of dogmas which are as unscriptural as they are irrational, and so long as the predominant section in the East requires those who enter its fold to anathematize all other forms of Christianity, the vast majority of Englishmen have no difficulty in deciding that the dictates of truth and honesty forbid reunion with either of these two great branches of Christendom. It is, for the present, put out of the question by the attitude of these Churches themselves. The schism between us was, in fact, caused, and is perpetuated, not by us, but by them. It was the Roman Church which excommunicated the Church of England, and not *vice versâ*; and the Roman Church to this day denies the validity of our orders and sacraments, while we recognise the validity of hers.

No such serious objections can be sustained against the terms of communion now required by that national branch of the Catholic Church which, as admitted the other day by Mr. Asquith, has enjoyed "a substantial identity and continuity of existence" in this country "from earliest history down to the present time." Nevertheless, looking at the records of the past three hundred years, we dare not affirm that the Church of England is entirely free from all responsibility for the existing Dissent in our midst. Therefore, though we may consider them to have been completely mistaken, we cannot absolutely condemn all those who have seceded from her since the Reformation, and still less their descendants who have perpetuated the secession. But what follows from this admission? That we are to acquiesce in the present state of disunion, and regard it as justifiable, or at any rate inevitable? Surely not. It is no easy task to heal the breaches of the past, and we may not be able completely to exorcise the spirit of division. But we are, at any rate, bound to remove all possible causes of offence and all legitimate excuses for Non-conformity, so far as they exist on the side of the Church. This has already been done to a very large extent by the ecclesiastical reforms and relaxations which have taken place during the last sixty years. And the Lambeth Conference of 1888, in formulating their famous Four Articles, indicated a readiness on the part of the Anglican communion to advance yet further in this direction, and to widen the basis of the universal Church to the utmost limits compatible with the

maintenance of fundamental truth. This is exactly as it should be. For if, on the one hand, the claims of the corporate body oblige us to insist that on principle there ought to be organic and visible intercommunion between all Christians, the claims of individual liberty, on the other hand, require us to hold that the conditions of that intercommunion should not be more stringent than is absolutely required for maintaining the objects for which the Catholic Church exists.

These considerations, while they point to the duty of reforming our National Church, point even more clearly to the primary obligation of upholding her. We are accustomed to insist on the importance of the union of Church and State in this country as testifying the national recognition of God. It is conceivable that some means, hitherto unknown, might be devised for a national recognition of the "one God," and even of the "one Lord" and "one Spirit," without this union. But Disestablishment could not possibly be otherwise than, in the most absolute and decisive terms, a national repudiation of the "one body." This, in fact, is one of the very grounds on which it is pressed for by Nonconformists. There ought, they urge, to be perfect religious equality in this country, and no favour or preference ought to be shown to one Church above another. Against this contention we are bound to enter our strongest protest. There ought, of course, to be perfect religious toleration. All who confess that Jesus of Nazareth is their Divine Lord, and have been baptized in the threefold Name, are entitled to, and do, in fact, receive, the designation of Christians; and so far as their status is affected by the question of their religion, they ought to be, and, in fact, are, upon a footing of perfect equality, with the exception only of certain restrictions as to the throne and the woollen sack, which had their origin in purely political considerations, and are to be defended upon these considerations alone. But the case is wholly different with bodies of Christians. We have learnt, and learnt rightly, that these, too, ought all to enjoy perfect religious toleration. But to place them on a footing of equality, to regard them all in the same light as Churches, and to treat them in the same manner, would be to admit that their separate existence is consistent with the true and ideal conception of Christianity. This, it appears to me, is radically wrong. We are bound to admit that their members may be individually as truly Christians as the members of the National Church; we are bound to admit, also, that under existing circumstances their members may be right in remaining where they are, and in some cases cannot do otherwise. But we may grant all this without admitting that the bodies themselves ought to be regarded and treated as on a perfect equality with

the Church from which they have separated. To admit this would be to concede that all is as it should be when Christ is divided, and that members of Christ are doing a Christian act when they break off from the main body and set up a separate organism of their own. The maintenance of the National Church is a standing protest against this doctrine. Its existence testifies that while those who so act may not cease to be Christians, and may even have a more or less valid excuse or justification for their conduct under the special circumstances in which they are placed, yet the act itself is in the abstract wrong, and the situation which it produces is one which we are all bound to endeavour to rectify.

In connection with these views respecting the value of the National Church as a witness to the duty of organic unity among Christians, it was interesting to read the article of Mr. L. V. Biggs in the *CHURCHMAN* for March on his proposed Society of Baruch for strengthening her position by the diffusion of accurate information and the correction of errors concerning her. It is impossible to overrate the importance of the object; but, amid the overwhelming multiplicity of existing organizations, one shrinks from the formation of a fresh association. Nor does it, under present circumstances, appear to be necessary. The Archbishop of Canterbury has started a scheme of Church Committees—central, general, diocesan, rural-decanal, and parochial—which, without the creation of a new society, shall, as representing the whole Church, carry on the work of Church defence. In connection with the Central Committee, which has its office at the Church House, Dean's Yard, Westminster, there is a Church Intelligence Sub-committee, which is charged with the function of supplying provincial newspapers with facts and comments bearing on the subject, and of replying to attacks on the Church and false statements respecting her which are brought to their notice. In the absence of any complete system of correspondents throughout the country, it is obvious that this duty can only be partially and imperfectly performed. But the nucleus of the plan exists; and what is now wanted is, not an independent Society of Baruch, but the enlistment of one or two individual Baruchs in each local Church committee, who will undertake to watch the newspaper press of their district, will supply it with full and accurate information on Church topics, will correct errors in matters of narrative, and, if they find a misstatement of history, or law, or statistics which they are unable to answer, will refer for a reply to the Church Intelligence Sub-committee at Westminster.

Such is one of the possibilities which underlie the Archbishop's scheme. There are many others, and among them



the advancement of Church reforms. Though we have been of late girding for the battle, it is permissible to indulge in the hope that there may be a happier time coming, when we can sheath the sword and take up the trowel. When this occurs, the network of Church committees throughout the country will furnish a means of expressing that consensus of Church opinion upon a particular measure, the absence of which has hitherto proved so great a hindrance to the progress of ecclesiastical Bills in Parliament. Church defence and Church reform are not antagonistic or competing subjects, but are intimately bound up the one with the other. We who believe that the Church of England is still the visible representative of the Catholic Church in this country, and yearn for the time when the bulk of those who are now separated from her shall be reunited to her communion, are bound to labour, that she shall be rendered as perfect as human efforts are permitted to make her, and be thoroughly worthy of her position as the true religious home of all English Christians, and the parent stock of the various branches of the Anglican communion throughout the world.

PHILIP VERNON SMITH.



#### ART. IV.—BISHOP HAROLD BROWNE.

IT may at first sight cause some surprise that the Liberal Dean of Durham should have been asked to write the biography of the late Bishop of Winchester. "An Oxford man writing a Cambridge man's life may be," as Dean Kitchin says, "an anomaly; but what shall we say to a Broad Churchman dealing with the problems of a High Churchman's mind, a Liberal in politics with those of a person instinctively Conservative, a Dean with the story of a Bishop's activities?" It would, however, have been impossible to have made a fitter choice. The Dean's charming and acknowledged literary abilities shine forth brightly in every page of the biography. His skill is the more conspicuous from the fact that Bishop Browne's life was singularly devoid of striking incidents. But he was pre-eminently a good and wise prelate, whose learning and moderation and Christian charity ever rendered his opinion of great weight in the deliberations of the Church. "My aim," says Dean Kitchin, "has been to do justice to one of the truest representatives of the Church of England, to a man who could with equal dignity and sympathy sit by the bedside of a dying cottager or stand in the presence of kings." In one respect only have we cause for regret. It was the wish of those who