

THE TRUE CHURCH.



What is it ?

Who compose it ?

17 Testimonies
from
Different
Lands.

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Short Papers on Church History

FROM THE APOSTOLIC AGE
DOWN TO THE NINETEENTH
CENTURY.

By ANDREW MILLER

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THE
TRUE CHURCH.

WHAT IS IT?
WHO COMPOSE IT?

SEVENTEEN TESTIMONIES
FROM
DIFFERENT LANDS.

EDITORS:
W. HOSTE, B.A.
R. M'ELHERAN.



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THE EDITORS' NOTE.

IT can hardly be questioned that the great European War is bringing very near two great political events long foretold in prophecy—the restoration of the United Roman Empire and the return of the Jews to their own land.

The moral signs of the times, as distinguished from political events, agree with this. The prevalent love of pleasure, the powerless “forms of godliness” which abound, the active propaganda of spurious imitations of the truth, corresponding so closely with the picture drawn in the second epistle to Timothy, chapter 3, all prove that we are in “the Last Days.”

But another event, not itself the subject of Old Testament prophecy, must, as very many believe, precede the political movements above referred to—the return of the Lord Jesus for His Church. This, then, must “a fortiori” be very near. How important, then, that all who bear the name of Christian should make sure whether they really are members of the True Church, so as to be ready for that return.

The object of this book is to point out what the True Church is, of which the Lord Jesus Christ is Head, and the Divine condition for membership. It is not religion that saves, but Christ. He is the Only Door of Salvation (John 10. 9), and the Only Way to the Father (John 14. 6). His Name alone is “given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4. 12). He is the One Mediator (1 Tim. 2. 5)

and the solitary Divine Foundation (1 Cor. 3. 11). The offering of His Body on the Cross is the sole valid Sacrifice for sin (Heb. 10. 12), His Blood the exclusive means by which sins may be forgiven and the sinner justified (Heb. 9. 12). Faith in Him is the one condition by which a self-condemned sinner can obtain eternal blessing (Acts 16, 31), and His Person the unique centre around which God would have His saints to gather (Matt. 18: 20 ; Heb. 10. 21).

The various writers are responsible only for their own articles. We hope that the fact that the contributors to this volume represent various countries of the world (though all by grace citizens of the Better Country) may add weight to their testimony, and be blessed of God, not only to the people of the British Isles and Empire, but also wherever English is understood.

W. H.

R. M'E

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THE TRUE CHURCH

WHAT IS IT? ———

WHO COMPOSE IT?

THE TRUE CHURCH

In which Alone Men can be Saved.

By J. C. RYLE, D.D., Bishop of Liverpool.

THERE is hardly any subject in religion which is so much misunderstood as the subject the "Church." There is probably no misunderstanding which has done more harm to professing Christians than the misunderstanding of this subject.

There is hardly any word which is used in such a variety of meanings as the word "Church." It is a word that we hear constantly used, and yet we cannot help observing that different people use it in different senses. The English politician in our days talks of "the Church." What does he mean? You will generally find he means the Episcopal Church established in his own country. The Roman Catholic talks of "the Church." What does he mean? He means the Church of Rome, and tells you that there is no other True Church in the world except his own. The Dissenter talks of "the Church." What does he mean? He means the communicants

of that Chapel of which he is a member. The members of the Church of England talk of "the Church." What do they mean? One means the buildings in which he worships on a Sunday; another means the clergy, and when any one is ordained tells you that he has gone "into the Church;" a third has some vague notions about what he is pleased to call apostolical succession, and hints mysteriously that the Church is made up of Christians who are governed by Bishops, and of none beside. There is no denying these things. They are all patent and notorious facts. And they all help to explain the assertion with which I started, that there is no subject so much misunderstood as that of the "Church."

I believe that to have clear ideas about the Church is of the first importance in the present day. I believe that mistakes on this point are one grand cause of the religious delusions into which so many fall. I wish to call your attention to that great primary meaning in which the word "Church" is used in the New Testament. I want to clear the subject of that misty vagueness by which it is surrounded in so many minds.

The Only Church in which is Salvation.

First of all let me show you *that one True Church, outside of which no man can be saved.*

There is a Church, outside of which there is no Salvation,* a Church to which a man must belong, or be lost eternally. I lay this down without hesitation or reserve. I say it as strongly and as confidently as the strongest advocate of the Church of Rome. But what is this Church? Where is this Church? What are the marks by which this Church may be known? This is the grand question. It is

* In this Dispensation.—EDS.

composed of all believers in the Lord Jesus. It is made up of all God's elect, of all converted men and women, of all true Christians. It is a Church of which all the members have the same marks. They are all "born again" of the Spirit. It is a Church which is dependent upon no ministers upon earth, however much it values those who preach the Gospel to its members. The life of its members does not hang on Church membership, and baptism, and the Lord's Supper, although they highly value these things when they are to be had. But it has only one Great Head, one Shepherd, one Chief Bishop, and that is Jesus Christ. He alone, by His Spirit, admits the members of this Church, though ministers may show the door. Till He opens the door no man on earth can open it—neither Bishops, nor Presbyters, nor Convocations, nor Synods. Once let a man repent and believe the Gospel, and that moment he becomes a member of this Church.

It is a Church whose existence does not depend on forms, ceremonies, cathedrals, churches, chapels, pulpits, fonts, vestments, organs, endowments, money, kings, governments, magistrates, or any act or favour whatsoever from the hand of man.—It has often lived on and continued when all these things have been taken from it. It has often been driven into the wilderness, or into dens and caves of the earth, by those who ought to have been its friends. But its existence depends on nothing but the presence of Christ and His Spirit, and so long as they are with it the Church cannot die.

The Only Church Truly Catholic.

This is the only Church which is truly catholic. It is not the Church of any one nation or people. Its members are to be found in every part of the world

where the Gospel is received and believed. It is not confined within the limits of any one country nor pent up within the pale of any particular forms or outward government. In it there is no difference between Jew and Greek, black man and white, Episcopalian and Presbyterian, but faith in Christ is all. Its members will be gathered from North and South, and East and West, and will be of every name and denomination, and kindred, and people, and tongue, but all one in Christ Jesus.

The Only Church Truly Apostolic.

This is the only Church which is truly Apostolic. It is built on the foundation laid by the Apostles, and holds the doctrines which they preached. The two grand objects at which its members aim are Apostolic faith and Apostolic practice; and they consider the man who talks of following the Apostles without possessing these two things to be no better than sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.

The Only Church which is Indestructible.

This is the only Church which is certain to endure unto the end. Nothing can altogether overthrow and destroy it. Its members may be persecuted, oppressed, imprisoned, beaten, beheaded, burned, but the True Church is never altogether extinguished. It rises again from its afflictions. It lives on through fire and water. When crushed in one land it springs up in another. The Pharisees, the Herods, the Neros, the Julians, the Diocletians, the bloody Marys, the Charles the Ninths, have laboured in vain to put down this Church. They slay their thousands, and then pass away and go to their own place. The True Church outlives them all, and sees them buried each in his turn.

The Only True Christian Church.

This is the Church which does the work of Christ upon earth. Its members are a little flock, and few in number compared with the children of the world; one or two here, and two or three there, a few in this parish, and a few in that. But these are they who shake the universe, these are they who change the fortunes of kingdoms by their prayers, these are they who are the active workers for spreading the knowledge of pure religion and undefiled, these are the life-blood of a country, the shield, the defence, the stay, and the support of any nation to which they belong.

This is the Church which shall be truly glorious at the end. When all earthly glory is passed away, then shall this Church be presented without spot before God the Father's Throne. Thrones, principalities, and powers upon earth shall come to nothing. Dignities, and offices, and endowments shall all pass away. But the Church of the first-born shall shine as the stars at the last, and be presented with joy before the Father's Throne in the day of Christ's appearing. When the Lord's jewels are made up, and the manifestation of the sons of God takes place, Episcopacy, and Presbyterianism, and Congregationalism will not be mentioned. One Church only will be named, and that is the Church of the elect.

The Only Church which is Vital.

This is the Church to which a man must belong if he would be saved. Till you belong to this you are nothing better than a lost soul. You may have the form, the husk, the skin, and the shell of religion, but you have not got the substance and the

life. Yes, you may have countless outward privileges, you may enjoy great light and knowledge and opportunities, but if you do not belong to the Body of Christ your light and knowledge, and privileges, and opportunities will not save your soul. Alas, for the ignorance that prevails on this point! Men fancy if they join this Church or that Church, and become communicants, and go through certain forms, that all must be right with their souls. It is an utter delusion. It is a gross mistake. All were not Israel who were called Israel, and all are not members of Christ's Body who profess themselves Christians. Take notice, you may be a staunch Episcopalian, or Presbyterian, or Independent, or Baptist, or Wesleyan, or Plymouth Brother, and yet not belong to the True Church. And if you do not, it will be better at last if you had never been born.

Serious Issues at Stake.

I do not ask whether you go to a place of worship on the Sunday. I do not ask whether you call yourself a Churchman or whether you are a Dissenter. I only ask whether you belong to the Church, which is made up of true believers, whether you have been brought to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, whether you have laid aside the world and sin, come out from following them, and fled to Christ by faith. If you have not, take warning that you are in a most dangerous and unsatisfactory state of soul. You have got hold of nothing worth calling religion. You have got the husk of Christianity, but not the kernel. You have nothing to rest upon, nothing to comfort you in the day of trial, nothing to satisfy you in an empty world, and nothing, above all things, to save you in the last day. The hopes of all men shall be put upon their trial sooner or

later. Except you belong to the one True Church, your end will be a Churchman or Dissenter lost, a Churchman or Dissenter cast away, a Churchman or Dissenter in Hell, without hope and without comfort, and that for ever.

Oh, that men would but see that Salvation turns upon this question! Oh, that men would but see that it shall profit nothing to say, 'I have always gone to my Church,' or, 'always gone to Meeting,' if they have not gone to Christ by faith and been "born again," and been made one with Christ, and Christ with them! Oh, that men would understand that "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;" that true religion does not turn on Episcopacy or Presbyterianism, on churches or chapels, on liturgies or extempore prayer; but on justification, and sanctification, on saving faith and new hearts. Oh, that men would set their minds more upon these points, and leave off their miserable squabbling about unprofitable controversies, and settle down to this one great question: Have I come to Christ, and laid hold of Him, and been born again?

I commend these things solemnly to your attention. That you may know them by experience is my heart's desire. That the knowledge of them may spread more and more is my daily prayer.

THE TRUE CHURCH

Contrasted with the False Church.

By M. CH. AUBERT, Switzerland.

THE True Church! Then there is a false Church! Side by side with the Church presented by the Word of God as being the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12), the House of God (Eph. 2; 1 Peter 2), the Bride of Christ (Eph. 5) (terms which set forth its sublime character), there is another Church which is only an imitation, a counterfeit, and does the work of the enemy. Of this latter we need say but little further than to point out the fact that for membership with it it suffices to be brought under a sacrament, to be inscribed in certain registers, to submit to certain rites, and to profess doctrines which vary according to the particular ecclesiastical organisation in question.

The false Church does not know how to require of its disciples a new heart, a second birth, a spiritual conversion, things which are above all human understanding. It shows itself at times very religious, very active, very attractive, as well by its forms as by the splendour of its ceremonial. But what can be its moral value? It remains, none the less, the work of man, and because of this fact it becomes quite easily the instrument of Satan to keep souls from the truth in a false security, strangers from the life of God and ignorant of the work of the Spirit.

Would you contemplate the false Church in the full development of its diverse character, and *understand* the end that awaits it? Only read with serious attention the seventeenth and eighteenth chapters of the Book of Revelation. Before closing the Book,

listen earnestly to the appeal which rings as with the voice of a trumpet: "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins" (18. 4).

In striking contrast is the *True Church*. Let us consider it under one or other of the figures which the Word of God uses to describe it; it will appear to us as a divine work—"The Body of Christ," "The House of God." Its origin is on high, in the eternal counsels of the Father, in His infinite love. When the question for the first time arises in Holy Scripture it is the Lord Jesus who names it, signifying this Church as His work. "I will build My Church."

The Foundation of the True Church.

This future, "I will build," may surprise persons who think that Christ laboured at the foundation and building of the Church by the exercise of His incomparable earthly ministry, viz., either by the preaching of the Sermon on the Mount or by the working of His wonderful miracles of which the Gospels tell us. Nevertheless an attentive reader of the Word of God cannot fail to understand that the Church could not come into being before the death and resurrection of the Lord. He teaches this Himself, adding to the words already quoted a significant instruction summed up in verse 21: "From that time forth began Jesus to show unto His disciples how that He must go unto Jerusalem, . . . suffer many things, . . . be killed, and be raised again."

To *suffer*, to *die*, to be *raised again*. These three words, corresponding to three things indispensable to the founding and building up of the Church, show us the foundation upon which the edifice was to be raised. How could any one save the Holy Spirit be able to build upon such a foundation? What help can human wisdom, energy, and capacity

supply in a domain and for a work which is not theirs? "The things of God knoweth no man, save the Spirit of God. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him" (1 Cor. 2. 11-14).

The Church is the Body of Christ. Here on earth He went from place to place doing good (Acts 10. 38); but He was the grain of wheat not yet fallen into the ground, and therefore alone, but He was destined to die and become fruitful (John 12. 24). Therefore, there could then be no question of His Body, nor of His members in this particular sense until after His death, burial, and resurrection. Then it was God "put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1. 22, 23). Thus the Church is a collective body, all the individuals of which are united, not by a constitutional organisation, regulating their relationship one with another, but as an organism of which the members are one, because they draw their life from a unique source, from the glorified Head, even from the Lord in Heaven. He it is who communicates Himself to His own by His Spirit to live in them, and to dwell in the midst of them (Matt. 18. 20; John 15. 4, 5; 1 Cor. 12. 12, 13; Eph. 2. 5-7; 4. 15, 16).

The Membership of the True Church.

The Church, the Body of Christ, we have said is *His* work. But by what means do those who have been made members thereof enter into its constitution? How does a sinner become a living stone in the edifice (1 Peter 2. 5), and an active member of the Body whose Head is in Heaven? Not by any external rite performed by priestly or clerical hands.

For a new creation, a divine operation is indispensable, since it is necessary to give life to that which was in a state of death (2 Cor. 5: 12; Eph. 2. 10). This work is the "new birth" (John 3. 3), and those who are its subjects are "*born of God*" (1 John 2. 29; 3. 9; 5. 1-4, 18). They have experienced regeneration accomplished by the Holy Spirit (Titus 3. 5; 1 Peter 1. 3-23). Let us add that this work is not arbitrary the fruit of a divine caprice, for it is only rendered possible in the case of those who yield to it by responding to the appeal of God by conversion, by the forsaking of sin, and by faith (John 5. 40; 6. 47; 1 Thess. 1. 9, 10; Eph. 1. 13, 14).

Regenerated! Born of God! These words convey a glorious reality, and comprise the gift of life by Christ raised from the dead and glorified in Heaven, invisible to the world, hidden in fact until that moment when He will appear terrible, in the Day when every eye shall see Him (Rev. 1. 7).

From a hidden Christ descends a hidden life (Col. 3. 3), communicated to the redeemed by a hidden Agent, the Holy Spirit, "whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him" (John 14. 17). Therefore all that has relation to the nature of the Church, to its constitution, to its increase, to its development, all that concerns its mode of work for unconverted souls, or for establishing believers, remain wrapped in a certain mystery, and exposes itself to the criticism of the uninitiated. In fact, if the believer individually is called to depend solely on His Lord, can the Church in its corporate capacity pursue any other course here below? We do not think so, for from the moment that human principles direct the life and testimony of the Church, this life is not that of a hidden Christ, and the testimony becomes conformed.

to that which the world knows and approves. Its praises are lavished upon that Church which it has ceased to despise, because the Church on its part has ceased to hold forth before its eyes the light of life (John 8. 12). Having lost for itself this light of life, it sinks into the same ignorance as the world, as to the hidden life, and that which is its source.

It is therefore most important for the Christian to grasp what is the Church according to the Word, for at the same moment he will learn what he is himself. It is the habitation of God, and he a living stone placed in the structure of this building. It is the Body of Christ, and he a member of this Body whose Head is in Heaven.

As to the world, it is the impure place, full of darkness and under the sway of the devil, in which the power of the life of Christ is working to take out stones for the temple of God and members for His Body. He is working this first for Himself, then for His own, and also for the world, the object of divine love: "That they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me" (John 17. 23). This prayer of the Lord for His saved ones finds an echo in the following exhortation of the Apostle Paul: "Be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world" (Phil. 2. 15):

A Personal Revelation of the True Church.

Before laying down his pen the author of these lines wishes to add his personal testimony. Brought up from his earliest youth deeply to feel his lost condition, early taught to have no confidence either in acts of ritual, in pretended good works, or in the piety of his parents, he found peace the day he simply

rested upon Christ. He saw in the work *accomplished once for all on the Cross* the expiation of his sins by Him who, now at the right hand of the Father, can "save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." (Heb. 7. 25).

Thus enlightened and enfranchised for himself, he had no thought of attaching great importance to that which is usually called the question of the Church until, nevertheless, his attention was drawn to the fact that if Christ can suffice for His redeemed as individuals He ought also to suffice for His redeemed ones as a whole. If each one of His members depends for himself on the Head, could the Body, looked at as a whole, know any other position, or the members among themselves a relation of a different nature to that which exists with the Head? "for we are members of His Body" (Eph. 5. 30).

This discovery was to the author of these lines a veritable revelation, which lit up his Christian path and enabled him to find his way amidst the labyrinth of contrary opinions which trouble the people of God, leading them far from the paths of the Word and the obedience of the Holy Spirit.

Let us cultivate this holy ambition to realise in the daily life the dependence of the member, directed by the Head, and when together as a local expression of the Church of God. As His people in the midst of the world, let us see to it that we manifest this lovely and precious unity of the Body, inspired by one life alone, that of the Head, which should characterise all its activity. In this way we should respond to His thoughts of love while awaiting the day when in the Glory the work shall be completed, perfected, and wholly to the honour of our God, to whom be praise, for ever and ever.

THE TRUE CHURCH.

“To What Church do You Belong?”

By J. S. ANDERSON, for thirty years a Herald of
the Cross in Italy.

To *belong to* means to *be of*, and that divine Scripture which says “ye *belong to* Christ” reads, literally, “Ye *are of* Christ” (Mark 9. 41). Having passed most of my life among people who are seeking peace and rest in the ecclesiastical unity of Rome, I naturally feel a deep interest in the question of the Church, and it is with the sincere desire to help any to find true spiritual peace and rest that I humbly offer the following thoughts.

As the Apostle Paul contemplated the Divine Unity of all true believers, he burst into a sevenfold exclamation:

“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” (Eph. 4. 4-6).

Every local Church ought to be formed after this divine pattern, and in our fellowship as God’s saints we ought to aim at having and holding the whole truth revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures; but we must never forget that those who have less light and knowledge, if children of God, *are of* and *belong to* the one Church. Many portions of the whole revealed truth were lost, and have been

gradually recovered, but at no time has any local Church possessed the whole truth of God, and yet His Church has existed in every age since the day of Pentecost. The closing Apostolic Epistles show that the earthly testimony of the Church—in the churches—was fast becoming weak and unfaithful, and the history of this failure is unfolded to us in the letters to the seven churches in the Book of Revelation (chaps. 2, 3).

Men have divided the world in many ways, geographically and nationally, but the highest, the divine division among men is that contained in the Scripture: "Jews,...Greeks,...the Church of God" (1 Cor. 10. 32). These three divisions are absolutely distinct. The Jew from the Greek (Gentile), and the Church of God from both, for in Christ "there is neither Greek nor Jew, but He is all and in all" (Col. 3. 11).

This is no dry, dogmatical study. The question of the Church touches our very hearts as we remember that divinely tender Scripture: "Even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it" (Eph. 5. 25). So if we are His we belong to the Church which He loved, His beloved Church. What a blessed and comforting assurance this affords us at the very outset. We are not the objects of a mere human ecclesiastical union or communion, but of the love of Christ, which led Him to give Himself for His Church. Yes, *His* Church, for He calls it "My" Church (Matt. 16. 18), loved by Him, built by Him upon this Rock, Himself, the Son of God.

For His Body's Sake.

But nearer and dearer still is the thought of the Church as the Body of Christ. Paul suffered the afflictions of Christ "for His Body's sake, which is

the Church'' (Col. 1. 24). Surely this speaks to us of a living union with Christ, of a belonging to Him. And it is in this aspect of the Church as the Body of Christ that He is spoken of as the Head, its living Head, its only Head, ''the Head over all things to the Church'' (Eph. 1. 22), and to whom ''the Church is subject'' (Eph. 5. 24), who is before all things, and by whom ''all things consist. And He is the Head of the Body, the Church'' (Col. 1. 17).

Human ecclesiastical supremacy has so characterised the history of the churches that we are accustomed to associate mere official dignity and direction with the head of the Church. But it is not so with our Lord. As Head of the Church He ''nourishes'' it (Eph. 5. 29); and all His ministering gifts are the fruit of His loving care for the members of His Body, ''for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ'' (4. 12), thus nourishing and cherishing the Church.

Man is a religious being, but his religious instinct has been so perverted by the fall that his very religion may lead him to persecute the Church. ''Concerning zeal, persecuting the Church'' (Phil. 3. 6). And twice writes the same Apostle: ''I persecuted the Church of God'' (1 Cor. 15. 9; Gal. 1. 13), the Body of Christ. And the persecutor heard the voice of the Head: ''Why persecutest thou Me?''

The Wonder of Heaven.

What a Church to belong to! The wonder of Heaven! ''That now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known, by the Church, the manifold wisdom of God'' (Eph. 3. 10); and not only now, but through eternity God will be glorified in the Church. ''Unto Him be glory in

the Church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end'' (Eph. 3. 21).

So in considering our subject, the Church, we have to return to Christ. It is His Church. He loved it, and gave Himself for it. The Church is not the way to God. Neither it nor anyone in it is the gate of Heaven. "I am," said Jesus, "the Way, and the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me" (John 14. 6). The Church is composed of all who have come to God by Him, and to whom He has revealed the Father. "I will declare Thy Name unto My brethren; in the midst of the Church will I sing praise unto Thee" (Heb. 2. 12).

Strange Views of the Church.

I remember what strange and erroneous views I had of the Church in my boyhood, which I passed religiously under several noted divines, and took part with my companions in the ecclesiastical discussions of the day. Some of us gloried in being "Free," others "Established," while others rejoiced in being "Independent." But before long, through the grace of God, I discovered that I was not truly free, spiritually established, or really independent. I was fourteen years of age, and the minister had a class for preparing the youth of the congregation as members of his Church. This preparation, however, only convinced me more and more that I was not a member of the Body of Christ, the Church, that I did not belong to Him, and that therefore it was worse than vain for me to join a Church. How, then, did I become a member of Christ and belong to His Church? It may help you if I briefly tell you.

I had read in Mark 12. 30, "the first of all the commandments:" "Thou shalt love the Lord Thy

God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.” Could I fulfil this? I thought I should do my best, and my love to God became my one aim in life for salvation. But my endeavour proved vain. I found I did not, could not, love God with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength, and my misery increased with the discovery. While in this hopeless condition I heard from John 3. 16 the saving message of God’s love to me. “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” I believed it, and had the assurance of everlasting life in “the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me” (Gal. 2. 20). Now I belonged to Him. But I read in Ephesians 5. 25 that “Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it.” Thus the question of the Church became clear to me. I had not to join it nor do anything to belong to it. As Christ’s I was now of it, in it. It has been a joyful privilege to witness to those under the yoke of Papal unity, or under the burden of any other party Church fellowship, that it is the will of God that every local Church should be united in Christ “with all that in every place call upon the Name of Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 1. 2).

THE TRUE CHURCH

Composed of "Living Stones."

By Colonel W. BEERS, Canada.

- "Upon this Rock I will build My
Church," Matt. 16. 18.
"Christ is the Head of the Church," .. Eph. 5. 23.
"Christ also loved the Church," .. Eph. 5. 25.
"He is the Head of the Body, the
Church," Col. 1. 18.
"His Body's sake, which is the
Church," Col. 1. 24.

IN the foregoing Scriptures we have presented to us what may be designated or described as the Body or universal aspect of the Church. That there is the local aspect Scripture also clearly defines, but it is not our purpose in this paper to refer to that side of the truth, further than to remark that in the New Testament Scriptures we find the term "Church," "Churches," etc., used some 108 times, and in about 96 places it has reference, we judge, to the Church or Assembly in any given place gathered around the Lord Jesus as a witness to His Name and Word. This fact is not generally known, and through ignorance of it much confusion has arisen, confounding things that differ, with the sad result that divisions amongst God's people have been caused and dishonour brought to the Name.

In Matthew 16. 18 we have the Lord Jesus Christ speaking prophetically of something which He Himself was *about* to do, and of something which

was not then in existence, "His Church," which He was going to build. Thus at the commencement of our subject we are met with this fact, that except in the mind and purpose of God the Church had no existence previous to this statement of our Lord.

In the Epistle to the Ephesians and in that to the Colossians, also in Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12, we have more reference than anywhere else to the Church which is "His Body," of which He (Christ) is the Head. It was this Church He loved, and it was for this Church He gave Himself upon the Cross of Calvary—a Church which includes every child of God, every regenerate person of this present dispensation on earth and in Heaven. No matter what religious name he may have been called of men, or have called himself, he is a member of the Body of Christ. The moment he received Christ he was incorporated into that Body, and became one of His members and a member of every other Christian already in the Body. "So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another" (Rom. 12. 5).

The Truth of the One Body.

"For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ" (1 Cor. 12. 12).

"Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular" (1 Cor. 12. 27).

"For by one Spirit are we all baptised into ONE BODY, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12. 13).

"And that He might reconcile both unto God in ONE BODY by the Cross, having slain the enmity thereby" (Eph. 2. 16).

“There is ONE BODY, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling” (Eph. 4. 4).

“And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in ONE BODY; and be ye thankful” (Col. 3. 15).

Let us remember that there is but “ONE BODY,” and its membership is the only one that God recognises. This is a truth that the Holy Spirit through the Apostle Paul uses to emphasise the awful sin of carnality which manifested itself in sectarianism at Corinth.

“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were you baptised in the name of Paul?” (1 Cor. 1. 10-13).

“For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?” (1 Cor. 3. 3, 4). Hence, for a Christian to unite himself to any mere human religious “body,” of which there are so many in Christendom, would be spiritual anarchy on his part.

Members in the Body.

“God hath set the members every one of them in the Body, as it hath pleased Him” (1 Cor. 12. 18). Hence no man can join himself to this Body, the

Church, nor can any one else place him in it by any act of any kind. Therefore, how great is the sin of all those who teach that in the christening of infants the little child is made "a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven."

Again, once in the Body, in the Body for ever! For as no human hand can place any believer *in* the Body, so no hand, human or satanic, can take a believer *out* of the Body. Neither can he by any act of his own separate himself from that wondrous and divine creation.

The Head (Christ) and the members constitute this Body, "the Christ" (1 Cor. 12. 12, lit. trans.). Head and members are joined together in One Body, in eternal and indissoluble union. Because Christ's death was our death, and His burial our burial, therefore His resurrection is our resurrection, and His glory shall be our glory (Col. 2. 11-20; 3. 1-4). In our baptism into Christ's death (Rom. 6. 3) this wondrous identification with Christ is beautifully and graphically set forth, for "as He is, so are we in this world" (1 John 4. 17). As He has passed through death and judgment, so have all His people.

On the day of Pentecost, fifty days after the resurrection of our Lord and ten days after His ascension, God the Holy Ghost descended, in sound as wind, and in appearance like as tongues of fire (Acts 2. 1-4). All those assembled together, about 120 in number, composed of men and women, as mentioned in chapter 1, were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and were all baptised by the Son of God (Matt. 3. 11; John 1. 33) "*in* one Spirit into One Body" (1 Cor. 12. 13). Thus did

The Birth of the Church

take place, and since that marvellous and unique

occurrence each person on believing is personally baptised in one Spirit into ONE BODY, and is sealed (Eph. 1. 13) and indwelt by the same blessed Spirit.

No unconverted person is or can be baptised into this One Body, nor can such by any possibility become a member of this One Body which is composed solely of those who have been "born again," who have received the Spirit-birth. All men need this new birth (John 3. 3-5), which is brought about by the Spirit through the Word of God. It is "not of blood," *i.e.*, not of natural birth, that is, not the result of natural relationship to parents, although they might both be Christians; "not of the will of the flesh," no man can regenerate himself; "nor of the will of man," no person can regenerate another; no bishop, priest, or minister can by any act of his, by the "laying on of hands," or by baptism, incorporate any one into the Church; "visible or invisible," "but of God," for the work of regeneration is the work of God alone.

"Salvation is of the Lord,"

it is vast, it is full, it is free. It is eternal as to its duration, it is comprehensive in its effects, for it saves from the guilt and penalty of sin, which is death. It saves to-day through a living Christ at God's right hand, who is able to save to the end of time from the power of sin, and by and by the believer will be delivered from the presence of sin by the coming Saviour, who will "appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9. 28). Thus our great Salvation covers the past, the present, the future, and the righteousness of God is in the Gospel presented "unto all and upon all that believe." "*Now* is the accepted time, *now* is the Day of Salvation."

THE TRUE CHURCH.

The Congregation of True Believers in the Lord Jesus.

By J. R. CALDWELL, Scotland.

IN ordinary usage a church is a building of stone and lime set apart for religious purposes. The term is also used of a national religious community, as the "Church of England, of Ireland, or of Scotland." Again, it is applied to a denomination, as "The United Free Church," "The Established Church," "The Episcopal Church," "The Baptist Church," etc., each being distinct from all the others. But in none of these senses is it used in Scripture. The Greek word is *Ecclesia*, i.e., "the called out." It is used in Acts 7. 38 of the congregation of Israel which was "called out" of Egypt, and, again, in Acts 19. 22, of the excited mob at Ephesus, but these two instances of the use of the word *Ecclesia* are quite exceptional. In all other places it denotes the congregation of true believers in the Lord Jesus.

The Church a Building.

It is first used in Matthew 16. 18 by the Lord Himself, "My Church." There we learn it was yet, in the future, to be built. It is a building, but not of brick and mortar. It is composed of "living stones," and these are built up "a spiritual house." All who have believed on the Son of God are living, they have "life eternal," all others are "dead in trespasses and sins." As John writes: "We are of

God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness" (or in the Wicked One, R.v.).

Those who are indeed believers, who through faith in Christ Jesus have passed "from death unto life" (John 5. 24), who have peace with God and rejoice in hope of His glory (Rom. 5. 1, 2), are not merely isolated living stones, they are "builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." They are "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the Chief Corner Stone" (Eph. 2. 20-22). Not one who is spiritually dead has any place or part in that building of God. He may belong to the membership of a National Church, or he may be a member of an orthodox denomination, yet if he has not been "born again," if he has not been converted, turned from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God, then he is not one of the living stones chosen for a place in the Church which Christ is building.

The Church a Body.

But there is another figure used which brings together into yet closer association all who belong to Christ. They have been by the Holy Spirit baptised in One Body, the Body of which Christ Himself is the Head, and of which all saints are individually members. These compose "the Church which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1. 22, 23, and 1 Cor. 12. 13, R.v.). The absolute oneness, interdependence, and sympathy of the members of the human body fitly represent the divine ideal of the Church of God. This is elaborately set forth in 1 Corinthians 12.

The Church a Unity.

At the beginning in Pentecostal days the unity was perfect. "All that believed were together, and

had all things common." "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul." They were filled with the Holy Spirit, and therefore in them Christ was glorified, and love was perfected. Attracted together by the instincts of a divine life, a corresponding principle of repulsion separated them from the world and the world from them. "Of the rest durst no man join himself unto them" (Acts 5. 13). These two principles are clear in the prayer of the Lord Jesus in John 17. Five times He prays "that they all may be *one*." Satan has ever opposed the manifestation of this unity, and split up into contending sects the Church which ought in the sight of man to be manifestly *one*, yet as a matter of fact in the anointing of the Holy Spirit all believers are one, and members of His Body, and members one of another.

The Church—A Separate Company.

But that wondrous intercessory prayer makes no less clear the separation of the Church from the world. "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." In the world they indeed are, but not of it, and the child of God who is in fellowship with Christ, while he loves all saints, will be separate from the world—a spiritual Nazarite following in the footsteps of His world-rejected Master.

The Church—How Entered.

Membership of a so-called Church is usually regarded as a voluntary act entered upon in connection with some religious ordinance, such as baptism or confirmation, when the child attains an age that warrants such a step. In the Church of England Prayer Book it is plainly taught that in baptism the child is made "a member of Christ, a child of God,

and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven." Nothing further of the nature of regeneration or conversion is required in order to membership of that Church. The rite of confirmation only is necessary wherein the child baptised in infancy relieves the sponsors of their vows and assumes the responsibility for himself. For all this there is not a scrap of warrant in Scripture. But these are what the Church of England is composed of. Among Presbyterians it is equally emphatically taught that the child of Christian parents (*i.e.*, of members of some denominational Church) is by virtue of its parentage alone a child of God. "He is a member of the Kingdom, he is that from his birth." "In baptism the Church receives him into its fellowship because his parents are believers." One would hardly have expected to find such fundamentally erroneous teaching emanating from a Presbyterian minister. Yet it is even so, and the words used above are quotations from a popular work on "The Child in the Church."

How such as hold this can dispose of such passages as "by nature the children of wrath" (Eph. 2. 3); "The mind of the flesh is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8. 7); "Except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God" (John 3. 7); "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psa. 51. 5), is more than we can comprehend. It is clearly an attempt to bring the flesh into the Kingdom of God, and the folly and sin of it will in due time be manifested.

A Personal Testimony.

The writer was a member of a Congregational Church long before he knew what it was to have

passed from death unto life or to have peace with God. But as soon as, by the infinite grace of God, the glorious light and love of the Gospel entered his heart, he found himself in a new atmosphere. He found there were those with whom he had true fellowship, to whom the Word of the Lord was precious, and the Name of Jesus sweet. But a large proportion of the members of the congregation with whom he was associated he found were ignorant of any such experience, nor could they understand or sympathise with the new found life and love. Whatever their position as members of a denomination, they had not become members of that Church which is His Body.

The Outward and the Real.

Alas, how many are there in every denomination, members of an outward organisation, and satisfied to go on as professed Christians, observing outward ordinances, attending upon what are called "the means of grace," but all the time ignorant of the life and love, the peace and joy that are known to the humblest, weakest, poorest believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Christ also 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" (Eph. 5. 25-27).

THE TRUE CHURCH.

“In the World, but Not of It.”

By S. DELATTRE, France.

I WAS born at Walincourt, in the North of France, on the 4th February, 1856, within the pale of the National Protestant Church.

From my earliest childhood the Word of God was the food of my soul. I often shut myself up alone for hours to study the Word and pray. The Acts of the Apostles was my favourite book. Before the age of eight I had read the history of the American Revival of 1857, and also the work of Professor Gausen, of Geneva, on the book of the prophet Daniel.

While still young I began to feel my sinfulness, and I remember writing to my parents that I felt guilty before God and them, like the prodigal of the parable. Weighed down by the thought of my guilt, for I began to see sin as it really is in my corrupt heart, I believed that all the whole world might be saved by virtue of the finished work of Jesus Christ except myself.

My First Communion.

When I was fifteen I refused to take my first communion. Such a thing had never been heard of, and it caused a great scandal. My mother wept much. At seventeen I took it with regret, to please my parents; but it made me so unhappy that I told them afterwards that I had taken the communion for the last time. I said to them: “This is no Church according to the Word of God. In the Acts of the Apostles I see that the entry into the Church was

after conversion without regard of age, that such a thing as receiving all young persons at the age of fifteen had no warrant in the Scriptures." I was not yet aware that there existed Assemblies composed entirely of believers. I only knew of popular "Churches" which received all Protestants within their pale. The entry into these was by natural birth, not by the New Birth.

There was in my heart a feeling of suffering at the thought of my life proving useless. I worked with a certain zeal for the salvation of others, but thought I was too guilty to be forgiven myself. This time of darkness and intense suffering lasted for two years. At nineteen years of age I took my certificate as a schoolmaster, and I was placed at the head of a free school in the North of France. My pastor thought me too zealous. He was a religious, sincere man, but full of prejudice against me. He could not bear to hear "conversion" spoken of. One day in a jest he advised me to subscribe to a Methodist newspaper, *The Evangelist*. He said to me: "These people have the same ideas as you, and are as zealous as you are." I followed his advice, and thus I gained acquaintance with the Methodist denomination, and gained some knowledge of the great revival of the eighteenth century in England. Some months later the Methodists in Paris required a manager for one of their schools. I applied and was nominated. The Methodist Assemblies were a precious home for me. I owe them a debt of gratitude. Nevertheless, I did not feel at liberty to follow their teaching, because of infant baptism, to which I had always been opposed.

A short time after my arrival in Paris occurred the experience of soul darkness and suffering to which I have already referred, and during that time I left Paris and went to study theology at the free school of

Geneva. There I found peace, when the Holy Spirit showed me that my sins were laid upon Jesus Christ crucified. I remained four years at Geneva, a time of which I retain a happy remembrance. The professors were Christians full of life. During these years I did much Gospel preaching.

In 1882, when I was twenty-six years of age, I became pastor of a Free Church at Marsillargue, in the South of France. There I found my field of activity too limited. Notwithstanding the deep and sincere affection which the brethren and sisters showed towards me, I felt I ought to leave them and go to preach the Gospel in the department of lower Charente. I had left a wealthy congregation to go and live in a very poor country. It was an act of faith. We found ourselves, my wife and I, from a material point of view, in different circumstances, but we were happy. I had a vast field for evangelisation in the midst of a Roman Catholic country; souls were converted, spiritual gifts developed in the several Assemblies, which were scattered over a radius of twenty-six kilometres. I was altogether in my element. In fact, little by little, my convictions with regard to the formation of Assemblies were enlightened and strengthened.

The last twenty-five years of my life have been spent in the centre of France, in Auvergne, and the department of the Loire.

I have been working among Roman Catholic populations who had never before listened to the preaching of the Gospel. In the midst of many persecutions, during which my life has often been in danger, I have had the joy of seeing souls passing from darkness to light in a considerable number of places.

To-day, more firmly attached than ever to Jesus Christ; my Saviour, I have left the Free Church of

Roanne since last January, in order to begin a work of simple evangelisation in complete independence, as far as men are concerned, but in dependence on my Heavenly Father, my mind made up to found Assemblies only according to the apostolic model.

As regards the Church, I did not see the truth of the Church all at once. It was by prayer and the study of the Word that the light grew in my soul, and that I gradually abandoned all human tradition to listen only to the teachings of the Word of God.

The Plan of the Church.

I may be permitted to expound them here.

When an architect desires to build a house he begins by drawing the plan and by calculating the cost. When God willed to construct His House, which is the Church, He also calculated the cost, and He paid the price by giving His only and well beloved Son. He gave Him to be the foundation on which the other stones should be placed. For nineteen centuries He has continued to build His House with "living stones" (1 Peter 2. 4-9). It is the Holy Spirit who creates these "living stones" and joins them together. Some of them, like Saul of Tarsus and the jailer of Philippi, are detached with violence from the quarry of the world; others, like Cornelius, the Ethiopian Eunuch, and Lydia, are gently gathered by the roadside. But whatever means may be used by which they are brought into the House of God, they are all "living stones," for dead stones, as the unconverted are, cannot form part of it. The Lord adds to the Church only those who are SAVED. It is for this reason that believers are called saints. They have received the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Holiness and Love.

As the Church is the "House of God, the pillar

and ground of the truth'' (1 Tim. 3. 15), all error must be banished, and the truth alone must be taught and embodied in it.

The Church has sometimes been compared to a hospital, not a flattering comparison, but even were it correct a corpse is never received as a patient into a hospital, neither ought a person who is dead in sins be received into Christian fellowship. What saith the Scriptures? 'Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness, and what communion hath light with darkness?' (2 Cor. 6. 14).

Catholic and Protestant Churches.

It is for this reason that we cannot regard as the House of God the popular Catholic and Protestant Churches, whose members are received without real repentance and faith. By teaching officially error they bring forth and maintain the worst delusions. Instead of being the "light of the world" and the "salt of the earth" they serve as dark shelters from the truth and from the requirements of Jesus Christ.

Since the Church is the "House of God" we ought to have at heart the honour of that House by living in holiness. "We exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly" (1 Thess. 5. 14). "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person" (1 Cor. 5. 13). Every society which desires to live should have a banner. Ours is: "Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." No one can shelter himself under this banner so long as he rests on the quicksand of man's opinions instead of the firm rock of the Word of God,

Family Joys and Sorrows.

As the Church is the House of God she has family joys and sorrows in which all the members should share. There are in her midst family relationships,

and we ought not to remain strangers to each other, as we are members one of another. There are family meetings, and one table for the family when they meet for worship in the liberty of the Spirit at the Lord's Supper. And, finally, there are the duties of the family towards strangers. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature" (Mark 16. 15). "And ye shall be witnesses unto Me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1. 8).

Before going further, it may be said that the word Church simply means an Assembly, and is sometimes applied to any assemblage of people. In Acts 19. 39-41 the word is used to denote a council of magistrates and a tumultuous concourse of people, but this is an exceptional use.

If for the last nineteen centuries believers had remained faithful to the teaching of the Word of God, and to the Spirit of Jesus Christ, by remaining united amongst themselves and separate from the world, what a power they would have exercised here below, and how their lives would have proclaimed the praises of Him "who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light" (1 Peter 2. 9). If one holy life is the most powerful preaching, what a power the testimony of Assemblies would be if members were only of one heart and one soul!

The Head of the Church.

In Apostolic times, while there was only one Church, of which Christ is the Head, there were also local Assemblies, which comprised the believers in the district, all such Assemblies were closely united to one another, and considered themselves as members of One Body having One Head, Jesus Christ. Had they not the same Father, the same Saviour, the

same glorious heritage, the same Spirit? They shared the joys, the sorrows, and the needs of each other. The brethren at Jerusalem, for example, glorified God in that He had granted salvation to the Gentiles, and "sent Barnabas to Antioch to strengthen the disciples" (Acts 11. 18-24). Those at Phenice and Samaria did the same (Acts 15. 3). The Assembly at Jerusalem bethought themselves of the difficulties which beset their Gentile brethren in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia, and sent them delegates bearing instructions as to their walk (Acts 15. 22-29). Finally the brethren in Galatia, Macedonia, and Achaia sent material help to the poor brethren in Jerusalem who had ministered to them of their spiritual blessings (Rom. 15. 25-28; Acts 11. 29, 30; 2 Cor. 8. 9). The union of the Body of Christ was then a holy reality, but each local Church had its own character, and enjoyed a certain independence. The independence and responsibility of each of the Churches appear from the fact that one, that at Smyrna, deserved praise, and another, that at Laodicea blame, that at Ephesus was in danger of losing its candlestick, and did lose it later on, while God allowed other lights to continue to shine. The praises and warnings of the Lord on this matter are a formal recognition of the autonomy and relative responsibility of each local Assembly. If the Church of Corinth allowed the old leaven in its midst, and was corrupted by it, it was no reason why that at Philippi should do the same, or bear the direct responsibility of the other's failure. Each Assembly had accordingly a certain autonomy resulting from its privileges and duties. This independence was, however, only relative and partial, since each group forms part of the body. Besides, good and especially evil are contagious, and are easily communicated by one

Assembly to another, especially when near each other. Moreover, the Assemblies should take a mutual interest in each other, have frequent intercourse, share in their spiritual gifts, especially between neighbours, admonish, exhort, love one another. They should remember that they form One Body in Christ, and that believers are "members one of another" (Rom. 12. 4, 5). Thus the early Christians did by giving one another mutual help (1 Cor. 1. 4; 1 Cor. 16. 19; Phil. 4. 21-23). The Lord Himself provided for these fraternal relations between the Assemblies by giving itinerant evangelists like Paul, Barnabas, Peter, Titus, Timothy, etc., who visited them, strengthened them, and brought them news one of another. The unity of believers was maintained, the gifts made use of for the edification of all, and the unity of the body was thereby manifested.

Local Assemblies.

The Christians in Apostolic times met together regularly in their respective localities for a religious purpose. What took place at these meetings? The Word of God tells us (1 Cor. 14. 26-33; Col. 3. 16; Eph. 4. 7-16; 5. 19-21; Rom. 12. 6-8; 1 Thess. 5. 12, 13; 1 Tim. 2. 5-17; James 2. 1-9).

Full liberty prevailed in these meetings. The Lord's Supper, worship, teaching, singing, and prayer were their principal features. These are called worship meetings, though it seems to me the Word of God does not limit them to worship. Any brother could pray, give out a hymn, exhort, instruct, or preach, according to his gift and according to the leading of the Spirit. The work of the elders consisted not so much in taking a prominent place in the Assembly as in guiding and watching over the flock (Acts 20. 28; 1 Peter 5. 1, 2).

There was, besides, as the basis of these assemblies, an important fact too much forgotten to-day, i. e., the presence and operation of the Holy Spirit in the Assembly, dividing "to every man severally as He will" (1 Cor. 12. 11). Thus, where the liberty of the Spirit is acknowledged, and the liberty of worship maintained in the Assemblies, there is edification.

This procedure has its inconveniences. We see them manifested in the time of the Apostle Paul (Titus 1. 10; 1 Cor. 11. 21, 22), but it is the Scriptural procedure. It is admirable simplicity, divested of all outward show, all ceremonial worship, and ought to close the door against all clericalism.

If the Holy Spirit gets His place in the Assembly to move some to speak, and others to be silent, is not a prepared subject, in view of the character of the meeting, contrary to the Word of God? It may not be always so. Beside the spontaneous addresses there may be addresses which are the fruit of long meditation and of much prayer. It is needful to search the Scriptures, and it is needful that the heart of the preacher should be revived by the truth, to enable him then to revive the hearts of the hearers. "Give attendance to reading, to exhortation," wrote Paul to Timothy (1 Tim. 4. 13-16; Titus 2. 7, 8; 2 Tim. 2. 15). We even think it is good to seek to put our thoughts "in order" (Luke 1. 3) and to give clear expression to them, but always in dependence on the Holy Spirit to know His will at the meeting. Let us not forget, however, that everything in meetings of Christians should tend to worship and edification. A well-known Christian once said with much reason: "It is important to introduce something of Heaven into religion here below." Now that which rules in

Heaven is adoration and praise; it is glory, honour, praise, and thanksgiving rendered to Him who loved us, and who is seated on the throne, and who lives for ever and ever. "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches" (Rev. 5. 9, 10, 12).

Nothing, we repeat, contributes more to the intellectual and spiritual development of believers than open meetings for worship and ministry in dependence on the Holy Spirit.

Ministry.

A most important part of ministry is that of the evangelist. If the mission of the pastor is to take care of believers, that of the evangelist is to concern himself about the careless, indifferent, and unbelieving. He is a gift of God to the world, as the pastor is a gift of God to the Church. The mission of the evangelist is to work for the salvation of sinners. He is a man who preaches the Gospel to all, everywhere and incessantly, notwithstanding all obstacles, dangers, and prisons. It needs for this work indomitable energy, very great decision, absolute self-denial. What would become of this ministry in the hands of a man only half devoted to it, with a heart diverted by other ties? No one needs to be filled with the Holy Spirit more than the evangelist. He should possess the power of love and holiness, virtue should be manifested in his life and in all his conversation. He needs tact, wisdom, knowledge, and breadth of mind. He needs also to know the human heart generally, and the habits of mind and the way of thought of those whom he evangelises. There is no more glorious ministry. Neither does any ministry require a more serious preparation.

With regard to elders, according to the Epistle

of Paul to Timothy and Titus, they should be "apt to teach," they should "take heed to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made them overseers, to feed the Church of God" (Acts 20; 1 Peter 5). The Apostles attached great importance to

The Recognition of Elders.

They desired that each Assembly should have them. There were some at Jerusalem, Ephesus, and Philippi (Acts 11. 30; 20. 17; Phil. 1. 1). Paul and Barnabas appointed them in the various Assemblies in Asia Minor (Acts 14. 23). Titus was left in Crete to appoint them in every town (Titus 1).

If God gives evangelists to the world and elders to the Church, let us not forget that all believers should evangelise, because every believer is a witness. The brethren at Jerusalem, when dispersed by persecution, preached the Gospel from town to town, and God blessed their testimony. All Christians should spread the Gospel, and all may exhort, teach, and baptise new converts.

Paul wrote to the Thessalonian converts that they had "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from Heaven." One cannot seriously await the return of the Lord in laziness, that is to say, selfishness. If we are filled with the Spirit of Christ, if we feel His compassion for the lost world, we shall also have something of His consuming zeal and spirit of prayer. United to Jesus Christ a virtue goes from us, rivers of living water flow from our innermost being. We can remove mountains, and we hasten the return of Him whom the world has seen in humiliation, and whom it must see one day in glory.

THE TRUE CHURCH.

A Witness for Christ.

By Dr. WALTER FISHER, Central Africa.

ON the day of our Lord's Crucifixion, when the priests moved the multitudes to cry "Away with Him!" there was a little company who gathered within sight of the Cross, silently weeping because they thought they were losing for good the One on whom they knew all their hopes depended.

Forty-three days later that same company were to be found upon the Mount of Olives, no longer with weeping eyes and sad hearts gazing upon a suffering Saviour, but with hearts overflowing with joy, enraptured with their risen and glorified Lord, and thrilled by His parting words: "Ye shall be witnesses unto Me, both in Jerusalem and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

Ten days later that same devoted band of men and women, after obediently waiting in prayer upon God for the promised baptism of the Holy Spirit, were telling out their joys to the wonder and amazement of all their audience, some of whom were hearing for the first time in Jerusalem their native tongues spoken by strangers. What was the result? About three thousand were added to that company, the nucleus of what would henceforth be called THE CHURCH.

Different Nationalities.

What was the mighty power that attracted those thousands? What was it that brought together

individual Jews from* different lands, speaking at least eighteen different dialects, and made them all one in heart and purpose? Never before since Adam's fall had the world witnessed such a sight. Never before had sinful men of any nation experienced such heights of joy on earth. Never before had there been an exhibition of such benevolent power.

It was nothing more nor less than the mighty power of God. God who so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son to suffer on the Cross the death-penalty due to sin, had now raised Him up from among the dead, seated Him at His own right hand in glory, and had sent down the Holy Spirit to dwell within these eye witnesses of His moral glory, and fill them with power to witness concerning the Lord Jesus, and the wondrous work He had accomplished on the Cross.

The Day of Pentecost.

We are told in Acts 2. 2: "There came a sound from Heaven as of a rushing mighty wind," revealing the irresistible power of God to be manifested so soon after in the conversion of those three thousand souls. They had come to Jerusalem well versed in Old Testament Scriptures, in obedience to the law of God, knowing they were sinners, knowing that without shedding of blood there was no remission of sins, and men with the national hope, looking for the promised Messiah who was to reign in righteousness. The simple testimony of these illiterate eye witnesses, backed up by the mighty power of the Spirit of God, revealed to them the Lord Jesus as the Lamb of God, the great Sacrifice to whom all their sacrifices had been pointing,

* They were doubtless Jews and Jewish proselytes, else they would not have been to the feast of Pentecost, but they all spoke the language of their adopted land in addition to Aramaic.

which alone could take away their sin, and also as their Christ and Lord.

John's Gospel, chapter 1. 12, and chapter 3. 3, reveal to us the fact that a mighty transformation had taken place. These multitudes had been born anew, they were now children of God, a new creation in Christ Jesus. With the eye of faith they now saw the Lord Jesus as their risen, glorified Saviour, with whom they were henceforth linked for all eternity by ties which could never be broken, either by death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature.

In Acts 2. 47 we also find that the Lord added daily such as should be saved. That daily addition has been going on for nearly two thousand years, and in these last days people of almost every tongue and nation are being gathered in, wherever God's witnesses are to be found faithfully testifying of their risen Lord, and of His atoning sacrifice on the Cross.

The Church—His Body.

In Ephesians we learn that the Church is His Body and He is its Head. This truth, also referred to in 1 Corinthians 12 and Colossians 2, reveals to us the fact that every believer on earth is a member of His Body. No two members are alike, each has his own personality, his own special service, and each is dependent for the success of his mission on his living Head, and on the co-operation of other members of the same Body.

Where is the True Church?

In those early days it was comparatively easy to recognise the members of that wonderful Body, the Church. But the question is: Where is the True Church to-day, and who belong to it? Just as in

Israel's declension unbelief demanded an earthly ruler, some one they could see, and who would go before them and fight their battles, so in the history of the "Church." Very soon unbelief entered, and it was not long before the Headship of Christ was usurped by bishops, popes, and other ecclesiastical authorities, resulting, alas, in sects, schisms, and divisions innumerable.

But in spite of all this confusion, which humbles us to the dust, there is still a True Church, a faithful remnant who still hold fast the Head, and the members of which, although scattered all over the world, are still one in faith, in hope, and in love. They may in some cases be so mixed up with the doctrines and traditions of men that it is difficult for other members, blinded perhaps by superstitions of other kinds, to recognise them.

Primitive Races and the Church.

In the case of those believers gathered out from the primitive races, there may be many so weak intellectually that they can grasp but little of the glories of their peerless Head; but He sees them, He knows them, He recognises them, and there is one distinguishing feature in them all, they by faith see Him who is invisible. He is their Lord as well as their Saviour, His will is their will, His interests are their interests, His work is their work, and the blessed hope of His coming again ever sustains them during the little while of His absence.

Failure in the Church.

If any of the members of a human body fail to respond to the impulses from its brain, or fail to work in harmony with other members of that body, we know at once that something is wrong.

If I who call myself a Churchman, Presbyterian, Baptist, or simply Christian, do not manifest the love of Christ to every one who belongs to Christ, and have no desire to win for Christ souls perishing all around me, something is wrong with me. Either I have never been united by faith to the blessed Lord Jesus, and am still a mere nominal Christian and still in my sins, or else my faith in Him is of so feeble a character that He can do no mighty things in and through me because of my unbelief.

Personal Responsibility of each Member.

Do I belong to Christ? If so, He has one great object in leaving me on this earth, and that is to be a *witness* unto Him. He wants to have entire control of me, use me in whatever way he desires, take my talents, my possessions, my all, and use them in His blessed service. Are we willing? If so our willingness will make it possible for Him to manifest His power in the world to-day, producing far greater results than ever yet have been seen.

“ Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were an offering far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.”

THE TRUE CHURCH.

How to Enter It.

By Monsieur GEORGES GAUDIBERT, Belgium.

THERE are in many minds hazy notions as to what is the Church. Anyone wishing to know exactly what is implied in that word, and how one may become a member of the Church, must necessarily turn to the Scriptures, which alone contain the full revelation of God on this important matter.

Many writers have expressed their thoughts on the question, but they vary much in their definitions, the more so the further they get away from the Scriptures. It is no wonder that their views should clash with other views when we consider that man could never of himself have conceived the thought of the Church as God has revealed it, or as the Apostle says, "The mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith" (Rom. 16. 25, 26). No religious creed nor ecclesiastical combination could give birth to a Church which is called to be the Body of Christ, "the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1. 23). No such thing as the Church exists outside the sphere of Revelation in the various religions of heathendom.

Hence, light on that question can only come from the Scriptures, and as these are complete, the whole of God's teaching on that matter has been given through the instrumentality of the Apostles, more

especially of Paul. To seek light outside the Scriptures, or to introduce what is not found there, is to tamper with what God has taught, and must be fraught with serious consequences.

The Original Charter of the Church.

Who can doubt that we are reaping these consequences when we are confronted by such utter confusion as would lead one to doubt whether God has spoken at all on this question. Evidently the numerous divisions among those who claim Christ as the Head of the Church show that the original charter has been lost sight of, for instead of the divine unity among believers prayed for by the Lord (John 17. 11, 21) we behold the sad spectacle of divided communities, large and small, and of conflicting opinions.

A puzzled believer of an inquiring turn of mind may well seek for the explanation of such a state of things, seeing that we have in our possession the very letters of the Apostle Paul, in which the whole teaching on the Church is to be found. The reason for the present confusion is not far to seek. The original directions have not been followed, they have, in process of time, been gradually modified or set aside. Hence the state of things around us in Christendom. Principles, whether good or bad, will show their results in the course of time, and evil results are evidently the consequence of evil principles. "An enemy hath done this," said the Lord, and since the appearance of the tares among the wheat "let both grow together until the harvest" (Matt. 13. 28-30). The field in which they grow, be it remarked, is not the Church, but the world.

The penalty of having set aside the teaching of God must be paid for, and we can trace its course in

the present state of things, in the gradual dwindling of the faith, greatly helped on by so-called Higher Criticism and Materialism, in the lowering of the moral standard, in the worldliness of the so-called churches, in the religious vagaries, and in the indifference of the masses. Perversions of Scripture, doctrinal errors, and so forth, are winning the day, with the predicted result that the religious world will hail a coming Antichrist (John 5. 43), the masterpiece of Satan, the counterfeit of Christ. It is not strange, therefore, that the simple believer, awakening to the importance of the subject, puzzled with the din of contending factions, should wonder how God is working in the midst of this spiritual anarchy.

When we turn to the Scriptures we find all this confusion round about us is simply the outward appearance of things which must not be confounded with the work of the Holy Spirit. This latter work goes on silently, and the Church is being built gradually by true and living stones brought from the quarry of the world. As we go beneath the surface several points are to be noticed. The Lord said: "I will build My Church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16. 18). This divine declaration stands true to the end, and her perpetual duration is guaranteed notwithstanding the efforts of Satan and men to destroy it or to divert it from its true course. Moreover, the Church was in God's thoughts ere the foundation of this earth (Eph. 1. 4), and its glorious destiny is predicted in unmistakable terms. "Christ also 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" (Eph. 5. 26-28).

The Present Construction of the Church.

Let us now inquire how the Church is being built and who enter it.

We have seen in the passage just now quoted that the Church will be glorious, "not having spot or wrinkle." Here the Church is considered as a Bride who is being prepared for her Bridegroom, and who is expecting Him. This Church has another name, the Body of Christ. As Paul says, "The Church, which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1. 22, 23). These two aspects concern the same work, for "Christ is the Head of the Church, and He is the Saviour of the body" (Eph. 5. 23). A third aspect is that of a building: "Ye are God's building" (1 Cor. 3. 9). And, again: "Ye are the temple of the living God, as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them" (2 Cor. 6. 16).

The Church, or Body, or Building, being founded on the Lord Jesus, "the Chief Corner Stone" (Eph. 2. 20), and this work being carried on by the Holy Spirit, it is evident that none other but believers compose it, and their being grouped together for that purpose is by the same Spirit. "By one Spirit are we all baptised into One Body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free" (1 Cor. 12. 13). These believers are gathered from all climes, mainly by the preaching of the Gospel. Not only the believers actually living form the Church, but also those who are no more of this world, and those who may come after us till its rapture (1 Thess. 4. 14-18; Phil. 3. 20, 21; 1 Thess. 1. 10). Thus men quite unknown to each other are nevertheless members of the Body of Christ, or the Church, in virtue of their being true believers.

And what unites believers who otherwise would be strangers to one another is the common possession of divine life, the life of Jesus Christ in them. We are all brought into one fellowship, that of "His Son Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. 1. 9). Thus believers are brought out of the realm of sin and darkness into the region of light, and are made members of the Body of Christ, all deriving their life and activity through their connection with the Head. "So we, being many, are One Body in Christ, and every one members one of another" (Rom. 12. 5; Eph. 4. 25). There is a new and eternal connection between believers which death cannot destroy or change, and this link is the possession of eternal life in Christ.

To be in the Church of God, or what is equivalent, to be a member of the Body of Christ, means that a man must be a true believer, and yet we see many people who make no profession of being children of God posing as members of the different denominations existing around us. This is an anomaly, but the state of things is getting to be such that the difficulty will be to find many true believers in these humanly organised Churches. For men have conceived various ways of getting into the Church quite foreign to what Scripture teaches, and live in this delusion. And the clearest result of this state of things is the Babel of tongues which is heard to-day in Christendom.

Christendom and the Church.

Thus many never seem to go beyond the notion that a cathedral, a temple, or some such building devoted to religious purposes is the Church, and their regular attendance at such "places of worship" is to them the assurance that they belong to the Church of God: Others go a step beyond, and

attach such an odour of sanctity to these special buildings that they believe that outside there is no True Church at all, ignoring the words of the Lord that "the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth" (John 4. 23).

Some others would regard the gathering of people having a common creed or a common liturgy as being the Church. Thus we see the Roman Catholic Church with the Pope at its head, the Greek, Anglican, Lutheran Churches, and different denominations whose names usually indicate their origin. All these are ecclesiastically separated, and tolerate each other when they cannot do otherwise. But when these religious bodies so prominent before our eyes are sought for in the Bible they are not to be found. True, we notice several Churches mentioned by name, but, if in different parts, they were all connected by a spiritual bond which cannot now be found among the denominations of to-day.

Others again suppose that through baptism a child becomes a member of the Church, a child of God; and that without going through that rite the danger of eternal perdition is incurred. Some believe that regular attendance at a place of worship and taking part in the sacraments has brought them finally, in some undefined way, into the Church or Body of Christ. Others imagine the same privilege will be granted to them because they are children of believers, or they will point to their confirmation as an evident proof of their standing in Christ.

But all these outward supposed means of grace utterly negative the one great fundamental and unchangeable fact which God will never modify: "Ye must be born again" (John 3. 7). This puts all men on the same level, "for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3: 23), and no outward

sign of reformation is of any avail. God sets before men the hideous reality of what their moral standing is before Him, and at the same time opens out the way of Salvation by faith in Christ alone. He invites the sinner to come to Him that he may be cleansed from all sin and become a new creature.

This, then, is the first step which, bringing Salvation and life to the sinner, introduces him into the Church or Body of Christ, into which he is baptised by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12. 13). The new nature is received when there is faith in Jesus Christ as a personal Saviour; it is the operation of the Spirit, coupled with the sinner's willing acceptance of God's righteous judgment on himself.

The fact that a believer becomes a member of the Body of Christ does not rest on any personal effort of his; there is no question of seeking to belong to it. This position is the necessary consequence of being "born again." This is quite different from that entering into visible fellowship with fellow-believers which may or may not exist. The operation of the Spirit in baptising believers into "One Body" is not subject to the will of man nor to any fluctuation whatever in his relationship with others.

The Aggregate of all True Believers.

The Church, which is His Body, is therefore the aggregate of all those who have believed ever since the day of Pentecost onward to the rapture of the Church, whether dead or living, or whether together or apart from each other.

It truly behoves each one who reads this to consider his position in this matter. Either he is a child of wrath or he is a child of God. So long as the question of Salvation is not settled no one can enter the Church of Christ. Salvation comes by belief in

Christ, who has shed His precious Blood that forgiveness and life might come to the sinner. Thus, "To as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become children of God, even to them that believe on His Name" (John 1. 12, R.V.).

But if, on the other hand, the reader is a believer, being born again he fulfils the divine requirements necessary to his standing as being a member of the Body of Christ. He is in the Church which the Lord is building through the power of the Spirit and the instrumentality of His servants who preach the Gospel. However small his knowledge of the purposes of God may be, that does not invalidate his title to be in the Church, a member, however humble, of the Body of which Christ is the Head. His baptism, his worship, his outward acts, are but the different visible manifestations of the grace of God which has worked in him, but they are not the basis of his standing. He is brought into the family of God, sharing its privileges and responsibilities, and having a right to its future glory, by faith in Christ alone.

Thus we have seen that utter confusion reigns in the ranks of professing Christians, and the only light and leading to be obtained as to what is the path to follow is by going back to Apostolic principles. For anyone seeking the truth on this question will find that all denominations being in their nature opposed to the unity of the One Body, a return to those principles is the only way into clear light and certain knowledge of the will of God. The Lord Jesus being the Head, let us gather round Him in dependence on His Spirit, refusing what is of purely human authority, but submitting to the divine declarations which are to be found in the Holy Scriptures.

THE TRUE CHURCH

As Viewed in its Various Aspects.

By C. H. HINMAN, New Zealand.

IN the inquiry we have practically two questions in one. First: What is the True Church? And, secondly: Who are in it?

Many erroneous ideas are held and taught as to what the Church is and what it is not, who are in it and who are not; hence it will be of importance to let some light in on the subject. This light, of course, must come from the written Word of God, which we accept as divinely inspired (God breathed) in the original from Genesis to Revelation. We believe not merely that the Bible *contains* the Word of God, but that it *is* His Word, containing the Revelation of His will and pleasure, and His purposes concerning His Son, Israel and the nations, the Church of the New Testament, and the world out of which that Church is taken. When first used, we believe, the word Church was rightly understood, but now it has become mystified and corrupted, so that its real meaning is obscured.

“Living Stones.”

In turning to the Book, then, we find that the first use of the word is found in Matthew 16. 18, “Upon this Rock I will build My Church; and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.” This is a prophetic utterance concerning something that was to take place. “I will build.” It was not in course of erection then, for the foundation was not

laid; and God does not build without a foundation. The word Church (*Ecclesia*) means an assembly of persons, or a called-out company; and as the Lord says "My Church," we take it that it was a company that He would own as His. This is true, as in Ephesians 5. 25 we read: "Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it." And again, in Acts 20. 28: "The Church which He hath purchased with His own Blood." Thus we find in starting that Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, and that He would own or claim it as His.

Stephen, before the Council, in Acts 7. 38, speaks of the "Church in the wilderness," referring of course to Israel; and they were no doubt in the true sense an *Ecclesia*, for they were a called-out company, called out of Egypt for Canaan. Saved by blood, delivered by power, and gathered around the divine presence in the Tabernacle, but they are never called a Church when in the land, neither were they indwelt by the Spirit as in the Church in the New Testament.

The Foundation of the Church.

Let us, however, go back to Matthew 16. 18, as this verse speaks of the foundation: "Upon this Rock I will build." What are we to understand by the rock? Does it mean that Simon Peter was the chief of the Apostles, and that he would be the rock? No, it does not, as this interpretation would contradict other Scriptures, and we would be brought into confusion.

In 1 Corinthians 3. 11 we read: "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ," and with this Isaiah 28. 16, Ephesians 2. 20, etc., perfectly agree. Hence we see that *Christ is the foundation, and not Peter*. Peter had

confessed Christ as the Son of the living God, therefore the Lord declares, "Upon this Rock (Christ the Son of the living God) I will build." Again, there are two forms of the word used here, *Petros* and *Petra*. The Lord said, "Thou art *Petros* (a stone), and on this *Petra* (a rock) I will build." There is a great difference between a stone and a rock. We read in one place that "they took up stones to cast at the Lord," but they could not pick up the rock. Again, in John 1. 42, we may note that at Peter's conversion the Lord said: "Thou art Simon the son of Jona, thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation a *stone*." While the Apostle himself, in 1 Peter 2. 5, speaks of believers as "living stones" (R.V.) in the spiritual house, still they are not the rock foundation.

We may settle the question then as to the foundation of the Church, that it is not Peter, or Cephas, the stone, but Christ the Rock, the antitype of the smitten rock in the wilderness (Exod. 17. 6), the "Rock of Ages."

The Building of the Church.

The next point is the building. When did this commence? Well, Scripture says, "I *will* build," so it was not then started, for Christ had not died, and the foundation was not laid. At Pentecost we begin with the formation of the Church, and the Holy Spirit was the divine workman to erect the structure. Here, through the Apostle Peter, He brought three thousand living stones from nature's quarry and put them on the Rock foundation, against which the gates of Hell could not prevail. This was a mighty work of grace, a grand start with the building, and a signal honour for Peter to be thus used of God.

Three Consecrated Buildings.

God has had three "consecrated buildings" in the world, *and only three*. The first was the Tabernacle in the wilderness, the second the Temple in the land, and the third the Church of the New Testament. By consecrated building we of course mean a building where the visible presence of God was seen and known. In the Tabernacle and Temple the Shekinah glory rested on the mercy seat in the holiest continually; thus in this sense there are no consecrated buildings on earth now. There are buildings set apart for religious services, but these are not consecrated buildings in the scriptural sense, as God does not dwell in them, and in no sense are they Churches. The Tabernacle and Temple were divine structures, made according to heavenly patterns (Exod. 25. 9; 1 Chron. 28. 11, 12, 19), and the Church of God is the antitype. The Tabernacle stood on solid silver atonement money, one hundred talents, or £34,200 worth of our money (Exod. 38. 27), while the Temple built by King Solomon stood upon the solid rock, Mount Moriah. After immense labour, we read that "great stones and costly" (1 Kings 5. 17) were brought from the quarry for God's house in Jerusalem; and these typify the living stones in the spiritual building (1 Peter 2. 5). Since Pentecost every truly saved soul has been a living stone in the building, the Church. No stone is put into the building by the will of man, but only such as are born "not of blood, nor of the will of flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1. 11).

The entrance, then, to this place of privilege and blessing is by the new birth, hence the importance of the Lord's words to the religious Nicodemus,

“Ye must be born again” (John 3. 7). Thus all who are not born of the Spirit, or born from above, are not in the Church of God, and have neither part nor lot in the matter.

The Head of the Church.

We have seen that Christ is the Foundation and the Holy Spirit is the Builder, but who is the Head of the Church? Is it possible for Christ to be both Foundation and Head? Yes, He is both. Through death He laid the Foundation; and as risen Lord He is Head. “God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2. 36). God hath raised Him up, set Him at His own right hand in the heavenlies, and “gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His Body” (Eph. 1. 20, 22).

Thus we see that no mere man can be the head of the Church, whether he be Archbishop or Pope, for the Scriptures declare that Christ alone is Head. In Colossians 1. 16-18 His Creatorship and Headship are linked together, hence man is put out of court. “By Him,” we read, “were all things created, that are in Heaven and that are in earth, . . . and He is the Head of the Body, the Church; who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the pre-eminence.” The pre-eminent place is His, not only in the councils and purposes of the Father, but also in the Church here, which is His Body.

The Church is as necessary to Christ as Eve was to Adam. If Eve had not been formed there would have been a blank in creation, and without the Church there would be a blank in the new creation. The wondrous fact is not only that He is Head, but that “we are members of His Body” (Eph. 5. 30).

Eve was taken out of Adam during his sleep, and presented to him by God in the morning. Even so is the Church being taken out during this dark night of its history, and in the resurrection morning will be presented to Him "a glorious Church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing" (Eph. 5. 27, R.V.), a perfect marvel and triumph of grace that will be to the praise of His glory throughout eternal ages.

The Members of the Church.

How, then, do we become members of this wonderful structure, the Church of God or Body of Christ, which is now in course of erection? This is a vital question of the greatest possible moment, and a right grasp of it would alter the course and prospects of many misguided souls to-day. If we join a club we are elected as members and our names are enrolled; but the Church is not a club. If one is called or appointed by the Sovereign as a Privy Councillor he is not elected, but recognised by all appointed before him. But even this illustration falls short of the wonderful position and privilege we have now before us. Members of the Body of Christ are not elected or appointed, as in the cases mentioned, but are baptised by the one Spirit into the One Body (1 Cor. 12. 13). The Spirit alone can bring members into the Body of Christ. In this chapter the figure of head and body is used by the Spirit to convey to us the truth of the spiritual Body.

Head and body are vitally connected, and the latter should be in complete subjection to the former. The will is in the head, not in the body; the latter exists simply to carry out that will. In a healthy man all members are under control of the brain, willingly acting as each "telegram" is sent through the nerves from the head to the various parts, and

all the members of that body are necessary. "The eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you" (1 Cor. 12. 21). Nay, rather, the less honourable are necessary, and all the members are equally necessary in the Body of Christ; therefore *all Christians need each other*, and it is an immense loss that all cannot profit by the gifts given. The divisions caused by sectarianism make this impossible, as they create *separate interests* not common to the whole Body; thus they witness daily to our sin and shame. There should be perfect fellowship between the members of the Body of Christ, like unto the fellowship, or corporation, in the various parts of a healthy man; and this complete accord one with another is dependent upon fellowship with the Head.

Defective Members.

Sometimes people are paralysed, or partially so, then certain members get out of control of the head, having no power to respond when a message is sent to them. Again, we know of people with St. Vitus' dance, and under such circumstances the head loses control, while the members in question act independently. These things simply illustrate the condition into which members of the Body of Christ can get when out of touch with the Head. Some are paralysed, because out of communion, and have no power to act; while others with St. Vitus' dance go off in self-will and act independently, instead of being under control. Both these classes need restoring to health before they may be used.

We see, then, that the True Church is built on the Rock foundation, CHRIST; that He is the Head of it as well, and that the members of this Church

or Assembly are believers, Christians, regenerated persons brought into the position they occupy by the Holy Spirit. Let these facts be clearly and firmly grasped, then a host of other difficulties will disappear.

The writer was reached by the Holy Spirit of God some thirty-two years ago, converted, and regenerated, and brought into the True Church of Christ. Before this time he was a baptised and confirmed member of the Church of England, but not a member of the Church of God. Subsequent to this, however, he has been connected with Heaven instead of England. The term "Church of England" links the Church with a country or nation, and within the limits of that term all sorts and conditions of unsaved people will be found. But the term "Church of God," as found in the Scriptures, links the Church with Heaven and with God. One term is human, the other divine, therefore it is obvious which is the more correct and scriptural. May each of us be led of the Spirit to act honestly with himself and the Scriptures, and hold that alone which will stand the test. "Hold fast the form of *sound* words" (1 Tim. 5. 21).

The Body Aspect of the Church.

Let us turn again to the good old Book and get a somewhat wider grasp of our subject. We looked at the Church as the Body of Christ, but we never read of bodies, as the word is never used in the plural. Many members, but ONE BODY.

One complete whole, a unique thing, taken out of this world for Heaven during this present dispensation of grace. It is also referred to as the "Bride of Christ" and the "Household of God." As Bride it has been bought and brought from the

far country, and will be presented to Him as Rebekah was presented to Isaac (Gen. 24. 67). Paul said to the Corinthians: "I have espoused you to one husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (2 Cor. 11. 2); while in Ephesians 5 the Lord speaks of the relationship of husband and wife to illustrate Himself and the Church.

The House Aspect of the Church.

The House aspect of the Church, being closely related to the Body, is important. There we get the thought of rule, order, authority, and discipline, which could not be connected with the Body aspect. Gifts are connected with the Body for its edification and upbuilding (Eph. 4), and these are common property for the good of all, and should, were it not for sectarianism, be used in the widest sense. Under the control of the Spirit all gifts should be used "for the perfecting of the saints unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the Body of Christ" (Eph. 4. 12, R.V.).

In the House aspect, however, a somewhat different view is brought before us. The Body is for Christ, the Head, but the House is spoken of as a "habitation of God" (Eph. 2. 22).

In this spiritual building or temple God will dwell throughout eternal ages. The Ephesian believers were spoken of as "the Household of God" and "an holy Temple in the Lord" (Eph. 2. 19-21). In writing to Timothy the Apostle says: "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the House of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3. 15). Here we get behaviour in the House, and the thought that the Church is the stay or support of the

Truth. This of course brings out obedience and responsibility, which presupposes divine intelligence. Right behaviour is the result of instruction and correction, and is foreign to ignorance.

Nowhere in the Scripture is the Church referred to as a building of brick, stone, or wood, built by man; and nowhere do we read of St. Peter's, St. Paul's, St. John's, or St. Mark's Church. They have no Church, and their names should not be connected with it. Such expressions not only betray a lamentable lack of knowledge, but they are a dishonour to Him who loved the Church and gave Himself for it.

Sometimes in Scripture the Church was *in* a house, but it never was a house or material building (Rom. 16. 5; 1 Cor. 16. 19). The Church has ears and eyes (Matt. 18. 17; Acts 11. 22), it feeds and grows (Acts 20. 28; 2. 47), it is taught and persecuted (Acts 11. 20; Gal. 1. 13), it assembles for worship and edification (1 Cor. 14. 23), hence we see it is composed of intelligent, dependent, responsible believers, and not bricks or stone.

Again, we may add that the word Church in the singular applies either to the local Assembly in a given place, such as Corinth or Ephesus, or to the whole Church in its widest aspect. Churches in the plural refer, not to different sects or denominations, but to assemblies of saved people meeting in different places. We read, for instance, of the Churches of the Gentiles (Rom. 16. 4), the Churches of Galatia, Asia, Judea, Macedonia, etc. (1 Cor. 16. 1-19; 2 Cor. 8. 1; Gal. 1. 22), just as we might speak of the Churches of New Zealand, New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania, and the Pacific Isles. But it is not right to speak of the Churches of a town,

but of the Church, whether of Jerusalem, London, or Sydney.

To What Church Do You Belong?

If the writer were asked the question, What Church do you belong to? the answer would be: I belong to the Church of God, the Church of the first-born ones enrolled in Heaven (Heb. 12. 23). Or again, What body do you belong to? The reply would be: I belong to that Body which is "fitly framed together" (Eph. 2. 21), the Body of Christ. And further, With whom do you meet for worship and edification? I meet with those who gather to Christ alone, and seek to own Him as Lord and Master, who also own the all-sufficiency of the Holy Spirit for edification, comfort, teaching, cleansing, and all ministry necessary for the upbuilding of the body.

In conclusion, there is another view of the subject we must briefly state. The word Church as used in Matthew 16. 18, "Upon this Rock I will build My Church," means the whole Church in its widest aspect, from Pentecost to the Second Coming of Christ. In 1 Corinthians 10. 32, "Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God," it refers to the whole Church on earth at a given time; while in 1 Corinthians 1. 2, "Unto the Church of God, which is at Corinth," it applies to the Lord's people in a given place. This is the local aspect, a miniature of the divine whole, where gift is used and responsibility recognised in obedience to the risen Lord and Head.

The Kingdom Aspect of the Church.

There is also a Kingdom aspect brought before us in the New Testament. We are brought "out

of the power of darkness, and translated us into the Kingdom of the Son of His love'' (Col. 1. 13, R.V.): This Kingdom is characterised by righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14. 17), and has to do with our obedience and subjection to His Lordship and righteous rule down here. This aspect is largely unfolded in the Acts, and formed an important part of the Apostolic testimony (see chaps. 19. 8; 20. 25; 28. 23-31).

Our Responsibility.

We would now solemnly appeal to each one to deal soberly, seriously, and faithfully with the truth here set forth. In view of the judgment seat of Christ, with its eternal rewards or loss, be honest with the Scriptures and with your own soul. Do not allow pride, prejudice, or bigotry to hinder you; but seek to adjust yourself and your path by the revealed will of God in His blessed Word. It will be in your own real interest to do this, without consulting flesh and blood. Your Lord and Master was misunderstood and misjudged, so you must be willing to follow in His steps, and on the resurrection morning you will not lose by it. "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14. 15). "And whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after Me, cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14. 27).

May His richest blessing accompany this brief testimony to His truth and His claims upon us.

THE TRUE CHURCH.

Not Religion, but Christ.

By W. HOSTE, B.A., England.

A BRITISH nobleman preaching the Gospel in Sweden some years ago was asked by a lady of the country what Church he belonged to. "To the Church of Christ," was his reply. "Yes, but to what Branch?" she insisted. "Madam," he answered, "I do not belong to any Branch, I belong to the 'Trunk.' "

This is an important distinction. How many belong to religious "branches," Roman, Greek, or Protestant, who do not, alas, belong to Christ, "the root out of a dry ground!"

Cain, had he lived to-day, would no doubt have belonged to a "Branch." He was a religious man. He brought to God an offering of the fruit of the ground. It was beautiful, and had cost much labour. Why then did God reject him and accept Abel? Were they not both born outside Paradise? Had they not both "sinned and come short of the glory of God?" Truly, and so far there was no difference. But we learn the secret in Hebrews 11. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his *gifts*, and by it he being dead yet speaketh." It was not because Abel was better than his brother that he was accepted, but because his offering was better. In Cain's fruit-offering there was no confession of guilt expressed nor any blood shedding, and consequently no forgiveness of sins possible. "For without shedding of blood is

no remission'' (Heb. 9. 22). But the lamb slain by Abel pointed forward to ''the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.'' Thus for six thousand years he has preached to men: ''Come to God through Christ crucified, the only Way.'' Cain justified himself and rejected the counsel of God in mercy towards himself. Abel condemned himself and justified God in accepting him on account of his sacrifice.

Two Great Classes.

Cain founded a religion; Abel a faith. Men to-day are divided into two great classes. The Cainites; the votaries of religion; and the Abelites, the followers of the Lamb.

The Pharisee ''who went to the temple to pray'' was a true scion of the stock of Cain. The publican was in the line of Abel. Listen to the former: ''I thank Thee that I am not as other men are; . . . I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.'' Hear, too, that brother of his in Luke 15: ''These many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment.''

The Abelites pray in another tone: ''Father, I have sinned.'' ''God be merciful to me a sinner.'' ''Lord, remember me when Thou comest in Thy Kingdom.''

It is all the difference between ''In the beginning God'' and ''In the beginning I.'' Christ must be the Alpha and the Omega. He must be all in all. He is *the* Door, the only Way, the one Mediator, the unique Foundation, and He must have all the glory.

Solomon tells us that ''the sacrifice of the wicked is abomination to God; how much more when he bringeth it with a wicked mind.'' God will accept no sacrifice from man till man accepts the sacrifice of Christ. When the Pharisees asked the Lord what

they should do that they might work the works of God, He replied: "This is the work of God, that ye believe in Him whom He hath sent." Had Cain "done well," that is, offered a lamb, he too would have been accepted (Gen. 4. 7; John 5. 29; 6. 29). Men trust in religion, but true religion demands three things impossible to the unconverted: To bridle the tongue, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep unspotted from the world (James 1. 26, 27).

Who can tame the tongue but the man divinely tamed? Who comfort the mourners but he who has been comforted by God? Who keep himself unspotted from the world but he who has first been cleansed by the Blood of Christ? The oldest, largest, and apparently the most fruitful olive trees in that home of the olive, North Africa, are the wild olives. These are covered with berries in profusion, but there is no oil in them. They have never been grafted. Nature never bore fruit for God. Man is lost, guilty, fruitless. He must be found by a seeking Saviour, justified by His Blood, and grafted by faith in Him who died and rose again. How is this to be brought about? By faith in Christ. The moment a sinner is willing to be saved by Him alone, and trusts Him as his Saviour, he is forgiven all his sins, he receives the gift of eternal life, and becomes a member of the True Church, which is the Body of Christ.

Man cannot receive their fellows into this Church. When the sinner believes he is incorporated into it by the Lord Himself, by the Spirit's baptism, as we read: "In one spirit were we all baptised into One Body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles," and were all made to drink of one Spirit (1 Cor. 12. 13, R.V.).

The reception by fellow-Christians has to do with practical fellowship and service in the local Church,

but is only a recognition of what the Lord has already done in the soul. "Receive ye one another, as Christ also received you to the glory of God" (Rom, 15. 7); but no man, be he what he may, can receive another into the Church of Christ.

What is the Church?

A question now presents itself, What is the Church? The word Church has many meanings in modern speech. In England it denotes the "Establishment," as contrasted with Nonconformist organisations. In Roman Catholic countries the Papal Church is meant, in contradistinction to Protestant denominations. In Christendom generally the word has often the secondary meaning, of a religious building, and in our own country the phrase, "A man is going into the Church," means that he intends to become a "clergyman," as if the Church consisted of a hierarchy or order of sacred persons. Never is the word used in these limited senses in the Holy Scriptures.

The expression, the Church of such and such a country, the "Church of England," the "Church of Scotland," or the "Church of Ireland," can hardly claim scriptural authority. We have frequently "the Church" of a town, "the Church of Jerusalem," "the Church of Philadelphia," etc., but when it is a question of a country or province the word is found in the plural, "the Churches of Galatia," "the Churches of Asia." Not "the Church of Galatia," nor "the Church of Asia." Which shows that although they were all linked together in the same communion they did not form one great unified organisation.

The Meaning of the Word.

The word Church (*Ecclesia*) really means that which has been called out, a called-out company.

Sometimes, but rarely, we find this word used in the New Testament in quite a non-technical sense, as when Stephen speaks of Israel as "the Church in the wilderness," meaning a people who had been called out of Egypt.

When we read of the tumultuous gathering out of the streets of Ephesus in Acts 19 the same word is used, "The Assembly (*Ecclesia*) was confused," "He dismissed the Assembly (*Ecclesia*)." But this is clearly an extraordinary use of the word. Usually in the New Testament the word denotes specifically the whole company of the believers from Pentecost to the return of Christ, and is represented on the earth at any given moment by all true Christians wherever found alive at that moment, or still more often is found in a secondary sense in such expressions as "The Churches of Christ," "The Churches of the Gentiles," "The Churches of the Saints." These are the local expressions of the Church, and should also be composed of all the believers in the town gathered according to the principles of the Word of God and in dependence on the Spirit of God. According to Acts 2, "They continued stedfastly in the Apostles' doctrine, and in the fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayers" (R.V.). The germ of denominationalism showed itself in Apostolic times. "I am of Paul," "I of Cephas," were party cries heard in the Corinthian Church, but it was a thing to be deplored (see 1 Cor. 1. 10-12). Now we see the principle in full bloom, and it is justified or even gloried in. "The disciples were called Christians* first at Antioch" (Acts 11. 26), and this name is referred to by the Apostle Peter in his first epistle.

* The word conveys a sense of a divine communication in the New Testament (Matt. 11. 12-22; Luke 11. 26; Heb. 8. 5; 11. 7; 12. 25; Rom. 7. 3). "She shall be called an adultress" may seem an exception, but I think there is reference to our Lord's words in Matthew 19. 9.

"If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this name" (1 Peter 4. 16, R.V.). With that divinely-given name we may well rest satisfied. The True Church then is formed of all who in this dispensation of the Spirit of God are united to the Lord Jesus by that Spirit in response to their faith.

Was the Church in Old Testament Times?

The next question to determine is whether the Church existed in Old Testament times, or whether it is peculiar to the present dispensation.

Some argue from Stephen's use of the phrase in Acts 7. 38, "The Church in the wilderness," with reference to Israel, that the Church did exist in bygone ages, and that Israel belonged to it. But it would be as reasonable to argue that the rabble of Diana worshippers in Acts 19, to whom reference has been already made, also formed part of the Church of Christ, because the same word, *Ecclesia*, is applied to them.

There are many reasons for believing that the Church is uniquely a New Testament fact.

In Matthew 16 the Lord, according to His promise to the man who should confess Him (chap. 10. 32), confessed Simon as "a stone," "Thou art Peter" (*Petros*), for had not Simon just confessed Him as "the Christ of God." Our Lord then adds, "Upon this rock (*petra*) I will build My Church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it."* "Upon this rock," not upon poor pebble Peter, but upon

* This is usually interpreted as meaning that the Church will successfully resist the onslaught of the powers of evil. Surely the more natural meaning would be that the powers of evil would not be able to resist the Church. Doors are not means, but objects of attack. This interpretation tallies well with the ordinary scriptural use, in such phrases "The gates of Zion," "Thy gates." I cannot find one instance of such a meaning as "the power," or "the throne," being attached in Scripture to this expression "gates."

Himself, the solid bedrock of God's founding. The words, "I will build My Church," show that the building was something future. Then, again, in Ephesians 2, the Church is said to be "built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets," where the order shows that the New Testament gifts are referred to. It would be a topsy-turvy building of which the foundation stones were inserted half way up its walls. Besides, in Old Testament times there was a "middle wall of partition" between Israel and the nations, ordained of God and rigidly respected by all godly Israelites. In the Church this wall is broken down, and Jew and Gentile are united in one body (Eph. 2. 14, 16).

The Church would have been an anachronism in Old Testament times. It is a new thing, fresh and peculiar to the present dispensation.

The unique character of the Church is all the more clear when we consider the object of our Lord's mission. He came to do the will of God and to glorify Him in this scene. God had made certain definite promises to the patriarchs, and God would surely keep His word. The Lord came therefore first of all exclusively to Israel, according to His own words, "I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," a truth witnessed to by the Apostle Paul. "Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers, *and* that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy" (Rom. 15. 8, 9). This blessing to the Gentile nations depended on Israel's blessing. When Israel as a nation rejected her Messiah her blessing and that of the Gentiles through her were postponed. But God had foreseen all, and had provided "some better thing," "the mystery, which from the beginning of the world had been hid

in God.” This mystery was not merely that Jew and Gentile should be blessed, *that* had been known and foretold by all the Old Testament prophets, but that a people should be taken out of them and formed into One Body, “that the Gentiles should be blessed” as “fellow-heirs with Israel, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ.” This was a new thing, “The Church which is the Body of Christ.”

The Great Mystery of the Church.

This great mystery was officially, though not exclusively, revealed in the Epistle to the Ephesians (chaps. 2 and 3; see also Rom. 16 and Col. 2). In this Epistle the Church is mentioned nine times, and in each case in a special connection.

1. An Eternal Purpose Unfolded. “This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church” (chap. 5. 32). This “in other ages,” as we have seen, “was not made known unto the sons of men as it is now revealed unto His holy Apostles and Prophets by the Spirit” (3. 5). The Church is to occupy towards Christ the double relation of Body to manifest the perfections and excellences of the Head, and of Bride, to enter into and enjoy the affections and purposes of the Bridegroom.

2. An Eternal Love Revealed. “Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it” (chap. 5. 25), leading on to “cleansing,” a single act; and “sanctification,” a continuous process in the case of each member of that Church, and so of the whole. The depth of the love of Christ can only be fathomed by His death on Calvary. “He gave Himself.”

3. A Present Ministry Performed. “No man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church” (chap.

5. 29). The word translated "nourisheth" is used in chapter 6. 4 of a father "bringing up" his children; and that rendered "cherisheth" is found in 1 Thessalonians 2. 7 of a nurse who brings up her *own* children. Here we see the Lord's present affections and unceasing activities on behalf of His own.

4. A Present Relationship Established. "The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church, and He is the Saviour of the body" (chap. 5. 23). This shows us the intimate dependence of the Church on Christ.

5. A Present Responsibility Incurred. "The Church is subject to Christ" (chap. 5. 24). That is, placed in a relation of subjection, as the wife to her husband, and therefore ought to be subject as also the wife.

6. A Present Service Unfolded. "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God." This explains one phase of our service here. The Church is an object lesson to the elect angels (chap. 3. 10).

7. A Present Privilege Prepared. "He hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be Head over all things to the Church, which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (chap. 1. 22). This is not merely that Christ is the Head of the Church, but the Head over all things to the Church. That is, He heads up all things for the benefit and blessing of the Church. "All things are ours," because all things are His.

8. A Future Consummation Awaited. "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" (chap. 5. 27). The Lord God presented Eve to Adam.

Christ will present His Church to Himself is only one more incidental proof of His Deity.

9. **An Eternal Ministry Revealed.** "Unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end" (chap. 3. 21). Therefore the peculiar position of the Church is not temporal merely, nor only lasting during the millennium, but is eternal. The differences between the Church, Israel, and the saved from among the nations will never disappear.

It will be clearly seen from the above that the Church is not a dead organisation, but a living organism; not a material edifice, but a spiritual building; not an earthly association, but a heavenly fellowship.

Jew—Gentile—Church of God.

When the first preachers reached Corinth the city was composed of two classes—the Gentile inhabitants in large majority and the Jewish settlers. When the Gospel was preached a third class arose, "called out" of the other two, and named the "Church of God." These classes are referred to in 1 Corinthians 10. 32: "Giving none offence, neither to the JEWS, nor to the GENTILES, nor to the CHURCH OF GOD."

The position of the Church of Corinth was one of abounding privilege. They were washed, sanctified, and justified. They were also gifted, intelligent, and eloquent, but carnal, because divided (1 Cor. 1 and 3).

How does the Apostle meet their condition? Does he exhort them to seek "the baptism of the Holy Ghost," or to attain to some new spiritual position, some "higher life," some "Pentecostal blessing?" No, they had all been "baptised in one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12. 13), they were "temples of the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor. 3. 16), they had all been "blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus."

He reminds them *where* they are and *what* they are. "Of God are ye in Christ Jesus," and therefore all that Christ is He is for you—"wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. 1. 30). "Ye *are* God's husbandry" (1 Cor. 3. 9). "Ye *are* God's building" (1 Cor. 3. 9). "Ye *are* the temple of God" (1 Cor. 3. 16). "Ye *are* Body of Christ" (1 Cor. 12. 27). "Ye *are* . . . the epistle of Christ" (2 Cor. 3. 3). All this is true of each Church of believers at the present day, and such privileges carry with them their corresponding responsibilities. This we need to lay hold of by faith. "If we are in Him" let us glory in Him, and let us count on Him. If we are God's husbandry we are expected to bare fruit to His Name. If we are His building, let us as His servants seek to build not mere "wood, hay, stubble"—ostentatious stuff it may be, but how combustible—but "gold, silver, and precious stones." If we are "the Temple of God" we are on holy ground. If we are "the Body of Christ" we must use our gifts for the glory of the Head and for the good of our fellow-members. If we are "the epistle of Christ" we must commend Him by the lucidity and the purity of our testimony.

How I Became a Member of the True Church.

A few words of personal testimony as to how the writer humbly believes he became a member of the True Church may be helpful to some.

I started life in Sandgate, Kent, with the biggest asset a boy can have in this world, Christian parents. They not only longed for us to be brought to Christ, but for this they laboured year in and year out, filling our minds with the Holy Scriptures, "which were able to make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Jesus Christ," and taking us week

by week under the sound of a Gospel ministry. Like Abraham, my parents commanded their children after God. "Yellow-backs" and "playing cards" were unknown in our home, and we never crossed the threshold of a theatre, nor attended a race-meeting. So much the better, as we had not these evils to pluck off later. According to "Mr. Worldly Wiseman" our childhood ought to have been very dull and irksome. On the contrary, it was very happy and full of interests suited to our age.

May I be allowed to refer briefly to three days which stand out as important crises in my life? The first was when I was about nine years of age. We lived in Jersey then, where my father was quartered. A godly clergyman from England was staying with us, and he took us children for a Bible-reading. His subject was one which some wise people assert ought never to be mentioned to children—the last judgment. I never forgot that solemn hour. God spoke to me in no uncertain tones, and His fear entered into my soul. I remember one night about this time resolving not to go to sleep till I was saved. Some would teach that I was "born again" already to have such desires, but how could I be born again without receiving Christ? It is only to "as many as receive Him that He gives the right to become children of God" (John 1. 12, R.V.), and I certainly had not received Him then. The Spirit does not begin His work by communicating life, but by convincing of sin. I was under this conviction. I read my Bible and said my prayers. I did the best I could, but I could not attain to righteousness, because I sought it not by faith in Christ, but by the works of the law. No doubt, however, the experience of those years was salutary and necessary. I had to learn that all my earnest efforts after goodness could

not give me the certainty I needed that I should be able to "stand in the judgment." I was always hoping, but in vain. One day I thought I was getting better, the next I was back in the old place. My dear mother longed not only that we should belong to Christ, but become preachers of the Gospel. I fell in with this idea, and determined to become a clergyman, but as I dreaded preaching to my own countrymen, I made up my mind to be a missionary; preaching under a palm tree to blacks would be less formidable I thought. My mother, who had a true missionary spirit, and had brought us up on the lives of Adoniram Judson, Robert Moffat, and such-like books, was overjoyed, but this desire on my part was a mere flash in the pan and soon vanished. However, the Lord continued His work, and when I was about sixteen an event occurred which was the turning point in my life. I was standing by myself in our schoolroom at home when a verse of the Bible came vividly to mind: "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 5. 23). The words were familiar, but they spoke to me for the first time. "Could it be possible that Heaven was a *gift*?" I asked myself. "If that be so I will accept it here and now." I looked up to God and told Him that I would take eternal life as a *gift*. No sooner had I taken this step in naked faith than the conviction came over me that I had found what I had so long been seeking. I saw the Lord Jesus Christ as my Saviour, I believed He had died for me. Truly good news worthy of God. "Eternal life a free gift, through Jesus Christ our Lord." This could never have entered into the heart of man to conceive. God planned it. God performed it. I heard, I believed, I became a child of God, and though I did

not know it at the time, a member of the Church of Christ.

About eight years passed away, and another event happened which was also in its way a turning point in my life. I was a student at Cambridge, preparing for ordination in the Church of England, an event which was to take place in a few months. I was staying in London at the house of a well-known Christian worker, Miss W., aunt of a Cambridge friend of mine. When the Sunday came round I questioned her about the "Churches" in the neighbourhood. Finding her, to my surprise, unable to inform me, I offered to accompany her to her "Church." "Perhaps you will hardly call it a 'Church,' " was her reply, "but if you like to come, pray do." A few minutes from her house we turned in at what looked like an ordinary doorway, and found ourselves in a fair-sized hall, full of people sitting round a table on which were placed a loaf and wine. Evidently they were about to celebrate "Holy Communion." The place had no religious look, there was no clergyman as I had been accustomed to, nor apparently any leader. Nevertheless all went on in an orderly fashion, now one taking part and then another in praise, reading of the Scriptures, hymn-singing, and worship, interspersed with times of silence, which impressed me most of all, ending up with the passing of the bread and wine from hand to hand in memory of Christ. It was indeed a strange kind of "Church," such as I had never seen or heard of before, a "Church" not of dead bricks and mortar, but of "living stones" quarried by the Holy Spirit from the pit of the world, and built upon the "Living Stone," Christ Jesus, to form a temple of God in the Spirit. I can thank God to-day for that strange visit and for its effect on my after life.

THE TRUE CHURCH.

Some State Church Errors Exposed.

By CHRISTOPHER KOEHLER, Germany.

[The following article, written some months before the war broke out, is of interest in exposing the spurious State Church of Germany, and in showing that there are at least some there who repudiate its baneful teachings and practices.—Eds.]

THE question, "Where is the True Church?" is apparently very difficult to answer. This question is constantly being raised, especially by unbelievers. They look upon it as an excuse. They say there are so many Churches, and each one affirms his own to be the True Church; so that one hardly knows which to decide upon. In their opinion it follows that the best way is not to decide at all.

Many young children of God are disturbed by this question. They feel the need of fellowship with other children of God. They therefore seek for the True Church. They ask: "Where is it?" "What is its name?" "Has it indeed no name?" "Are its members not entered in a Church register?" Surely it is most important to belong to the True Church, which will be recognised by the Head of the Church when He comes. It was for this reason that thousands went to Utah or migrated to Doctor Dowie, of Chicago, because they believed that the True Church was to be found there. But to the question, "*Where, in which place, is the True Church?*" there is no reply. None of the denominations on earth has the right to call itself the True Church, although members of the True Church may be in most denominations.

Originally things were not so uncertain as they are to-day. There was only one Church. The Christians were known. They were those who had turned from heathenism or Judaism, and had followed the crucified Nazarene. If the Apostle Paul wrote a letter "to the Church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ," or to the "Church of God, which is in Corinth," he could be certain that the epistle would come into the right hands. That would be impossible to-day. Nevertheless the True Church exists.

Somebody once used the following illustration: For some purpose or other a chain is laid across a river from one bank to the other. Both ends of the chain can be seen, but the greater part is covered with water. That is a picture of the Church of Christ. In early times it would be visible; they, the Christians, were known. Men could say: "That is one of those who left heathendom or Judaism, and has followed the crucified Jesus of Nazareth." In those times to do so was associated with reproach, contempt, and personal danger. In process of time all that has been altered. Millions to-day call themselves Christians who are not really so. It has become impossible to find the True Church in this vast mass. The broad stream of the world has flowed over the chain of the True Church, but it is still there. It has never been rent in sunder. It shall once again be seen when the Lord comes. Then His Church shall once again be visible.

Characteristics of the True Church.

If the True Church cannot be pointed out in any particular *place* at the present time, it has been clearly described in the Scriptures, and can therefore be recognised by its characteristics.

The New Testament significance of the word Church in numerous passages is the sum total of all believers in this dispensation, *e.g.*, Matthew 16. 18; Ephesians 1. 22; 3. 10, 21; 5. 23-32; Colossians 1. 18, 24; Hebrews 2. 12; 12. 23; *i.e.*, of all those who have been called out of the world by God; who have followed this call, and who have been made one with Christ through faith inwardly and essentially. Thus all believers on earth belong to this Church.

It is the Church of God "which He has purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20. 28; 1 Cor. 1. 2), the Body of Christ whose Head He Himself is. It is no popular or State Church, no Protestant or Catholic Church, but the Church of God, the House of God, the Temple of God. Its destiny is to be subject to Christ (not to a man), as the wife to her husband (Eph. 5. 23). No Pope, no Archbishop, no Episcopal Council, no ecclesiastical authority has the right to make rules, laws, or statutes which could bind the conscience of the believers. Her foundation and her rule of life is God's Word alone. This Church is to be gathered out of Jew and Gentile in the present dispensation, which is the dispensation of the Holy Ghōst. This was the secret which had not been revealed in earlier dispensations, and which was revealed to the Apostle Paul. It was through him that the resurrected and glorified Lord communicated to us His thoughts as to the composition of the True Church, her relations, her service, and her destiny. In the Pauline epistles we therefore find those characteristics by which the True Church may be recognised.

The State Church and the True Church.

When the Lord gave me light on these truths it shook me to the depths of my heart and revolutionised my life.

I was converted when I was barely fifteen years of age. From that time on two things stood immovable in my mind. 1st, The Bible in its entirety is a revelation from God. 2nd, I must submit myself unconditionally and at whatever cost to its teachings.

Meanwhile I was taught to read the Bible through the spectacles of "Church Teaching," and thus I became a zealous pastor of the State Church, which had taught me to distinguish between a visible and an invisible Church, and to regard every effort which had as its object the gathering of believers into a visible assembly as sectarian. Still, I had already received too much knowledge of the truth to permit me to be satisfied with the mere performance of my official duties. I preached the necessity of regeneration and conversion, the knowledge and certainty of salvation, the need of holiness, and gave myself especially to work among drunkards, while seeking fellowship with the children of God.

In His wonderful grace God so ordained it that I was gradually brought into touch with many simple believers who had more light on scriptural truths regarding the Church of God, and were helpful to me in digging deeper into the Scriptures. This took ten years, for I held tightly to the "vain conversation received by tradition from the fathers" (1 Peter 1. 18). From the very start I felt it was a question of my earthly existence, and only let go one thing after another after much inward conflict. The Lord bore me along with unending patience, and very gradually led me step by step from one new truth to another.

The Lord first of all set me free inwardly from the system of **the State Church**. He showed me that this system, although it calls itself a Church and its officials pastors, has everywhere put human thoughts and inventions in the place of divine order.

To take only one example. Before a theological student is nominated for a pastorate it is presupposed that he has studied theology, that he has passed his examinations, that he has an outwardly honourable walk, and that he is a regular communicant in the State Church. A candidate is never asked whether he is converted. When elders are being chosen 1 Timothy 3 is never laid down as containing principles to be observed. The whole Church system is a mixture resembling only too exactly "the meal leavened" with the evil principle of unbelief.

All this time I regarded the Church as a mere mission field, but remained in my office. It was painful indeed to experience personally how the State Church in its official organs hated and persecuted the gatherings of believers, but to bear this seemed to me an honour. The Lord very graciously brought about a revival in my congregation, from which a scriptural assembly of nearly two hundred believers resulted. I experienced great joy, and devoted myself to the care of, and fellowship with, the believers in addition to my "official" duties. Meanwhile the Lord showed me that the teaching and practice of my "Church" stood in sharp opposition to the Word of God in very important points.

If I only had been appointed to preach the Gospel I could have performed this service with a clear conscience. As it was, I was compelled by reason of my ecclesiastical office to baptise infants, confirm young people, and administer holy communion, and I could not hide from myself as I looked more closely into the Word of God that all this was unscriptural. For a long time I endeavoured to defend infant baptism and to establish its title from the Scriptures.

However, the more I studied the Word and com-

menced to understand the act and significance of **Baptism**, the surer I became that baptism according to the Scriptures is always associated with faith, indeed can only take place on the ground of faith, so that baptism performed on young infants is contrary to the Scriptures and unlawful. I was also compelled to recognise that the Apostolic Church knew nothing of infant baptism. Everything which up till that time I had thought or taught about infant baptism, as, for instance, that it was "the reception into the covenant of grace," or that "thereby the embryo of regeneration is laid in the young heart," I had to let go as deceptive human imaginations. I recognised that no one can become a Christian and receive divine life by virtue of some outward act performed upon him, but solely through faith, as a consequence of which baptism must follow.

I got on no better with **Confirmation**. As pastor of the State Church I was obliged to receive into the Church every year at Easter time some hundred boys and girls, over whom I prayed and laid my hands, declaring them to be henceforth Christians, responsible for their own acts, and fully qualified members of the Church. Yet I was fully convinced that most of them, without true faith and inward understanding, had uttered a forced vow.

Although I had pointed out to the children the necessity of conversion, although I begged them most earnestly rather not to be confirmed than to come into the presence of God with a lie, yet ecclesiastical custom and parental pressure were too strong, and with heavy heart and harassed conscience I had to perform this act which is utterly contrary to the Word and Spirit of God.

As pastor I had, moreover, to administer the "Sacrament of the Altar," *i.e.*, to give Holy

Communion to all who approached the altar, whether they were children of God or people of the world, unrepentant sinners; mockers, or infidels. Of course I warned them in the so-called Confession of the misuse of this Church service, and pointed out the result of eating and drinking unworthily. Then, however; in spite of the fact that most of those desirous of communicating were doing so as an ecclesiastical ceremony, I had to administer the "Sacrament" after prayer and calling upon the Name of God. Many of these poor deceived souls sought to find forgiveness of sins in the "Sacrament," many expected to receive a mysterious inflow of spiritual power, but most of them went through with the ceremony in sheer indifference or as performing some good work.

I came more and more to realise that the Lord bequeathed this legacy to His disciples alone, to those who are saved, so that with worshipful hearts they may remember Him and show forth His death until He comes. The practice of the State Church appeared to me to be a deplorable misconception and a blasphemous abuse in which I could take part no longer.

Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Communion are necessary to the existence of the State Church. As soon as it gives up infant baptism and introduces believers' baptism, or only permits believers to take the Lord's Supper its dissolution must commence. But, as has already been said, the State Church is not the Church of God, and however many believers there may be in it the system is a human one and not of God, therefore false, and one which has deceived untold numbers and hindered them from being converted and understanding God's thoughts about His Church.

According to Romans 14. 23 it would have been sin for me to have continued in my ecclesiastical office when once the grace of God had brought me to a knowledge of the truth. I was therefore compelled to resign my pastorate in 1905. I did so with confidence in the Lord, certain that He would indicate to me the right place where I was to serve Him, depending solely upon Himself and His Word. Wondrously and gloriously did the Lord honour this step taken in faith. Almost at the same time as I left the State Church, and under a similar clear guidance of God, the Bible School in Berlin was founded, and I was called to conduct it.

A Happy Field of Service.

Many of my former friends disapproved of the step I had taken, and pitied me for having left the sphere of activity to be found in the State Church to be now hidden away in a corner, in their opinion. But exactly the reverse has taken place.

Moreover, the privilege has been granted me of being in fellowship with a gathering of believers which is not separated from believers of other denominations by man-made contrivances, but stands open for all children of God who are sound in doctrine and godly in their walk.

The influence of George Muller and Dr. Baedeker, who have often ministered the Word there, has preserved this meeting from sectarian divisions and taught it to recognise all true children of God as members of the One Body who belong to one another, and must serve one another "in love, humility, and faithfulness."

How wonderful are the leadings of God, how adorable are His faithfulness and goodness! How precious is the freedom of the children of God!

Never a moment has come in my life when I regretted having been obedient to the Word and the Spirit of God, but instead I have had to marvel and thank Him that He set me free from the yoke of bondage to man, delivered me from false religious forms, and put me into the service of the truth.

In this, His service, there are of course continual difficulties and trials of faith, even sorrow and suffering, but it makes all the difference if one can take it all from the Lord's hand in the certainty that it must work together for our good (Rom. 8. 28), instead of feeling that the difficulties, disappointments, and sorrow are a result of a false position in self-will towards the Word of God.

How many servants of God sigh over the fetters of human laws and religious tradition, through which they are hindered from acting according to the conviction they have gained from the Word of God. They are "consumed in the multitude of their own ways," and dissipate their strength without having the joyous certainty of filling their place according to Ephesians 4 in the Church of God, in harmony with the Word and Spirit of God.

May these lines prove a testimony to the faithfulness and mercy of God and be an encouragement to us, realising our responsibility in all things, to submit ourselves unconditionally to the Word of God, and to go along our path of faith in childlike trust in the promises of God, so that the Lord may be enabled to give to others their place in the Church of God, where with the whole body they, "speaking the truth in love may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ" (Eph. 4. 15).

THE TRUE CHURCH

A Spiritual Building.

By R. M'ELHERAN, Ireland.

THERE are multitudes living in this twentieth century belonging to one or other of the world's multiple religions to whom the subject of this book would be both perplexing and irksome. But to the *true* child of God the theme is one of deepest interest. Down through the centuries the contemplation of the calling and hope of the Church has given Heaven-born joy to thousands of the redeemed family of God in spite of the trials and sufferings, even unto death, through which many of them had to pass.

There is scarcely a subject connected with Scripture more perverted than that of the Church. One man will tell you that the Greek Church is the True Church, another that the Church of Rome is the True Church, another again that the Church of England is the True Church, a fourth that the Presbyterian Church is the True Church. Others will tell you that all these together, with the various branches which have proceeded from them, form the True Church.

Only recently an eminent clergyman is reported in an evangelical paper as having stated in a public meeting that Christendom is the Church. It would be truer to say that Christendom is Babylon! To many persons "the Church" is a religious building. The phrase "**Going to Church**" is the proof. A well-known author, writing on this subject, says: "The word Church has suffered very much from the

hands of men, strangely but frequently it has been used to designate a mass of brick and mortar. *Ecclesia*, a chosen assembly, has actually, by natural debasement of the tongue of priests come down to mean a building. By no possible construction can it mean any such thing. A more debased use of a divine term than that can scarcely be found."

Another familiar expression is that of "**Joining the Church**," by which is meant becoming a member of some particular denomination. "I belong to Mr. So-and-so's Church" are words often heard. Such expressions reveal a sad lack of knowledge regarding that Church of which Christ is the Head, and against which "the gates of Hell shall not prevail."

It must be obvious that where there are so many conflicting systems and different opinions all cannot possibly be right. Indeed, it may be said of the True Church, "The world knoweth it not."

In this connection we would draw the reader's attention to an expression now becoming very common, but one very misleading, we refer to the phrase "**Jewish Church**."* The teaching of Judaised Christianity, which fails to perceive the distinction between Israel and the Church, has begotten the huge religious denominations of Christendom, beclouding the minds of many true children of God, and is deluding multitudes of men and women into the belief that they were made children of God by christening and confirmation, or were so even by virtue of their parentage. These last are supposed to be Christians from their birth, and become members of the Church through the initial rite of sprinkling, although they know nothing by experience of being "born again."

* Stephen once calls Israel "the Church in the wilderness," but this is clearly an exceptional usage, as may be at once seen if the constitution of Israel is compared with that of the New Testament Church.

Educating an unregenerate soul to live like a child of God does not make him a child of God, but only an imitation. Indeed, there is probably nothing more common in the world to-day than deception, and there is no form of deception more dangerous than self-deception, especially when it concerns our eternal destiny.

The Lord's Solemn Warning.

This is of vital importance, for we know from the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ that there are many who think they are on the way to Heaven when they are on the way to Hell. In the Sermon on the Mount He said: "Enter ye in at the strait gate, for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and *many* there be which go in thereat. Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and *few* there be that find it. Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy Name? and in Thy Name have cast out devils? and in Thy Name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from Me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. 7. 13, 14, 22, 23).

It is deeply solemn to notice that the *many* referred to by our Lord in verse 22 were professedly His servants. They called Him Lord, they prophesied in His Name, they cast out devils (demons) in His Name, and in His Name they did many wonderful works. Who will say that the words of our Lord do not apply to *unregenerate* preachers? To whom might be applied with equal force an old term of the second century, which meant, "Christ-traffickers," people who make merchandise of Christ. In Apostolic days there were "false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the

Apostles of Christ. And no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works'' (2 Cor. 11. 13-15).

Seeing that such men existed in the days of the Apostles, is it not to be feared that the number of unconverted young men in the present day who in many instances have been pushed forward by ambitious parents to become ministers is far from small?

Robert Murray M'Cheyne, in his diary, writes: " 'Have been laying much to heart the absolute necessity laid upon the Church of sending the Gospel to our dead parishes during the life of the present incumbents. It is confessed that many of our ministers do not preach the Gospel, alas, because they know it not. Yet they have complete control over their own pulpits, and may never suffer the truth to be heard there during their whole incumbency. And yet our Church consigns these parishes to their tender mercies for perhaps fifty years without a sigh!' So deep were his feelings on this matter that a friend relates of him that as they rode together through a parish where the pastor 'clothed himself with the wool, but fed not the flock,' he knit his brow and raised his hand with vehemence as he spoke of the people left to perish under such a minister.' "*

The late **William John Patton**, author of "Pardon and Assurance," said: "There are persons who do not profess to be Christians, but are honest and truthful and noble enough not to tell a lie. With all their faults they say: We won't tell a lie. How they put to shame persons who go to the Lord's Table and take the bread and wine, and thereby declare that they

* Mémoir by the late **ANDREW A. BONAR**, D.D.

take Christ, when they know very well it is a lie! And how they put to shame ministers who not merely go to the Lord's Table, but presume to preside at it, and get into the pulpit, and profess to teach others the way to Heaven when they know very well that they have never travelled it themselves, and know nothing about it." He adds: "I know very well that no matter what care is taken some unworthy men will get into the ministry. There was a Judas even among the Apostles. But surely we are responsible for all lawful means. And is not this of all matters the most important? What is the use of learning and talent in a minister if he has not grace? He is only a learned hater of God, a talented servant of the devil, an accomplished child of wrath, an amiable heir of Hell, an unconverted minister. What a lifelong hypocrisy, pretending to tell others the road to Heaven and not knowing it himself! Oh, the meanness of it, the shabbiness of it, the dishonesty of it! It would be nobler far to break stones on the roadside."*

A friend of the writer has told him that "the necessity of a second birth was never mentioned to her by any clergyman during her long life of over eighty years." Another friend, who is over seventy years of age, has the same sad story to tell. Is it any wonder that conversions are unheard of in many congregations?

An eminent preacher once said: "The great soul I cry for is a man who will preach to the preachers, who will convert the pulpit." But where is there a man on earth to-day who will deal faithfully with unregenerate ministers? While many missions have been held in many parts of the world during the

* "Pardon and Assurance," biographical sketch of the author, page 17. Ninth Edition. (Oliphants, Ltd.)

past and present century, yet it is truly remarkable how seldom we hear of a minister's conversion! This is unspeakably sad, because many of them might be likened unto the scribes and Pharisees of old, concerning whom the Lord Jesus said, "Ye shut up the kingdom of Heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in" (Matt. 23. 13). We know such statements are not popular, but they are true, therefore we must not restrain our pen because there are some people who do not like to hear the truth. It has been said: "The thief likes dogs that do not bark and watchmen that give no alarm." When unregenerate souls are aroused blessing very often follows.

Gordon Furlong used to illustrate this by a story of two Scottish elders who were so annoyed by the direct preaching of the laymen in the Revival that they made personal complaint to the Presbytery, and represented the case to the Moderator, saying: "They preach to a set they call saints, and we are not of them; and then to a set they call sinners, and as elders we are not of them." In the end, however, it was suggested by the Presbytery that as these two friends were neither saints nor sinners they should resign from eldership. The two went home in dismay, the work progressed, and in a few years afterwards one of the elders, who had become truly converted, made his apology."—Frank H. White.

"Remember," says **Samuel Rutherford**, "many go far on and reform many things, and can find tears, as Esau did; and suffer hunger for the truth, as Judas did; and wish and desire the end of the righteous, as Balaam did; and profess fear, and fight for the Lord, as Saul did; and desire the saints of God to pray for them, as Pharaoh and Simon Magus did;

and prophecy and speak of Christ, as Caiaphas did; and walk softly and mourn for fear of judgments, as Ahab did; and put away gross sins and idolatry, as Jehu did; and hear the Word of God gladly, as Herod did; and yet all these are but like gold in click and colour, and are watered brass and base metal." All this goes to show how far men may go, and yet not belong to either the family of God, the Kingdom of God, or the Church of God!

Sad to say, there are many earnest souls in this highly favoured land being deceived by doctrines, based on human reasoning, regarding a "regeneration" supposed to have taken place in infancy. This is

Satan's Masterpiece of Soul Deception,

and is the great root-evil of the vast religious systems of Christendom. Both those who teach that infants are made children of God by having water sprinkled by ministerial hands upon their foreheads, and those who affirm that men and women are children of God by virtue of one or both their parents being Christians, are alike helping Satan in his fiendish work. It is greatly to be regretted that some ministers who wish to be regarded as evangelical in their views are found constantly propagating these errors. Their actions in this connection are much akin to that of the captain of the pirate ship who always carried two flags, and hoisted whichever flag suited the occasion.

In order to rightly understand our subject we must not allow ourselves to be guided by any of the present-day new theories, nor by high-sounding phrases concerning traditions, nor by the writings of the early fathers, who as all candid scholars admit, disagree amongst themselves in their interpretation of the Scriptures, as do theologians of the present century. Let us turn away from the flickering light

of human dogmas, opinions, and lifeless traditions of an apostate Church to the Word of God, the Holy Scriptures. In doing so it will be seen that the first allusion found therein regarding the Church was made by the Lord Jesus Christ as recorded in Matthew 16. There He speaks of it as yet future. As a well-known author puts it: "He does not say I have built, or I am building, but I WILL BUILD."

We would emphasise this fact, because of the erroneous idea that exists in the minds of some who think, and teach, that the Church existed in Old Testament times, and that the Church of the present dispensation is a development of the former, the words "Church in the wilderness" (Acts 7. 38), already referred to, are quoted in support of this theory.

The thought of the Church as revealed in the New Testament was completely hid (hid in God) under the Old Covenant. It is, "the mystery," "which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy Apostles and Prophets by the Spirit. That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same Body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the Gospel" (Eph. 3. 5, 6).

In the Old Testament Scriptures, after the Exodus, we read of two classes on the earth, the people of Israel and the Gentile nations. These *two* classes embraced the whole human family upon the earth. But when we come to the epistles of the New Testament we read of three distinct classes of people, *i.e.*, "Jews, Gentiles, and the Church of God" (1 Cor. 10. 32).

The Jews.

It is not our purpose to enter into the matter of Jewish history further than to say that the term "Jews" embraces the old covenant earthly people

of God, the seed of Abraham, to whom God gave special promises of earthly blessings, having relationship and privileges attached thereto, which applied to no other nation; yet after the death of King Solomon their wickedness and departure from God became so great that predicted judgments fell upon them, and they were carried away captive into the land of Assyria and Babylon. Although a remnant of them was afterwards allowed to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple, yet from that time onwards they were under Gentile rule, first to the Persians, then to the Greeks, and afterwards to the Romans, under whose yoke they were at the time of the Messiah's birth.

The writings of the four Evangelists testify how the vast majority of this same people despised and rejected their long-looked-for Messiah, and joined with the Gentiles in putting Him to death. "For of a truth against Thy holy child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel were gathered together" (Acts 4. 27). These Scriptures are sufficient to show that the Church of which we write was not the Jewish nation.

The Gentiles.

All outside of Israel were included in the term Gentiles. At the time of Israel's captivity national power fell into the hands of the Gentiles, yet they remained outside the covenants of promise made to Israel. The Apostle Paul, when reminding the saints at Ephesus of their condition before their conversion to God describes them as being "alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph. 2. 12, R.V.).

Thus we see the Gentiles were not the Church:

The Church is something unique, being composed of true believers, who have been called out from amongst Jews and Gentiles, and concerning whom we read: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3. 28).

The Church.

How important it is to distinguish between the calling of Israel and of the Church. These are continually confounded, although quite distinct, as the Scriptures show.

It was after the Lord Jesus had been rejected by the people of Israel that He began to unfold to His disciples the mystery of the Church, when Peter confessed Him, saying: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in Heaven. And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16. 16-18). Here the Lord Jesus uses two Greek words, *petros* and *petra*: "I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter (*Petros*); and upon this rock (*petra*) I will build My Church." Although both words are from the same root they have different meanings. *Petros*, meaning a stone, like the name of the Apostle, while *petra* signifies a rock. The foundation upon which the Church is built is a Rock-foundation, Christ Himself is that foundation. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3. 11). The Apostles and Prophets are spoken of as "a foundation" in Ephesians 2. 20, but in another sense, and in any case, subsidiary to Christ.

In the first chapter of John's Gospel we read that the Lord Jesus said unto Peter: "Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, a stone" (John 1. 42). Peter was a stone on the Rock-foundation. All who have been regenerated are lively (living) stones in the building.

When a Jew became converted to God he was added to the Church of God, and so with a Gentile when he became converted to God. Thus we see the Church of God is not a building of men's hands, but it is a spiritual building composed only of saved people.

A converted Irish lassie when asked by a minister if she had been to Church, replied: "Why, don't you know I am a stone *in* the building? I am never *out* of the Church." Are you a stone in the building? If not, no matter what denomination you may belong to, you do not belong to the Church of God.

There is Only One Church,

One Body, of which Christ is the Head (Col. 1. 18). To this One Body all *true* believers belong. "For by one Spirit are we all baptised into One Body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free" (1 Cor. 12. 13).

In Apostolic times the Church in its local aspect was composed of believers. "All that believed were together" (Acts 2. 44). "And of the rest durst no man join himself to them. And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women" (Acts 5. 13, 14).

It is worthy to note that wherever the word Church occurs in Scripture it never bears any denominational title, and all the names given in the Word to the Lord's people include all who are saved, *e.g.*, "Children of God" (John 11. 52); "Believers" (Acts

5. 14); "Christians" (Acts 11. 26); "Disciples" (Acts 20. 7); "Saints" (Rom. 1. 7); "Brethren" (Acts 14. 2; 15. 1 and 3, etc.).

The Christians at Corinth were rebuked by the Holy Spirit through the Apostle Paul for adapting other names. "Now I beseech you, brethren, . . . that there be no divisions among you. Now this I say, every one of you saith, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were you baptised in the name of Paul?" (1 Cor. 1. 10, 12, 13). "For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?" (1 Cor. 3. 4).

If it were wrong for the believers at Corinth to take sectarian names, it surely cannot be right for believers to do so now. "Don't call yourselves Lutherans," said **Martin Luther**. "Who is Luther but a miserable bag of dust and ashes? Call yourselves 'Christians' after Him who died for you!"

When some one suggested to **George Whitfield** that he ought to form a new sect, he replied:

"Let sects and names and parties fall,
And Christ alone be Lord of all."

In the world to-day there are numerous sects, but when these are looked for within the pages of inspired Church history, the Holy Scriptures, they cannot be found. While this is so, there are undoubtedly some in these various sects who are really born again, and therefore belong to the True Church, but it is greatly to be feared that very, very many do not even profess to have experienced this necessary and radical change.

All True Christians are Double-Born.

"Where were you born?" said an English bishop to **Summerfield**. "In Dublin and Liverpool,"

he answered, "Were you born in two places?" said the bishop. "Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?" replied Summerfield.

"**Robert Ferguson**, a converted Scotsman, entered a Glasgow tramcar which was fairly well filled. Having a difficulty in finding a seat, a gentleman at the front end of the car beckoned him to take a vacant space next to him, remarking as Robert sat down, 'Man, you have a typical Scotch face.' 'So I should,' replied Robert, 'for I was born *twice* in Scotland.' When giving his testimony he never fails to tell his hearers that he is a double-born Scotsman, having been born twice, the first time in Penpont and the second time at his own fireside at 195 Wolseley Street, Glasgow; and he invariably adds that he is going to spend eternity with a people gathered out of 'every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation,' all redeemed to God by the precious Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ" (Rev. 5. 9).—J. Gray, in *The Herald of Salvation*.

Now, with regard to salvation, it cannot be too plainly enforced that it depends, not on anything the sinner can do, but on a work which the Lord Jesus Christ has already done, a work by virtue of which God "might be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3. 26).

To this the following Scriptures bear witness: "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24. 46, 47).

"Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from

which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses'' (Acts 13. 38, 39).

Declared in the House of Commons.

In concluding this article we wish to commend to the serious attention of all the following weighty words once preached before the English House of Commons:

''Christ is the Way: men without Him are Cains, wanderers, vagabonds. He is the Truth: men without Him are liars, like the devil of old. He is the Life: men without Him are dead in trespasses and sins. He is the Light: men without Him are in darkness, and go they know not whither. He is the Vine: men that are not in Him are withered branches prepared for the fire. He is the Rock: men not built on Him are carried away with the flood. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Author and the Ender, the Founder and the Finisher of our Salvation: he that hath not Him hath neither beginning of good nor shall have end of misery. Oh, blessed Jesus, how much better were it not to be than to be without Thee; never to be born than not to die in Thee! A thousand Hells come short of this, eternally to want Jesus Christ.''—''Owen's Works,'' vol. 8, p. 36 (Johnson's Edition).

''Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved'' (Acts 4. 12).

THE TRUE CHURCH

Which is "His Body."

By W. J. M'CLURE, United States, America.

"THERE IS ONE BODY." This is the first of seven unities which we get in Ephesians 4. 4-6, and it is a most important truth that should be kept well to the front in these days, when that which we find condemned by God in 1 Corinthians 3. 4, in its incipient stage, is now gloried in, as if it were according to His mind.

"There is One Body" comes as a rebuke to the thought which finds expression in the oft-repeated question: "To what body do you belong?" As if there were more than One Body. The fact of *One* glorified Head in Heaven should lead us to hold fast to the truth of *One* Body on the earth.

The Church as the Body of Christ had no existence, save in the purpose of God, before Pentecost. It was "the mystery which hath been hid in God." When Christ was glorified as the risen Head, then the Holy Spirit was sent down to add the members to Him, and on the day of Pentecost the Church came into being.

Its Unique Character.

Never in the past do we find Jew and Gentile on an equality. Nor will they be on an equality in the millennial age. The Gentile will be blessed through the Jew, but the Jew will have the chief place. But see what is true in the Church: "To wit, that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the Body, and fellow-partakers of His promise in Christ

Jesus through the Gospel'' (Eph. 3. 6, R.V.). This is one of the triumphs of the Cross: ''That He might reconcile both unto God in One Body by the Cross, having slain the enmity thereby'' (Eph. 2. 16).

The Members of the Body.

''Now ye are the Body of Christ, and members in particular'' (1 Cor. 12. 27). It is well that we should note of whom these words are spoken and get a good hold of their scope. ''Unto the Church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours'' (chap. 1. 2). Here we see that *all* who know our Lord Jesus, no matter where found, or by what name they may be known among men, are members of the One Body. They may be found amid the darkness of the Greek or Roman Catholic Churches. Yet they are linked up with all who believe in Christ, in that wonderful work which God is now engaged upon, the One Body.

How they Became Members of the Body.

Some to whom the Apostle Paul wrote, ''Ye are the Body of Christ, and members in particular,'' had been religious and cultured, as for instance, Crispus, the chief ruler of the Synagogue (Acts 18. 8), but others belonged to the utterly irreligious and ungodly classes. But he can say of them all, ''But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified'' (1 Cor. 6. 11).

In chapter 10. 17 we read: ''For we being many are one bread (loaf) and One Body, for we are all partakers of that one bread (loaf).'' The many grains of wheat could never become one loaf save through the power of bruising or grinding. Now in Isaiah 28. 28 and 53. 10 the bruising is used as a

figure of the Cross, when Christ was ‘‘bruised for our iniquities.’’ It was on the ground of the Cross then that these Corinthians were brought into the One Body. As the grinding prepares the flour, so the bruising of the Cross prepares the members.

1 Corinthians 11 gives us the loaf as a type or symbol of the perfect human Body of Christ. The 10th chapter gives us it as representing the mystical Body of Christ: He the Head and we the members. Indeed both thoughts are in chapter 10. 17. We have in it, too, that which represents faith in the Lord Jesus. Those words, ‘‘We are all partakers of that one bread (Christ),’’ tell how we made Christ our own by faith, just as a hungry man appropriates the food set before him. And it was just as absolutely necessary for us thus to receive Christ by faith as it was necessary for Him to die upon the Cross. And when we made Him our own by faith we became one with Him for ever. But for the formation of the One Body another thing was necessary, namely, the Spirit baptism. ‘‘For in one Spirit were we all baptised into One Body.’’ This happened the very instant that we believed on Christ as our own personal Saviour. What is said of the sealing of the Spirit is just as true of this. ‘‘After that ye believed ye were sealed,’’ or as it ought to read, ‘‘Having believed, ye were sealed.’’ Not a fraction of a second of time intervened between our trusting Christ and our being put into the Body.

And this Spirit baptism is never repeated. Baptism is into the Body, so before we could have it repeated we must have become separated from the Body. And this is something which can never be. It was sovereign grace which put us there, and that same grace will maintain us there. Romans 8. 35-39 applies most assuredly here.

Before we look at the practical application of this truth I would just like to restate three things which we have in these Scriptures, 1 Corinthians 10. 17 and 12. 13. First, we have the death of Christ ; this is the sure foundation on which God can display such amazing grace to those who deserve only wrath. Secondly, the personal reception of Christ by faith on the part of the sinner. And, thirdly, baptism in the Holy Spirit, by which we were put into that which is God's great masterpiece of grace, "the Church, which is His Body."

This, then, is God's way, and the only way in which to become a member of the Church of God. We remember when we used to repeat those words: "In my baptism, wherein I was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven:" But it was not true. Never until as lost sinners we turned to Christ as Saviour did we enter that Church which Christ loved and died for.

The Practical Application of this Truth.

There is no truth unpractical, all truth learned from God will influence our lives. But there are few truths that would have such an effect as this truth were it to lay hold of our hearts. We read in 1 Corinthians 12. 25, "That the members should have the same care one for another." The sad results of the divided state of the Church on earth is seen in nothing more plainly than in the way the sympathies of God's people get narrowed up to those with whom they associate, and who see and appreciate the same truths. It is true that some of the members are united with much from which the Word of God would have them separated. It is also true that agreement as to the truth forms a wonderful bond of sympathy between believers,

but surely all who know these truths may well be humbled because of their little love to the whole family of God. All are dear to Him, and all have claims upon us. May we have grace to know how to meet those claims.

“THERE IS ONE BODY.” When this truth is apprehended by the Christian he cannot consistently hold a membership in any other, as that would be a practical denial of the truth. He cannot be a member of anything whose membership is short of the whole Body of Christ. All the systems of men fail in two ways. They fail to include all believers, or they include other than believers.

No one who forms part of a company of believers who gather in the simple way found in the Word of God would, if intelligent, ever speak of himself as a member of that company, or assembly, much less will he speak of himself as a member of such-and-such a building. Christian membership is of the Body of Christ, and of nothing else.

Gathering to Christ as Lord and Head.

Each member of that Body depends for everything on the one Head, and ought to gather to Him as their Lord. To illustrate this I wish to refer to two passages. (1) “From whom the whole Body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the Body unto the edifying of itself in love” (Eph. 4. 16). (2) “And not holding the head from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.” (Col. 2. 19). All ministry flows down from Christ as Head by the Spirit through the members, as He may see fit to use them. So to set

up any order that would interfere with His liberty to minister through the members is to rob the body of the nourishment that it needs. "Not holding the Head." In connection with the assembling of believers to remember the Lord in the breaking of bread and for mutual edification and worship, to all mere human arrangements, such as having an official minister or leader to conduct the service, these words are a rebuke. Such arrangements put our Lord Jesus out of His true place. And be the gathering large or small, He should have His right place as Centre and Lord.

It has been said that in 1 Corinthians 12 we have the Body in the machinery of its working; in chapter 13 the oil to make it work smoothly, and in chapter 14 the actual working of the body in healthy exercise. And in spite of all the failure that has come into the Church these Scriptures are still the pattern and guide. Christians are still responsible to "hold the Head." This requires, however, not only that we should own the truth, endeavour to give Christ His place, and refuse any order that would rob Him of it, but also that we should maintain such a spiritual condition as will enable us rightly to discharge the functions of members of the Body, for His glory and the good of the Body; otherwise weakness rather than help will result.

The Presentation of the Body.

We will now briefly consider how the body is presented to us in the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians. There is a certain similarity, but a characteristic difference, between this presentation in the two Epistles. In Ephesians the emphasis is on the Body, in Colossians it is on the Head.

"And hath put all things under His feet, and gave

Him to be Head over all things to the Church, which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1. 22, 23). I want you to notice the word "fulness." It is a wonderful word to be used in connection with poor sinners in their relation to Christ. It means that which is required to make perfect or to complete a thing. We then are looked at here as the complement of Christ; as necessary to Christ. Well does this suit the Epistle, which speaks of the "exceeding riches of His grace," and in which grace is always spoken of in the superlative degree.

Complete in Christ.

"For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him which is the Head of all principality and power" (Col. 2. 9, 10).

That word "complete" is a kindred word to the word "fulness," and gives us the same thought, only now it is Christ who is the complement of the Body as its Head. What a Head to have! We read in chapter 2. 3 of that Head: "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." And all this is for the Body. In Ephesians we are by wondrous grace made necessary to Christ; that by means of us He may display His wisdom and His grace to all created intelligences. In Colossians Christ is seen to be necessary to us for the supply of all our needs as His Body. In other words, we are the complement of each other.

Before such grace we may well bow in adoring worship. And in the measure that we enter into the reality of it we will be able to bless Him that we were ever born to be thus linked up as believers with the Lord of Glory in this marvellous organism, "the Church which is His Body."

Ere we close we would ask the reader of this paper the solemn and important question: Are you "born again?" If not, you must be

A Stranger to All

we have been speaking about. And by being "born again" we do not mean: Have you been baptised, either as an infant or as an adult? Nor: Have you joined the Church and taken the communion? You may have done all these things and yet not have been born again. If you have been born again, then there was a time in your life when as a guilty sinner you trusted in Christ. If there has been no such time you are yet without Christ and without hope. But if the one who reads these lines is conscious of being lost and guilty in the sight of God, now is the time, before laying down this book, to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. "The wages of sin is death," and "all have sinned," but it is written, "While we were yet sinners Christ died for us." The sentence against your sin was carried out on Him. God was satisfied, and in proof of this raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His own right hand. His word to you now is: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16. 31). "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3. 16). "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3. 36).

THE TRUE CHURCH.

The Church of the Living God.

By V. NAGEL, Twenty-Two Years a
Missionary in India.

I HAVE often heard Christians using the expression, "The *Visible* Church" and "The *Invisible* Church." Though there is some truth underlying these terms, in general they are misleading, and can hardly be based on the teaching of the Holy Scriptures. For the Church of Christ on earth consists of living men, and as men are not invisible the Church cannot be either. There is, however, a real distinction in the Bible with regard to the way in which the word Church is used. Comparing all passages where the word occurs I find, first, that in a number of places it stands for the whole Church of Christ as one, including every true Christian anywhere in the universe; second, that there is another large number of passages which refer to a *part* of the whole Church only, namely, to a number of Christians rightly united as such in the same locality. This being a fact, I believe that we are on Biblical ground when we speak of the Church in two ways, namely, "The Church Universal" and "The Church Local."

The Church Universal.

This is referred to in the following passages: "Upon this rock (the rock is Christ Himself) will I build My Church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16. 18).

"God gave Christ to be the Head over all things

to the Church, which is His Body, the fulness of Him, that filleth all in all'' (Eph. 1. 22, 23).

''Christ is the Head of the Church. . . . Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word'' (Eph. 5. 25, 26).

Ye are come to the ''Church of the firstborn, which are written in Heaven'' (Heb. 12. 22, 23).

''God has set some in the Church; first, apostles; secondly, prophets; thirdly, teachers'' (1 Cor. 12. 28).

Any spiritually minded man can easily see that these passages are not limited to Christians of any particular time, or district, or creed, but include all true believers in Christ in the past, present, and future, whether young or old, whether strong or weak, whether united to a denomination or not. Thus, wherever there is a true believer there is a part of the Church Universal, for which Christ died, again, and sitteth on the right hand of God.

Who are Members of the True Universal Church?

In several of the passages quoted above the Church is called the Body of Christ, He himself being the Head. These words evidently point to the human body as representing a figure of the Church, which is of the highest importance in deciding the question who are members of it. The following are some of the solemn truths which we can learn about True Church memberships by considering the connection between a human body and its head.

1. All the members of a body are in **life connection** with the head. The same essence of life which flows through the head flows through every member, however great or however insignificant. The connection between Christ and every true member of

His Church is the same. It is a connection of the same life. Christ's own spiritual life is that of each true believer also. This truth is not only clearly suggested by this figure of the body, but it is also most emphatically taught in plainest words. "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5. 11, 12). "Christ, who is our life" (Col. 3. 4). "I am the Vine, ye are the branches." (It is the same sap of life which flows through a vine and its branches.) "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2. 20).

Therefore anyone who does not know in experience what it is to be in spiritual life connection with Christ is no member of His True Church, though he may be baptised, live a moral life, and receive communion.

2. The human body is **continually supplied by the head** with its needed food, for it is through the mouth, which is seated in the head, that all food gets into the body. So it is with the members of Christ's spiritual Body, His Church. They are continually supplied with their necessary spiritual nourishment by Christ Himself.

"He nourisheth and cherisheth it" (Eph. 5. 29). "I am the Bread of Life; he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst" (John 6. 35). Therefore anyone who does not know experimentally what it is to be fed in his soul by Christ Himself is not a member in His Body, the True Church.

3. The head is **the seat of the senses of sight, hearing, and scent** for all the members of the body. So is Christ to His Body, the Church, and anyone who does not know by experience what it

is to have spiritual sight, hearing, and scent in living connection with the personal Christ is not a member of His Body, the Church. "The Lord is my light and my salvation" (Psa. 27. 1). "My sheep hear My voice" (John 10. 27).

4. The head, through brains and nerves, **exercises a most wonderful direct control** over all the members of the body. So does Christ over every member in His Body, the True Church, and therefore anyone who knows nothing in personal experience of being guided, controlled, and instructed within by the living Christ Himself cannot be a member of the True Church. "He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him" (John 10. 4).

5. The members of a body are **most wonderfully connected** not only with the head, but also **with one another**; and according to the direct control from the head they are subject to one another and serve one another. So are the true members of Christ's Body, the Church, and anyone who does not know what it is to be lovingly tied and drawn within to the true children of God cannot be a member of the True Church. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not abideth in death" (1 John 3. 14).

How to become a Member in the True Church.

To answer this question let us again refer to the figure of the human body. Let us ask: How did any member, *i.e.*, an ear, an eye, etc., become a living member in a living body? The answer is very simple. By birth, and by birth only. There was and is no other way. Well, it is exactly so with the Body of Christ. A new spiritual birth is needed to become a member, nothing less and nothing more;

a birth through which the sinful child of Adam becomes in divine reality a 'new creation in Christ Jesus.' "Except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God" (John 3. 3). "Created in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2. 10). "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5. 17).

How is this new birth effected? According to God's Word it is a threefold process.

1. **'Repentance toward God.'** A turning of the heart from self-righteousness, the love of sin, and the love of the world, and from false religion as well, in order to seek God and His righteousness (see Mark 1. 15). "The Kingdom of God is at hand; *repent*, ye, and believe the Gospel" (compare also Acts 17. 30 and 20. 21).

2. **Personal acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ** as the Son of God, the crucified, risen, and exalted only Saviour (see John 1. 12, 13). "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

3. **Receiving the Holy Spirit** (see Acts 19. 2). "Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed?" (R.V.). "We are His witnesses, . . . and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God hath given to them that obey Him" (Acts 5. 32). That is, obey Him by accepting Jesus as the Messiah and Saviour, which the Jews refused to do. "Having believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. 1. 13, R.V.). "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His" (Rom. 8. 9).

Whilst this process is clearly a threefold one, the

three links need not always be separated in time from one another like three successive steps, but can well be united in one. This was evidently the case with the jailer at Philippi, who within a few hours repented, accepted Christ, and received the Holy Spirit. Compare also the conversion of the Apostle Paul. Temporarily separated it was with the first disciples of Jesus, who first repented under John the Baptist's preaching, then accepted Jesus as the Son of God, and only some time afterwards received the Holy Spirit.

The *means* which God in His infinite mercy has put within our reach to produce this process in the human soul is His Word, and His Word only. But it is the Word of God in its entirety, and not some pieces of it. The sum and substance of God's Word is the personal Christ Himself, the crucified, risen, and exalted Son of God. Where a soul understands the Gospel and accepts it in the heart, there by the power of the Holy Spirit it acts like a seed, and produces a new creation within. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth My Word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life" (John 5. 24). Further, "Having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the Word of God, who liveth and abideth" (1 Peter 1. 23, R.V.). It is the "*engrafted*" Word which is able to save the soul (James 1. 21).

Blessings of Members of the True Church.

The Apostle Paul writes: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 1. 3). What are these

spiritual blessings that true believers have been blessed with? Some of them are contained in what already has been said above about the connection between Christ, the Head, and His Body, the Church. Yet I feel these blessings are so wonderful and so glorious that they should be mentioned here as a whole. Though the writer cannot give an exhaustive description of the "unsearchable riches of Christ" (Eph. 3. 8), what will be said ought to be enough to make every human heart long to come to such a wonderful Saviour. What, then, are the blessings of true believers?

1. Their **sins have been forgiven** on account of the atonement which Christ wrought on the Cross of Calvary. "God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4. 32). "In whom we have redemption through His Blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Col. 1. 14). "Your sins are forgiven you for His Name's sake" (1 John 2. 12).

2. They have been **raised up from spiritual death** by receiving divine life in their soul. "When we were dead through our trespasses, God made us alive together with Christ" (Eph. 2. 5; see also John 5. 25 and Rom. 6. 13-23).

3. They are **children of God**, and therefore on a far higher level than Adam was when he was created. "Ye are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3. 26, R.v.). "No longer a bond-servant but a son" (Gal. 4. 7; see also 1 John 3. 1 and Rom. 8. 15, 16).

4. They have received the **Baptism of the Holy Spirit**, who is the "earnest of their inheritance," their teacher, comforter, and guide to the end of their journey through the wilderness of this world. "In one Spirit were we all baptised into One Body" (1 Cor. 12. 13, R.v.). "We received not the

spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God'' (1 Cor. 2. 12; see also Eph. 4. 3 and Rom. 8. 9).

5. They are **freed from the dominion of Satan**, of sin, and of the law. "Giving thanks unto the Father, . . . who delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the Kingdom of the Son of His love'' (Col. 1. 13, R.V.). "Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law but under grace'' (Rom. 6. 14; see also John 8. 31-36).

6. They shall **never be condemned before God**. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus'' (Rom 8. 1; see also John 5. 24 and Rom. 8. 31-39).

7. Instead of being judged together with the world, they themselves **shall take part in the judgment of the world**. "Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world? . . . Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" (1 Cor. 6. 2, 3; compare 2 Tim. 2. 12).

8. If they fall asleep before Christ returns their **souls will be in Paradise** until He comes. "Verily, I say unto thee," the Lord said, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise'' (Luke 23. 43). This the Apostle describes as being "with Christ;" "To depart and to be with Christ, which is far better'' (compare Phil. 1. 23 and Rev. 14. 13, and 2. 7).

9. In Heaven **an inheritance is being kept for them**, which is "incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away'' (1 Peter 1. 4; Phil. 3. 20; and John 17. 24).

10. When Christ their life shall be manifested, then shall they also **be manifested with Him in glory** (Col. 3. 4; 2 Thess. 10; 1 John 3. 2; Phil. 3. 20, 21).

Looking at these blessings with regard to the time

wherein they are to be enjoyed, we find that five of them belong to the present and five to the future. In other words, forgiveness of sin, the receiving of a new divine life in the soul, the position as children of God, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and freedom from Satan, sin, and law, are blessings enjoyed by the true Christian in the present life, and not things to be hoped for only. This truth is of the greatest importance for the following reasons:

1. Unless a man appropriates this first part of Christ's Salvation, which is present, he has no right at all to hope in getting a share in that portion which belongs to a future time.

2. As the true believer, through the power of the Blood and the Holy Spirit, enjoys already these heavenly blessings in his soul he "hath the witness in himself" (1 John 5. 10), first, that Christ and His redemption are the truth and the only truth; and, second, that his faith in Christ is the right kind of faith. And thus he is fortified for ever against the attacks of the unbelieving non-Christian world, as well as against the anathemas of various kinds of counterfeit Christian systems and their ecclesiastical authorities.

3. This fact of a *present* Salvation in Christ is a solemn challenge to every man to prove for himself the truth of Christ and God's Word, and man will have to answer to God for not doing so.

Have you become a partaker of these wonderful blessings in Christ? Have you become a member of the True Church of Christ? If not, I beseech you, no longer "neglect so great Salvation" (Heb. 2. 3). Turn to God according to His Word, with your whole heart accept Christ as your all-sufficient and only Saviour, then you also will receive the Holy Spirit and know in yourself that these things are

not mere fancies, but blessed, divine realities. "My sheep hear My voice" (John 10. 27).

Membership in a Local Church or Assembly.

The basis can be no other than that for membership in the Church Universal, namely, the experience of a new spiritual birth from above. In other words, unless there are clear signs that a man has turned to God, accepted Christ as his personal Saviour, and received the seal of the Holy Spirit, it is not right to accept him as a member. To substitute anything else instead of this Biblical basis (Acts 2. 38) means nothing less than to get the local Church away from the Rock, which is the living Christ Himself, and make of it a mixed multitude, whose religion is in the flesh, not in the Spirit, and which is utterly unfit to be the witness of God and Christ in this world.

Writing this, I am most conscious of the fact that serious mistakes can be made in this matter, that is, servants of the Lord may accept a man as "born again," and afterwards find to their sorrow that he was a sham. Such mistakes happened even in Apostolic times, as an examination of the epistles will show to any careful reader (Acts 8. 9-23; Gal. 2. 4; 1 John 2. 19). Wherever such cases happen they are a cause for deep mourning and self-humiliation; but to argue, as many Christians do, that because of the possibility of making such mistakes the whole principle of membership as stated above should be done away with as false is sad and fatal folly of the highest degree. A train gets derailed sometimes, therefore, away with all rails! The doctor's diagnosis is sometimes not correct, therefore, away with all diagnosis! Garden fences are sometimes broken through by cows and goats, therefore, away with all fences! Would ever

intelligent men of this world argue like this? Never; they are wise enough to learn by their mistakes and aim at doing things better. But, alas, as to many of the Lord's people, they argue so to their own loss, and thus it is true in this point also what our Master said: "The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light" (Luke 16. 8).

How the Writer Became a Member of the True Church.

I was born in 1867. My parents were members of the "Evangelical Lutheran State Church," and so were all the villagers except one old man, and a few Roman Catholics and Jews. Any other Protestants in our district not belonging to the State Church were stigmatised with the name "sects," and against such we were always duly warned by our pastors. As is the rule of the Lutheran community, I was christened as an infant, confirmed when I was fourteen, and on this basis accepted as a real Christian and communicant. Nobody knew better, neither pastor, nor people, nor myself. My parents died early; my mother when I was six years old, and my father four years later. He was a godly man according to the light he had, and his remembrance is very sweet to me. At the age of fourteen I had to step out into the world to learn a trade.

From this time the hand of God began to touch me, though I knew it not then. Now and then an indescribable thirst after something, I knew not what, would come suddenly in my soul and last for days. During such periods I got very melancholy and miserable. All around there was not a single soul to point me to the fountain of life. So I went where others went, to worldly pleasures like dances and

theatres, but soon found that such only left me all the more empty and miserable. In 1884 my apprenticeship was over, and in my restlessness I soon began to run from town to town, working at my trade some months here and some months there. Now I had thoughts of joining the Navy in order to find satisfaction in a romantic life on the sea. One bright Sunday, when walking alone up and down the sea-shore, I met a young countryman of mine who invited me to go to the Y.M.C.A. This was a new thing to me, but I said I would gladly go, and so I did. I liked the people I met there, and their ways.

One evening, in the "religious meeting," an old shoemaker spoke about Christ. What he said I have forgotten, but I well remember that the spirit in which he spoke touched me so deeply that it led to my first meeting with Christ. For I went home that evening to my lonely chamber, fell on my knees, and said: "Oh, Jesus, Thou hast said, 'Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest' (Matt. 11. 28). I have sought satisfaction and peace in various ways, but all in vain. Now I come to Thee to quench my thirst." Then there came a kind of peace and bliss in my soul as I had never tasted before, and from that day I knew that what my soul wanted was the Lord Jesus. But did this peace last? No, it did not, for I was by no means on the Rock yet. I was "turning to God," and sincerely seeking Him, but I was still in Adam. I had by no means seen my heart's utter corruption, and that I was utterly lost in myself, and again there was none to help me on. Forward and backward, backward and forward; sometimes feeling that I was getting very near God; soon after, far, far away.

Meanwhile I had received what I thought to be a clear call from God to serve Him in foreign fields. I

applied to the directors of the Basle Mission Society, was at once accepted, and entered their college for a six years' training in August, 1886. And here I was soon to pass on from mere repenting unto true acceptance of Christ, which gets the seal of the Holy Spirit.

It was in spring, 1887. One morning I was passing up and down the class-room, learning by heart the passage about the fruit of the Holy Spirit in Galatians 5. 22. All on a sudden I felt prompted to stand still and ask myself some questions.

Question: "What is the fruit of the Holy Spirit?"

Answer: "Love, joy, peace"—here I stopped.

Question: "Are these fruits first an outward action, or an inward condition?"

Answer: "An inward condition."

Question: "Is this your inward condition?"

Answer: "No, no, no! You have any amount of outward zeal and action, but inwardly you are cold, full of irritation and pride."

Question: "And if you have not the fruit of the Spirit, can you say that you have the Spirit, the Person?"

Answer: "No, I cannot."

Question: "And what does the Word say about him who has not the Spirit of Christ?"

Answer: "He is none of His."

I cannot dwell here lengthily on the days of struggle that followed. I wrestled, I prayed, I read the Bible more diligently than ever. I did everything I could to change the coldness and pride of my heart. All in vain. I listened to others. They told me what troubled me was "the old man," that he would always trouble us, and that I had to "crucify him daily." I tried to crucify him, but the more I tried the stronger he grew (see Rom. 7. 7-25). The end was that I gave up everything in despair.

One afternoon I went up into one of the garret-chambers reserved for private prayer. Here I fell, not on my knees only, but right on my face in the presence of God. All I could say was: "Oh; God, I am undone. I can never make my heart loving and humble, and if this is the way to get to Heaven I am lost, for ever lost." Then I waited in silence to see whether God would not speak to me, and He did, glory to His Name! Again a passage from Scripture was brought to my mind, and again it was from Galatians, this time chapter 2. 19, 20: "Through the law I died unto the law, that I might live unto God. I have been crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and that which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." Then the blessed Holy Spirit Himself enabled me to understand these words step by step and to lay hold on them. I saw:

1. That in the bottom of my heart I was a rebel and transgressor of God's law. For the summary of the law is love, and the secret spring of my life and religion was anything but love.

2. That as a transgressor I was condemned to death by the law, and that it was foolish under such circumstances to ask for pardon in order to make my life better.

3. I saw that this sentence of death was really to be executed, and that it had already been executed in the Person of Christ when He died on the Cross: "One died for all, therefore *all* died" (2 Cor. 5. 14, R.V.).

4. That therefore instead of trying to make myself fit for God's presence by legal efforts I had to sign my sentence of death, and thenceforth, as Paul did, reckon myself, my whole old personality, as an

abominable thing, which has been judged and done away with by God on the Cross (Rom. 6. 10, 11).

5. So far it was all plain to me, but now came a serious difficulty. The Apostle says: "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Then I said to myself: "However can I say that Christ liveth in me? This is just my trouble, that I see in my heart anything else but Christ." Then the divine voice said: "Read on, read on." So I read on: "For that which I now live in the flesh-I live *by faith* in the Son of God." I asked myself: "What is faith?" Answer: "A looking away from things visible and reckoning on things invisible, as they are revealed in God's Word." "Well, then, what is faith in this my present condition?" Answer: "You must look away from the visible, that is, yourself and your corrupted heart; and you must look up to the invisible, that is, to the Son of God who died for you, rose again, and liveth for ever. And doing so, you must believe that on this new basis God *has* accepted you as His child, that is, not on account of what you are, but on account of what Christ is." For a moment I hesitated and wondered. "What, is this all I have to do? Isn't this too simple and too bold a step?" Again I was assured: "This is God's way, so get on it." Yes, I got on it, I took the step. I let myself go, and took Christ instead as my basis before God. I believed that God had accepted me on this new basis and called myself in His presence, not a lost sinner, but His saved child, in spite of a thousand voices within which condemned me.

The result was wonderful. Then and there I felt down to the inmost depth of my being that God had "brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock" (Psa. 40. 2). I left the little chamber, no longer being in Adam,

but as a new creature "in Christ Jesus." A deep heavenly peace filled and thrilled my soul. Henceforth the hidden character of my inward life was entirely changed. The former legal struggling and striving had ceased, and the sweet Sabbath rest of faith taken its place. But this rest of faith did by no means lead me into a lawless or fruitless life. No, from that hour I felt as if a fountain had been opened in my barren soul, and so it was (see John 4. 14). Not struggling to love, but trusting in Christ to work in me, I found that now I did really love, and that now it was easy to be meek and humble, and that this was the fruit of the Holy Spirit, who had been given to me (Rom. 5. 5). Yet God taught me not to change the principle and live looking into the work of the Holy Spirit within, but to go on, "looking unto Jesus," the "Author and Finisher of faith," and to glory in Him only (Gal. 6. 14; 1 Cor. 1. 30, 31). Many years have passed, and all this time I have found this path a path full of God's abiding presence, full of light, full of comfort in sorrow, full of help in conflict; full of love and patient forbearing, leading from "strength to strength," "from glory to glory." And by the grace of God I shall be kept in this heavenly "life of faith" until faith is changed into sight (1 Peter 1. 5).

Thus was I by God's own working made a member in the True Universal Church. What I learned afterwards about the true local Church I cannot tell here. Remembering the way God has led me, my heart is filled with adoration and thanksgiving, and I close with Revelation 1. 5, R.V., "Unto Him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by His Blood; and made us to be a Kingdom, to be priests unto His God and Father, to Him be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

THE TRUE CHURCH.

A Divine Work.

By HENRY PAYNE, Spain,

Forty Years a Preacher of the Gospel.

ONE of the many comprehensive and far-reaching statements of Holy Scripture concerning man's state as regards God is found in 1 John 5. 19, where we read, "The whole world lieth in wickedness;" or, as the Revised Version has it, "The whole world lieth in the Evil One." So entirely has the Evil One, that is, Satan, taken captive the human race that they all lie within his power and willingly do his bidding. Captives ordinarily taken in war were chained to the chariots of their conquerors, or kept under guard lest they should escape; but Satan's captives are in love with their captivity. They have not only lost all power to escape, but what makes their state doubly desperate is that they have lost the will to do so. If there are chains by which the captives are held, as indeed there are, they are considered as ornaments to be gloried in, and tokens of the liberty which is enjoyed by the enslaved. Men may deny this, but Holy Scripture declares it, and man's history from the beginning, whether recording his sinking into the lowest depths of idolatry, or rising to whatever height of civilisation, proves the same solemn truth.

It is very true that in our day marvellous progress is made in almost every branch of human knowledge and skill. In the times of the Pharaohs no swifter mode of travel or of conveying messages was known

than by use of horses. The same was true when Queen Victoria ascended the throne of Britain. But now man makes nature yield up her hidden treasures, and he is learning how to harness all her powers so as to make use of them for his own ends of ease and comfort, or pride and ambition. With lightning speed he sends his messages to the uttermost parts of the world. On land he travels with increasing rapidity and comfort, and on the sea he is carried with every luxury in ocean liners which he is pleased to call "the greyhounds of the deep." The air has become another of his realms, while with his telescope he scans the heavens, and worlds innumerable are the objects of his diligent search. From nothing that he imagines will he be restrained. But with all these things, which are proofs of man's wondrous capabilities, he is left, as regards his soul and God, in the same helpless condition as were the men who lived in the days before the flood, when, according to the testimony of our Lord, "They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage until the day that Noah entered into the ark; and the flood came and destroyed them all" (Luke 17. 27). These occupations, mentioned by the Lord, were perfectly right and lawful in themselves; the evil lay in that they were carried on without God. Now if we turn to the Old Testament we get a glimpse of the other side with the results of such a godless manner of life: "There were giants in the earth in those days, mighty men; men of renown. The earth was corrupt, and filled with violence" (Gen. 6. 4-11).

A True Picture of To-day.

Does the picture correspond at all to that which we see around us to-day? If not entirely so, it very soon will, for the Son of God has said that as it was

in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man, that is, when He shall be revealed from Heaven. But surely we see men and women rapidly acquiring all that which made up the character of the antediluvians. There are mighty men to-day, men of renown, men who have millions of money 'at hand for the accomplishment of their purposes'; and men who have the masses in their hands to paralyse the life of a nation at any time, while the whole of Europe, with its millions of trained soldiers, has become a great military encampment, ready at a moment's notice for deeds of violence such as never have been witnessed from Noah's day to this. Confessedly the world has reached a time of universal unrest. We are all becoming acquainted with outbursts of violence and of lawlessness such as our forefathers never dreamed of. Verily the world to-day is like a "troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt" (Isa. 57. 20).

At first sight it seems strange that with an experience of six thousand years man should never have discovered, in the midst of all his other discoveries, a way of peace and contentment, of safety and happiness, so as to be able to sit under his own vine and fig-tree with none to make him afraid. But let us take another view, a God-given view: "The whole world lieth in the wicked one," therefore the present state of things is nothing to be wondered at.

Is there no hope, no way of deliverance from such a tyrant, and from such chains as those which bind us? There is. The plan is worthy of the only wise God. It calls forth the admiration and worship of holy angels as they see the manifold wisdom of God in rescuing, not simply captives who had lost all power to free themselves, but in rescuing helpless

captives who had no will to be delivered. As soon as sin entered the world the promise of deliverance was given, which promise right down through the ages shone with increasing splendour until Emmanuel, the woman's seed, "whose goings forth were of old from the days of eternity" (Micah 5. 2), was born in Bethlehem of Judah. His presence in the world of sinners, whom He came to redeem, was marked by an outburst of persecution which continued until it reached its climax, and the people and their rulers, the princes of this world, crucified the Lord of Glory.

Another Page of Divine History.

But let us turn over to another page of God-given history, where we see that "Thus it was written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name among all nations" (Luke 24. 46, 47). The words in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms concerning redemption were then fulfilled. Jehovah laid on Him the iniquity of us all, and in that solemn moment the soul of the Redeemer was made an offering for sin, which offering was accepted by the holy and righteous God. In proof of this the Lord who died was raised from the dead, and as the mighty Victor took the keys of Hell and of death, and is now exalted at the right hand of God.

" The victory is ours !
For us in might came forth the mighty One,
For us He fought the fight, the triumph won.
The victory is ours ! "

At this point it may well be asked: In what way does this work of redemption, wrought by the Lord Jesus, affect the sinner so as to deliver him from the power of Satan in whose grasp he is through sin?

In answering this all-important question, let us

call to mind what has already been stated: Because of the entire subjugation of the sinner to the power of darkness his state by nature is helpless and hopeless, for both power and will are gone; hence a way had to be found, not only of deliverance, but that should appeal to the heart as well as to the conscience of the sinner. That is, that he should see his need of such a Saviour, and be willing to accept Him. Both these ends are gained by the Gospel applied with power to heart and conscience, so that the sinner is changed, is converted; he accepts deliverance by an act of faith, and cannot but love his Deliverer. Well might the Apostle sing, while contemplating the vastness of this redemption and the glory of the Person who accomplished it, "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen." And well might he ask the question: "How shall we escape if we neglect so great Salvation?" (Heb. 2. 3).

A Personal Experience.

In common with all others, from my birth upwards, I stood on the same ground of alienation from God, and was in love with sin. As an infant I was not christened, and therefore was none other in the eyes of the religious world than a heathen. My knowledge of Scripture, however, in my early days, received from my godly and beloved father and mother, was sufficient to show me that the position before God of my school companions who had been christened was no better than my own. The water which had been sprinkled on them had not changed their hearts, and consequently had not changed their lives. We were heartily agreed in running the same course, the course of this world, I "a heathen," and they

“christened boys,” but equally heathens, or Gentiles, without hope and without God in the world, living in sin and seeking pleasure.

But there came a time when conscience spoke with a loud voice, and trembling followed. Then I discovered in God’s sovereign remedy the Gospel not only that which gives peace to the troubled soul, but that which wins the heart of the rebel. I was seized by a power greater than that which had held me a captive in hard and cruel chains, and was delivered from the authority of darkness, and translated into the Kingdom of God’s dear Son. That was a passing from death unto life, from a state of alienation from the life of God into one of reconciliation, of friendship, a new birth from above; a calling forth from that ground on which I once lay in the grasp of the Evil One to own that I had changed Masters. I was a called-out one, and formed a part of that state or company of called-out ones, the Church of God, whose members are being called out (as the word *Ecclesia* implies) from every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.

Why Doubts and Fears?

My song began, and so did another class of conflicts to which I had been a stranger hitherto, for I became the subject of most defiling and distressing doubts, which even threatened to undermine my physical health. Many were the darts of the wicked one which wounded my soul. At the time I could give no true account of my state, for my joy in believing had departed. Since then more than half a century has passed, and in looking back I can now better understand where I stood when surrounded with such thick mists. I had been taken by my Lord to be His own, and I had given myself to Him as a

poor and needy one, and the adversary was wroth. Some months after these conflicts and struggles, when in the enjoyment of more rest of soul, I desired to join one of the local Churches of the district in which I lived, and on the ground of a confession of my faith in the Lord Jesus was received by its members as a fellow-member.

Experiences in Spain.

In the course of time I came to Spain to make known the grace of God through which I had been saved, and here I have witnessed the same mighty power of God in the Salvation of many souls, but with ever varying experiences. As a rule I have not seen deep distress on account of sin either before or at the time of conversion in persons who have been in the depths of iniquity of the Church of Rome. On hearing the Gospel in the simplicity of faith they have received Christ as their Saviour. The consciousness of the guilt of sin is an after experience, produced by the light of God's penetrating the dark heart. There have been unmistakable examples of true conversions to God without apparent soul distress on account of sin. On the other hand, we have seen some bowed down under a sense of sin and longing for pardon; but such souls generally have had, prior to this, a knowledge of the Word of God, which is the instrument in the hand of the Holy Spirit for producing, among other things, stability and excellence of character in the believer.

Saints in the Church of Rome.

In conclusion, I may say that notwithstanding all the corruption and abominations of the apostate Church of Rome, as seen in her own natural state in Spain, there can be no doubt but that a great number

of persons who have lived and died within her pale have been members of the Church of God, in virtue of faith in the Lord Jesus as their only hope of Salvation. So much may be clearly gathered, if proofs were needed, from the writings of many of them, writings which have come down to us from the sixteenth century. I have also met with some cases myself of conversion to God about whom I can have no doubt. They were brought up in all that Rome teaches, but by the Spirit of God they were led to discover in the midst of the darkness the glorious truth that "Christ died for our sins" (1 Cor. 15. 3), and like drowning men they caught hold of that one hope of Salvation, and consequently had more or less of the enjoyment of peace with God.

A Glorious Company.

"The Night is far spent, the Day is at hand" (Rom. 13. 12). Soon the Redeemer will come and claim His own—all who have accepted Him as their Saviour and Lord—that they may be with Him for ever. He will gather them from all lands and from the isles of the sea, a glorious company, a Church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. Then He will accomplish another great work, that of subjecting everything to divine authority, that God may be all in all.

"He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen" (Rev. 22. 20, 21).

THE TRUE CHURCH

A Temple of Living Stones.

By ROBERT STEPHEN, China.

Two men who had met for the first time discovered to their mutual joy that both were followers of the Lord Jesus. After a little time one said to the other: 'May I ask to what Body you belong?' The answer was a query: 'How many Bodies are recognised in the New Testament?' 'ONE.'

There is a great deal of misconception about this subject, and we do well to remind ourselves that the only reliable authority to which we can appeal for light is the Word of God.

The One Body.

-It tells us "There is ONE Body" (Eph. 4. 4). It speaks of "The Church which is His Body" (Eph. 1. 23), but we also learn that until after the resurrection there was no Church in the technical New Testament sense. It was predicted by our Lord, but not until after His ascension did it come into being. It "in other generations was not made known unto the sons of men, as it hath now been revealed unto His holy Apostles and Prophets in the Spirit; to wit, that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the Body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel" (Eph. 3. 5, 6, R.V.; see also Col. 1. 26, 27).

Our Lord had to pass through death, and in resurrection to bring forth this fruit of His sacrifice, the calling out of Jews and Gentiles from the world,

so that they who by nature "were dead in trespasses and in sins" (Eph. 2. 1) are through faith in His Blood made one in Christ. "We, who are many, are ONE Body in Christ, and severally members one of another" (Rom. 12. 5, R.V.). "For as the Body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the Body, being many, are ONE Body; so also is Christ. For in one Spirit were we all baptised into ONE Body, whether we be Jews or Greeks, whether we be bond or free" (1 Cor. 12. 12, 13, R.V.). So in the epistles quoted, Ephesians, Romans, and Corinthians, those who had believed the Gospel are regarded as ONE BODY, and one with Christ. The Church is His by the gift of His Father, and by the purchase of His Blood, for "He loved the Church and gave Himself for it" (Eph. 5. 25). Has the reader yet responded to the Gospel call, and thus been united to Christ and all that are His? If so, then he is a member of the True Church and only then.

It is possible to have our name on a Church roll on earth, but this is a false position unless it be also written among those of "the Church of the first-born ones" in Heaven. There are no dead members in the "Body of Christ." There is vital union between all, for the "Head" manifests His own life, will, and power in some degree through every member. These members are scattered through all lands wherever the Gospel has been preached and received, for His Church knows no geographical boundaries. It is, alas, divided into many sections on earth by the self-will of man, but the Lord looks upon it as one, and so should we, if we would submit to His will.

The House of God.

Another figure than that of "the Body" is used in 1st Timothy. "The House of God, which is the

Church of the living God'' (1 Tim. 3. 16). This is not a material building. In this dispensation there is no scriptural warrant for calling any structure ''the House of God,'' whatever the beauty of its architecture, or however solemnly dedicated. ''God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of Heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands'' (Acts 17. 24), but ''ye also, as *lively stones*, are built up in a spiritual house'' (1 Peter 2. 5). Who are the ''ye?'' The same epistle tells us: ''Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious Blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot'' (1 Peter 1. 18, 19). And the Apostle further addresses them as ''you which believe'' (chap. 2. 7). Redeemed ones are the ''living stones'' of God's House in which He dwells and exercises His authority.

The Temple of God.

To the Corinthians Paul wrote: ''Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? . . . For the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are'' (1 Cor. 3. 16, 17, R.V.). And again, ''Ye are the temple of the living God, as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people'' (2 Cor. 6. 16). This holy temple is in contrast to the material temple of old. It is a *spiritual* house in which ''*spiritual* sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ,'' are offered (1 Peter 2. 5, R.V.), and these are the only sacrifices which are acceptable to God, for ''God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth'' (John 4. 24). The redeemed alone can

worship Him, for they alone have the Spirit and know the truth.

Human Responsibility.

But now we come to the side of human responsibility. The Word of God nowhere sanctions the mixture of the "holy" and the "unholy." "What communion hath light with darkness?" Since *God* recognises only redeemed ones as being in His Church, do we not go against the Scripture if *we* regard the unconverted as eligible for membership in it? The first time the writer faced this question was at a "communion service" in a Scottish kirk when, not long converted, he handed the bread and wine to the man next to him, a drunkard and blasphemer. This man was there, probably under the mistaken idea that he was doing the right thing. When we open a door which God has not opened, are we not likely to lead such men to disastrous self-deception, by causing them to hope for Salvation through that which can never save? No ordinances can ever blot out sins. Without the "new birth" man cannot worship God, and even the sacrifice of "the wicked is an abomination to the Lord."

Local Churches.

The New Testament local Churches were composed confessedly only of those who were members of Christ's Body. If others were there they had "crept in unawares," but they had not been welcomed with a false charity, though ostensibly unconverted. These Churches had no name other than the God-given one, save distinctive geographical names, as "the Church of God which is at Corinth" (1 Cor. 1. 2), "the Churches which are in Asia" (Rev. 1. 4). Faction spirit when it showed its face was rebuked (1 Cor. 1. 10, 12, and 12. 21, 22). "They were

exhorted to be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind; doing nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself'' (Phil. 2. 2, 3, R.V.). This oneness of mind was not to be attained by compromise, but by *self-renunciation*, and submission to the mind of God.

True Church Life.

Their bodies were to be presented as *living sacrifices*, holy, and acceptable to God, which is spiritual worship. They were not to be fashioned according to this world. They were to be transformed by the renewing of their minds, in order to prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Every man was exhorted "to be not fashioned according to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God. For I say, through the grace that was given me, to every man among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly" (Rom. 12. 1, 3, R.V., marg.). The mind of Christ was to be desired, and not the thoughts of men. Thus we see that although redeemed the members of the Church had conditions to fulfil if True Church life was to be attained. Only when the individual conditions—self-renunciation and consecration to God, unworldliness and lowliness of mind, have been in some measure attained does the true state exist for corporate testimony according to the will of God. Only then can the members properly fulfil their individual ministry in their God-appointed place in the Body (see 1 Cor., chap. 12). Self-will is the root of all faction, lack of harmony, and bad testimony; but self-denial and the life of sacrifice

to God in the Church is the base of all that is God-honouring.

New Testament Church Order.

It is not impossible to attain to Church order after the New Testament pattern, and it should be aimed at, relying on the Holy Spirit's power, which is promised to those who desire to carry out God's will.

The Church Complete.

The Church is not yet complete. It "*groweth* into a holy temple in the Lord." The day of its completion may be nearer than many think. Then "the Lord shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord; wherefore exhort one another with these words" (1 Thess. 4. 16, 17, R.V.).

These are words of comfort to all who are in God's Church. This is their hope, and in this time of waiting their responsibility is to carry out God's will as revealed in the Word, and to be faithful in seeking to win men "to be to the praise of the glory of His grace" in that Day.

"Now unto Him that is able to guard you from stumbling, and to set you before the presence of His glory without blemish in exceeding joy, to the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and power, before all time, and now, and for evermore. Amen" (Jude 24 and 25).

THE TRUE CHURCH.

What Is It? How Is It Entered?

By CHARLES A. SWAN, Portugal.

THE Apostle Pául, in writing to the Romans (2. 28), says: "He is not a Jew which is one *outwardly*, . . . but he is a Jew which is one *inwardly*." It will at once be seen that what he meant was that unless there were an *inward reality* corresponding with the *outward profession* God could only look upon the outward observances, no matter how correct in the eyes of men, with abhorrence, for even "the *sacrifice* of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord."

Now with regard to the subject in hand it would be well at the outset to put it down as an established fact that that is not the Church which often passes as such, and no man is a Christian merely because of his being a member of it.

When I say "the Church which often passes as such" I include *all* the different sects and denominations of Christendom, even those who consider themselves, and perhaps are, the most orthodox. I am quite aware that in the Scriptures the local assemblies of professing Christians were called Churches. We read of "the Church of God which is at Corinth," "the Churches of Galatia," etc., but no one of these, nor all of them together, constituted "The Church" which the Lord, in Matthew 16. 18, said He would build, and against which the gates of Hell should not prevail. A man might have been a member of any of those

local Churches without being a member of the Church of Christ, and therefore without being a Christian. Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, says: "Some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame" (1 Cor. 15. 34). (See also such Scriptures as Gal. 2. 4; 1 John 2. 19, etc.)

The lesson, then, that I would draw from this is that a man may be a member of the most orthodox Church in the world to-day and yet not be a member of "the Church," outside of which there is no Salvation for fallen man in this dispensation.

Some one may now with reason ask: "What then is the Church? and How can I become a member of it?"

Being convinced that no one can possibly be saved, at least in this dispensation (*i.e.*, the days in which we live), without being a member of the Church of Matthew 16. 18, I shall endeavour to give a Scriptural answer to these questions.

What is the Church?

Of it we may say what Paul said of the Kingdom of God, it "is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 14. 17). It is the duty of every one to carefully consider the effect of his "meat and drink" upon those by whom he is surrounded, but our eating and drinking, or our refusing to eat or drink certain things is no proof as to whether we are in the Church or not. Neither the Kingdom nor the Church consists in external observances.

The Greek word *ecclesia* is made up of *ek*, "out of," and *kalein*, "to call," and the full meaning is "an assembly of called-out ones." So the Lord Jesus in speaking to His true disciples says: "I have chosen you *out of* the world" (John 15. 19), and

Simeon explains the purpose of God in this dispensation as being to *take out* from among the Gentiles a people for His Name (Acts 15. 14).

The Church is called the "Body of Christ" (Eph. 1. 22, 23), the "Church of the firstborn ones" (Heb. 12. 23), and "the habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. 2. 19, 22).

How Can I Become a Member of It?

May no one be satisfied without knowing beyond all doubt whether he is in this Church or not.

First of all I should like to say there is a *within* and a *without*. It is impossible to occupy a neutral position, for the Lord distinctly says: "He that is not with Me is against Me; and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth abroad" (Matt. 12. 30). To be outside *now* is to be under the power and dominion of sin and Satan (Eph. 2. 2, 3) and an enemy of the Son of God. To die without having become counted among its members is to be among those who are described in Revelation 21. 8, R.V., "Their part shall be in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

Does Natural Birth Admit?

It is sad to think that in spite of the plain teaching of the Word of God there are those who affirm that the fact of a child having Christian parents constitutes it a child of God, and among these so-called teachers and guides are some who occupy prominent positions and profess to be the ministers of Christ! They affirm that the child is a child of God from its birth, and that it becomes a member of the Church by baptism, confirmation, or some such rite. These "teachers" often make elaborate attempts to show that the child is a member of the Kingdom without

having experienced any spiritual change, and should be admitted into the Church by baptism, etc. They make a difference between the child of Christian parents and the child of heathen parents. Now all this finds absolutely no support in the Word of God. 1 Corinthians 7. 14 is frequently cited as showing that the children of believing parents "are holy," and therefore should be baptised, but it is a very perilous procedure to build a doctrine of the kind on such an obscure passage (especially as baptism is not once referred to in the passage*) when there are so many clear passages which show unmistakably that children, or adults, are not baptised because they are "holy" in this sense, but because they are "believers" (Mark 16. 15, 16). The same verse in Corinthians speaks of the unbelieving husband or wife being "sanctified." The point of the passage is that if a Christian be married to an unbelieving wife, and that unbeliever be willing to *live* with the Christian, there is no need for separating either from her or from her children, as was done under the law (see Ezra 10. 1, 3).

The most serious aspect of this evil is that thousands who know they were christened in their infancy build their hopes on that fact without having had any definite spiritual experience.

Mischief in the Mission Field.

What terrible mischief this error has done in heathen lands! Look at the English possessions in West and South Africa. Large numbers of natives whose parents are professing Christians have been christened and educated on the mission stations.

* In 1 Corinthians 7. 14 neither baptism nor ecclesiastical position are spoken of in any shape or form. It is merely a question of living under the same roof, and the children are only said to be holy or set apart in the same way as the unconverted parent by the Divine ordinance of marriage.—EDS.

These are looked upon and called "Christian natives," but my experience, and that of many others, proves that hundreds of them are morally more degraded than the raw natives who have never been brought under these so-called Christian influences. Is there any wonder that ungodly men in these places speak against *all* mission work? Surely not. These teachers of error have given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme.

It is as clear as daylight that all, when once they have reached the age in which they can distinguish and choose between right and wrong, must be saved through a personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. This applies equally to those who have Christian parents.

The Case of Timothy.

Take the case of Timothy (2 Tim. 3. 14, 15), he needed to be made "wise unto salvation," and that "through faith which is in Christ Jesus." It was not the faith of his grandmother, Lois, or of his mother, Eunice, but his own faith in Jesus Christ which saved him and made him a member of the True Church. Mother and grandmother both had faith, but of Timothy Paul could say: "And I am persuaded that (the same faith dwells) in thee also" (2 Tim. 1. 5).

When we open our Bibles at the third chapter of John we find that the Kingdom is entered, not by natural birth, and this is true of all, whether their parents are Christians or not, but by *new birth*, by being "born again," born "from above" (see margin), or "born of the Spirit" (vv. 3-8). It will also be seen from the Lord's teaching which follows that this new birth is wrought in those who *believe* (vv. 14-18).

The Case of Nicodemus.

The case of Nicodemus, who was devoted to his religion as a Pharisee, and had probably been baptised by John, shows that apart from this definite and clear heart belief in the Son of God no Salvation is possible.

My Personal Experience.

I should like before going any further to give a few words of personal testimony as to how I became a member of the True Church. Unfortunately this expression, the "True Church," has been almost monopolised by one of the most unchristian systems which ever attempted to pass as Christians. I refer to the Roman Catholic religion. It is not for me to say there are no Christians in it, if there are, they are Christians not *because* of, but *in spite* of her evil doctrines. When I refer to the True Church I mean, of course, the Church which is the "Body of Christ."

Up to about the age of twenty I led the ordinary kind of life which the average young man of to-day lives. Parental control was irksome, and I threw it off as much and as quickly as I possibly could. The usual round of sports, theatres, music-halls, and such-like claimed a good deal of my time. I did not altogether neglect attendance at places of worship, and was sometimes deeply impressed with the truths I heard, though my principal reason for attending was the company of young people I found there. As a child I was christened, but the life I lived as I grew in years was quite sufficient to prove that I, though the child of Christian parents (my father being a local preacher for sixty years), was far from being a child of God, or in any way improved or helped by the rite. I became acquainted with a number of young people connected with the "Church of England," and began

to attend its services. Then I joined the cricket club, the captain of which was the Curate of "the Church." He pressed me to be confirmed, and said that all that was necessary was to attend some preparation classes and be able to answer certain questions. There was no reference to sin, my need of a personal Saviour, or the necessity of the new birth. Of course there were the usual confirmation questions, but no attempt was made to reach my conscience. I was duly confirmed, but I was still in my sins, and I well remember how on the very afternoon of the day of our confirmation, a number of us, both young men and women, visited a gipsy camp and behaved most disgracefully.

"The Most Important Step I Ever Took."

Eventually I and my dearest companion were led to attend the preaching of Mr. A. A. Rees, of Sunderland. That man of God, as many can gratefully testify, did not hesitate to declare all the counsel of God concerning sin and the absolute impossibility of obtaining Salvation apart from a personal faith in the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was the custom of Mr. Rees to see any anxious ones on the Monday night in his vestry, and I decided to go and see him. But how was this to be done, seeing my companion and I were accustomed to meet every night at the very hour when I should go? There was nothing for it but to tell him frankly of my decision, but this was no easy task, for it meant, probably, a close to our companionship, and perhaps his scornful contempt at what he might consider a manifestation of childish weakness on my part. I cried very much to God for strength, for my mind was made up. When we met, after much hesitation, I broached the subject, and instead of contempt, which I expected,

his face brightened up, and he said that he also had been seeking grace to tell me that he had come to the same decision. We visited Mr. Rees together, and received a most loving welcome. After conversation, during which we were pointed to the Lord Jesus Christ who had "finished" the work of redemption on the Cross, and who offered us Salvation as *a gift*, He gave us each a little book which showed the difference between "do" and "done." Salvation was not to be obtained by *doing*—not of works—for the Lord had done it all long, long ago, and all that was needed was a true heart, belief in the Saviour, and a grateful acceptance of His finished work. My choice was made there and then, and so was my companion's, who is now with the Lord, and I have never had a doubt since as to my soul's Salvation. Blessed be God, that was the best and most important step I ever took, and my desire to-day is that God may use me to point others to the living Saviour, who has power; and is willing to save from the dominion of sin all who put their trust in Him. This, and only this, is the way of Salvation, and the way to become a member of the True Church, against which the gates of Hell shall not prevail.

"Crowns and thrones may perish,
Kingdoms rise and wane,
But the Church of Jesus
Constant must remain."

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