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ART. I.—*The Life of Isaac Milner, D. D., F. R. S., Dean of Carlisle, President of Queen's College, and Professor of Mathematics in the University of Cambridge, &c.* By his niece, Mary Milner, author of the "Christian Mother." Second Edition abridged. London. 1844.

DR. JOHNSON once observed, in conversation, 'that no man is so important to society, that his death makes a chasm which cannot be filled up.' This sentiment is so far true, that affairs of the world never cease to go forward in some way, however many important persons are taken away; but it is not true that the space occupied by some men can immediately be filled by others. Dr. Johnson, himself, left no man behind him who entirely filled his place. The same may be said of our Washington and also of our Franklin. The same is true of Luther, Calvin, John Wesley, and others. Dr. Milner, we think, is another example of a man who left a great chasm in the literary and religious society, with which he was connected, which has not been filled to this day.

The writer of the life of this eminent man, makes an apology for the length of time which had elapsed after the death of her uncle, before this biography appeared; but she makes this sensible remark, "That the value which may be reasonably supposed to belong to a faithful Memoir of the Life and Character, of the late ISAAC MILNER, is by

was a very amiable trait in his character; and so was his condescending readiness to communicate religious instruction to those into whose company he happened to fall. And as he was affectionate and benevolent, so he was strictly conscientious; feeling that he was accountable for the right use and improvement of all the talents committed to him.

6. We will close our review with the reflection, "How great a blessing to the church and to society is the life and labours of such a man as Dr. Milner! Though he was of a different denomination from ourselves, and entertained different views from ours, of the polity and government of the Christian Church, yet we can admire his talents, love his pious character, and rejoice in his usefulness in promoting the cause of truth and holiness, as truly, as if he had been a Presbyterian. Our difference with Dr. Milner and other Episcopalians, of like sentiments and spirit, is merely external, and in comparison with the great points on which we agree, are of little consequence. We sincerely wish that there were hundreds of such men in the church of England, at this time, and there would be no danger that she would be corrupted or divided by doctrines and usages, which are more suited to the dark ages, than to the nineteenth century.

The signs of the times are ominous all over the world. When the inquiry is made, "Watchman what of the night?" the answer is, "The morning cometh and also the night."

ART. II.—*A Treatise on the Church of Christ; designed chiefly for the use of Students in Theology.* By the Rev. William Palmer, M. A., of Worcester College, Oxford. With a preface and notes, by the Rt. Rev. W. R. Whittingham, D. D., Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Maryland. From the second London edition. New York: D. Appleton & Co. 1841. Svo. 2 vols. pp. 529, 557.

LOGICIANS bid us have an eye to the *πρωτον ψευδος* in every piece of bad argument, because, by uprooting that, we subvert all that grows out of it. For a different reason it is often well to look after what, in corresponding language, one might call the *εσχατον ψευδος*—that error for whose sake

the whole argument is framed, and toward which, as the grand point to be reached, each step in false reasoning is bent. The good of knowing it is plain. It is the drift of what the errorist has said. It gives order to his fallacies—puts your mind in the attitude of his, and helps memory to hold fast his whole scheme, and see its deformities together. As a bad knot must be loosed in the order in which it was tied, so a perplexed system of wrong argument should be exposed in the order in which it grew in the mind that utters it.

Mr. Palmer, in the two volumes before us, leaves us at no loss as to his last end in error. It is one proof of his superiority to the rest of his school, and of the wisdom, whether his own or theirs, that put the work in his hands, that he stands out so far above them in the power he gives his reader of tracing system in what he writes. If his theory of the church be true, he has selected from it with admirable exclusiveness those positions that bear on his one great point. If his theory be false, as we hope to prove it is, then he has framed it with admirable directness—directness really casting suspicion on itself by the minute ingenuity that it costs—for the same never forgotten end. We leave it to any discerning man, whether absorbed devotion to that end has not forfeited for his book the title of “*A Treatise on the Church of Christ;*” and whether it is not more distinctively, a *Treatise in proof*, that out of the British churches, on the islands where they originated, and in the colonies where they were planted, there is no salvation. This clearly is its scope. Nor is the position one so trifling or indifferent, as to make it wonderful that it should grow to be a favourite error in any church, or that learned men should write long volumes to reach it. We have called it the ultimate error, and it is so, among those of a theoretic kind. But take practical errors into the account, and there is one still a step beyond it, the end and aim, the great attracting charm of this and all behind it in the chain of errors—one that has reduced the English church to the length of making such a claim of adherence, just as elsewhere it has elevated to the rank of vital tests things much more indifferent. We will tell what it is.

When prelatists cast it upon the advocates of parity to show how prelacy came to exist so early as it is confessed it did, in any other way than by Christ's appointment, they are answered that it was the birth of ambition in the cler-

gy; that then, as now, the laity let fall from their hands that strong practical influence which they might have in moulding the church; and that, therefore, that easily besetting sin of the ministry had earliest and most thorough effect in changing the church's government. They are reminded of that struggle "who should be the greatest," that began in the very presence of Christ; of the disturbances under the eye of the apostles, among those "who loved to have the pre-eminence;" of that "mystery of iniquity" in Paul's time already working; and of the proofs from tradition itself, that the order they bid us account for, was actually the fruit of clerical usurpation.

The same key will serve us here. The claim to argue which this book was written, is not a wonderful one; if for no other reason than that it aggrandizes the ministry. The same ambition that gave birth to prelacy, might be expected to load it with all ghostly honors; and how more directly than by making the church necessary to salvation; and prelacy, the church?

Starting then from the supposition of an ambitious clergy, the whole theory of these volumes beautifully unfolds itself, their contents falling into that arrangement which refers them back to their proper origin; and Mr. Palmer has been as true to our interests as to his own in writing so clearly, that not one link in the chain of error is missing, or concealed. Let us trace it. Ambition, at work for ages, has nursed the idea of an exclusive church, until this doctrine has been reached—out of the pale of the British churches in those countries where it first held the ground, there can be no salvation. Our author then has two positions to make good: first, that there is no salvation out of the church, whatever that may be, a position which he argues and finishes in his first few pages; and second, that the church of England on its own soil is exclusively that church; a position having so many points of contact with others which must stand with it, but are hard to sustain, or which must fall before it, but are hard to overthrow, as to swell out the argument to many hundred pages, and to need scarce any thing besides to give matter enough for the rest of his book.

For, first of all, in finding marks that shall fix a line round the church of England, and shut out dissenters, that church has long ago discovered that Rome and the East must fall within such a line. Ingenuity cannot draw one

that shall encircle the British churches and exclude both the Romanist and the Protestant. It is cast upon Mr. Palmer then to show, that of that body of Christ from which the pious dissenters of Great Britain are cut off, the corrupt churches of the East and West are true members. Near a hundred pages of his book are devoted to this difficult argument.

The adjustment, however, only provokes a new challenge of his claim. That crime which thrusts the dissenter beyond the reach of covenant mercy, and quite nullifies his right to call his society a church, is separation. Unity and apostolicity—two marks most insisted on in the way of test—both condemn him. He has broken one, and lost the other. Now the papacy, so laboriously vindicated, for the very sake of the integrity of these tests, as part of the true body of Christ, and so plainly, if a part at all, an older, a larger, and hence a more catholic and weighty part, is living in something much like separation from the English church. If the excommunication of the younger sister—every limb and member of her—a hundred times—if contempt, if a total absence¹ and expulsion from her sacraments, and a long and willing alienation from her seem to interfere with that vital mark, unity, and seem to place the English churchman under the ban of Rome, much like the dissenter under the ban of Oxford, we might expect serious trouble in our author's mind to prove that they do not. He has had some; but less than we could have imagined. He has chosen the happiest expedient possible:—just to shape his church-theory beforehand, in forecast of this difficulty. There are of course, differences between the schismatic course of the Episcopalian against his dissenting brother, and the anathema of popery against simple prelacy; for no two church separations can occur exactly alike through the whole history of the world. Then all that Mr. Palmer has had to do, is so to draw his church line originally as to let these differences throw the two cases on opposite sides of it. You remember he not only chooses his own marks, but what is better for him, interprets them for himself. He simply, therefore, defines unity to be precisely such a thing as will not be destroyed by the one form of separation, but must be by the slightly different form, and thus anticipates the difficulty, pages before it comes up.

In his theory he says: "If a particular church should be condemned on some account by a portion of the universal

church, but not by another considerable portion, it is not to be held as heathen and separated."* A hundred and thirty-five pages afterward we see the intention of this guard: "At that time," (of the Reformation,) "whatever decrees or judgments were made by some western churches in respect of ours, were not confirmed or received by the eastern churches, who remained exactly in the same position towards us that they had previously done. Consequently there could not have been any decree of excommunication passed by the catholic church," &c. Again, his theory: "If churches have been condemned by a large portion of the church universal, and it can be clearly proved that the facts of the case have not been investigated, such a sentence is to be held invalid and unratified in heaven. If, however, the condemnation of the universal church is unanimous, and there is no proof of any marked injustice in the proceedings," (where would such a case be found, in the judgment of the excommunicated party? Such a caveat would shield any church.) those who are condemned for offences against charity ought to be held of all the brethren as heathen men and publicans."† Then, its application: "It must be proved that these churches" (British) "have separated from all the rest, or that all the rest have by some regular judgment excommunicated them."‡

It is true that from a man who led us to expect from his pen the grand attributes of that church which we must either recognise or perish, this seems rather minute and subtle; and that from a man who, feeling how few have "learning and judgment requisite" for "difficult questions," aimed at a "comparatively short and intelligible process,"§ it seems rather perplexed; and that for so radical a thing as a theory, it seems rather assumed; still remembering, as the author bids us, that "the time is short," and that this plan of his, "without any very lengthened discussion," is "the briefest course," straight to what he wants;|| perhaps we can scarcely wonder at its adoption.

Grant the theory, and let the author interpret it, and certainly it holds. Certainly "all" churches have not excommunicated those of Britain, for the Greek church does not so much as know every minor body whom her western sister, herself anathematized, in her turn anathematizes. Certainly the Church of England has not "separated from the

* Vol. i. p. 80.

† Vol. i. p. 80.

‡ Vol. i. p. 215.

§ Vol. i. p. 45.

|| Vol. i. p. 45, 46.

rest ;” for if we will let the author judge for us, separation from the Roman pontiff merely, breaks no unity with his church ;* and even prohibition of communion, made by the civil power, and submitted to ecclesiastically, if it be in self-defence, against Rome’s restless intrigues,† is no breach of union. Certainly the Roman church has never excommunicated her British sister, if no church can be excommunicated till she confesses herself regularly and rightly dealt with. Certainly, then, Mr. Palmer, as he aimed to do, has fallen upon “a short and intelligible process” by which he can hold fast his Romish principles, convict the dissenter of schism, and yet so neatly dissect off that case from his, as to parry a like charge against himself from Rome ; and all simply from having a long-sighted, well-considered theory.

Thus far on his plan two useful corollaries suggest themselves :—the first saves him the odium of denouncing the Reformation. The mass of the English people are not prepared to change their thanksgivings for that work into expressions of regret ; and a book that is to pass current among them must not do violence to such attachments. But, then, to recognise the protestants of Europe would bring utter discord into our author’s scheme. . A dilemma is to be met much like that of the Jews, as to the baptism of John : “If we shall say, From heaven, he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him ? But, if we say, Of men, we fear the people ; for all hold John as a prophet.” The greatest relief, therefore, would spring from a device that should at once approve the Reformation, and unchurch the bodies that grew out of it, and precisely this relief the theory that Mr. Palmer has arranged affords him.

The protestants of continental Europe, like those of Britain, (a) did not wilfully separate themselves, (b) were not regularly excommunicated, and, therefore, like England, might have cleared their skirts of the crime of schism. “They were to be regarded as brethren, separated indeed from the external communion of a large portion of the catholic church, without their own fault, but not internally cut off from it, and, consequently, still in the way of salvation.”‡ Lack of “existence,” however, “as societies prior to their separation from the ancient churches,”§ and lack of “apostolical succession in their ministry,”|| distinguished

* Vol. i. p. 214.

† Vol. i. p. 215.

‡ Vol. i. p. 352.

§ Vol. i. p. 353.

|| Vol. i. p. 354.

them from the Church of England, and destroyed their regular union with the body of Christ, (an anomalous and certainly no very pleasant state, if salvation is no where but in the church,) and "it is to be lamented," we are told, "that in process of time they forgot the principles on which their founders had set out, and deemed it necessary to assume the office and character of churches of Christ in the ordinary sense."* This, we understand, has broken the extraordinary link that held them in the covenant, and brought on them the wonted curse of separation; so that now "Lutheranism and Calvinism are little more than matters of history," "feeble and lifeless relics,"† "nearly perished in the countries where they arose."‡

The second corollary rounds off and finishes the claim. As thorns in the side of the Church of England, stand the papal churches on her own island. Aspiring as she does to sole right there, and wishing for her own supremacy and increase, not to recognise salvation in any other, and yet forced in the very arguing of that right, to admit Rome to an equality with herself in Christ's body, we should anticipate sore embarrassment on her part from so formidable an adversary. Rome excommunicating her and she recognising Rome, she would seem, at first glance, compelled by her favourite principles to nourish a rival in her own bosom. Mr. Palmer's wide-reaching theory, however, again comes to the relief of his church.

That vital mark of his, Unity, shields the ancient church of Britain from any intrusion, let it come from what quarter it may. The Roman Catholic on the continent is a true churchman. In England he is a separatist. An ancient body already holds the soil, and true churchmen become schismatics in the very act of setting up a rival worship. Then, carrying on the principle, he stretches out an arm to shield his brethren on this side of the Atlantic. "Schismatics do not cease to be so by a mere change of country. Therefore, the papists who went from this country to establish colonies in the United States of North America, were schismatics when they arrived there;" "when America received bishops from our churches, the schismatics constituted a rival episcopacy, and so remain to this day separated from the true church,"§

Next comes a damning blot upon the book. Its claim is

* Vol. i. p. 358.

† Vol. i. p. 359.

‡ Vol. i. p. 359.

§ Vol. i. p. 286.

finished; bolstered up by a crafty reading of appropriate marks. It only remains to nullify other marks that might stand in the way. If the eastern and western churches, with all their overgrown corruptions, are to be raised over the heads of pious protestant churches, and are to find a place in the body of Christ, when these are denied it, those narrow gates—Faith and Sanctity—must be widened a little to let them pass. That curse upon the papacy—the burial of all that is inward and spiritual under a load of outward tests and evidences—must be consummated here. Mr. Palmer goes boldly to his work, first of all by sinking that cardinal point with protestants—Unity of Faith—down, down, quite out of reach as a test. Why he set it among the marks of the church at all we know not, for he deliberately says: “It may be concluded then, that apparent unity or apparent difference in faith is not a safe ground to proceed on, in discriminating the true church from all rival communities; and the question of real unity involves a too extensive examination.”* Then to cut us off from condemning a church even for the lack of vital faith he says: “I do not deny that every one may form a notion of fundamentals in his own mind, &c., but what I contend for is that it is useless in general controversy,” fortifying the idea by these sentences, as absurd as those are horrible: “The Socinians themselves affirm that they believe fundamentals. The Romanists affirm that Jurieu and his party deny fundamentals. By what rule can it be proved that both are wrong?”

Thence he passes to the second mark—sanctity—and depreciating that as low as he dare, or as he can, without abandoning it, he goes on through the usual interpretation of catholicity and apostolicity, and so finishes his theory; a theory with which in the order of error, though not of chapters and sections, we have thus coupled part with part, a view of the main matter of the book—a book singularly downright and earnest in pursuing its favorite end—an end against which, if it be sound, all that we have said of the prostitution of grander principles to it, is mere crimination, but which, if it be false, shall stand only as another of those ever-recurring proofs of how lust for some one self-flattering error will throughout debauch the mind. We hope to prove it false.

The credit of some arguments must be worn out by long attack. Others expose a flaw that destroys them at a stroke. Mr. Palmer's is of the latter class. His proposition has two points: No salvation out of the church, and that church his own. The first, the corner-stone of his system, rests upon reasoning in which there is a chasm so wide, that only an illogical transposition of chapters conceals it from any reader. Chapter 3d. (Part 1.) is "On the Visibility of the Church." Now every one knows that the doctrine of the school opposed to Mr. Palmer is, that there is a Visible and an Invisible church in the world; one, that body of professing Christians with their children, around which church order roughly draws the line; the other, that body of true Christians around which God's omniscience unerringly draws the line. If Mr. Palmer doubts the doctrine, here precisely is the chapter to say so, and prove it false; if he believes it, still, to say so, and prove it true. What has he done? Announced the proposition, The Church is Visible, and then spent nine pages in wearying us with argument, that no one doubts, to prove it, and then five pages more in answering the objections of men (who to any extent never made them) by showing that that church, proved visible, is not invisible; and there the chapter ends. What miserable trifling is here! These are the instances that give occasion for the sneer that reasoning is admitted in theology that would be ridiculed in law or science. What had Mr. Palmer to do but to show, not only (what is half a truism) that there is a visible church, but either that there is or that there is not also an invisible church, spoken of in the Bible and by the early fathers. His question was not, Is the church visible and not invisible? but, Is there a visible and an invisible church? and his failure to meet this, has nullified his general argument.

True, he has half hid the flaw by placing this chapter third, when it should have been first; but we will go back and trace the mischief that it does, and set it in its proper place. Section third (Chapter 1), brings forward the direct position, No salvation out of the Church. Mr. Palmer's course in sustaining it reminds us of a man who, after having assassinated some successful rival, should use his dress and seal to counterfeit his person and obtain his honours. Destroying in his readers minds, by simply, as we have seen, omitting it, the idea of an invisible church, he here uses the texts and testimonies that mean that church, and

that proof, so far as they prove anything, that there is no salvation out of it (a truth evident from its very definition) to show that out of the visible church, there is no salvation. Without these borrowed sentences, the argument would be a cypher, as we may see by taking them away. "Christ is the head of the body, the church;"* now "if any man abide not in Christ, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."† "Christ is the Saviour of the body the church."‡ If Mr. Palmer doubts whether these do mean the church invisible, so much more shame upon him for not proving in the proper place the common voice of interpreters about them, to be wrong.

At best he has miserably few texts for making good a point so vital—only two beside those just quoted; and these, because independent, and not trusting to the illusion that we have exposed, palpably impertinent, belonging to that class of theological arguments which we tempt worldly men to ridicule. (1.) He says, "Without faith it is impossible to please God,"§ but "how shall men believe" &c., "without a preacher?"|| Now what does this prove beyond what common sense, as the very form of question in Paul's mouth implies, might have told without it, that men cannot know the truth till that body which possesses it, sends it to them? That they must join that body, or be lost, is totally another proposition. (2.) He says: "The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."¶ Now if he were aiming to show that all are saved who are added to the church, (an idea that he repudiates) we could see some distant bearing, or if he wished to prove that the Lord regards the church as the proper place for those that are saved, and that it is duty to join it, we own the text to be very strong and pertinent; but what it has to do with the reverse proposition, that none positively are saved but those that are added to the church, we are at a loss to see.

These few texts despatched, Mr. Palmer plunges into a long series of traditional testimonies, where, as the best evidence he can harvest must be only probable, traditional opinion furnishing no better, we do not care to follow him. From only five scriptures, on so radical a point, and these thus easily shown to be quite empty of what he would

* Col. i. 18. † John xv. 6. ‡ Eph. v. 23. § Heb. xi. 6. || Rom. x. 14, 15.
¶ Acts ii. 47. Bishops Pearson and Beveridge strangely use the same text.

draw from them, surely an author turns with but a bad grace to the Fathers.

We ask the reader to strike out from the list (*a*) wherever the writers quoted are speaking of the invisible church; (*b*) wherever the writers quoted are worth nothing in testimony, but so far from giving probable witness, give witness that is probable the other way; and (*c*) wherever the writers quoted are of modern date, and, therefore, their opinion and prejudices worth no more than ours; and then see how much sound proof is left to redeem the chapter from the charge of total emptiness.

Mr. Palmer will help him; for at times, by mis-chosen quotations, he seems bent on tearing off the veil himself. "Even the Quakers admit, that out of the church there is no salvation, though they hold that there may be members of this catholic church among Heathens, Turks, Jews."* The visible church? Of course not. Again, "Dr. Owen," (Independent) "their principal writer, says: 'It is required that we believe that the Lord Christ hath—a church on earth, confined unto no places, nor parties of men, no empires nor dominions, or capable of any confinement; that thereunto (and) all the members of it all the promises of God do belong, and are confined; that this church he will save,'* † &c. What! "all the promises of God, to all the members of" the visible church! "This church he will save! and after death raise it up and glorify it at the last day!" Even our author repudiates such a notion ("of all its members;") would the Independent Owen fall into it? Plainly the invisible church is meant, and then both parts of the sentence will agree. "To all its members, all the promises of God do belong and are confined."

Hurrying away with his ill-gotten conclusion—no salvation out of the visible church—to fix, (chap. 2, Part 1,) what it now becomes of vital necessity to know, marks of that church, our author leaves us to trace him back still further, to the place where the defective chapter (chap. 3) should have come in. Section first (chap. 1) gives "definitions" of the word Church. A definition must be either admitted or demonstrated, or be left unused till it is. Now definitions of that word depend for their truth on the question of the visibility and invisibility of the church. What it is, then, whether oversight or plan, that has led Mr. Palmer to interpose twen-

* Barclay, prop. x., p. 273.

† Owen's True Nat. of Gos. Ch., Chap. xi.

‡ Vol. i., p. 40.

§ Vol. i., p. 40.

ty pages and a settlement of vital church principles between his definitions and that question, we are at a loss to know. No order of the subject asks such a postponement, but quite the reverse. Proof as to visibility and invisibility should have been in close connection with the chapter of definitions. In default of this we might at least ask either, (*a*) that the definitions should be so general as to be conceded by all, or (*b*) should be proved in an independent way, or (*c*) should be unused (we mean definitely) till that chapter on "visibility" is reached. Mr. Palmer concedes neither of these.

In the first place, his definitions so far from being general, assume the very doctrine he is afterward to prove. "The applications of this term" (*ἐκκλησία*) "to the Christian society are various: 1. It sometimes means the whole Christian body or society, considered as composed of its vital and essential members, the elect and sanctified children of God, and as distinguished from those who are only externally and temporarily united to Christ. In this sense we may understand the apostle speaking of a 'glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.' And again, 'the general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven.' It is generally allowed that the wicked belong only externally to the church. 2. The church means the whole society of Christians throughout the world, including all who profess their belief in Christ, and are subject to lawful pastors," &c.*

At first glance this might seem like yielding the idea of an invisible church, in the sense we have been contending for; but read again, and a direct assumption of something totally different will be plain. That "glorious church," "the general assembly and church of the first born," is made up not of the pious anywhere, (as we believe,) whether within the pale of an orderly profession, or by untoward circumstance out of it, but of the "vital and essential members" of the visible church; abruptly taking for granted that there are no "vital and essential" Christians out of it; and so no salvation out of the visible church.

The unfairness of this beginning, carrying with it the prepossessing weight that definitions generally bear, would be less, if he would make it good at once, by independent proof, or else not use it till he does. But he violates both these obligations in section 3, by actually using it to

prove itself, as it stands involved in the grand doctrine of that section. If "salvation" were "only in the visible church," of course his idea of the invisible church would be just; it could be only the vital part of the church visible. But, as we have seen, in his main texts to prove that doctrine, he takes his own definition for granted and thus palpably reasons in a circle.

The definition, therefore, passes through that section only to add to its own assumption that of the doctrine which props itself upon it. Both, however, had they the least particle of truth, might yet substantiate themselves in that after chapter on which, after all, definition and doctrine rest together—the chapter "On the Visibility of the Church." How totally do they fail when our author flies the true issue of the question, turns away upon another, quite off the field of argument, and neither meets nor mentions what every modern controversialist must know as the very familiar idea of an invisible church.

Of course, we only say, Mr. Palmer's proposition, "no salvation out of the church (visible,)" has not been proved in his hands; let us see, now, if it may not be disproved in ours. The Bible theory of the church, that we bring forward to this end, will, in its after development, set aside the much longer argument for his other great proposition—that church, exclusively his own (in Britain.)

There are certain conditions of salvation made necessary by the very nature of salvation itself. Or, to tell the same truth in other words, salvation consists in the gift of certain things, the possession of which, therefore, becomes the evidence of salvation. Now God's great gift in the act of saving is holiness; and faith is but one exercise of it; faith and holiness, therefore, are essential conditions of salvation. Their necessity must be absolute, past all possibility of so much as one exception, just as the motions of life are an essential condition of the resurrection of the body, inasmuch as resurrection consists in giving life.

This, that reason might have taught, the Bible seals, in announcing its great religious test: "Without holiness no man shall see God." "He that believeth not shall be damned." "For without faith it is impossible to please Him."

It would seem the part of wisdom with God to fix no other absolute tests than this vital one, lest others should obscure faith by turning the mind away from Christ, or

lessen holiness by dividing the attention of men. Unquestionably, however, we are responsible for none till the Bible tells us we are ; for whether wise or not in God to make any outward change an indispensable term of pardon, we need no better proof that he has not done so, than the negative one that he has not said so. Faith is a natural duty, itself of the essence of salvation ; yet God has taken care to tell us, "He that believeth not shall be damned." Church membership is but a positive duty, not of the essence of salvation : much more would God tell us, if he meant in no case to save without it. Now it is from the total want of one word to that effect, that we deny that union with the visible church can be absolutely necessary to salvation.

The Bible binds us to join the church with no stronger expressions than plain common sense would have led us to anticipate. For what purpose was such an institution as the church established ? To use the power of the social principle, rising high, as it does, above the power of isolated thought and action ; to guard the purity of the truth ; to warm piety by communion with itself ; to secure the benefits of teaching and discipline which especially the New Testament Church so admirably exhibits, and extend these to every corner of the world ; "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of the Christ ;" richly ministering to that faith and holiness, which are essential conditions of salvation.

Judging beforehand, how would God be likely to bind us to these means of grace ? As he does to all others, that is, by simple command. Prayer is of benefit ; therefore He says, "Continue instant in prayer." Reading the Bible is of benefit ; therefore He says, "Search the scriptures." So joining the church is of benefit ; and we should expect precisely the same method to bring us to join it, namely, command.

Accordingly, no diligence can gather from the Bible anything stronger—not one text that looks more like the imposing of an absolute condition than the simple precept, "not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together," &c.* Let any man who doubts it search for one, and so far from success, he will find it hard to add to the text we have just quoted one equally strong. His list even of precepts for the duty will rise very slowly. The mass of preceptive

* Heb. x. 25.

weight will have to be derived from example; the actual institution of the church and its convening on the first day of the week. And when he comes to the question of the church order binding on us, he will find that here there is not even precept express and verbal—none such as was given to Moses,—“See that thou make all things according to the pattern shown thee on the mount,”—but only a model after which our churches should be formed. This even one of the Oxford Tractarians admits—“The injunction to obey strictly is not precisely given to us, as it was in the instance of the Mosaic law:”^{*} and though we by no means adduce this to retract our admission of a precept—a direct precept to join the church, whatever it may be, and a preceptive model, fixing, in all common circumstances, what it shall be, we insist upon it as proof of the hopelessness of finding anything stronger.

Some inconsiderately say, that the command of a holy God is enough to make a duty necessary to salvation. “If ordination is a divine ordinance, it must be necessary; and if it is not how dare we use it? As well might we pretend the sacraments are not necessary to salvation,” &c.† Allow us to ask, Are Christians perfect? If not, may they not much rather sin, through overcoming temptation, against church form, than against spiritual doctrine, or vital godliness? These men do not doubt that souls may die with many mischievous errors in their minds, and many strong lusts upon their hearts, and yet be saved: shall a mistake about mere rule and order damn them?—a mistake dealing with a subject so purely carnal as not to be guarded by the inner voice of the spirit, and with matters so purely technical, as to be beyond the reach of any other voice with the people generally?

Why erect this simple command above others so closely like it, into a vital test? The Bible is a means of grace; so is the Church. Reading the Bible is infinitely more insisted on in either Testament than joining the church. Yet if a man may never read one word of the Bible, and yet be saved by its doctrine, in the mouths of others, who will dare to say that he may not through doubt or difficulty, never join the church, and yet be saved without the blessing of its visible communion.

The claim is kept in many minds from seeming totally

^{*} *Ox. Tracts*, No. 6, p. 42, Am. Ed.

† *Ox. Tracts*, No. 1, p. 11.

absurd by two facts that entangle themselves with it, and make it plausible. One is that the church is so necessary to the salvation of men. Hers are the countries, and hers the ministers, and hers generally the private men and the books by which the truth goes to the perishing. Those born again are born under her shadow. Without her instrumentality, nearer or more remote, perhaps, no one is converted; for the truth that instrumentally does the work, must trace itself back, if it be through a hundred alien hands, at last to hers. Now the proposition "No salvation out of the church," which means simply, no salvation without joining the church, confounds itself with the more plausible, and in a distant sense sound proposition, no salvation except by the church.

And into another truth the error like a parasite plant, strikes its roots still deeper. The duty of joining the church is so clear and solemn, and the sin of refusing, not being one of a moment, but of days and weeks together, has so much time to correct itself, that few men who are saved, are out of the church. Not so few, however, as we should at first imagine. For even though we take no foolish view of what that body is, nor unchurch the soundest piety of the world by drawing its lines as Mr. Palmer bids us, still in any view, who has not seen good men not in it; some, perhaps, from doubt as to the proper church to join, many more from fear as to their being fit for any; still, men with piety as promising as our own, and yet dying, not in the church. They sin; but so do all Christians. They sin persistingly and finally; but so do many; just as many a pious man, through prejudice, may never give a farthing for the salvation of the heathen, and die without ever having stretched out a finger for their relief; though we verily believe the time is at the door when this will be held a far more glaring sin than keeping off our name from the church's roll.

Thus keeping close to the idea of simple precept, and challenging the writers of Mr. Palmer's school to show us something more,* or else to rest satisfied with what it asks, we have made good our denial of the maxim, "No salva-

* We know that the collateral, but still more monstrous claim of the vital necessity of sacraments to salvation would carry this claim with it. A slight change in our argument, too, would make it bear upon either; neither having more to show than mere precept. But we are meeting now, the naked claim of the church. Mr. Palmer does not go off on the other ground, nor need we.

tion out of the church." Proof positive in a case like this grows out of what is negative; for while the nature of the church is alien to such a test, and the silence of God demands none such, it is the part only of impiety to attempt to set it up.

We hasten now to the second and larger part of Mr. Palmer's book, which deals with the question,—What is the true church? The labour that question has exacted, ought long ago to have covered it with suspicion. After the thought of centuries, scarce two men yet agree in the church-marks by which it is to be decided. Long ago it should have been seen that it had no bottom, from the mass of matter that has been gathered upon it; that it was not a labyrinth, but a self-entering path; for thought upon it after most minute and patient labour only returns into itself. The very bulk of Mr. Palmer's volumes; seeing so plainly, as we do, his narrow object, is but a specimen of the demand that the question has ever made. We say abruptly, It is no question. With anything like the preciseness which our author would give it, there is no idea to answer to that after which it asks, viz. the true Church. If we can prove this, it will spare us the detail of our author's, in that case, necessary errors.

The church order of the apostles was a preceptive model, and we are bound as far as circumstances will permit, to copy it. But as an individual man may err from the precepts of God without totally losing His favour, or ceasing to be a Christian, so we should anticipate that a professed branch of Christ's church, which is but an aggregate of individual men, might err without totally losing His favour or ceasing to be a church. If this be so, (and the book before us admits it, when it makes unity of faith a mark as well as unity of worship, and then confesses that a true church has sinned in both*)—then we see not but there must be endless degrees of purity in churches, just as there are in individual Christians, and endless degrees of favour with God, and all measures of regard due to them from men. Possessing our mind with this, the question, What is a true church? strikes us awkwardly. In doctrine and order combined—two of the things that make a church—there are such endless shades of difference in the thousand communions of the world, so many degrees of purity indis-

tinguishably shaded into each other, from the highest orthodoxy down to the lowest heresy, that there seems to be nothing to fix one point in the scale, all above which you must embrace and all below which you must condemn. Truth, in such a case, seems to be a matter of gradation, so that a better use of that phrase true church, if used for what is visible, seems to be to apply it to that perfect model, never realized yet, in the eye of God, and to call all true in proportion as they approach it.

To give a direct answer to the question, what is a true house? would be a very foolish attempt; from a palace to a shed there are such endless grades. Shall the lack of a window or a door, or a wall, or a roof take away the name? Will not the meanest shelter claim it? Is he not the wisest man who dismisses the question in its absolute form—and with some perfect model in his eye, gives only a relative opinion. He may say what is not a true house: a fence is not, or the shelter of a tree. And so we may say, a band of Mussulmans is not a church; nor the disciples of damning heresy, nor a club of infidels. But any thing like one narrow line, in either case, separating the false from the true, can be nothing but a figment.

We know this question has been agitated in our own church. No matter; it is a question without a bottom. Our divines have wearied themselves to know whether the papacy is a true church; or the Nestorian or Armenian bodies. One would think the lack of great attributes to direct their search, and of great ends to be answered by it, would long since have started their misgivings.

If our own illustration be thrown back upon us, there are all degrees of obedience possible in a man, yet is it not right to ask, Is he a true Christian? We answer, That is *not* our illustration; we spoke only of believers. There are not, in the sense supposed, all degrees of possible obedience in any man; but a sudden change to totally different obedience when he becomes a Christian. There is a great line marked by a great change in this case, but none such in the other; and the objection happily introduces what shall close our argument:

If there be any great mark to distinguish between two different measures of obedience on the part of a professed church, then we freely grant the question is a valid one.

This mark may be either of two kinds. (1.) An outward exigency; or (2.) An inward peculiarity. We can

well conceive the question, What is a true house? to be a sensible one (1.) if a tax is to be laid on houses; or (2.) if there were some great attribute in a house fixed by its very building that would decide the name. But there is nothing like these to break the gradual chain of differences in the church.

1. No outward exigency; not on the part of God; for what need has He to draw a clear line, as he does between the righteous and the wicked at the last day, and set outward churches, some on his right hand and the rest on his left? Not the question of salvation or no salvation; pardon possible and frequent in some, but no pardon in any other; for we have seen that not to be the case. Nor the question of high favour, or little favour; God doing much for some churches, then a long interval between, and scarcely anything for all the rest; Where is the proof of that? The whole spirit of the Bible (and all reason, till evidence of something else is given) warrants us to believe that just as God's favour toward a single church grows and wanes in all degrees as the tide of her errors ebbs and flows, so it stands in all degrees toward different churches, in proportion to their purity. Draw the line where He might, the lowest above and the highest below would be too near for any sole, grand, and decisive test.

Nor on the part of man.

Yes, many will say; here your position fails. Does not that one thing—Fellowship—constitute such an exigency? A call arises for some act of communion with a neighbouring body. Does not that at once create a question, what is a true church? It is the very exigency—and a practical one it will be said, that has put the question in the mouths of our divines.

In reply suffer us to ask, What is communion? Interchange of thought and feeling between souls that see marks of piety in each other, is not meant; that may be indulged at will across any church lines.

What is communion? Visibly carried on, it may be summed up in three acts. Interchange of membership, accrediting of baptisms, interchange of ministers. Now we ask no better evidence that the exigency of this communion does not ask a precise unchurching line, than the fact that most generally these acts if wisely deliberated, cannot go together. In Mr. Palmer's church they may in consequence of his error, and in the Romish church they

do, but the evidence here is vitiated by its dependance on the very doctrine in debate. Among all genuine protestants these acts are separated. We admit baptisms where we would not members, and members where we would not ministers. Nay, toward the same church often we judge differently of the same act. We take a church certificate from one man where we would examine another; though both out of one communion. From the misgiving of parents we baptize in one case and let a baptism of kindred purity stand good in another; labouring only to bring out the meaning of the ordinance—"a seal of the righteousness which is by faith."

So of ministers; from the same bench we would open our pulpits eagerly to one, and silence, if we could, his neighbour. To that popish priest who some months ago denounced his bishop for duping the peasantry of Prussia, with "the coat in which our Lord was crucified," would he but carry the same spirit into the sacred desk, we would far rather trust our people than to many a protestant divine. The fact is, we judge by cases, not by churches. The church is but one *datum* in the judgment. In every communion certain men stand out from the rest, and demand a treatment of their own. Who would shut his pulpit against a cowl or cassock, if a spirit like Thomas a Kempis lived and breathed beneath them? Who would rebel for the lack of sealing ordinances, if one with the light and the soul of John Joseph Gurney should visit him? We need no line; nor can have any; for, as might have been foreseen from the fact that error like the frogs of Egypt respects neither gate nor wall, but climbs everywhere, and that in all degrees, different countries and different schools, and different men, and different acts of the same church call for endlessly different decisions.

2. If any man still demurs, let him go to the root of the matter and tell us what he means by a true church, showing some inward peculiarity that shall throw meaning into the question. Not a true church, as one sound and perfect; for no man knows any such but his own small communion; and some have discernment enough to see error even there. At least such is not Mr. Palmer's true church.*

Not that church out of which none are saved; for it has been shown that there is no such, except that which is invisible.

* Chap. v. secs. 3, and 4.

Not the church in which some are saved. This turns the idea in our minds; but is the same at bottom as the last. By this rule we must make the church embrace every body of men banded for religious worship; for even in the modern fanatical societies of Irvingites, or Shakers, or Mormons, there may be some deluded Christians.

Not the church in which there is truth enough to save; for no mortal can tell what that church is. Creeds that seem to us damning, and which are, if intelligently followed out, yet are robbed of their mischief often by the ignorance of those who live under them. They profess one creed with their lips, but feel a better in their hearts. We hold Arminianism to be damning error, if a mind will force it on to all it means, and hold fast to each link in the chain that logically connects with it. We are sure its salient points from the line of orthodoxy are all toward Atheism; and yet thousands of pious men, not knowing what spirit they are of; are proud to call themselves Arminians.

Conviction like this makes us wary in condemning any sect, lest, though it have no truth in its books, it may have much in the hearts of its people. Not that we would tie a weight about the neck of the church by fellowship with darkest heresies; for "What communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial; or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?" but that after many had been cut off as past all question no churches, many would remain, so doubtful and mongrel in their character, as that we should not dare to draw the line either above or below them.

As to Mr. Palmer's marks, if they be thrown up to us as meeting our call for some definite idea of the only true church, we dismiss the four on the sanction of a single maxim: Marks make no idea definite, if they are not definite themselves. What are his marks? He takes a sentence of the Constantinopolitan creed for them: "The One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church."

1. The Church is One. Perfectly one? If so we grant this mark might answer. But instead of that he scarcely utters the word, Unity, before he enters upon the studied argument of pages to show how far unity of worship may be interrupted, and unity of faith departed from, and yet the integrity of the test remain. Is this definite? any more so than a point chosen at random in any sliding scale?

2. The Church is Holy. Perfectly holy? If so, then

no matter for the last ; this mark is as good as hundreds. But what precision does our author leave it ; when he takes care to say how low sanctity may sink, how many sins and how many sinners may enter, and still the test not turn against him? Is this definite?

3. The Church is Catholic. How? Does it embrace all persons? No. Dissent from it is the burden of our author's complaint. Has it entered all countries? No. There is soil where the foot of a minister never trod ; Catholicity, then, absurdly as it may sound, is a mere matter of degree. Will it do as a test? The fact is, any good attribute would stand as well. No wonder there has been room for any churchman to choose his own list of marks, for Charity, or Growth, or a Missionary Spirit, no more susceptible of indefinite degrees, would be no less of marking differences. But then,

4. The Church is Apostolical. Perfectly so? Yes, we are told, it traces unbroken descent from the Apostles. Then, here, at last, is a mark—a mark, having all that available precision which what it has to do demands ; for we have said that if any attribute of a church is perfect, there is something definite to fence it off from every other. A train of ordinations, without a flaw, back to the Apostles, with no act forgotten that makes them valid, could it be proved of one set of churches and disproved of the rest, might array the whole of Christendom on the two sides of a line drawn with mathematical distinctness. If the mind did not grow callous under the vagaries of error, it would be hard to treat the flattering success of this mark more respectfully than to laugh at it. The others of the four—those cardinal attributes of the Church of God, her Union in doctrine and practice, her Holiness, her Extension among men, have failed. This poor, carnal, by contrast trifling thing, Succession, saves, at the last moment, the integrity of the plan, and is available at once to fix the grand landmarks of Christ's kingdom in the world. No wonder a sense of so good a service should not be wholly wanting ; and that the phrase, Apostolical Succession, should have so far displaced all the other marks of the church in the mouths and in the writings of the whole school.

The rite of ordination is a precautionary act to keep the ministry from being intruded on by unworthy men ; and as such it was the subject of a command on the part of God, binding it as a duty upon the church in all ages. It will be

curious to see how it has escaped from the list of simple duties, and been erected into a test.

We were broken off from treating it as we had done the other three, by meeting the assertion not made with them, that it had been perfectly fulfilled; that is, that for near twenty centuries, certain churches, though deficient in all other duties, were absolutely perfect in this, never missing an act in a thousand ordinations. Now, why this assertion? Simply because falsehood may be better concealed than in the other cases. Unity, and sanctity, and catholicity, are things of the present—their imperfection palpable before our eyes. Apostolicity has to do with the past, resting on that most debatable of all things, human testimony; so that the thousand flaws that we detect in it have time and room to mystify themselves by argument. Those are broad and noble qualities: this is a narrow row of facts. Those, therefore, are measured by conscience and common sense: this by scraps of history, which a mere No, from either party, may challenge or contradict.

Happily, however, the very thing that mystifies the fact, nullifies the mark. A mark is of value only as it can be known. Now if unbroken succession were a reality in any church, how possibly could we know it? Macauley has devoted one of his strong passages* to show the absurdity of the whole idea from the immense combination of right acts, in this sinning, careless world, necessary to realise it. Perhaps, however, one sentence should be added to his reasoning. His opponents have no doubt replied, No matter if the combination must mount up to myriads of acts, God, who promises to be with his church, might secure them all. And no doubt he might; but then the mark, not the fact, is the thing in requisition. Of what use to secure the fact, if a second miracle must be wrought to make it known? What evidence have we that God has secured the line? And, if he has, then still the mark? What evidence have we that he has done so in this church or the other, especially as there is no church on earth against which special charges at least are not brought from history, that it has many times broken its succession?

We go to the root of the matter, however, when we ask, What proof have we that God intended any such test, or that he to whom alone we are responsible, calls that no

* *Edinb. Review*, No. cxxxix. (Apr. 1839,) page (*Lewer's Am. Ed.*) 139.

church, that has lost one link in its chain of orders? Let Mr. Palmer show us anything but precept in the premises. The Holy Spirit says, "Let there be no divisions among you;"* yet our author labours to show to what degree we may be divided and still not be cast off. We are bid "All to speak the same things;"* yet speaking different things, as he confesses, does not always unchurch us. "A bishop must be blameless;"† "The temple of God is holy;"‡ yet lack of holiness does not, we are rightly told, of necessity, invalidate either the office or the church. The church must be catholic, "going into all the world and preaching the gospel to every creature;"§ she is not catholic, and yet she is a church. Precisely so the church must be apostolical: "The things that thou has heard of me, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."|| It is her duty to allow no unnecessary break in her succession, and if she perceive any, to go back, if she can, and restore continuity and order. Yet (why not precisely as in the other three cases?) she may fail in this to some extent and still not cease to be a church.

If it be said No, because right orders constitute a church—"No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron;"¶ we deny the fact, and claim the quotation. Passing by the principle, that the text is nothing more than strong precept, with no ban against the church that should sin by limited departures from it, there is a phrase in it we wish to use—"called of God." Imposition of hands by other clergy makes but a small part of the "call of God;" and that he will pass over deep corruptions of creed, and strange follies of conduct, and excommunicate for lack of this, we dare not believe.

Let us instance a case. Here is a sect noted for the marks it bears of peculiar piety, seeming to claim the witness of that voice from heaven—"What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common."** The worth of its ministry has been sealed by unnumbered conversions, seeming to bring upon its enemies the rebuke drawn down by those words of John—"Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and we forbade him, because he followeth not us."†† Its clergy accompany this success with the profession of an inward call from God. They have that part of an outward

* 1 Cor. i. 10.

† 1 Tim. iii. 2.

‡ 1 Cor. iii. 17.

§ Mark xvi. 15.

¶ 2 Tim. ii. 2.

|| Heb. v. 4.

** Acts x. 15.

†† Mark ix. 38.

call that Matthias had in election by the rest of their communion; also a belief that they have a regular call by rightful ordination, and transmitted, in an order they believe scriptural, from hand to hand. The sect lives and grows, rich in piety and diligent in doing good. Now though we knew a wide chasm in its line, we dare not refuse that sect the right-hand of fellowship; and we charge it upon the consciences of Mr. Palmer and his brethren, as they would themselves shun the brand of peace-breakers and schismatics, to show us one word of God in the Bible, as certainly there is none in their books upon our table, that casts out such a society as no church of Jesus Christ.

Having shown that the whole ground over which our author seeks a footing for his argument is hollow, and that there is really no such chance for unchurching as he imagines, we should like to turn the tables, and show, that, if there were such a chance, and it were regulated at all by the question of most wrong or right, his own church would be one of the first to fall by it. Nor would we ask any better marks on which to base the judgment than these four of his, with which the reader is by this time quite familiar. It has been from no doubt of their value, when used relatively, and no desire to shrink from them, when used upon ourselves, but only from logical necessity, that we have proved that the whole principle of Mr. Palmer's use of them is wrong. We are half sorry that our work is over; for though we stand honestly to our position, and dare not unchurch this English prelacy, though it unchurches us, still we should like to show again, as we have often done, how low she stands on the list of churches; for that by all her own marks, in unity, she is more schismatic; in sanctity, more stained; in catholicity, more narrow; in apostolicity, more changed, than the mass of those churches, whom, by the mouths of such men as this, she excommunicates.

John P. ...

ART. III.—*Histoire de la Chute des Jésuites, Au xviii. Siècle (1750-1782.)* Par le Cte Alexis De Saint Priest, Pair De France. Paris, 1844.

JESUITISM forms the theme of one of the most remarkable chapters of modern history. Nearly contemporaneous with