

petual application and ever present efficacy? That the word "Church" does not often occur signifies little. It is the thing, not the name, with which we are dealing. When the name does fall from the lips of our Lord it is surely with tremendous emphasis, for it is precisely in such passages that we perceive most clearly a transfer of His own power to a visible society in the world. Let any one consult on this point St. Matthew xvi: 18-19, together with xviii: 17-18.

The writer quoted is unfortunate in his reference to Apostles in proof of his position. Not to enlarge upon the fact that they are everywhere represented as engaged in founding a visible organization, not simply disseminating abstract principles, we should think it would be hard to discover in mediæval or modern writers any greater exaltation of "the Church" than that which is to be found in St. Paul's Epistles. First, take such expressions as these: "The Church of God—them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints," "the Church of our God," "The Church of the Thesalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ." But more than all these profound utterances: (God) "hath 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;" (Ye) "are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone;" "Unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen;" "Husbands love your wives, even as 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." The Church is never separated from Christ as modern thought would separate them; as if, while He is Divine, the Church is merely a convenient invention of men; but, by virtue of the Incarnation, Christ and the Church are one. As Hooker says: "His Church He frameth out of the very flesh, the very wounded and bleeding side of the Son of Man."

But it is one of the tricks of writers of this stamp to jumble together matters which should be separately considered and to draw general conclusions without discrimination. Thus, in the words we have quoted, the Church, the ministry, the discipline and the customs or "ways" are mingled without distinction, and it is said of them all that "nobody knows" anything definite about them. This we say is in opposition to the plain facts of the case. Of the Church, the ministry and the fundamental institutions of Christianity we know a great deal both from the New Testament and early Christian writers. Many of these facts are admitted by scholars of various denominations as well as by rationalists of no denomination. We suppose, for instance, that no one who accepts the New Testament writings as even substantially authentic has any doubt that the Apostles governed the primitive Church with supreme authority; that as time went on they delegated their authority to certain trained associates, as Timothy, Titus, and James of Jerusalem; that they ordained in every local Church presbyters or overseers and deacons. What is involved in obscurity is the period of transition, during which the Apostolic authority of government became localized in the bishops whom history reveals to us in full possession of it within ten years of St. John's death. Since this was a period which followed the age of the New Testament it is not surprising that it finds no record there. What is certain, however, is that the transition referred to was effected with such authority that no question was raised about it, and for fifteen centuries there was never a doubt that the Church of God existed under a

visible form impressed upon it by its founders under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

As to "ways," as, for instance, the ceremonies of Baptism, and of the Holy Eucharist, it may be true that the New Testament supplies us with few particulars. It is not to be expected that it should do more. Those institutions had been long in existence before a word of the New Testament was written. We may say, however, that it is quite certain that there were no "chairs in the upper room in which the Church began." But it does not follow that a believer in the Catholic Church is left at liberty to assume that Romanist, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Baptist, who arrive at opposite conclusions "by excellent arguments out of the Scriptures," are all equally right or equally wrong; that is to say, that these institutions are matters of complete indifference since it passes the wit of man to arrive at any sure conclusion about them. If a man believes in "the Holy Catholic Church," that primary conception serves as a guide in these other matters. As they are institutions of the Church, he will necessarily assume that the Church knew what they signified and how to fulfil them, and he will find overwhelming evidence of their character in the virtual identity which they have maintained among all nations and in all ages. The reasoning is of the same character as that which would be applied to the institutions of Masonry or any other world-wide society. Of course Protestantism will not accept this reasoning because it rejects the idea of a Catholic Church and involves the assumption that God allowed the formation of a spurious institution immediately after the days of the Apostles, so that the world remained in darkness until the Reformation. But it is a serious breakdown for Protestantism, if, after requiring us to reject the Church and its testimony, and confine ourselves to the "Bible and Bible only," it then concludes that from that source we can know nothing of the "old way."—*The Living Church*.

#### ORGANIC VS. VITAL UNION.

(*The Living Church*.)

Dr. McKnight, in our issue of Aug. 12th, has laid down a proposition which cannot be gainsaid, when he says that no formal union of Christians, and no organic union, is worth anything without vital union. In this only can true unity consist.

We have been accustomed to insist upon organic unity, and it is probable that many who use that expression assume that vital unity is included in it. But it is evident that there are those also, who, looking too much at the outside of things, are inclined to favor the idea that the union which is to be aimed at can be effected by imparting a valid ordination through the Apostolic Episcopate to the ministers of such Protestant denominations as are willing to accept it, leaving them in all other respects just as they are. Now we do not deceive ourselves so far as to believe that any Christian sect will put itself in such a position. Nevertheless, as any theory or ideal which comes to be widely held tends to affect our own action, and shape canonical and even constitutional legislation, it is well to examine the bearing of such a theory upon the ends proposed.

In the first place, then, in order to accomplish real and vital union, it is necessary that there should be unity of faith as well as external Apostolic descent, and this is not to be attained by acceptance merely of the letter of the Catholic Creeds. The creeds must be accepted in the meaning which they have borne in the Church through all Christian ages, and as they have in various articles been specifically drawn out and fortified by the action of the great ecumenical councils. It is certain that the bishops at the

last Lambeth Conference, when they followed our own bishops in saying that the two creeds contain "a sufficient statement" of the Christian Faith, had no idea of repudiating the formal utterances of the two previous conferences. Those utterances cover satisfactorily the whole Catholic position relative to the Faith and form a part of the literature of this subject absolutely essential to any one who desires to know where the Anglican Church stands.

It is worth while to remind ourselves that the possession of the Episcopate by extraneous bodies, separated from the atmosphere and traditions of the Catholic Church, has not in the past secured unity of doctrine, and it is little short of absurdity to suppose that it will do so in the future. There are in the east two very ancient bodies, both in possession of an undoubted episcopal succession, but separated from the Orthodox Church by a profound gulf. These hold the Nestorian and the Monophysite heresies. As these heresies radically affect the doctrine of the Incarnation, it is impossible that there can be any compromise. Unity is out of the question until these heresies are repudiated. Yet both these separated bodies, we believe, accept the letter of the Nicene Creed in common with the ancient Eastern Church.

Again, it must be remembered that Orders are bestowed for definite purposes, and if there is no idea of using them for those purposes, it is something very like sacrilege to confer them at all. A man is ordained to the priesthood, for example, that he may be enabled to fulfil certain functions which the Church intends should be fulfilled, in the sense in which she has received them, and with the methods and surroundings which she has employed from the beginning or which experience has taught her to require in order to guard these functions in their integrity. The purpose of ordination is not fulfilled by the practice of observances other than those which come within the scope of the Church's intention, or which, while resembling her rites and possibly called by the same name, are a different significance. If, for instance, a rite is observed which does not in its meaning, its manner, or its adjuncts rise above the plane of a love-feast, a token of brotherly amity in memory of the Atonement, no ordination, however unimpeachable its validity, can convert such a rite into a sacrament of the Catholic Church. It may be edifying and of spiritual efficacy in its own way and along its own lines, but it is not the Holy Communion.

Another purpose of ordination is to bring the recipient under authority within the lines and limitations of the Catholic Church. He is not ordained as a free-lance, to preach or teach what may seem to him good, or to conduct the worship of Almighty God according to his own sweet will, and administer the Sacraments after his own judgement. In the very act of ordination he is brought into corporate relations and under obedience in those things which are connected with the ministry. On the other hand it would be equally monstrous in ordination to consign the newly-made priest to an organization or an authority over which the Church has no control, which does not own allegiance to her laws.

There is in all this a curious instance of the workings of an *opus operatum* theory of the ministry. A valid ordination is assumed to convey some power which will enable its possessor, without any of the restrictions or safeguards, guidance or helps with which the Church has always surrounded her ministry, to impart some kind of new and vital force to things outside her borders. It is as if a certain wheel or spring admirably fulfilling its purpose as a part of some delicate machinery, were supposed capable of going on with its work when detached from the mechanism of which it formed a part, or, to use St. Paul's simile of the body and its members, as if a member could fulfill its proper function when severed from the body of which it was a natural part.