

whatever cost, insist on the rule that only the children of communicants shall be admitted to the baptismal rite. The subject requires study and discussion, and might with propriety be made a topic of inter-denominational conference, with a view to agree on principles, and induce a greater uniformity of practice than exists at present in the Protestant Church.

Yet another evil attending the restriction of Church-membership to communicants is this, that it contracts the sympathies and charities of the Church. It has always been the wont of the Christian Church to contribute alms with prayers for the benefit of the poor, the sick, and the infirm through age. This is apart from such general charities as are given by individuals or societies, and not by the Church in her proper capacity. Church alms are undoubtedly for the relief of Church members in poverty or distress; but it is surely an error to confine the benefaction to communicants only. Every one who has had much knowledge of the Protestant poor in the cities and towns of Canada knows how various are the causes which have hindered them from close fellowship with the Church; and to insist on that fellowship to the extent of actual participation of the Lord's Supper, as a condition of charitable relief in time of need, has the inevitable effect of leading the poor into temptation, inducing among the unprincipled a hypocritical profession, while some of the most honest and industrious are debarred from all Church sympathy and help. There are, we confess, great dangers on the other side, but the risk of erring in exuberance is better than the risk of an undue exclusiveness.

"The quality of mercy is not strain'd;
It droppeth, as the gentle rain from Heaven,
Upon the place beneath."

What we have written may surprise and displease those whose ecclesiastical theory contemplates Churches as companies or societies of adult persons, who have 'got religion,' 'professed religion,' and been publicly admitted to communion; but we have never discovered that theory in Scripture, or received it from our fathers. We think of the Church as the flock of God, including lambs as well as sheep. We recognise the membership of the young from the date of their baptism. And further, we suppose that there are adults who have not yet advanced to the highest Christian privileges, who ought not to be disowned or treated as without the Church altogether. In fact there is need of care, lest in our protestation against the ecclesiastical as well as doctrinal heresies of Rome, we be content to become mere Protestants, and omit what is just as necessary, to be Catholics also. We leave great advantages on the side of the Church of Rome, if we cannot oppose a true Catholicism to hers, which is false. We must not fail to present the large Catholic aspects, the charitable, forbearing, motherly character of the Visible Church of Christ. While she receives only her pious members, her 'visible saints,' to the sealing ordinances of the House of God, she must keep her extended arms round all her children who do not apostatise, or do anything worthy of solemn excision.