

We have great pleasure in copying from the Missionary, the following well merited eulogium upon the production of a reverend divine in the sister church in the United States, whom we are proud to reckon among the number of our personal friends. Long may he be spared as a light and an ornament to the church at large.—Ed. C. C.

THE REV. DR. JARVIS' SERMON.

We offer no apology for the space which is occupied by this masterly discourse. Were our pages larger we should be glad to put our readers in possession of the whole. We present them with the opening and concluding portions. The intervening paragraphs are occupied in inquiring by what calamity the progress of the Church was arrested; "and why, for more than twelve centuries, the light of the Gospel has been in some parts extinguished, and in others burning dimly, while the attempts to carry it into the regions of utter darkness have been so unsuccessful." The inquiry, exhibiting the widest range of learning, under the influence of the soundest judgment, is most interesting and instructive, and well illustrates and clearly establishes the sentiment of the sermon—"Christian unity necessary for the conversion of the world." We congratulated the Church on the return of Dr. Jarvis to our shores, after an absence of many years. We may point with pleasure and pride to this sermon as evidence that our congratulation was not without reason. For extent of information, for clearness in presenting and minding in conducting the argument, for cogency of reasoning and beauty of style, in a word, for the complete establishment of the point which it proposes, it would have done honour to the Church in any age. We rejoice to know that such a "minister of the New Testament" is among us. We rejoice to know that already rich fruits of his industry are in preparation for our instruction and enjoyment. In the composition of the present discourse, a mass of notes that would fill a volume has also been prepared, illustrative of some of the most interesting topics of ecclesiastical history, which will soon, we trust, be given to the world. Shall we be thought presumptuous, if we express the hope that these stores of learning, this patient inquiry, this clearness and comprehension of view, this soundness of judgment, this christian candour and charity, will be applied to the work which most of all is wanted, a history of the Church. We are informed that Dr. Jarvis has accepted the Rectorship of the Church at Middletown, once the scene of his father's pastoral labours, the venerable Bishop of Connecticut. Let us hope that in that delightful retreat he will collect around his noble library, and devote himself to this great work. He can do no greater service to the truth. There is no man among us that can do it so well as he. If there needed evidence, it is afforded in this sermon, the first fruits, we confidently hope, of a golden harvest for the Church.

UNITY OF THE CHURCH.

A Sermon by the Rev. Dr. Jarvis, of Washington College, Hartford.

The four great characteristics of that unity which our Saviour requires as necessary for the conversion of the world, are summed up in the second chapter of the Acts: "They that gladly received the word were baptized; and they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."

The first characteristic in stedfastness in the apostolic doctrine.

St. Paul, in his Epistles to Timothy, requires of us that we "take heed to the doctrine," and to "hold fast the form of sound words;" and one of the latest inspired writers speaks of contending earnestly for the faith, once delivered to the saints. It is one faith; and is supposed to be as much known as fully recognized by Christians, as are "one Lord, one baptism."

The second characteristic includes an adherence to the ministers of apostolic succession.—Christians are required to have communion, or fellowship, with

the Father, with the Son, with the Holy Ghost; with the Apostles, as the sources of all ministerial authority. There is also the communion or fellowship of the prosperous with the afflicted; of those parts of the Church which are rich in the means of grace, the capacities of knowledge, and the ability to give, with those which are perishing for lack of vision. In a word, fellowship is that pervading and animating spirit which constitutes the communion of saints in the one holy Catholic and apostolic Church, so that "whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it."

The third and fourth characteristics need no comment. The former, is the constant and frequent reception together of the holy communion, called in the New Testament, the breaking of bread; the latter is the uniting together, at stated times and seasons, in the several acts of public worship. At every period of time, therefore, Christians are required to form one body, by continuing stedfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayer.

Now, if we examine by this rule the state of the primitive Church, we shall find that all these characteristics of unity were preserved till about the middle of the fifth century.

It is true that there were heresies even in the apostolic age. "They went out from us," says St. John, "but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us." But, in comparison with the great body of Christians, these were few and inconsiderable. They proceeded, not from any mistaken views of divine truth, but from the wild reveries of a deceitful philosophy. Their very extravagance prevented any influence over sober sense, and ardent piety. They were the effervescence of human corruption, rising like bubbles to the surface, bursting there one after another, and each in its turn disappearing forever.

Even the most formidable of all departures from the apostolic doctrine, I mean the Arian and Macedonian heresies, the one denying the divinity of the Son, the other, the personality of the Holy Ghost; even these, violent and extended as they were for a season, had no permanent existence or influence.—The penumbral varieties with which the Sun of Righteousness is obscured, may afford a grateful shelter to those who hate his beams, but even when darkest they are transitory. A deep sense of the enormity of sin, of the holiness of God, of the weakness of man, will always lead to the exaltation of the Saviour. The joy shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, and the light which the Divine Spirit sheds over the word of God, when it is read with an humble and teachable frame of mind, will produce the conviction that He is our divine teacher and comforter. On these points, therefore, the great body of professing christians always have been, and always will be, orthodox. The Nicene Creed, confirmed by the Council of Constantinople, and professed by those of Ephesus and Chalcedon, was unanimously admitted in every part of the christian church, with the exception of one word, which, in the bitterness of controversy, the Eastern, afterwards accused the Western church of surreptitiously introducing.

The apostolic ministry, consisting of the three orders of bishops, priests, and deacons, existed everywhere; and all christians, so far from thinking of separating themselves from their fellowship, would have considered such a separation as the greatest of earthly evils. "A Christian," to use the words of Bishop Horne, "furnished with proper credentials from his bishop, might travel through the world from east to west, and from north to south, and be received to communion with his brethren in any part of the globe then known."

The liturgies and formularies in general use, bore so remarkable an affinity as to induce the belief that they could be traced even to the apostolic age.

I repeat it, therefore, that the christian world, or Catholic Church, in the proper sense of that much abused term, agreed in all the essentials of christian unity, until about the middle of the fifth century.

EARLY SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY.

During this period of unity, the progress made by the christian faith is, perhaps, the most surprising

fact recorded in history. At the time of our Saviour's birth, the decree had gone forth that all the world should be taxed. By the word rendered in our translation "the world," was meant the Roman empire. Its division at that time was into kingdoms, provinces, and free cities or colonies. In all these divisions, the chief cities were called metropolitan; and even a cursory inspection of the subject will show that when the Apostles obeyed the command to "go into all the world," their first object was to plant a Church in every one of these metropolitan cities. As an illustration of this remark it may be observed, that St. John has mentioned the seven cities of Asia in the order and dignity of their civil geography. And the fact is undeniable, that nearly all the colonial and free cities of the empire had Churches during the apostolic age. If we may credit the most ancient historians, the Apostles went even beyond the bounds of the Roman empire. Not only was the Church extended through Asia Minor, Syria, Mesopotamia, Egypt, the principal islands of the Mediterranean, Greece, Thrace, Illyricum, and Italy, but perhaps to Spain and the British Islands on the West, to Scythia on the North, and Persia and India within the Ganges on the East. "He put on wings," says the eloquent Chrysostom, speaking of Paul the Apostle, "and traversed every land which the sun surveyed; not simply travelling through it, but rooting up the thorns of wickedness and sowing the seed of religion, expelling error and introducing truth." If this be hyperbolical with regard to the labours of St. Paul, it is good testimony as to the extent of the church in the fourth century. Certainly by the middle of the fifth, the time I have mentioned, in addition to the countries already enumerated, may be named Gaul and Germany in Europe, Ethiopia, Nubia, Lybia, Mauritania, and indeed all that was known of Africa, Arabia, the greater and the lesser Armenia, the regions beyond the Caspian and the Euxine, and possibly even China itself.

From the letter of Constantine to the King of Persia, preserved by Eusebius, it is evident that there must have been an immense number of christians in that kingdom. For he speaks of the finest provinces as filled with christians; and Sozomen mentions that Adiabene, the chief province, was almost entirely christianized. The letter of the Emperor, so far from aiding the christians, excited political jealousies in the breast of the Persian monarch. In 330, a severe persecution began, which lasted forty-three or forty-four years, and terminated only with the death of Sapor. The very circumstances of this persecution show that the Persian church, on account of its supposed connexion with the religion of the empire, was formidable for its numbers. Sozomen expressly says that Sapor forbade the fire-worshippers to exercise their fury upon common christians. They were to select only the bishops, priests, deacons, and other persons consecrated to the service of the church. He says it would be difficult to tell how many suffered martyrdom, but that the men and women, whose names were known, amounted to sixteen thousand. From these premises we may fairly infer that the church in Persia was extremely flourishing; and from the review of all that has been said, the assertion will not, I trust, be deemed hazardous, that the church was in fact more extensive at the middle of the fifth century, than it ever has been since.

ENGLAND AND AMERICA TO EVANGELIZE THE WORLD.

Thirty-nine years after the downfall of Constantinople, Columbus gave a new world to Leon and Castile. The Pope who began to reign the same year, with that prodigal generosity which gives what is not its own, divided this new world between Spain and Portugal, forbidding all other nations to intermeddle with their property.

Had this decree been obeyed, how different would have been our lot, and how changed the history of the world!

But a nation of whom the Pope, when he drew his line, little thought, was rising into a mighty maritime power, and within forty-two years released itself from papal dominion. Since that time, while Spain and Portugal have sunk into secondary and unimportant

Carried to page 150.