

by one called will-worship, carved all over with figures of the Virgin and angels, saints and relics. The name of the original spring was the first commandment, but all the other nine hang by it. The great blade had been loose for a long time, and at last it fell into the dust. It was the Word of God. Tradition took its place. Rome was a new knife, the work of which in the world seemed to be the wounding of God's saints and severing every tie between earth and heaven. Yet she pretended to be the same that God had sent into the world to cut the bonds of the captive and Satan's galling yoke. The reformers, Luther and Zwingli, Calvin and Knox, with Wickliffe, and those before them, found the old pieces of imperishable truth that Rome had rejected, fastened them firmly together as they had been in the days of old, and showed to the world the same knife that had done God's work in early ages. It is the same knife. If a beggar in the street had found it, still would it be the same. In every case, however, it was priests of Rome that found it, when the light became brighter and clearer; the wisest and most learned among Rome's best priests were those who learned that the knife they had carried so long was a blunt instrument for good, though sharp as a razor for evil, and longed to hold in their hands one that should do the work of God in severing the soul from earth and sin, that it might be free for a heavenward flight. By that work, and not by any foolish theories of weak minds, let the personal identity of the Church of Christ be tested.

When the blessed Reformation came, it was in the overwhelming majority of cases a Presbyterian, or, in other words, a Bible Reformation. The Latin nations refused alike Episcopal Calvinism and Lutheranism. The Church of France, that in Beza's time counted 2150 congregations, some of which had 7,000 communicants and five ministers, was Presbyterian. So was that of the French Netherlands. The persecuted remnant of the Waldensian Alps adopted in full, as for ages they had in part, Presbyterian faith and polity, and the other short-lived Churches of Italy and Spain were of the same heart and mind. The Presbyterianism of French Switzerland I need not dwell upon. The Germanic nations were divided between the Reformed or Presbyterian and the Lutheran Confessions. Holland, with its many thousand martyrs, whose numbers throw St. Bartholomew even into the shade; the Palatinate of the Rhine, stained with the blood of rival hosts that battled for religious liberty and against it; Brandenburg, the parent state of Prussia's great empire, (for the royal house of Prussia has ever been of our faith); Hesse, Anhalt, Lippe, Bremen, and other states and towns adopted the principles of Presbyterianism, which Zwingli had planted in German Switzerland. The Slaves in Poland, Bohemia, Moravia, and neighboring countries were Presbyterians wherever Protestantism found its way among them, and only the German settlers in these lands retained their Lutheran creed. At one time not one Catholic could be found in a hundred of the population of Bohemia, now, alas, it is the other way. And the Magyars, that proud and gallant race of Hungary, who still boast a Presbyterian Church with two million adherents, might but for adverse circumstances have claimed the first rank in Pan-Presbyterian Councils to-day.

The recent Council has striven to gather up the fragments, fragments of what once were great and flourishing Churches. Does any one ask why the world is not so Presbyterian as once it was—ask where the Churches of the Reformation are now to be found? Where is the blood of many martyrs? Let the Inquisition in Spain and the Netherlands tell their dread secrets. Let St. Bartholomew, the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and, long before, the Albigensian Crusade, lift up their gory heads and answer; and in minor tones let Scotland's killing time and England's black Bartholomew speak their mournful tale. Matthew Rhodani, a Hungarian Popish bishop, shall tell us what Rome thought of Presbyterians because they held the doctrine of Augustine and the polity of Jerome. "I tell you," he says, "that an ox or an ass, the creeping things and the fish in the sea, yea, even the devil himself, would sooner be taken out of the abyss and attain eternal life than a Calvinist. I know how dangerous the Calvinistic doctrine is. Robbers, Calvinists and Turks I will not tolerate." Small wonder that Presbyterians should by the spokesman of an apostate Church be placed between robbers and Turks, when by a similarly apostate Church of old their Lord and Master was crucified between two thieves.

Nec tamen consumebatur—it is not yet consumed.

Phoenix-like, it raises its head again where once it was done to the death; in England, where acts of uniformity took away its Presbyteries and Synods and drove its members, on the one hand, to evangelical episcopacy and independency, and on the other, to Unitarianism; in Spain, where its ashes lie around long-forgotten stakes; in Italy, under the very shadow of that Vatican whose temporal power, now by God's grace gone I trust forever, strangled it almost at the very birth. Our Presbyterian principles have not had fair play in the past, nor have they yet. When God breaks every yoke and sends the times of refreshing to the dry and parched lands scorched by the hot breath of persecuting days, we may look for a visible realization of the ideal, and a world-wide home for the world-wide heart of our Presbyterianism. Then looking round upon a world that accepts and honors the truth for which our fathers lived, suffered and died, we may say without misgiving or divided affection, "I believe in the holy catholic Church." But in order to such a consummation, Presbyterians must extend rather than diminish their catholicity of feeling and practice, their large heart taking in all that receive Christ and whom Christ receives; for the exclusive baptism of adults by immersion, forms of church government and worship, and the one-sidedness of Arminian and kindred creeds, errors though they may be, are not essential barriers to the grace of God, and should not hinder the communion of the saints. We have differences in the Presbyterian Church itself, and these not a few; much in its history in many lands that we cannot approve, and some things that we must condemn; errors in judgment and belief, faults of heart and life, even in the great men whose memories we most venerate. I seek to disparage no body of professing Christians, to cover or palliate nothing that has been or that is wrong in the wide communion of which we form a part; but this, as a student of history and of the word of God, I must say, that the Presbyterian Church is the soundest in doctrine, the purest in polity, the most abundant in labors, the most constant in suffering, the most catholic Church in Christendom.

We cannot but love the grand Church of Luther, with its child-like or boy-like overflowing heart, overflowing now with love, and now, alas, with angry zeal; with its brave champions and gentle scholars, its old-fashioned worship and its soul-stirring hymns, that have a hearty ring, a fullness and a roundness no other sacred songs can imitate. We love the Church of England with its noble Marian martyrs, its chaste and simple liturgy, its learned divines, and even its mistaken loyalty to an unworthy Stuart line of double turncoats. We love the Independents, or Congregationalists as they are called here, for their fervent love of liberty, their kinship with ourselves as of the Puritan stock of England, the Ironsides alike of the Church and the battle-field. Our Baptist brethren share our warm affections, for they passed through great tribulation in the days of old, and have been true to the great doctrines of God's redeeming grace. And who shall displace from our hearts the followers of Wesley, God's witnesses in a time of spiritual apathy to a living faith, an earnest Christian life, the nearness to every waiting soul of Him in whom we live and move and have our being? I had almost forgotten no obscure branch of our great Presbyterian family, the so-called Calvinistic Methodists of Wales, who have won back again the creed and polity of their old Culdee fathers, of which Rome robbed them twelve hundred years ago. I need not say that they are enshrined in our inner sanctuary of Church fellowship. All the others I have mentioned are half Presbyterian, or more, Presbyterian in creed or in polity, and some of them not far off in either. We do not ask the testimonies of Carlyle and Froude and Bismarck to what our Church is or to what she has done and can do, to the strength of her principles or the loyalty of her sons. Wisdom is justified of all her children. Look over the world and see. The Church of Rome alone can claim such a wide diffusion of her faith and rites as is enjoyed by the Church of the Presbyterians. All other Christian communities are the exclusive property of one nation or of one tongue. But ours knows no nationality, no race; the Celtic and the Latin, the German and the Slavonic, and even the Ugrian Magyar, lie within her fold. And if it come to a trial of witnesses between our Church and Rome, and the world, that judges all things by sense, is to be the umpire in the case, let the comparison be made in arts and sciences, in politics and education, in literature and culture, in social progress and national prosperity,

in all that outwardly tends to make men great and wise and good. The comparison has been made the result is known; but few have thought that Presbyterianism had under God so large a share in that result. I trust that I have said nothing to make our Presbyterians of this city of Montreal narrow or selfish or spiritually proud, but I do hope that this humble tribute to our Church's greatness may help her sons and daughters to love and venerate her more highly, and that no folly of fashion, nor pleasure of sense, nor false claim of superiority may tempt them to exchange her for any less catholic Church. And may God ever make her more worthy of Himself and of that treasure which He has placed in her keeping, the everlasting gospel of His dear Son, until all differences be taken out of the way, till the watchmen of Zion, knowing as they are known, see eye to eye, till the warfare of the Church militant, is accomplished and the Church universal and triumphant stands in the visible presence of its glorified Head, the one Bishop of our souls, with the four and twenty Presbyters around His throne.

THE SPIRITUAL NATURE OF THE CHURCH.

MR. EDITOR,—In your March 1st number you have favored your readers with a criticism of a work called "A Reply to 'The Apostolic Church—which is it?'" by the Rev. Thos. G. Porter. Will you permit an humble reader the favor of expressing his appreciation of the tone which pervades your article, notwithstanding the exceptional temptation of the subject to indulge in a strain of severe harshness and uncharitable irony. It is indeed devoutly to be wished that your example will attract many disciples to a style of polemics so well calculated to persuade and to convince; and especially as regards the spread of Christian truth, to edify or build up.

But the main object of my addressing you is to relieve my mind of a few thoughts suggested by your criticism, as well as by some detached sentences which, in direct relation to the subject of it, some time ago have fallen under my observation.

1. You object "that the Church, as set forth by Mr. Porter, is an unspiritual affair." Is this objection quite borne out by his description of it as a "*Divinely* instituted society called out of the world," united to its Founder, and its officers acting under His commission. Assuming that Mr. Porter is in error as to the duties and powers of these officers, this does not seem to me to affect in any way the nature of the Church as defined by him. Had I not read your remarks I should certainly have at once assumed that his idea of the Church was that it is "a spiritual affair."

"Called out of the world," Mr. Porter says. You object that this Church, so called, not being called by the Holy Spirit, is therefore unspiritual. Yet Mr. Porter does not say that it is not called by the Spirit. May we not assume that you both agree here? Or should Mr. Porter aver that it was called by the Father or the Son, would its spirituality be hereby denied or detracted from? "The bond of union," as defined by Mr. Porter, you say is "not the Spirit." Mr. Porter says that this bond of union is "Church services, sacraments, the Priesthood." As I read in the Church of England form of ordination to the Priesthood that the Holy Ghost is assumed to be therein imparted for the work and office of a priest, and that the Holy Ghost is the invisible minister, acting by and through the priest or minister so called, and who makes sacraments visible channels of their respective graces—as indeed the "Confession of Faith" requires me also to believe—it seems to me that this Divine Spirit must be in Mr. Porter's theology the "bond of union," the want of which you object to his definition.

2. You again object to Mr. Porter's definition of the Church, that he makes its "essentials" consist in "purely external" acts, viz., "manual contact for communicating grace in confirmation and ordination," etc., etc. Does this objection hold good if I have rightly interpreted Mr. Porter above? You maintain that the Church is a "faithful company" in which God's Spirit dwells according to the Scripture. You here admit that the Church is composed of two elements—the corporeal and the spiritual—the inner and the outer, as epitomized and involved in the man Christ Jesus. Is not Mr. Porter's view consistent, or at all events is his view inconsistent, with this? May it be logically assumed that he considers externals as in themselves constituting the essence of the Church, and not as divinely instituted *media* for the conveyance of