

rejoice in the light of truth and in the favor of God. The Jews are yet to be restored. So we trust that Rome may be at no distant day. Meanwhile neither Jew nor Romanist, spite of all their national and ecclesiastical succession, by blood and by ordination, form part of the true Church of Christ. They are apostate. The true Church is not that which consists in any outward succession from Peter and his fellow disciples, but in the preservation in their purity of the word of God and the sacraments, being composed as our confession says, of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children. This is the Church visible. As for the Church invisible, it is found in the inward succession of divine grace that comes by the operation of the Holy Spirit throughout the ages, the means of this operation being the word of God. It is thus in any case the continuity of truth, of the word of God that makes a Church and not of any act or form ecclesiastical.

A popular and transparent illustration of the fallacy of the argument to prove succession, is the following. A worthy schoolmaster was dilating to his pupils on the subject of personal identity, which, according to him, lay in form, not in matter, so that the body, although it changes continually is still the same body. He took for his illustration a penknife of which he supposed the small and large blades, the two sides of the handle and the springs to have been successively lost and replaced, "still," he said, "it is the same knife." A clever youth in the class appeared to doubt and at last ventured to ask the question: "Suppose that some one were to find the different pieces of the knife, which had been successively lost, and were to put them together again, what knife would that be?" It is not recorded that the master succeeded in making the class see the trifling nature of this objection, or that the views of his scholars on the subject of personal identity became clearer.

Rome is the knife. In the first century it was whole and sound, but in the second one of the blades called the spiritual nature of the sacraments became loose, soon fell out and was lost. In the third century, the side of the handle nearest this blade called the true gospel ministry began to shake, and at last was superseded by episcopacy and sacerdotalism. The spring at the back of the missing blade, which was the truth concerning the kingdom of the meek and lowly Jesus, dropped away in the fourth century, and in its place came the rise of temporal power and the spirit of persecution, which was strengthened every year. The fifth and sixth centuries were the grave of the other side of the handle, called the simplicity and universality of worship, which gave place to a gorgeous ceremonial and vicarious religion. This led to weakness in the spring adjoining. Before the eighth century it fell and was superseded 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 bands of the captive and the yoke of Satan.

The reformers, Luther and Zwingle, Calvin and Knox, with Wickliffe and Huss before them, found the old pieces which Rome had rejected, fastened them firmly together as they had been sound of old, before the corroding influences of evil had eaten away the pins that secured them, and showed to the world the same knife that had achieved victories in the days