

main stationary, while everything else is advancing, by losing its relative standing and power, it will be soon crippled, and its influence weakened, if not annihilated. It should be the policy of the church to give to her ministry such resources, such energy, as to enable it to grapple with the stoutest minds, and become, by its well directed strength, the object of respect and esteem, instead of scorn or pity. Yes, true wisdom says, give it the learning that can enlighten every circle; give it the power of reasoning, that will carry conviction through all ranks; give it a Divine eloquence, that will thrill and move, and charm at pleasure. Yes, give it the ability, and courage, to hold up the cross of Christ, and to present the eternal realities of the gospel in all their greatness and power; and then it will become mighty through God. Let the cause of salvation be thus sustained, and all the bustle and parade, and imposing grandeur of worldly enterprises, cannot obscure its majesty, or impede its progress. The march of truth will be onward, and the subjection of the world to the cross of Christ will be certain. Then will the Christian ministry command respect, and exert a healthful and saving influence upon the world of mankind.

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The Primitive Church Anti-Sectarian.

BY ASA SHINN.

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Mr. Editor:—In order to give an adequate exhibition of the evils of the sectarian spirit, it is necessary to take a view of the true spirit and impartial constitution of the primitive Church; that the benevolence of the "common salvation" embraced by the first Christians may be held up in contrast with the selfishness of the religion of sectarians. A sect is an organized body based upon certain distinctive articles of faith, arranged and established by human authority, the belief of which is a condition of membership in that denomination. The sectarian spirit, is embodied selfishness, zealously engaged in conflicting with rival sects, or refractory individuals, in order to sustain and to extend its powers and dominion at their expense. It is my purpose to prove, in the first place, that the primitive Church

was not of this spirit, and that it was based upon an entirely different foundation; after which the evils of the sectarian spirit will be examined in detail, with a view to guard reflecting minds against their disastrous consequences.

In illustrating the true basis of the primitive Church, we commence with that famous passage in Matthew: "He saith unto them, but whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered, and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Matt. xvi. 15, &c. The Church of Rome has long claimed this passage as a proof that Peter is the rock on which the Christian superstructure is founded; but this pretension was not set up till after the Church of Rome had become a distinguished body of sectarians, based on certain distinctive articles of faith arranged and established by human authority; and she claimed an Apostle as her founder, in order to strengthen her power and influence, in putting down all rival sects and heretics.

"Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona." Why was he blessed? Not merely because he was Peter, but because such a central and primary truth had been revealed to him, which he held fast, and which he was ready to publish all abroad. This truth that Christ is the Son of the living God, is the basis of all human hope, virtue and salvation, and our Saviour evidently meant to be understood, that this doctrine is the rock of our safety and support; and not that Peter is the foundation on which the church was to be built. This will appear manifest from the following inspired testimony.

1. Jesus said to the twelve Apostles, "Call no man your Father, [Papa or Pope,] upon the earth; for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters; for one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren." Matt. xxiii. 9, &c. Here the Apostles are placed upon an equality, and are subjected alike to the governing authority of one Master.