

T H E

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"The Lord God is a Sun and Shield."

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The Evils of a Sectarian Spirit.

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MR. EDITOR:—As the primitive church was based upon an inspired foundation, both of faith and practice, and aimed with impartial benevolence to promote the welfare of all mankind, it is manifest that a sect is an organized body which has departed from the primitive foundation, to embrace distinctive articles of faith, arranged and established by human authority.

The first sect of this kind appears to have arisen in the Apostles' days, as we learn from the epistles both of John and Jude. The first says, "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us." 1 John ii. 19. In the preceding verse he called them "Antichrists," i. e. persons opposed to Christ; and in the 22d verse he states explicitly what the heresy was, on which their sect was founded: "Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son." The apostle Jude says, "These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit." He says, moreover, that they "are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts;"—"ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ."

Whether this was the origin of the sect afterwards called Gnostics, we need not now inquire: it is well known that many sects arose during the first three centuries, and the Nicene Creed was formed by three hundred and eighteen bishops, in the year 325. Hence it appears that the church of Rome was formed into a large sect of heretics, as early as the fourth century: and the Greek church was formed

into another large sect, long before the numerous bodies of Protestants had an existence. The Romish sect, indeed, calls herself Catholic, and says she is the Mother Church; but if we credit our Bibles, we must believe that the church of Jerusalem was the Mother Church,—she being founded by the Apostles, on the only foundation that any man can lay, which is Jesus Christ. The church of Rome cannot therefore be the mother, unless she be the Mother of Harlots, which many wise and learned men believe her to be, upon the joint testimony of Scripture and of History.

In confirmation of the view above given, I will now produce the authority of Professor Wylie, who published a work in 1840, entitled "Sectarianism is Heresy." This distinguished minister does not believe that any church, whether called Catholic or Protestant, or that any organization of men, civil or ecclesiastical, has a right to make a creed to be enforced authoritatively upon Christians. For, if any have this right, the church of Rome had it, and "the Reformation was wrong, and Luther and Calvin were what the church pronounced them to be—heretics." p. 15. He says, "Heresy means the choice, or adoption of any opinion or tenet, which is inconsistent with the unity of the church, or the acting upon, or carrying out into practical consequences, of any such tenet or opinion—that is, taking such measures as will lead to the establishment of a society or party, based on such a tenet or opinion. The principle of such a society is heresy, and the society based upon it as a sect; and whoever adopts such a principle and adheres to such a party in religion, is a heretic or sectarian." p. 16. Again: "The church of Rome, in the exercise of her usurped authority, made certain tenets, or dogmas, or doctrines of her own arbitrary enact-