

in which we "denied the fact that the Catholic Church was the oldest organization in Christendom," we will agree never to write another word against that Church. What we have repeatedly denied is that Jesus Christ ever set up what our contemporary terms the Catholic Church, or that such a Church existed in the days of Christ and the apostles. If our brother thinks that such a Church existed at that early day, and that too by Divine authority, let him undertake to point it out from the word of God. The Church that was established in the beginning was the Church of Christ, or the Church of God, *not* the Roman Catholic Church. The Scriptures were first written out and given to churches of Christ for their guidance in saving sinners and in edifying saints, and *not* to the Roman Catholic Church. Hence the oft-repeated assertion that the world to-day is necessarily dependent on the Catholic Church for the Holy Scriptures is both false and ridiculous. Instead of her assisting to put the word of God into the hands of the people she has done more to monopolize and suppress it than all other powers on earth combined. While then we have not denied that the Catholic Church is an old organization, we do deny that it has any necessary connection with the Church our Savior set up in the beginning. Neither does her age affirm her Scriptural right to exist nor improve her moral standing. The subjoined passage is a fine sample of fanatical twaddle from some preacher of whom we know nothing, and has no weight or point in settling the question before us. By the way, is the *Sentinel* certain that the Roman Catholic Church is the oldest denominational organization on earth?

COMMON-SENSE IN RELIGION.

One of the greatest needs of the day is the exercise of more good common-sense in matters pertaining to the Christian religion. This important element in human nature is too often overlooked in coming to Christ and serving him acceptably. Men and women of fair education, excellent judgment and quick perception when they have to do with temporal things often show a weakness at this point when speaking and acting on religious matters that is truly alarming. Such persons need to take their first lesson in learning the alphabet of Christianity. They need to learn that God, in revealing

himself to man, adapted himself to man's understanding; that he spoke to and communed with man as man. They need to know that God spoke to man to be understood, and that he expects him to exercise the same degree of common-sense in accepting the great principles of Christianity and making a personal and practical application of them that is exercised in the mere temporal and business vocations of life. God never designed that men's judgments should be destroyed in making them Christians, nor that their common-sense should be laid on the shelf in following Christ. It is not necessary to become a fool, literally, in order to become a Christian. While the Bible is emphatically the Book of books, and contains a breadth, a height and a depth of meaning incomprehensible by finite minds, yet in many respects it is like any other book, and hence is to be accepted and interpreted in the light of the same common-sense rules that are applied to the various branches of scientific knowledge. It should be examined from the same rational point of view as the science of mathematics, mental philosophy or geology. It should be accepted in the same light of the plain and gentle words of a father to his child. And above all things must one get rid of the idea of the miraculous in conversion, if he would understand the true relation the sinner sustains to God as revealed in this Book. There is nothing any more miraculous nowadays in becoming a believer in Christ and acting upon this conviction than there is in becoming a believer in the science of astronomy and speaking and acting accordingly. Scientists have swept the heavens with their mighty telescopes and brought down to the student in the form of text books on astronomy, evidence sufficient to fully convince the latter, when properly submitted to his understanding, of the true movements of the solar system. The student does not throw away his practical judgment when coming to a study of this subject; but on the contrary, when he takes up his text book he allows it to address itself to his understanding while he applies himself diligently till fully convinced of the correctness of the science, and then he shapes his course of conduct accordingly.

Now in like manner should the seeker after spiritual light come to the Bible. The Bible is addressed to his understanding; and let him apply himself thoughtfully and

prayerfully to a study of it till fully convinced of the truths and facts it reveals, and then let him honestly act upon its teaching in coming to the Savior of the world and living the Christian life. We are expressly told that sinners are begotten through the truth, and by the gospel; and that the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto the salvation of all who believe. Hence the inspired apostle Peter says, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." 1 Pet. 1:2-3.

THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH AND WHAT IS NOW NEEDED.

At no time in the history of Christianity, did the church exert such a mighty influence, as during the first centuries of its existence. One of the chief accusations brought against the followers of Christ, in the days of the apostles, was that they had "turned the world upside down." When Christianity began its career the world was one vast sea of paganism, with a pagan emperor firmly seated upon the throne. Its beginning was insignificant in the extreme. Its founder was born of a humble woman, in a stable. His work, during the few years he lived was largely among the poor outcasts of his nation. He died in the most ignominious manner, "despised and rejected of men," and when he was about to leave the world he committed the affairs of his kingdom into the hands of a few humble men, many of whom he had called from their nets at the sea of Gallilee. Such a small and humble beginning was fitly likened by the prophet to "a little stone cut out of the mountain without hands." Looking at Christianity from a human stand-point, there was little hope of success. But we follow the history, and, strange as it may seem, paganism, in less than three centuries, fell before the victorious march of Christianity, and the very emperor upon the throne became a vassal to Jesus of Nazareth. In the days of the apostles the Church of Christ was firmly planted in all the principal cities of the Roman empire. The establishment of Christianity in the beginning looks more like a stupendous miracle than anything else; but it was not. The work was done by and through the noble men and women who com-

posed the church. "They had a mind to work," and God worked with them, just as he always works with those who are faithful to his word. The following are a few of the principle reasons why such great success attended the church in the beginning.

1. *It was a united church.* There was simply "one body," the Church of Christ, moving upon society, as one man. They all believed alike, and were perfectly joined together. They were all of one heart and one soul. The church in that day was not split up into Episcopalians, Lutherans, Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists and a hundred others, all laboring largely

to build up parties, instead of the Church of Christ, but was a unit, moving as one man and throwing its forces all in the same direction. The old saying, "in union there is strength," has been fully proven in the history of the ancient church, for it had a power that enabled it to triumph over obstacles that were truly appalling. And what is to day needed more than any one thing to enable Christianity to conquer the world is a united church. Not simply a friendly feeling among sects and parties that will cause them to let each other alone, but the annihilation of all these and the restoration of the one body of Christ, the church just as it was in the beginning. We believe this is coming and must come, before the kingdoms of this world will be conquered for Christ.

2. The simplicity of what was preached and of what was required of sinners to become Christians, gave the ancient church a power that the religious world to day lacks. The primitive preachers went forth holding up before the world a *person*. They would know nothing among the people but Jesus Christ and him crucified, and when sinners believed in him as their divine savior, and wanted to know what they should do to be saved the way was so simple and easy that it could be made plain to them in one sentence, so that all who desired salvation could go forward and put on the Lord Jesus. If any one will take the time to examine the many cases of conversions recorded in the Acts of the the Apostles they will be struck with the difference between what was required of sinners then and what is required of them now, in some of the modern churches. That there has been a great departure from apostolic practice must be plain to all who care-