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ARTICLE I.—*Religious Endowments.*

THE legal term *mortmain* is frequently used, especially in common discourse, and sometimes in books, in a mistaken sense. It is sometimes confounded by well informed men, and even by lawyers, with another and distinct subject. Mortmain, in strict propriety, means the acquisition or holding of real estate by a corporation or body politic, having perpetual succession. The popular meaning of the word is the vesting of land or other property, either in a corporation or in individuals, in such form as that the produce or beneficial interest may become permanently applicable to religious or charitable purposes. The proper legal term descriptive of property thus situated, is Charities or Charitable Uses.

It may be useful to deduce succinctly the history of these two subjects. In so doing, perhaps, the best explanation can be given of the general principles upon which religious and charitable endowments are based in the jurisprudence of England and this country.

The prohibition to alienate in mortmain, or, in other words, to give or grant to a corporation, existed in the Roman law. Diocletian gave this rescript: Collegium, si nullo speciali pri-

so that, according to the Scriptures, the Spirit is the author of all special mental endowments, as well as of holy affections. It was he who gave skill to Bezaleel to work in gold, and silver, and brass. It was he who gave strength to the warrior, and wisdom to the lawgiver, as well as inspiration to the prophet. This is the clear doctrine of the Scriptures, which teach an everywhere-present, sustaining, and controlling God, in whom we live, move, and have our being.

ART. VI.—*Visibility of the Church.*

OUR view of the attributes of the Church is of necessity determined by our view of its nature. There is no dispute between Romanists and Protestants, as to whether the Church is visible, perpetual, one, holy, catholic, and apostolical. This is universally conceded. The only question is as to the sense in which these attributes can be predicated of it. If the Church is, in its essential nature and external organization, analogous to an earthly kingdom, then its visibility, perpetuity, and all its other attributes, must be such as can pertain to such an organization. When we affirm that an earthly kingdom is visible and perpetual, we mean that its organization as a kingdom is conspicuous, notorious, seen of all men, and unchanging. The kingdoms of Babylon, Egypt, and of Rome, have passed away. They are no longer visible or extant. The Papacy has a visible existence of the same kind, and Romanists affirm it is to continue while the world lasts. The kingdom of England is the body of men professing allegiance to its laws, and subject to its sovereign. The Church, according to Romanists, is the body of men professing the true religion, and subject to the Pope. Bellarmin, therefore, says: "*Ecclesia est cætus hominum ita visibilis et palpabilis, ut est cætus Populi Romani, vel regnum Gallix aut respublica Venetorum.*"* As

* Disputationes: de Ecclesia Militante, Lib. iii. c. 2.

these bodies are equally external organizations, the visibility of the one is analogous to that of the other.

But if the Church is the *cœtus sanctorum*, the company of believers; if it is the body of Christ, and if his body consists of those, and of those only, in whom he dwells by his Spirit, then the Church is visible only in the sense in which believers are visible. England stands out before the world as an earthly kingdom; the members of Christ's body in England are no less conspicuous. That believers are there, that the Church is there, is a fact which can no more be rationally disputed, than the existence of the monarchy. But it does not follow that because equally visible, they are equally external organizations, and that to deny that the Church, in its idea, is an external society, is to deny that it is visible. Protestants teach that the true Church, as existing on earth, is always visible:

1. As it consists of men and women, in distinction from disembodied spirits or angels. Its members are not impalpable and unseen, as those ministering spirits who, unrevealed to our senses, continually minister to the heirs of salvation. "Surely," exclaims Bellarmin, "the Church does not consist of ghosts!" Certainly not: and the suggestion of such an objection betrays an entire misconception of the doctrine he was opposing. Protestants admit that the Church on earth consists of visible men and women, and not of invisible spirits.

2. The Church is visible, because its members manifest their faith by their works. The fact that they are the members of Christ's body becomes notorious. Goodness is an inward quality, and yet it is outwardly manifested, so that the good are known and recognized as such; not with absolute certainty in all cases, but with sufficient clearness to determine all questions of duty respecting them. So, though faith is an inward principle, it so reveals itself in the confession of the truth, and in a holy life, that believers may be known as a tree is known by its fruit. In the general prevalence of Arianism, the true Church neither perished nor ceased to be visible. It continued to exist, and its existence was manifested in the confessors and martyrs of that age. "When," says Dr. Jackson, "the doctrine of antichrist was come to its full growth in the Council of Trent, although the whole body of Germany, besides

Chemnitz and others, and although the whole visible Church of France, besides Calvin and some such, had subscribed unto that Council, yet the true Church had been visible in those worthies."* Wherever there are true believers, there is the true Church; and wherever such believers confess their faith, and illustrate it by a holy life, there the Church is visible.

3. The Church is visible, because believers are, by their "effectual calling," separated from the world. Though in it, they are not of it. They have different objects, are animated by a different spirit, and are distinguished by a different life. They are visible, as a pure river is often seen flowing unmingled through the turbid waters of a broader stream. When the Holy Spirit enters into the heart, renewing it after the image of God, uniting the soul to Christ as a living member of his body, the man becomes a new creature. All men take knowledge of him. They see that he is a Christian. He renounces the ways of the world, separates himself from all false religions, becomes an open worshipper of Christ, a visible member of the Church, which is Christ's body. When the early Christians heard the words of eternal life, and received the gospel in faith, they at once renounced idolatry, withdrew from all corrupt associations, and manifested themselves as a new people, the followers of the Lord Jesus. They were visible members of his body. Even though there was but one such man in a city, still the fact that he was a Christian became notorious; and if a visible Christian, a visible member of the Church. The true Church is thus visible throughout the world, not as an organization, not as an external society, but as the living body of Christ; as a set of men distinguished from others as true Christians. They are the epistles of Jesus Christ, known and read of all men. This is a visibility which is real, and may be, and often has been, and will hereafter be, glorious. The Church, in this sense, is a city set on a hill. She is the light of the world. She is conspicuous in the beauty of holiness. This is not, indeed, the visibility of a hierarchy, gorgeous in apparel, pompous in ritual services—a kingdom which is of this world. But it is not the less real, and infinitely more glo-

* *Treatise on the Church*, p. 19, Philadelphia edition.

rious. How unfounded, then, is the objection that the Church, the body of Christ, is a chimera, a Platonic idea, unless it is, in its essential nature, a visible society, like the kingdom of England or Republic of Switzerland! Apart from any outward organization, and in the midst of all organizations, the true Church is now visible, and she has left a track of glory through all history, since the day of Pentecost, so that it can be traced and verified, in all ages and in all parts of the world.

4. The true Church is visible in the external Church, just as the soul is visible in the body. That is, as by the means of the body we know that the soul is there, so by means of the external Church, we know where the true Church is. There are, doubtless, among Mohammedans, many insincere and sceptical professors of the religion of the false prophet. No one can tell who they are, or how many there may be. But the institutions of Mohammedanism, its laws, its usages, its mosques, its worship, make it as apparent as the light of day, that sincere believers in Mahomet exist, and are the life of the external communities consisting of sincere and insincere followers of the prophet. So the external Church, as embracing all who profess the true religion—with their various organizations, their confessions of the truth, their temples, and their Christian worship—make it apparent that the true Church, the body of Christ, exists, and where it is. These are not the Church, any more than the body is the soul; but they are its manifestations, and its residence. This becomes intelligible by adverting to the origin of the Christian community. The admitted facts in reference to this subject are—1. That our Lord appeared on earth as the Son of God, and the Saviour of sinners. To all who received him he gave power to become the sons of God; they were justified and made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and thereby united to Christ as living members of his body. They were thus distinguished inwardly and outwardly from all other men. 2. He commissioned his disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He enjoined upon them to require as the conditions of any man's being admitted into their communion as a member of his body, repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. 3. He commanded all who did thus repent and believe, to unite

together for his worship, for instruction, for the administration of the sacraments, and for mutual watch and care. For this purpose he provided for the appointment of certain officers, and gave, through his apostles, a body of laws for their government, and for the regulation of all things which those who believe were required to perform. Provision was thus made, by divine authority, for the Church assuming the form of an external visible society.

Let us now suppose that all those who, in every age, and in every part of the world, professed the true religion, and thereby united themselves to this society, were true believers, then there would be no room for the distinction, so far as this world is concerned, between the Church as visible and invisible. Then this external society would be Christ's body on earth. All that is predicated of the latter could be predicated of the former; all that is promised to the one would be promised to the other. Then this society would answer to the definition of the Church, as a company of believers. Then all within it would be saved, and all out of it would be lost. The above hypothesis, however, is undeniably false, and therefore the conclusions drawn from it must also be false. We know that even in the apostolic age, many who professed faith in Christ, and ranked themselves with his people, were not true believers. We know that in every subsequent age, the great majority of those who have been baptized in the name of Christ, and who call themselves Christians, and who are included in the external organization of his followers, are not true Christians. This external society, therefore, is not a company of believers; it is not the Church which is Christ's body; the attributes and promises of the Church do not belong to it. It is not that living temple built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets as an habitation of God, through the Spirit. It is not the bride of Christ, for which he died, and which he cleanses with the washing of regeneration. It is not the flock of the good Shepherd, composed of the sheep who hear his voice, and to whom it is his Father's good pleasure to give the kingdom. In short, the external society is not the Church. The two are not identical, commensurate, and conterminous, so that he who is a member of the one is a member of the other,

and he who is excommunicated from the one is cut off from the other. Yet the Church is in that society, or the aggregate body of professing Christians, as the soul is in the body, or as sincere believers are comprehended in the mass of the professors of the religion of Christ.

If, then, the Church is the body of Christ; if a man becomes a member of that body by faith; if multitudes of those who profess in baptism the true religion, are not believers, then it is just as certain that the external body consisting of the baptized is not the Church, as that a man's calling himself a Christian does not make him a Christian. Yet there would be no nominal Christians, if there were no sincere disciples of Christ. The name and form of his religion would long since have perished from the world. The existence of the external Church, its continuance, its influence for good, its spiritual power, its extension, its visible organizations, are all due to the living element which it embraces, and which in these various ways manifests its presence. It is thus that the true Church is visible in the outward, though the one is no more the other than the body is the soul.

That the Protestant doctrine as to the visibility of the Church, above stated, is true, is evident, in the first place, from what has already been established as to the nature of the Church. Every thing depends upon the answer to the question, What is the Church? If it is an external society of professors of the true religion, then it is visible as an earthly kingdom; if that society is destroyed, the Church is destroyed, and everything that is true of the Church is true of that society. Then, in short, Romanism must be admitted as a logical necessity. But if the Church is a company of believers, then its visibility is that which belongs to believers; and nothing is true of the Church which is not true of believers.

2. The Protestant distinction between the Church visible and invisible, nominal and real, is that which Paul makes between "Israel after the flesh," and "Israel after the Spirit." God had promised to Israel that he would be their God, and that they should be his people; that he would never forsake or cast them off; that he would send his Son for their redemption; dwell in them by his Spirit; write his laws in their

hearts; guide them into the knowledge of the truth; that he would give them the possession of the world, and the inheritance of heaven; that all who joined them should be saved, and all who forsook them should perish. The Jews claimed all these promises for the external organization, *i. e.* for the natural descendants of Abraham, united to him and to each other by the outward profession of the covenant, and by the sign of circumcision. They held, that external conformity to Judaism made a man a Jew, a member of that body to which all these promises and prerogatives belonged; and, consequently, that the apostacy or rejection of that external body would involve the destruction of the Church, and a failure of the promise of God. In like manner Ritualists teach that what is said and promised to the Church belongs to the external visible society of professing Christians, and that the destruction of that society would be the destruction of the Church.

In opposition to all this, Paul taught, 1. That he is not a Jew who is one outwardly. 2. Circumcision, which was outward, in the flesh, did not secure an interest in the divine promises. 3. That he only was a Jew, *i. e.* one of the true people of God, who was such in virtue of the state of his heart. 4. That the body to which the divine promises were made, was not the outward organization, but the inward, invisible body; not the Israel *κατα σαρκα*, but the Israel *κατα πνευμα*. This is the Protestant doctrine of the Church, which teaches that he is not a Christian who is such by mere profession, and that it is not water baptism which makes a man a member of that body to which the promises are made, and consequently that the visibility of the Church is not that which belongs to an external society, but to true believers, or the communion of saints.

The perversion and abuse of terms, and the false reasoning to which Romanists resort, when speaking of this subject, are so palpable, that they could not be tolerated in any ordinary discussion. The word *Christian* is just as ambiguous as the word *Church*. If called upon to define a Christian, they would not hesitate to say—He is a man who believes the doctrines and obeys the commands of Christ. The inevitable inference from this definition is, that the attributes, the promises, and prerogatives pertaining to Christians, belong to those only who

believe and obey the Lord Jesus. Instead, however, of admitting this unavoidable conclusion, which would overthrow their whole system, they insist that all these attributes, promises, and prerogatives, belong to the body of professing Christians, and that it is baptism and subjection to a prelate or the pope, and not faith and obedience towards Christ, which constitute membership in the true Church.

3. The same doctrine taught by the apostle Paul, is no less plainly taught by the apostle John. In his day many who had been baptized, and received into the communion of the external society of Christians, were not true believers. How were they regarded by the apostle? Did their external profession make them members of the true Church, to which the promises pertain? St. John answers this question by saying, "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: but they went out, that it might be made manifest that they were not all of us. But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." 1 John ii. 19, 20. It is here taught, 1. That many are included in the pale of the external Church, who are not members of the true Church. 2. That those only who have an unction of the Holy One, leading them into the knowledge of the truth, constitute the Church. 3. And consequently the visibility of the Church is that which belongs to the body of true believers.

4. The Church must retain its essential attributes in every stage and state of its existence, in prosperity and in adversity. It is, however, undeniable, that the Church has existed in a state of dispersion. There have been periods when the whole external organization lapsed into idolatry or heresy. This was the case when there were but seven thousand in all Israel who had not bowed the knee to Baal, when at the time of the advent the whole Jewish Church, as an organized body, rejected Christ, and the New Testament Church was not yet founded; and to a great extent, also, during the ascendancy of Arianism. We must either admit that the Church perished during these periods, or that it was continued in the scattered, unorganized believers. If the latter, its visibility is not that of an external

society, but such as belongs to the true body of Christ, whose members are known by the fruits of the Spirit manifested in their lives.

5. The great argument, however, on this subject, is the utter incongruity between what the Bible teaches concerning the Church, and the Romish doctrine that the Church is visible as an external organization. If that is so, then such organization is the Church; then, as the Church is holy, the body and bride of Christ, the temple and family of God, all the members of that organization are holy, members of Christ's body, and partakers of his life. Then, too, as Christ has promised to guide his Church into the knowledge of the truth, that external organization can never err as to any essential doctrine. Then, also, as we are commanded to obey the Church, if we refuse submission to this external body, we are to be regarded as heathen men and publicans. Then, moreover, as Christ saves all the members of his body and none other, he saves all included in this external organization, and consigns to eternal death all out of it. And then, finally, ministers admit to heaven all whom they receive into this society, and cast into hell all whom they reject from it. These are not only the logical, but the avowed and admitted conclusions of the principle in question. It becomes those who call themselves Protestants, to look these consequences in the face, before they join the Papists and Puseyites in ridiculing the idea of a Church composed exclusively of believers, and insist that the body to which the attributes and promises of the Church belong, is the visible organization of professing Christians. Such Protestants may live to see men walking about with the keys of heaven at their girdle, armed with a power before which the bravest may well tremble.

The scriptural and Protestant doctrine of the visibility of the Church is, therefore, a corollary of the true doctrine of its nature. If the Church is a company of believers, its visibility is that which belongs to believers. They are visible as men; as holy men; as men separated from the world, as a peculiar people, by the indwelling of the Spirit of God; as the soul and sustaining element of all those external organizations, consist-

ing of professors of the true religion, united for the worship of Christ, the maintenance of the truth, and mutual watch and care.

The objections which Bellarmin, Bossuet, Palmer, and writers generally of the Romish and Ritual class, urge against this doctrine, are either founded on misconception, or resolve themselves into objections against the scriptural view of the nature of the Church as "the company of believers." Thus, in the first place, it is objected that in the Scriptures and in all ecclesiastical history, the Church is spoken of and addressed as a visible society of professing Christians. The churches of Jerusalem, Antioch, Corinth, and Rome, were all such societies; and the whole body of such professors constituted THE CHURCH. History traces the origin, the extension, the trials, and the triumphs of that outward community. It is vain, therefore, to deny that body to be the Church, which the Bible and all Christendom unite in so designating. But was not the ancient Hebrew commonwealth called Israel, Jerusalem, Zion? Is not its history, as a visible society, recorded from Abraham to the destruction of Jerusalem? And yet does not Paul say expressly, that he is not a Jew who is one outwardly; that the external Israel is not the true Israel? In this objection the real point at issue is overlooked. The question is not, whether a man who professes to be a Christian, may properly be so addressed and so treated, but whether profession makes a man a true Christian. The question is not, whether a society of professing Christians may properly be called a Church, and be so regarded, but whether their being such a society constitutes them a competent part of the body of Christ. The whole question is, What is the subject of the attributes and prerogatives of the body of Christ? Is it the external body of professors, or the company of believers? If calling a man a Christian does not imply that he has the character and the inheritance of the disciples of Christ; if calling the Jewish commonwealth Israel did not imply that they were the true Israel, then calling the professors of the true religion the Church, does not imply that they are the body of Christ. When the designation given to any man or body of men, involves nothing more than what is external or official, its application implies they are what they

are called. To call a man an Englishman, is to recognize him as such. To address any one as emperor, king, or president, is to admit his claim to such title. But when the designation is expressive of some inward quality, and a state of mind, its application does not imply its actual possession, but simply that it is claimed. To call men saints, believers, the children of God, or a Church, supposes them to be true believers, or the true Church, only on the assumption that "no internal virtue" is necessary to union with the Church, or to make a man a believer and a child of God.

Scriptural and common usage, therefore, is perfectly consistent with the Protestant doctrine. That doctrine admits the propriety of calling any man a Christian who professes to be a worshipper of Christ, and of designating any company of such men a church. It only denies that he is a real Christian who is one only in name; or that that is a true Church, which is such only in profession. An external society, therefore, may properly be called a Church, without implying that the visibility of the true Church consists in outward organization.

2. It is objected that the possession of officers, of laws, of terms of communion, necessarily supposes the Church to have the visibility of an external society. How can a man be received into the Church, or excommunicated from it, if the Church is not an outward organization? Did the fact that the Hebrews had officers and laws, a temple, a ritual, terms of admission and exclusion, make the external Israel the true Israel, or prove that the visibility of the latter was that of a state or commonwealth? Protestants admit that true believers form themselves into a visible society, with officers, laws, and terms of communion—but they deny that such society is the true Church, any further than it consists of true believers. Everything comes back to the question, What is the Church? True believers constitute the true Church; professed believers constitute the outward Church. These two things are not to be confounded. The external body is not, as such, the body of Christ. Neither are they to be separated as two churches; the one true and the other false, the one real and the other nominal. They differ as the sincere and insincere differ in any community, or as the Israel *κατα πνευμα* differs from the Israel

zara capxa. A man could be admitted to the outward Israel without being received into the number of God's true people, and he could be excluded from the former without being cut off from the latter. The true Israel was not the commonwealth, as such, and the outward organization, with its laws and officers, though intimately related with the spiritual body as the true Church, did not constitute it. The question, how far the outward Church is the true Church, is easily answered. Just so far as it is what it professes to be, and no further. So far as it is a company of faithful men, animated and controlled by the Holy Spirit, it is a true Church, a constituent member of the body of Christ. If it be asked further, how we are to know whether a given society is to be regarded as a Church; we answer, precisely as we know whether a given individual is to be regarded as a Christian, *i. e.* by their profession and conduct. As the Protestant doctrine, that true believers constitute the body of Christ, is perfectly consistent with the existence among them and others outwardly united with them, of officers and laws, no argument can be drawn from the existence of such outward institutions to prove that the Church is essentially an external organization.

Bossuet presents this objection in the light of a contradiction. He says, "Protestants insist that the Church consists exclusively of believers, and is therefore an invisible body. But when asked for the signs of a Church, they say, the word and sacraments: thus making it an external society with ordinances, a ministry, and public service. If so, how can it consist exclusively of the pious? And where was there any such society, answering to the Protestant definition, before the Reformation?"* This objection rests upon the misconception which Ritualists do not appear able to rid themselves of. When Protestants say the Church is invisible, they only mean that an inward and consequently invisible state of mind is the condition of membership, and not that those who have this internal qualification are invisible, or that they cannot be so known as to enable us to discharge the duties which we owe them. When asked, what makes a man a Christian? we

* Bossuet's Variations, Book xv. § 20, *et seqq.*

say, true faith. When asked, whom must we regard and treat as Christians? we answer, those who make a credible profession of their faith. Is there any contradiction in this? Is there any force in the objection, that if faith is an inward quality, it cannot be proved by outward evidence? Thus, when Protestants are asked, what is the true Church? they answer, the company of believers. When asked, what associations are to be regarded and treated as churches? they answer, those in which the gospel is preached. When asked further, where was the Church before the Reformation? they answer, just where it was in the days of Elias, when it consisted of a few thousand scattered believers.*

3. A third objection is very much of the same kind as the preceding. If the Church consists exclusively of believers, it is invisible. We are, however, required to obey the Church, to hear the Church, &c. But how can we hear and obey an invisible body? To this the answer is, the Church is no more invisible than believers are. We are commanded to love the brethren; to do good to all men, especially to the household of faith. As faith, however, is invisible, it may be asked, in the spirit of this objection, how can we tell who are believers? Christ says, by their fruits. There is no real difficulty in this matter. If we have a real heart for it, we shall be able to obey the command to love the brethren, though we cannot read the heart; and if disposed to hear the Church, we shall be able to recognize her voice. Because the true Church is always visible, and, therefore, can be obeyed, Ritualists infer that the visible Church is the true Church, though, as Dr. Jackson says, the two propositions differ as much as "to withstand a man" differs from "standing with a man."

4. Much the most plausible argument of Romanists is derived from the analogy of the old dispensation. That the Church is a visible society, consisting of the professors of the true religion, as distinguished from the body of true believers, known only to God, is plain, they say, because under the old dispen-

* The question which Romanists so confidently ask, Where was your Church before Luther! is well answered in the homely retort, Where was your face this morning before it was washed!

sation it was such a society, embracing all the descendants of Abraham who professed the true religion, and received the sign of circumcision. To this external society were given the oracles of God, the covenants, the promises, the means of grace. Out of its pale there was no salvation. Union with it was the necessary condition of acceptance with God. This was a divine institution. It was a visible Church, consisting of professors, and not exclusively of believers. If such a society existed then by divine appointment, what has become of it? Has it ceased to exist? Has removing its restriction to one people destroyed its nature? Does lopping certain branches from the tree destroy the tree itself? Far from it. The Church exists as an external society now as it did then; what once belonged to the commonwealth of Israel, now belongs to the visible Church. As union with the commonwealth of Israel was necessary to salvation then, so union with the visible Church is necessary to salvation now. And as subjection to the priesthood, and especially to the high-priest, was necessary to union with Israel then, so submission to the regular ministry, and especially to the Pope, is necessary to union with the Church now. Such is the favourite argument of Romanists; and such, (striking out illogically the last clause, which requires subjection to prelates, or the Pope,) we are sorry to say is the argument of some Protestants, and even of some Presbyterians.

The fallacy of this whole argument lies in the false assumption, that the external Israel was the true Church. It was not the body of Christ; it was not pervaded by his Spirit. Membership in it did not constitute membership in the body of Christ. The rejection or destruction of the external Israel was not the destruction of the Church. The apostacy of the former was not the apostacy of the latter. The attributes, promises, and prerogatives of the one, were not those of the other. In short, they were not the same, and, therefore, that the visibility of the one was that of an external organization, is no proof that the visibility of the Church is that of an external society. All this is included, not only in the express declaration of the Apostle, that the external Israel was not the true Israel, but is involved in his whole argument. It was, indeed, the main point of discussion between himself and the

Jews. The great question was, is a man made a member of the true Israel, and a partaker of the promise, by circumcision and subjection, or by faith in Christ? If the former, then the Jews were right, and Paul was wrong as to the whole issue. But if the latter, then Paul was right and the Jews wrong. And this is the precise question between us and Romanists, and Anglicans. If the external Israel was the true Israel, then Romanists are right and Protestants are wrong as to the method of salvation. Besides, if we admit that the external Israel was the true Church, then we must admit that the true Church apostatized; for it is undeniable that the whole external Israel, as an organized body, did repeatedly, and for long periods, lapse into idolatry. Nay more, we must admit that the true Church rejected and crucified Christ; for he was rejected by the external Israel, by the Sanhedrim, by the priesthood, by the elders, and by the people. All this is in direct opposition to the Scriptures, and would involve a breach of promise on the part of God. Paul avoids this fatal conclusion by denying that the external Church is, as such, the true Church, or that the promises made to the latter were made to the former.

It is to be remembered that there were two covenants made with Abraham. By the one, his natural descendants through Isaac were constituted a commonwealth, an external, visible community. By the other, his spiritual descendants were constituted a Church. The parties to the former covenant were God and the nation; to the other, God and his true people. The promises of the national covenant were national blessings; the promises of the spiritual covenant, (*i. e.* of the covenant of grace,) were spiritual blessings, reconciliation, holiness, and eternal life. The conditions of the one covenant were circumcision and obedience to the law; the condition of the latter was, is, and ever has been, faith in the Messiah as the seed of the woman, the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world. There cannot be a greater mistake than to confound the national covenant with the covenant of grace, and the commonwealth founded on the one with the Church founded on the other.

When Christ came "the commonwealth" was abolished, and there was nothing put in its place. The Church remained.

There was no external covenant, nor promises of external blessings, on condition of external rites and subjection. There was a spiritual society with spiritual promises, on the condition of faith in Christ. In no part of the New Testament is any other condition of membership in the Church prescribed than that contained in the answer of Philip to the eunuch who desired baptism: "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."—Acts viii. 37. The Church, therefore, is, in its essential nature, a company of believers, and not an external society, requiring merely external profession as the condition of membership. While this is true and vitally important, it is no less true that believers make themselves visible by the profession of the truth, by holiness of life, by separation from the world as a peculiar people, and by organizing themselves for the worship of Christ, and for mutual watch and care. The question, when any such organization is to be regarded as a portion of the true Church, is one to which the Protestant answer has already been given in a few words, but its fuller discussion must be reserved to some other occasion.

SHORT NOTICES.

A Commentary on the Song of Solomon. By the Rev. George Burrowes, Professor in Lafayette College, Easton, Pa. Philadelphia: William S. Martien, 144 Chestnut street. 1853. Pp. 527.

By some mistake a notice of this interesting volume failed to appear in our last number. It is entitled to a much more extended notice than it is now in our power to give it. It is certainly somewhat remarkable, that the *Song of Solomon* seems to be attracting special attention in different parts of the Church. Hengstenberg, Hahn, and Delitzsch, have all recently published on the subject in Germany, and Professor Burrowes in our own country. We hope soon to devote a review to these works, and can now only say in general terms of the book before us, that it is imbued with a devout spirit, and evinces, in no small measure, skill and wisdom in the author. The Introduction, which occupies eighty-six pages, ably defends