

views of those who look at the appointment through the medium of prejudice, the want of ability, or inexperience, cannot be imputed to Mr Butler.

(‘Carcoar Chronicle.’)

If Mr Parkes had kept his promise to his colleague, the appointment would have given satisfaction to probably more than that of Sir James Martin. No one questions Mr Butler's ability as a lawyer, or his integrity as a gentleman; while in his steady application to work he is decidedly, we think, Sir James Martin's superior. Objections have been raised in some quarters to Mr Butler on the ground of his being a Roman Catholic; but in a country where all forms of religion are equal before the law, such an objection ought never to have been hinted at. If Mr Butler had received the appointment, we are certain that his religion would never have interfered with the discharge of his duty to the country, or given a bias to his decisions on the judicial bench.

(‘Maitland Mercury.’)

Under the circumstances, we cannot wonder at Mr Butler coming to the conclusion that Mr Parkes, though repudiating the influence of sectarian pressure, had really yielded to it. We cannot wonder, under the circumstances, that Mr Butler regarded the action of the Government as the result of anti-Catholic influence, and that he resolved at once to quit the ministry rather than, by retaining office, lend his sanction to the imposition of a civil disability upon his fellow Roman Catholics. And, as we think, Mr Butler viewing the matter thus, has acted not only with commendable spirit, but with a moderation, a self-control, and a dignity that will raise him greatly in the estimation of the community.

(‘Hawksbury Times.’)

We have witnessed and read of many scenes in our Legislature which we would wish to expunge from its proceedings, or over which we would at least draw a veil, but none that equals this. The Colonial Secretary found no sympathizers on either side of the House; the Secretary stood alone—not alone in virtue like Chatham, beating down the hounds of faction that howled around him, by the power of his majestic intellect, but alone in meanness and trickery—the inventor and perpetrator of one of the most crooked and slippery political dodges that has ever been practised in this community.

(‘Braidwood Despatch.’)

The conduct of Mr Parkes, whose treatment of Mr Butler in promising him the office and then drawing back from his word is anything but what it should be.

(‘Southern Argus.’)

The real truth we conceive is, that Mr Parkes, with all his vaunted ability to hold the reins of government, is a political coward.

(‘Wagga Express.’)

With a natural facility for humbug that could hardly be exceeded by the very oldest of serpents, Mr Parkes has beguiled his late Attorney-General. Whether Sir James Martin will develop into a better Chief Justice than would Mr Butler, need not enter into the calculation. The silk gown of a Queen's Counsel which he abandons for the scarlet vestment which clothes a Chief Justice, and is typical of the Lady of Babylon, may give a certain weight to the appointment, that Mr Butler may lack. But if we handicap by previous official performances, the question assumes a different appearance.

## THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH.

(‘The Tablet.’)

THE great crime of the Church of Rome, as every right-thinking Englishman knows, is to have “corrupted” both the form and the creed of the Primitive Church. The newspapers say so, and they are not often mistaken. A good many preachers agree with the newspapers. Yet as nothing seems to be easier than to “revive” the Primitive Church, an operation which a multitude of “pure and reformed” communities have effected with complete success, the Church of Rome has not done so much harm after all. At all events the mischief has been extensively repaired. It is quite astonishing what a number of undoubtedly Primitive Churches there are just now in the world. In certain soils they seem to be a natural growth, and spring up spontaneously. There are said to be about one hundred and twenty sects, each of which, though differing from all the rest, boasts to have reproduced, to the great confusion of the Church of Rome, exactly the faith and discipline of the Primitive Church. And they are all equally confident, by clear demonstration of Holy Writ, that theirs is the true and genuine article, and that every other is spurious.

There is our old friend in the Church of England, which everybody admits—at least everybody who has the good fortune to belong to it—to be an exact copy of the original institution. The resemblance is perfect in every particular. We must suppose, therefore, if we have the privilege to be Anglicans, that in the Primitive Church, which we have so happily revived in our England, it was usual to practise Confession, and to revile it at the same time; to exalt the Priesthood, and to laugh at it; to adore the Real Presence, and to ridicule it; to believe in Regeneration by Baptism, and to deny it; to abhor heretics, and to remain in communion with them; to call schism a crime, and to rejoice in every fresh example of it; to consider unity essential, and to be in communion with nothing and nobody. The Primitive Church may have been this, as its Anglican restorers appear to believe, but perhaps the evidence of the fact is not quite decisive.

Then there is the great Russian, or “Orthodox,” communion, which is also entirely Primitive, though it owes its present form to Peter the Great, and is divided into as many irreconcilable sects as the Anglican. It has not only separated itself from Constantinople, which it used to call its source and mother, but has persuaded Greece and Bulgaria to do likewise. According to the Russian view of the Primitive Church, that institution was governed by a Tsar, with an official “Holy Synod,” submissive to his faintest whisper, and directed by one of his aides-de-camp. No doubt the Apostles would recognize this at once as the very Church which they founded. St. Petersburg

would be to them an improved Jerusalem. Perhaps the aide-de-camp would puzzle him a little, particularly if he treated them as he does his own Bishops—which would hardly be a safe proceeding—while the Tsar might possibly suggest unpleasant reminiscences of another Cæsar with whom they were more familiar.

Other Primitive Churches, which are neither national nor official, and have no wish to be so, consider priests a delusion, Bishops an abomination, and Sacraments “a fond thing vainly ‘invented.’” Is it not so written in the Scriptures? Their prophet is the mild Calvin, the diffident Knox, or the respectable Wesley. They all profess to be disciples of Paul,” and do not care much about Peter.

The Döllingerists have just made quite a new Primitive Church, which differs a good deal from all others, but has special merits of its own. According to its more or less inspired founder, the original Primitive Church remained in its perfection till after the Council of Trent, of which the canons ought to be reverently received by all Christian men; then was totally lost to view till about the year 1872; when it was gloriously revived by a few German professors, the only people in the world who really knew anything about it, aided by some gentlemen of Holland, particular favourites of Heaven, and almost as wise, modest, virtuous, and “not as other men are,” as the *illuminati* of Bonn and Munich.

Amid so many Primitive Churches, by which the corruptions of the Church of Rome are so happily repaired, and of which we may hope to see a good many more if we live a few years longer, we must not forget the Quakers, whose only fault is that they claim to be more Primitive than all the rest, which is perhaps invidious. Let us notice also respectfully the Irvingites, who justly resent the pretensions of the Quakers, since they alone have revived, not only the Primitive Church, but even the original Apostles, besides angels and archangels, and we know not what else besides. If any restoration might seem to defy competition, it is surely this. Yet while doing full justice to the Irvingites, and to a host of others, among whom our admiration is impartially distributed, it must be admitted if there is anything in a name, that the “Primitive Methodists” beat them all.

It is evident, then, that nothing is easier, as we have already observed, than to revive the Primitive Church, in spite of the impotent stratagems and general misconduct of the incorrigible Church of Rome. And this is surely a consoling fact, upon which our fallen race may be warmly congratulated. Let Rome do what she likes, she cannot extinguish the Primitive Church, but only creates a dozen in place of one. People may say, indeed, for there is no limit to human perversity, that as these new Primitive Churches differ from one another quite as freely as they do from the Catholic Church, and on questions of the most tremendous gravity, they cannot possibly be all true portraits of the same original; and further, that if any one of them is a good likeness to it, all the rest must be horrible caricatures. But the objection may be dismissed as weak and trifling. May it not have been the particular merit of the Primitive Church that it could resemble hundred different things at once? We offer this suggestion as our personal contribution to the general subject. It is true that, as far as we know, no one has yet discovered an animal which is at the same time a fish, an ox, a rat, a zebra and a pelican. If the Primitive Church really resembles the multitudinous sects—Russian, Anglican, Irvingite, and the rest—which claim to be its mirror and faithful representation, it must have been all these animals at once, and a good many more. But in that case we must shift our conclusion and say, we hope with the concurrence of our Protestant readers that the Roman Church can hardly be blamed for “corrupting” it off the face of the earth, and substituting for such a Primitive Church a less grotesque monster.

On the whole we advise our contemporaries, who will certainly not take our advice, to say as little as possible about the Primitive Church. They will only get themselves into difficulties. No man living can belong, in any sense whatever, to the Church of the first century, unless he belongs to that of the nineteenth. It is not permitted to the British citizen to transfer his allegiance from Victoria to William Rufus or Canute, in spite of the great merits of those remote sovereigns; and the British Christian is subject to the same law. If he is not loyal to the Church of his own age, he is a rebel against the Church of every other. She is no more capable of change or corruption than her founder; and if St. Peter who was the first Vicar of Christ, should revisit the earth, it is certain that, in spite of the attractions of so many Primitive Churches of recent origin, he would recognize that one alone, against which all the rest are in revolt, and would take up his abode with the prisoner of the Vatican. We suspect that in their secret heart most Protestants are of the same opinion.

If some, for whom the living and incorruptible Spouse of Christ is not sufficiently pure and chaste, have gone back to what they call the Primitive Church, others, by a more violent recoil, have gone a little further. Weary of so many “pure and reformed” Churches of which the multiplicity serves to convince them that Christianity is a fable, they have relapsed into the paganism which was an older form of human belief. We must avow a certain sympathy with these ex-Christians, who have strayed like comets beyond our theological orbit, and passed into the far-off regions of space. They are not wholly without excuse: If we believed with them that the Christian Church is one of the most contemptible of human institutions, always falling into errors and corruptions, and only existing to be periodically “reformed”—like a house in want of whitewash or a bungling Act of Parliament,—by any adventurous spirit, Anglican, Döllingerist, or Irvingite who feels moved to undertake the job, we should probably think of the Christian religion and its Founder pretty much as they do. Men who have been gravely assured, for example, ever since they were born, that the Anglican Establishment, with its twenty different religions, is a genuine representative of the Primitive Church, may well refuse to admit that the latter has any claim to their respect or that the Almighty could have anything to do with it. Our esteemed contemporary the ‘Pall Mall Gazette’ is evidently of this opinion. He goes in for “Magna Roma,” and that sort of thing. The State, he says, is more sacred than any Church, and, considering what he understands by a Church,