

free, we must beware of curtailing that same liberty for our fellow-Christians. While, where Christ has left no commands, we acknowledge none, we must be careful not to impose on our brother our own scruples, tastes, and opinions. Just as we should be as ready to admire a classical cathedral as a Gothic, so we should not attempt to set up one type of practice for everybody. As it is to Christ alone that we ourselves acknowledge our own responsibility, so we must remember that it is equally He alone who condemns or acquits our neighbour. It is our glory to follow the merciful Saviour who would not harshly condemn even the sinful woman taken in adultery, and never to imitate Procrustes.

WILLIAM SINCLAIR.



ART. VI.—THE SPANISH CHURCH.

CIRCUMSTANCES have recently occurred which have awakened a considerable amount of interest in the Church which bears the above title, and criticism, both adverse to and favourable, has made many familiar with a subject that was hardly thought of in many circles. It may, therefore, not be out of place to set down a few notes, made during a recent visit to Spain, to help those who have not yet enjoyed that advantage.

The title selected above, "The Spanish Church," is adopted for two reasons. First, the Church of Rome, though dominant in Spain for so long a time, and though acknowledged by her people, is not a *national* Church; and second, because the Church of which I write is the only one either aspiring to that name, or with any prospect of being so.

The Church of Rome, it is true, has interfered in the politics of Spain, has moulded them entirely to her own fancy for close upon four hundred years, has given tone to society, and we may say administered its laws, but yet remained an alien after all. Her centre was Rome, not Madrid. Her interests were those of the city of the seven hills, not of the Spanish, and she drew largely on the resources of the country whenever she could, and when the support of the pretended successor of St. Peter required it. Spain was, moreover, almost the last of the nations of Europe to acknowledge the supremacy of the See of Rome. And it was not until the reign of Philip II. that religious tyranny reached its climax, Rome became supreme, and the rising light of the Reformation effectually shut out, and Spain entered on that downward course which brought her from the proud position which she then occupied,

the foremost kingdom in Europe, to be unnoticed and unknown in European politics of the present day.

Then, on the other hand, there are at present several organizations at work for the evangelization of Spain. The various reformed Churches have established missions there, and are carrying on faithfully the preaching of the Gospel, with varied success. The Scotch and Irish Presbyterians, the Independents, and the Plymouth Brethren are all zealously labouring. And while one must feel regret at the apparent want of union which these various elements present, yet in the face of the gross darkness, the hideous idolatry, that meets one so glaringly at every turn, the Apostle's words commend themselves to the thoughtful Christian, "Whether in pretence or in reality Christ is preached: and therein I do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice;" and one must strongly sympathize with every effort that is being made to teach the people. I had the advantage of visiting the missions of these societies, as well as the privilege of mixing with the members of the reformed Episcopal Church, and while I would not for one moment withhold the credit due to the self-denying labours of the good men engaged in them and the success attending those labours, yet the conclusion irresistibly forced on one is that this latter has taken the true standing of a national Church. It has secured largely the confidence of many who have not as yet joined it; it stands on its own basis, and has a unity in its organization throughout the country that marks it out distinct from all the others. It was cheering to hear the little congregations joining so heartily in the responses in their Scriptural services, and in the hymns, many of which are very beautiful.

There are other considerations which serve to heighten the claim of this reformed Church to be the National Church of Spain.

In England and Ireland it has become the fashion to assert the continuity of these Churches with the ancient Churches of those lands. And in Ireland we do lay stress on the fact that we derive our Orders in an unbroken line from St. Patrick. Now, if this continuity be anything more than a curiosity, or, as Archbishop Laud put it, "a great conquest over the unstability of this present world," we find it possessed in a very high degree by this Spanish Church. The ancient Church, the Gothic Church, after abandoning Arianism in the sixth century, resisted for five centuries all attempts of the See of Rome to enforce its jurisdiction. Again and again were the attempts renewed, always, it is true, just as in the present day with Romish aggression, with some slight advantage on their side; but so

late as the year 1482, when the bishopric of Cuenca became vacant, and Sixtus IV. wished to nominate his own nephew to it, the interference was resented by Isabella the Catholic, who bestowed the see on her chaplain, Alphonso de Burgos; and when the Pope's legate came to Castile to remonstrate, he was ordered to quit the country at once, and it was not until after the intercession of Cardinal Mendoza that he was admitted to an audience of Ferdinand and Isabella, the result of which was the complete surrender of the Pope, and the issue of a bull, said to be at present among the archives of the Simancas, engaging to confirm the nominations of the Spanish monarchs to all ecclesiastical preferments.

It is not until the reign of Philip II. that we find the Church in Spain brought completely under the dominion of Rome. His father only prepared the way for it, out of hatred to the rising Protestant cause, and was himself too imperious to bend to such a yoke, even in his retreat at Yusté proving but a bad papist, but with Philip's accession every spark of religious liberty was trampled out, and Rome—dark, cruel, and superstitious—settled down as a pestilential cloud upon the land. It is remarkable that it was under the rule of this relentless bigot, who could besiege the city of Rome and make Paul IV. sue for peace when his own political schemes required it, that the chains of Romish intolerance and oppression were riveted on his own country.

The light of the glorious Reformation was then breaking over the rest of Europe; in no land more than in Spain had its advent been hailed with joy and apparent promise, for the reforms effected by Isabella and Cardinal Ximenes de Cisneros among the clergy had made them superior to almost any then in Europe. The new doctrines carried across the Pyrenees and into the Eastern ports made rapid progress until the arm of the Inquisition was turned against those who received them, and those of the reformers who escaped the fire and the dungeon fled to other lands, carrying their influence with them, and their piety, their earnestness, and their learning are attested by a large literature which is to be found in the public libraries of almost every country of Europe but their own, on subjects connected with the Reformation and theology.

The late Emperor of Germany, becoming aware of the existence of these works, had a collection of them made and published, with a memoir of their authors, as far as that could be done, under the able editorship of Dr. Boehmer, and the work has recently been translated into English.

Prescott, summing up the effects of the suppression of the Reformation in Spain, says: "Never was there a persecution which did its work more thoroughly. The blood of the

martyrs is commonly said to be the seed of the Church. But the storm of persecution fell as heavily on the Spanish Protestants as it did on the Albigenses in the thirteenth century, blighting everything, so that no germ remained for future harvests. Spain might boast that the stain of heresy no longer defiled the hem of her garment, but at what a price was this purchased! Not merely the lives and fortunes of a few thousand of the existing generation, but by the disastrous consequence entailed for ever on the country! Folded under the dark wing of the Inquisition, Spain was shut out from the light which broke over the rest of Europe, stimulating to greater exercise in every department of knowledge. The effect was visible in every department of science, not in the speculative alone, but in the physical and practical. Hence those frantic experiments, so often repeated, in the financial administration of the kingdom, which made Spain the by-word of the nations, and which ended in the ruin of trade, the prostration of credit, and finally the bankruptcy of the State."

For upwards of three centuries and a half Spain has lain under this incubus and continued to descend. Not all the advantage which ought to have accrued from the discovery of the New World—which fell to her lot—not all the gold stolen from Mexico and Peru, or wrung from the Jews and the Moors, could serve to keep her afloat. As one travels through the land, rich in all natural resources, the dreariness of desolation is apparent; every little eminence is topped with its church, crumbling to decay, inside whose dark walls a lifeless ceremonial is drawled out with perfunctory monotony, while all around lie the straggling vestiges of peasant life, unsustained by any industry, unenlivened by any signs of prosperity.

Prescott was not right, however, in saying that every germ of the ancient plant had been destroyed in Spain. We know that from time to time there have been shoots from the old stock—revivals of spiritual religion, risings against spiritual tyranny—even in Spain. Many of us remember the case of Matamoros and the strong feelings it excited some thirty-five years ago; but these individual efforts were soon put down, and it was not until the tide of revolution which swept over Europe in the middle of this century reached Spain and overturned the reigning dynasty that religious liberty and the rights of conscience were regained by the people; but with that event it was remarkable how soon inquiry was turned in the direction of a purer religion. Revolutions have not, in general, much about them to commend them to the Christian mind, but that in Spain had a remarkable feature. An old sea captain, who had for many years been trading to the ports

of Spain, told the writer that very shortly after the revolution broke out he happened to enter Bilbao with his vessel, and that he had no sooner arrived than he was simply besieged by crowds of Spaniards asking if he would give them Bibles, and begging him on his next voyage to bring a cargo of them from England, and when on his return he brought a goodly supply they were carried away by the people as a great treasure.

The British and Foreign Bible Society at once embraced this opportunity, and nobly stepped in to sow the precious seed, it is to be hoped, of a great and glorious harvest. And if on the bookstalls of Madrid and Seville and other large towns the "Santa Biblia" is occasionally to be met with, as it is, it is the hopeful evidence that ignorant prejudice is giving way—that the Bible is no longer a proscribed book in Spain, and that the Spanish themselves are now not ashamed or afraid of having it in their possession, but that it is passing into the current literature of the country.

It was under these circumstances that the recent reformation took form. There were not wanting, even then, those who sighed for the light—those who were earnestly searching for it—those who saw some faint glimmering of it, and were patiently awaiting the dawn.

The revolt from the Church of Rome had been deep and wide; smothered, indeed, under the power wielded by that Church, but intensely bitter against it, and ready to break away, as it has done, on the first opportunity into open infidelity, because it knew nothing, and had the means of knowing nothing between the two. But some labourers had been at work, prayerfully, earnestly, quietly—Christian men from England, whose business or professions brought them to reside for short periods in Spain, were moved to compassion when they saw the darkness and ignorance, and gathered little bands around them to listen to Bible truth and to drink in the "good news." But with the opening afforded by the revolution various branches of the Church of Christ felt themselves called on to enter the field, and did so with success. And was there not both cause that they should so feel and room for them to work? A recent writer remarks that "A religion that has no moral effect upon the people serves for nothing. This has been precisely the result of religious ignorance in Iberia. The people have been surfeited with fantastic notions of saints, with thousands of petty observances of feast days, etc.; but what effect has it had on their morals? They have been brought up on superstitious lines, but have not been taught the principles of common morality. Religion in Spain thrives on ignorance and deception. It

harbours and fosters both." There are circumstances, however, which determine the mind to act in one way rather than another, and while wishing success to all that is done in Christ's Name, we naturally feel more drawn to those who think as we think, who see truth in the same light, and who adopt the same principles which we have adopted, both with regard to matters of Church government and the ordering of public worship.

Among the Spanish reformers there were a number of men who were sufficiently large-minded to see that under the huge incubus of Romish superstition and impiety there were vestiges of the truth, forms that once had life, principles that were correct, though they had been twisted into shapes almost unrecognisable, threads—feeble threads—of historic connection with past purity, and they determined to retain what was good while clearing away all that did not stand the test of God's Word; to retain the form of Church government, the use of a liturgy, and the threefold order of the ministry. In this they were aided by several English and Irish Churchmen, among whom are to be mentioned the Rev. Mr. Tugwell, and more recently the Archbishop of Dublin, the latter of whom has written an interesting preface to the English translation of the "Revised Prayer-Book of the Reformed Spanish Church."

Two circumstances favoured the formation of this Church in Spain.

First, a goodly number of men who had received Orders in the Church of Rome, and were so far instructed as to be able to teach others in turn, were awakened to see the errors of the Church to which they belonged, and to come out from it. The number of priests, indeed, who have left that communion in Spain are very large, and are to be met with in various walks of life; too many of them to be found among the "free-thinkers;" but those to whom I allude embraced the truths of the Gospel, and were fitted to enter upon ministerial duties. One of them—a man who occupies an important post in the Church, and is doing good work among his fellow-countrymen—came to England some years ago as domestic chaplain to a Spanish nobleman. While living there he made the acquaintance of the gardener at the house where the family was stopping, and this man, in his humble way, asked the Spanish priest as to the hope that was in him, led him to study the New Testament, and this led to his conversion, his leaving the Church of Rome and finally joining the reformation. Others, in different ways, have been led to adopt the same course, so that the Church stands fairly well fortified in this respect: not well enough, indeed, for the ever-widening sphere, the new doors continually opening, and the

almost unlimited field before the Church, but quite sufficient for it to claim affinity with our own branch of the Church, as well as to establish its catholicity.

The second circumstance is the existence of the liturgy of the ancient Spanish Church, known as the Muzarabic. The history of that liturgy is remarkable, and, though pretty well known, will bear repetition here.

It derives its name from the appellation given by the Moors to all Christians whom they conquered, and who were willing to live under their rule. This was the case with the inhabitants of most of the large towns, where they were not only tolerated, but lived on friendly terms with their Moslem masters, and in some cases, as at Toledo and Cordova, even held their worship under the same roof where the Mahomedans worshipped. The word "Mustararab," which means a person aping the Arab, was applied to these because they adopted the manners, dress, habits, and even language of the ruling race, was afterwards corrupted to "Muçarab," and finally to its present form, in which it has become better known as describing their ancient liturgy than the people themselves. This liturgy has been ascribed to Isidore of Seville, but is in reality much older—at least in some parts—and on the return of the Goths to the Catholic faith, under Riccared, many hymns and prayers by Leander and others were added to it.

Its known divergence from the Romish Missal excited the hostile feelings of the Pope of Rome. John X. had it examined, and, the report proving favourable, it was allowed to remain as it was. Alexander II. in 1064 ordered its abolition, but still the Spanish Church clung to it. In 1067 the attempt was renewed, but was again resisted, and it was not until after Alphonso VI. reconquered Toledo that, by intrigue and every other artifice that could be employed, a part of the Spanish prelates were gained over, and the Roman ritual established in some parts of Spain. The city of Toledo held firmly to the old book, and it was at that time, 1087, that the trial, of which Robertson gives the account, took place, first by an appeal to arms, and then to a trial by fire. But though the Muzarabic ritual came out triumphant in both cases, it was allowed in only six churches, and by degrees died out in them. In the sixteenth century, however, Cardinal Ximenes appointed to the cathedral the Muzarabic Chapel, in which the Spanish rite is in use to the present day; at the same time he made alterations in the text, removed some of the offices, and added others, so that while unique in one way, it is but a mutilated thing after all.

As it stands, it proved a valuable aid to the reformers, and

gave them a basis from which to start. Taking it for their foundation of a book of common prayer, they proceeded carefully, testing, as they say, every portion by the Word of God, and they have succeeded in arranging for themselves a really excellent and Scriptural liturgy. As the Muzarabic did not contain all that was necessary for the compilation of a complete liturgy, they have borrowed from other sources, modern and ancient, and added compositions of their own, many very admirable prayers, etc., by Señor Cabrera.

In the translation of this book these several portions are indicated in the margin, with notes of the respective sources from whence derived.

This Church is represented by congregations pretty widely scattered over the Peninsula, and these in very many cases have become centres with branches in outlying districts mission-stations, where, for want of ordained pastors, the work can be carried on largely by evangelists and teachers, superintended by the ministers at the headquarters. These stations might be multiplied almost indefinitely, were the means forthcoming and ordained men to be had. At Seville, for instance, there is a most interesting station at Osuna, the life of which is a Bible-woman of great earnestness; this place is visited by the Rev. F. Palomares; but there are very many other towns in the Vega or Plain of Seville where there are similar opportunities, where there are very many longing to have a teacher among them.

An organization such as this may well feel its need of a chief pastor—a Bishop—and it is with a feeling of that want that it has turned its eyes to the Church in these lands, one constituted as it desires to be, and one from which, for many reasons, it might expect the truest and most brotherly sympathy. The dubious answer given by the Lambeth Conference was calculated to chill the warmth of affection kindling in the hearts of those Spanish reformers towards England, and it argues well for the staunchness of their principles and their patient loyalty to them, that they have not been led to throw themselves into the arms of some of the Nonconformist bodies.

GEO. YEATES.

