

and so labour for Him that even the success of the past may be obliterated in the more complete and more triumphant successes of the time to come.

J. F. KITTO.

ART. III.—"I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH."

"I BELIEVE in the Holy Catholic Church."

An Article of Belief difficult of comprehension to many, unintelligible to some. It is not, I take it, so much the subject, the Church, as the epithets applied to the subject, One, Holy, Catholic—the distinguishing "affections," as Pearson calls them, of this Church—which perplex our minds and try our faith. We all accept, I suppose, without difficulty as an article of belief, that Christ came to form a community upon earth, spoken of as *future* before Pentecost ("Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I *will* build my Church"), as *present* after Pentecost ("And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved"). That admission to it was, and is, by Baptism. That the conditions of membership were, "steadfast continuance in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in the breaking of the bread and in the prayers." That the conditions still are, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." We accept the definition of the Nineteenth Article, that "the visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men," the aggregate of all the flocks of professing believers in Christ, "in the which the pure Word of God is preached, and the two Sacraments are, in their right way, administered." We admit that within this visible Church, whose boundaries we can see, there is an invisible Church whose boundaries we cannot see, and the limits of which extend far beyond the visible Church on earth, including the great multitude who are at rest. All this we most of us receive without difficulty, and embody it in that article of our Creed, "I believe in the Church."

But when we look at the spectacle of Christianity as it stands before the world to-day; when we look at the Roman, the Greek and the Anglican Churches, the Lutheran, the Presbyterian, and a hundred other sects, not merely differentiated one from the other by minor points, while agreeing in essentials and wishing each other well, but arrayed against each other in deadliest feud, intolerant of each other's beliefs, hurling anathemas to and fro, and one-half of Christendom bent on nothing short of the extermination of the other half, we may well be startled at the description of these severed, antagonistic hosts as "One, Holy Catholic Church"; and men may be excused if they ask, and we clergy may well ask

ourselves in order that we may return answer to them, What means this article of a Christian's Creed, "I believe in *The*" (or *One* as the Nicene Creed has it) "Holy Catholic Church"? And the subject is well worthy a Christian man's thought, in order, first, that his belief may be clear; and, second, that his conduct may be guided and stimulated by a belief that is definite; for hazy creed and feeble action are common companions.

"I believe in The Holy Catholic Church."

Yes! I believe in the *Ideal* Catholicity of a Church that is not Catholic as it ought to be. The *Idea* of its Founder was Catholicity. His "marching orders" are sufficient proof, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." The vision of the sheet with its miscellaneous contents so instructed St. Peter about the meaning of those orders that he said, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him." A formidable obstacle to Catholicity was thus, in early times, removed.

The Church has in it the essentials of Catholicity; it is universal in its offers, universal in its suitability, and universal in its adaptability. It is in character and genius eminently diffusive. "Universal," according to Pearson's definition, "as embracing all sorts of persons, as to be disseminated through all nations, as comprehending all ages, as containing all necessary and saving truths, as curing all spiritual diseases, and planting all graces in the souls of men."

But we look abroad at the end of nearly nineteen centuries, and what do we see? Anything but Catholicity. A Church touching a mere fraction of the race; a Church gone, dried up, stamped out in places where it flourished once.

Again, I believe in the *Ideal* Holiness of a Church that is not holy as it ought to be. The *Idea* of its Founder was the holiness of its members. "He gave Himself for it that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Its Head is the Holy One. Each of its members is indwelt by the Holy One; each is obligated to holiness, *κλήτος ἅγιος*, "called to be a saint."

But what do we see? Laxity everywhere: laxity in doctrine, in morals, in personal consecration. Individuals, no doubt, aiming high, and, thank God, reaching high; but these, brilliant exceptions.

And yet again, I believe in the *Ideal* Unity of a Church that is not One as it ought to be. The *Idea* of its Founder was the Unity of His Church. He signified before that unity by calling it "the *kingdom* of heaven" in the opening of His

parables, and when foretelling its approach. In the wonderful prayer which He made the night before His death, He offered up a great petition for the preservation of its unity; "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee; that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me." Its rites and ceremonies do distinctly assume unity, and are designed to promote it; "We being many are one bread and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread."

But what is the experience of facts? Sadly at variance with the Founder's idea. Most of us have taken part in the ceremony of laying the foundation-stone of a new church. We have walked in procession to the site, we have sung that fine hymn, "Onward Christian Soldiers," and, as we have passed some building, a Roman Catholic Chapel perhaps, these words have been on our lips:

Like a mighty army, moves the Church of God;
 Brothers, we are treading where the saints have trod.
We are not divided, all one body we,
 One in hope and doctrine, one in charity.

And the bitter irony of the words has struck us painfully. I believe, then, in the *ideal* Unity, Holiness and Catholicity of a Church, which is not in any of these particulars what it ought to be.

And I also believe that chief among the reasons why the Holiness of this Church and the Catholicity are not what they should be, is because the *Unity* is so far from perfection. And further I believe, that the more and more its Unity becomes an appreciable reality, and in proportion as it becomes so, in like proportion will its Holiness deepen and its Catholicity widen. Let me prove my position, and illustrate my meaning, by a reference to facts. Look at Eastern Equatorial Africa at the present moment! Its contending factions! If they were tribal, or heathen and Mohammedan, it would concern us little; or if it were heathen against Christian, or Mohammedan against Christian, it would not surprise us, nor would it greatly grieve us. But there in the Dark Kingdom, where Satan's seat is, it is Christian against Christian! Why, it's a disgrace to Christendom! Can anything be a greater hindrance to the universal acceptance of the Gospel, *i.e.*, to the realized Catholicity of the Church, than the spectacle of "piebald Christianity" at which heathen nations are invited to look?

Again, look how things work at home—on a large scale, if you will. See how the great question of Elementary Education has fared in consequence of our "unhappy divisions." It was

no wish of the Statesmen who, in 1870, passed their famous measure to divorce Religious Teaching from the care of the State. They were only driven thus to check, as we think, the progress of Christ's Kingdom amongst the youth of our land, because of the extreme difficulty of reconciling the religious differences of Christians.

Again, how can a proper standard of Holiness be maintained without discipline? And how can discipline be properly enforced in the absence of unity? You deal, *e.g.*, with a child in your Sunday-school as you know it ought to be dealt with, for its own good and the good of the school. What happens? The child goes elsewhere, and is received without a character and without inquiry. You deal with a member of your congregation in the same way. What happens? He is received with open arms by some opposing sect, with the result that, instead of the man's fault being corrected, his vanity is flattered. This evil is keenly felt in different parts of the Mission Field; notably, we believe, in Sierra Leone. "In the Primitive Church there was a godly discipline" which the Church of later days has been unable to enforce, but for the restoration of which we are taught on Ash Wednesday to express the wish. We need not, I think, adopt the amended form of the old clergyman who always read that parenthetical wish thus, "Until the said discipline may be restored again, which is *not* to be wished."

These, then, are, we take it, the details of belief covered by, and included in, that article of the Creed, "I believe in *The Holy Catholic Church*." Belief in a Church existing from the Day of Pentecost onwards, and existing still; belief in its *ideal*, but not now realized, Catholicity, Holiness, and Unity; and belief in the dependence of more perfectly realized Holiness and Catholicity upon more perfectly attained Unity.

But beliefs are valuable and genuine, only as they affect conduct. *Then* is my faith real when I act upon it. Our Divine Master will not be satisfied with assenting acknowledgments of His Ideals, unaccompanied by any effort to act in a manner consistent with those acknowledgments. His Ideals are to be at once the inspirers of our hopes and the stimulants of our efforts. What then, we may inquire, are some of the practical issues which flow from the previous reflections?

How should belief in the ideal Catholicity of the Church influence our conduct? Its natural outcome is missionary effort. There are those who particularly pride themselves on the title "Catholic" who do not always give the most practical proof that they realize the obligation which the title entails. We often wish that the great work of foreign missions

were more warmly supported by those who find pleasure in arrogating to themselves, with peculiar emphasis, this distinguishing name of "Catholic." Thankful may we be that our beloved Church of England possesses in the Church Missionary Society an institution the noblest, probably, and best in the world for giving practical expression to the Church's Catholicity.

How should belief in the ideal Holiness of the Church influence our conduct? Its natural outcome is *sensitiveness about sin*; conscientious regard to discipline as far as circumstances admit. In the attempts to secure holiness, we must keep our Lord's cautions in mind. While He makes no qualifying statements about the Catholicity and Unity of His Church, He does about its Holiness. In reply to the servant's question, "Wilt Thou, then, that we go and gather them up?" He said, "Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them."

How should belief in the ideal Unity of the Church influence our conduct? Its natural outcome is *abhorrence* of division. I emphasize "abhorrence" as distinct from indifference or even dislike.

And how should belief about the relation of this latter to the other two affect our conduct? It should develop an overpowering desire to face the difficulties in the way of union, with an honest purpose and sincere desire to overcome them.

It is no unpromising step towards Unity that the mood of dissatisfaction with the existing state of things has become so generally prevalent. Due regard to the subject under discussion may well explain and justify (if justification be needed) the action of those who have attended the Reunion Conferences at Grindelwald and elsewhere. The aim of these meetings has been to bring together men of widely different views and belonging to different religious communities, but all animated by a common desire for union and communion with their fellow Christians, so far as such union may be attained without compromise of principle or sacrifice of essentials. That the Grindelwald Conference was fairly representative may be gathered from the fact that, of our own Church, two bishops, a dean, an archdeacon, two professors of ecclesiastical history, besides canons and others, either actually took part in the debates or had signified their intention of doing so; that the Old Catholics were represented by their most accomplished orator, Père Hyacinthe; that the Reformed Churches of the Continent appeared in the person of Pastor Theodore Monod; and that men of foremost note amongst the Wesleyans, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and other bodies, contributed to the discussions. Was it not something that such an assembly

should be gathered together at all?—that they should be able to meet in friendly debate and express their views frankly and fully? Some looked with eager, hopeful eyes to organic unity, fusion *i.e.* of all into one, as a future possibility. But to most of us *that* looked as hard of access as the precipitous heights of the Wetterhorn which overshadowed us. Still, we could not but remember how the Wetterhorn, and many another Alpine giant once thought inaccessible, had been conquered by the combined counsel, the patient investigation, and persevering effort of enthusiastic Alpine climbers, who were bent upon surmounting such difficulties: and we could not but admire the hardy, almost desperate, hope which eyed these religious mountains of difficulty without despair. But most of us thought that though organic union might be neither practicable nor even desirable, still there was much in the direction of reunion which was well worthy of pursuit, and within the possibility of realization; lesser heights which might be attained if the steeper summits could not yet be scaled. Prominent among these are:

(1) *Clearer Recognition*, so that the non-Episcopal Communion should not be un-Churched; that the views of our leading divines of the reign of Elizabeth—Whitgift, Jewell, Cooper, and others—as well as those of the judicious Hooker, may more largely prevail. These men never venture to urge the *exclusive* claims of Episcopacy, nor to connect the Succession with the validity of the Sacraments. There is a wide difference between believing the Episcopal form of Church Government to be best, and believing it to be indispensable. Even a High Church writer like Bishop Andrewes says, "That though Episcopal Government be of Divine institution, yet it is not so absolutely necessary as that there can be no Church, nor Sacraments, nor Salvation without it. He is blind that sees not many Churches flourishing without it, and he must have a heart as hard as iron that will deny them salvation." The "silver line of continuity" is indeed a precious possession, and Anglicans may be thankful that they possess it; but if it cannot be shown to be essential, the Ecclesiastical body that is without it may surely be a *true Church*, though, in this respect, a poorer one than its neighbour.

(2) *More Concerted Action*, at home and abroad; for the enforcing of discipline and the economizing of power. There is quite enough to tax to the utmost extent the combined strength and effort of both Churchmen and Nonconformists, in order thoroughly to evangelize the masses of our countrymen at home; while abroad the gain would be enormous every way, if the "spheres of influence" were more definitely assigned, if the different Bodies which occupied them were more entirely

trusted by the other Bodies, and if intrusion were more sharply branded as a breach of charity and a waste of power.

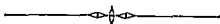
(3) *Confederated Union of some kind*, by which, without forfeiture of cherished opinions, with permitted diversity of rites and ceremonies as well as modes of worship, there might be some acknowledgment of corporate connection, and some plan of corporate action through a representative authority on the part of those who accept the Nicene Creed as their common basis of belief.

These are ideas for which we wish, at least, a more definite place in the minds of Christian people. It is only as they are allowed to ferment in many minds that satisfactory solutions of the difficulties which beset their realization are likely to be found. "I keep it before me," was the simple answer of Sir Isaac Newton, when asked his method of attacking a complicated problem.

We will not forget that there are other means besides submission for securing unity, and that unity is consistent with considerable lack of uniformity, with wide difference of function, with absolute lack of contact. If it be not permitted us on earth ever to see a realization of the Master's Ideal, we will still breathe the prayer, "That it may please Thee to inspire continually the Universal Church with the spirit of truth, unity, and concord."

The goal of our most sanguine dreams will be reached at last when the glory of the Apostolic Vision bursts upon our sight, "Lo! a great multitude which no man could number of all nations, and kindreds, and people and tongues, stood before the Throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands." While with tens of thousands of tongues gathered from all antagonistic sections of the rent, divided, mutilated Church, *one* song floats upon the ear, *one* melody unites the Redeemed from every age and from every clime, "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

B. LAMB.



ART. IV.—FASTING COMMUNION NEITHER PRIMITIVE, NOR APOSTOLIC, NOR DIVINE.

THE Holy Communion was instituted in the evening. "Now when even was come, He sat down with the twelve" (Matt. xxvi. 20). "AND AS THEY WERE EATING Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat, this is My body" (Matt. xxvi. 26).