

*I Believe in One Catholic and Apostolic Church*, by  
Frederick William Faber. (1840).

I BELIEVE IN ONE  
CATHOLIC AND APOSTOLIC  
C H U R C H.

NICENE CREED.

BY THE REV.  
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That thou mayest know how  
thou oughtest to behave  
thyself in the house of God,  
which is the Church of the  
living God, the pillar and  
ground of the truth.—1 TIM.  
iii. 15.

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## I BELIEVE IN ONE CATHOLIC AND APOSTOLIC CHURCH.

### NICENE CREED.

THERE was once a time, though alas! it is many hundred years since, when the Holy Catholic Church was a glorious building, all one, like the seamless vest of her Master, Christ. The remote cities of Egypt and Syria, Greece and Rome, Gaul and Britain, were all one body, in one Lord, one faith, one baptism.<sup>1</sup> The voice of discord was scarcely heard within her. Heresy found no resting-place within the sanctuary. The Church was like the New Jerusalem above, which is the mother of us all. East and west, north and south, continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.<sup>2</sup> These were happy times, a great deal too happy to last. It was a state of things too unlike this world; and it was easy to see, that as soon as ever the Church and the world became friends, one or other of the two must become very much altered: and as we all know that the world is very pliable, and has a way of seeming to give up a great deal, while in fact it gives up nothing at all, it was most probable that the Church would be the sufferer. Thus it turned out. She left her first love, and so the glories of her candlestick were dimmed. It is not necessary for my purpose, as practical to ourselves, to follow her course as she journeyed from east to west. Long time abode we in Rome, doing as Rome bid us, albeit she was a hard task-mistress.

At last it came about from a variety of circumstances that there was a religious movement all over Europe, in some places tumultuous, in other places under authority. Kings and princes joined it to serve their own

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<sup>1</sup> Eph. iv. 4, 5.

<sup>2</sup> Acts ii. 42.

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ends, and the people followed one side or other, and called themselves by party names which they did not understand. This was in the sixteenth century. England was affected by the movement. The king and his nobles were impure, greedy, tyrannical, and did not care for religion, but only for the gratification of their lusts, and the unholy plunder of Church lands. But out of it all God brought some blessings, even through the means of these bad men. The English Church made changes in her doctrine, and her ritual; because of which the Roman Church separated from her. Division brought with it its usual evils, and sad excesses. Other men fell off from the Church of England on the other side. Every man thought he was to be a Church to himself. One party thought this the most important doctrine of Christianity, another party thought another, and a third party chose a third. And so they separated, always in anger, and each took his own path; a most unblessed strife, and, like the parting of Lot from Abraham, full of danger and of trouble. The Church of England, too, was quite unable to remedy this. The kings and rulers of the times would not let her have her discipline back again. She had trusted too much to them. She had let them take matters too much into their own hands. She had not had faith enough in her own powers and titles. And this was what of it; this was the way she was punished. She has never ceased to regret it. She humbles herself for it, and deploras her weakness in the commination on Ash-Wednesday year by year.

Meanwhile she did not seek to invent a new system for herself; but to reform her old one. With all teachableness and much meek wisdom she turned herself to the purest, youngest days of Christ's virgin Church: and in her doctrine and her discipline, as well as in her solemn and decent ceremonial, she took care to fashion most things "according to the pattern God had showed her in the primitive Church." And she was blessed in her deed. Sect rose after sect, and fell; while she moved calmly and

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steadily along, holding up on high the clear lamp of truth; and thus will she move on, be the world never so unquiet, if only her own sons do not turn their arms one against another in unhallowed strife. Now this is the state of things we find ourselves in at present. The Church keeps on in her old way. But almost numberless sects have risen up along side of her, some having forsworn the Apostles' fellowship, and some, alas that it should be so! the Apostles' doctrine, and some even denying the Lord that bought them. They have pitched their tents all about the holy camp, like the mixed multitude that followed the true Israel of God from out of the land of Egypt.

There was a time, as I said, when the Church and the world were *visibly* different bodies: and so long as it was so the Church did well. When they met it was ever in blood, the blood of the saints, and the Church was strengthened by it. But now they are mingled together, so far as ever they can mingle, and we have suffered from it. A sort of sleepiness has come over the world, as if it were growing old and waxing to its decay. Its activity has become restless, feverish, and intermittent, like that of an aged man: and if love is to wax cold, and faith to be rare in the earth, when the Son of Man shall come, may He not now be at hand? It is not for us to know the times and seasons which the Father hath put in His Own power; but what we may discern in the signs of the times that we are bidden to discern. Therefore let each man be thoughtful, and ponder all the strange things he is now seeing, and commune with his own heart, and be still. There shall no divination prosper against Israel.

However in this state of things we *may* be asked by others, we *must* sometimes ask ourselves, Why are we members of the Church of England rather than of any other of the religious societies about us? A very common, and for plain men a very sufficient answer is, that we belong to the Church because our forefathers for generations and

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generations have done so.

All change is bad from its very nature. It is full of evil; it unsettles and disturbs; it is full of the world; it is the very spirit of the world; and nothing worse can be said of it. Whenever we are tempted to change any thing, we must not only be quite sure that the old system contained evils, but also that those evils were more numerous and more important, than the ones we must inevitably bring in by change. So cautious, so slow, so meek must we be; so different from those rash and headstrong men who are for changing every thing, though they are not certain that they know all the hidden uses of that which they attack. But change in religion is of all things most perilous. We all of us feel how intimately our spiritual life is bound up in little things, and how change of time and place and company is always putting us wrong. It dislocates our religious habits; our religious ways of thinking, and acting, and speaking. This is the great reason why we should oppose all changes in our ancient Liturgy. It would disturb and unsettle the people. The Prayer-Book is their own Book: it is their own inheritance, which the Church has given them; and many a time in the hour of trouble, of sickness, and even of death, has a fragment of some one of the Church prayers rested on the sufferer's memory, full of gentlest power to sanctify and calm his soul.

In this way, therefore, we naturally cling to the Church of our Fathers; but more than this. It is here in the Church, and here only, that we meet with them. We sit upon the seats whereon they sat to listen to the accents of the everlasting Word; and they are in their graves about us. There their bodies rest till the day of judgment; and the spirits of many, very many of them are, we trust, in Abraham's bosom. We come here to worship among the dead, to worship where we rest ourselves, where we ourselves shall rise once more to meet the Master at His coming. This is a very solemn thought: and, when St. Paul

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tells us that we have already “come to the spirits of just men made perfect,”<sup>3</sup> we may well feel that there is a sense in which the Dead form part of every Christian congregation. The dust beneath our feet is full of life, and very precious in the sight of God: and shall we lightly leave a place of such holy sadness to go we know not where, to follow we know not whom? Surely not; and this is the reason why I said that for plain men it was quite a sufficient answer to say that we belong to the Church because our forefathers did.

But now-a-days this is not enough to silence questioners, not always enough to silence ourselves. Why did our forefathers belong to the Church, for there were plenty of sects even in their times? They could not have belonged to it because *their* forefathers had done; for *they* had been sons of Rome. This is what men say; and the answer is very plain, and we must take heed to it. Though our forefathers were sons of Rome, yet were they still more sons of the Church of England, just as much so as we are, and we no more than they were. Romanists have said so often, and with so much noise, that we are schismatics, that ignorant and indolent people think it is the easiest way to believe it, and to argue about it no more. Our forefathers *did* belong to the Church of England. We will not leave them: we will not have them taken from us; we will not be cut off from communion with them, those fathers of the old English Church. Our forefathers in Henry the Eighth’s time did continue to belong to the Church, because *their* forefathers also, in the days of the Henries, Richards, and Edwards, before that, had belonged to it. But we may find also a further answer in the Church herself, some excellence in her, some attraction in her; something or other, in short, which was to be had in the Church, and was not to be had out of it. The Church has many such things as

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<sup>3</sup> Heb. xii. 23.

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these, but there are three in particular which would come strongly home to plain pious people in all times, but in troubled times particularly; and on each of these I would make a few plain remarks, by way of furnishing you with a ready and I trust a complete answer to the insidious questions of our enemies. These three gifts are—*the lawful administration of the Word and Sacraments—a primitive and set form of Prayer—and stability.*—The time is now come when these matters must cease to be merely the business of the scholar. They have a practical usefulness to ourselves as humble but affectionate children of the Church within whose quiet walls we have grown up. But there is still another point to clear up before we begin—“What is the Church? We hear this word on all sides of us now. What does it mean? What ideas are we to attach to it? What clear meaning are we to give it?” First I will tell you what it does not mean. It does not mean the invisible company of the really pious, the elect, the predestinated, and so on. It does not mean any congregation gathered together any how, and worshipping any how, and governed any how, professing to believe the Bible, and interpreting it any how. It does not mean the established Church of England—that is only part of it, and its being established has nothing to do with making it a church. It would be just as much a Church, just as much to be obeyed, just as much to be honoured, if the establishment were destroyed in the next session of parliament. Now I will tell you what the Church is. It is a visible society, called in Scripture the Body of Christ. It is a visible institution governed by bishops, priests, and deacons, baptizing all nations, explaining the Bible in creeds, giving the seven-fold gifts of the Holy Ghost in Confirmation, absolving the penitent from sins, feeding the faithful with the Body and Blood of Christ in the Holy Communion, and continuing itself by creating new bishops, and priests, and deacons, by the laying on of hands in apostolical succession. It is the outward visible form of

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Christ's religion, which exists in it only and not out of it. It is a vessel which all men can see and touch, a vessel filled, informed, lighted up, by the true faith. If any break it or spill any of the truth out of it, that truth, so spilled, loses its fragrance and its virtue; and they who carry it away are heretics and schismatics, and in the end make no profit of their sacrilege. In the Apostles' creed we call the Church holy and Catholic: in the Nicene creed we say it is one, and apostolic. It is one because it is built on the one faith once delivered to the saints, getting life from the one Incarnate Lord, directed by the one Spirit, washing us with the one Baptism, and leading us all to the one God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in us all. It is *Catholic*, which is a Greek word meaning universal, because it is not in England only, or in France only, or at Rome only, but over all the world, differing in language, in dress, in ceremonies, in pomps, in ways and customs, in learning, and wealth, and grandeur, and the number of bishops, and the beauty of cathedrals, and the ornamenting of churches, sometimes in more error, sometimes in less error, yet still over all the broad earth holding and teaching, as the Church universal cannot fail to hold and teach, the one Lord and one faith, directed by the one Spirit, washing with the one Baptism, and leading to the one God and Father of all. It is *holy*, because He who founded it and is with it is holy, even Christ the Lord; because the end of it is a holy end, the salvation of souls, whereunto it calleth us with a holy calling; because the institutions of it, its gifts and graces, its prayers and praises, its powers and absolutions and sacraments, are holy; because holy angels minister to the heirs of salvation within it, and the spirits of just men made perfect are in it, and good and holy men on earth are its children. It is *apostolic*, because the bishops are the successors of the Apostles; because it is under the form of government instituted by the Apostles through the leading of the Holy Ghost; and because it keeps to the



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Apostles' doctrine as well as fellowship. This is the Church, One, Holy Catholic, Apostolic.

Having now made this matter plain, we will speak of the LAWFUL ADMINISTRATION OF THE WORD AND SACRAMENTS. When our Lord and Saviour had broken the portals of the grave, He stayed awhile upon earth to cheer and support His Disciples in the doubtful and dangerous circumstances in which they found themselves. It was this very solemn time which He selected for investing them with that high and awful commission to preach the Gospel, and to baptize all nations in the name of the ever blessed Trinity. It was in the evening of the first day of the week that the little band of faithful ones were met together with doors shut for fear of the Jews.<sup>4</sup> "Suddenly Jesus stood in the midst of them, and said, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." Such was the evening of the first Sunday ever observed in the world. And when the Master ascended up on high, He repeated this commission, and added, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Such was the beginning of the Christian Priesthood. By this divine ordination all grace had been given to the Apostles; they were the rightful fountains from whence all Church authority was to flow. By virtue of this power they added to their own number St. Matthias; and afterwards, as the needs of the Church increased, they consecrated St. James, a relation of our Lord's, bishop of Jerusalem: St. Paul consecrated Timothy and Titus, bishops of Ephesus and Crete, and St. Peter consecrated St. Mark, Bishop of Alexandria. None were to preach who were not sent, none had the gift in them, save by the laying on of

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<sup>4</sup> St. John xx. 21.

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hands. When the visiting of the sick, the distribution of alms, and baptizing, multiplied in the hands of the Apostles, they constituted the Order of Deacons; of whom St. Stephen and St. Philip were chief ornaments; and lastly, we read of their ordaining elders, or, as it is in the Greek, presbyters,<sup>5</sup> in every church, praying with fasting, and commending them to the Lord on whom they believed. These three Holy Orders of Apostles or Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, were thus established. From the earliest times down to the present have they been by God's good Providence preserved in the Church.

The Church of England, in the preface to the Ordination Services, has these express words: "It is evident unto all men diligently reading the Holy Scripture and ancient authors, that from the Apostles' time there have been these orders of Ministers in Christ's Church—Bishops, Priests, and Deacons—which offices were evermore had in such reverend estimation, that no man might presume to execute any of them, except he were first called, tried, examined, and known to have such qualities as are requisite for the same; and also by publick Prayer, with Imposition of Hands, were approved and admitted thereunto by lawful authority. And therefore, to the intent that these orders may be continued, and reverently used and esteemed, in the united Church of England and Ireland; no man shall be accounted or taken to be a lawful Bishop, Priest, or Deacon, in the united Church of England and Ireland, or suffered to execute any of the said functions, except he be called, tried, examined, and admitted thereunto, according to the form hereafter following, or hath had formerly Episcopal Consecration, or Ordination." And it is on this account that, if a clergyman of the Roman Communion does in this country join himself to the English Church, his ordination is accounted good and valid,

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<sup>5</sup> Acts xiv. 23.

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because the Roman Church has episcopal ordination and an apostolical ministry. He is not ordained over again, but simply licensed by a Bishop to teach and preach in his diocese. Whereas, if a Protestant dissenter, who has been accustomed to call himself a minister of the Gospel, repents of his schism, and is anxious to become a clergyman, the English Church considers him merely as a layman, and not as a minister of the Gospel; and makes him a clergyman by episcopal ordination. Furthermore, in ordaining priests, the Church, by the Bishop, uses these grave words, the "Receivers humbly kneeling upon their knees," the Bishop "with the priests present laying their hands severally upon the head of every one that re-ceive the Order of Priesthood"—the Bishop saying to each—"Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands. Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained. And be thou a faithful dispenser of the word of God, and of His Holy Sacraments; in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

The laying on of hands can be traced from the Apostles downwards in a long succession of bishops throughout the whole world; and so absolutely necessary was Apostolical Ordination considered in primitive times, that St. Ignatius, a contemporary of the Apostles, distinctly says, "Without a Bishop, Priests, and Deacons, there is no Church!" Indeed I cannot give you a better or clearer view of this than by quoting a passage from this same holy Father, the friend of St. Peter and St. John. He thus writes to the Churches of Ephesus and Smyrna:—"On this account it is fit ye should obey your Bishop, which thing also ye do. For your deservedly blessed presbytery, which is worthy of God, is so fitted into your Bishop, as strings in a harp; wherefore in your unity and musical love Jesus Christ is sung; and be ye all and each of the Chorus, that being in

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tune and of one spirit, ye may lift up the song of God in unity, and sing with one voice through Jesus Christ to the Father, that He may hear you, and know you by the things which ye do to be very members of His Son. Let no man be deceived; if any one is not within the Altar, that man falleth short of the Bread of God; for if the prayer of one or two hath such power, how much more that of the Bishop and the Church? Ye are the stones of the Father's temple, prepared for the building of God the Father, lifted up on high by the scaffolding of Jesus Christ, which is His cross, using for a rope the Holy Ghost: and your faith is that which bears you upward, it is that good way which leadeth unto God. Obey your Bishop, as Jesus Christ obeys the Father, and the presbytery as the Apostles; and reverence the Deacons as the commandment of God. No one shall baptize or offer the feast of love, but the Bishop, or those whom he shall approve.”

I have thus compressed, into as brief a space as I possibly could, the doctrine of what is commonly called the APOSTOLICAL SUCCESSION.

But as it is a most essential doctrine, and lightly gainsayed in these days, it may be as well to leave the statement of it to three of as holy and learned Bishops as God has vouchsafed to the modern English Church, Bishops Sanderson, Taylor, and Beveridge.

Bishop Sanderson says:—“My opinion is, that Episcopal Government is not to be derived merely from Apostolical practice or institution, but that it is originally founded in the Person and Office of the Messiah, our blessed Lord Jesus Christ; who, being sent by our Heavenly Father to be the Great Apostle,<sup>6</sup> Bishop, and Pastor<sup>7</sup> of his Church, and anointed to that office immediately after His

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<sup>6</sup> Heb. iii. 1.

<sup>7</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 25.

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baptism by John, with power and the Holy Ghost,<sup>8</sup> descending then upon Him in a bodily shape,<sup>9</sup> did afterwards, before His ascension into heaven, send and empower His holy Apostles, in like manner as His Father had before sent Him,<sup>10</sup> to execute the same Apostolical, Episcopal, and Pastoral office, for the ordering and governing of His Church, until His coming again; and so the same office to continue in them and their successors unto the end of the world.<sup>11</sup> This I take to be so clear, from these and other like texts of Scripture, that if they shall be diligently compared together, both between themselves and with the following practice of the Churches of Christ, as well in the Apostles' times as in the purest and primitive times nearest thereunto, there will be left little cause why any man should doubt thereof."

Bishop Taylor's words are as express: "This government was by immediate substitution delegated to the Apostles, by Christ Himself, 'in the giving of the keys, in the breathing of the Spirit, in the mission of Pentecost' . . . This power so delegated, was not to expire with their persons; for when the great Shepherd had reduced His wandering sheep into a fold, He would not leave them without 'guides to govern' them, so long as the wolf might possibly prey upon them, and that is, till the last separation of the sheep from the goats. And this Christ intimates in that promise, 'I will be with you (the Apostles) even unto the end of the world.' 'With you;' not with your persons, for they died long ago: but 'with you and the like to you,' with Apostles to the end of the world. And, therefore, that the Apostolate might be successive and perpetual, Christ gave them a power of Ordination, that by imposing hands

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<sup>8</sup> Acts x. 37, 38.

<sup>9</sup> Luke iii. 22.

<sup>10</sup> John xx. 21.

<sup>11</sup> Matt. xxviii. 18—20.

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on others, they might impart that power which they received from Christ.”

Lastly, the pious Bishop Beveridge says: “In the first place, I observe, how much we are all bound to acknowledge the goodness, to praise, magnify, and adore the name of the most high God, in that we were born and bred, and still live in a Church, wherein the Apostolical line hath, through all ages, been preserved entire, there having been a constant succession of such Bishops in it, as were truly and properly successors to the Apostles, by virtue of that Apostolical imposition of hands, which being begun by the Apostles, hath been continued from one to another, ever since their time, down to ours. By which means, the same Spirit which was breathed by our Lord into His Apostles is, together with their office, transmitted to their lawful successors, the pastors and governors of our Church at this time; and acts, moves, and assists at the administration of the several parts of the Apostolical office in our days, as much as ever. From whence it follows, that the means of grace which we now enjoy are in themselves as powerful and effectual as they were in the Apostles’ days.

As for schism, they certainly hazard their salvation at a strange rate, who separate themselves from such a Church as ours is, wherein the Apostolical succession, the root of all Christian communion, hath been so entirely preserved, and the word and sacraments are so effectually administered; and all to go into such assemblies and meetings, as can have no pretence to the great promise in my text. For it is manifest, that this promise was made only to the Apostles and their successors to the end of the world. Whereas, in the private meetings, where their teachers have no Apostolical or Episcopal imposition of hands, they have no ground to succeed the Apostles, nor by consequence any right to the Spirit which our Lord hath; without which, although they preach their heart out, I do not see what spiritual advantage can accrue to their hearers by it.”

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The importance which was attached to this doctrine in the best and purest ages contrasts strongly with the neglect into which it has now been cast. It was then one of the main reasons which might well attach our forefathers to the Church. Without this ministry how could they be sure of the blessed sacraments? For fifteen hundred years the whole Church had held that out of this ministry there was no legitimate Priesthood—what were they that they should *dare* to set up a new priesthood for themselves? All this they doubtless felt; and therefore, with singleness of heart, they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship. It is not my intention to dwell longer upon this subject. I have said enough for my present purpose; it was to show you that when men are inclined to think lightly of change in the Church, when they are disposed to refashion it after their own imaginations, they should remember that they are meddling with an ordinance of God, and not with an institution of man.

Let us pass, in the second place, to THE PRIMITIVE AND SET FORM OF PRAYER, which we, as members of the Church, possess. It is not my intention now to prove either the reasonableness or the advantages of a set form of prayer. The example of the Jewish Church, and of our Lord Himself, Who gave His disciples that perfect Form which we daily use, the constant practice of the Apostles, and the invariable usage of the Catholic Church, for centuries and centuries, are abundant arguments against public extempore prayer, if any such were needed. But I wish rather to point out to you how completely the Prayer Book is your own book, your own inheritance, as sons of the Church. In a series of services of pure and solemn beauty it accompanies you from the cradle to the grave. It meets you at the baptismal font, it furnishes you with a Catechism for your younger years; it goes with you when you seek the Bishop to take upon yourselves your baptismal vow. When you enter into the estate of holy

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Matrimony, there again the Prayer Book meets you, and sends you out into the world with blessing and with prayer: you see it still with the same unwearied care and assiduous love receiving your children at the Font, as it received yourselves before; and going from the Font to the Altar to join the thankful mother in her praises to Almighty God for her deliverance from the great pain and peril of child-birth. Then, when illness comes upon you, and lays you low upon the bed of suffering, the Prayer Book brings the priest to your side, bids him soothe your aching heart, fill you with the hopes of the Gospel, and pour upon you, by his effectual blessing, and grave absolution, a peace which this world can neither give nor take away. Nay, it leaves you not, even when your eyes are closed in death; it waits for you by the side of the opened tomb, and gravely and affectionately commits your spirit to Almighty God, reminding the dull earth that it must give your body up again at the resurrection of the Dead. Again: are there any of my readers who are mothers—whose affections are far away with sons who are serving their country on the great deep? How blessed for them to feel that there, on the wide sea, the Prayer Book, perhaps the very one they gave them at parting, is with them still; that its calm and untroubled voice is lifted up above the swelling of the storm; and that should death come to any one among them, the Prayer Book speaks as much of hope and rest on the tossing waters as if it were still in a quiet country churchyard at home.

“Thou too art here with thy soft inland tones,  
Mother of our new birth;  
The lonely ocean learns thy orisons,  
And loves thy sacred mirth.”<sup>12</sup>

Now there is something so simple, so touching, so gentle, in this domestic character of our Church services,

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<sup>12</sup> Christian Year.



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that a person who had weighed them well, a person who bore in mind how, for generations and generations, the Prayer Book, like a ministering angel, had walked side by side with his fathers, would surely feel as if he were wronging their sacred memory, lightly to leave the inheritance they had left him, and to seek for a home in some far land among aliens and strangers. It is only in the bosom of the Church that you can realize that strong feeling of home, which is so grateful to a mind weary with the endless tossings of this unquiet generation. It is the Church only, which, full of life and power within herself, can afford to discountenance that feverish excitement, on which unsatisfying food so many of the poor sheep of Christ are content to feed; that can say to her children, in all her staid, and grave, and beautiful solemnities, "In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength."<sup>13</sup> It is the Church only, who from her lofty seat will not stoop to allure you onwards by dangerous novelties in doctrine, or in discipline; that turns neither to the right hand nor the left, but walks meekly upon the old ways whereon the Lord hath placed her, and where His gracious hand will keep her steady for evermore. It is the Church only who dares lift up her voice to reprove all heresy and schism, who will not, and does not, respect persons; and who, strong in the confidence of her most holy faith, that faith once for all delivered to the saints, dares openly to pronounce the threatenings of God against those who deny the Divinity of His blessed Son, and bring another doctrine than that which hath been delivered to us from the beginning. Shall it be for us, then, to leave this loving mother? Shall it be for us to hew out cisterns for ourselves, to leave those green pastures and fresh watercourses, wherein we now may live so peaceably? I pray God most fervently that He will keep us stedfast in this faith, that He

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<sup>13</sup> Isaiah xxx. 15.

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will not let us be “blown about by every wind and blast of vain doctrine;” “for he that is unstable as water, shall not excel.” I pray God, that in the ancient Church wherein we were all of us born, we may calmly and soberly live, and that in her enfolding arms we may, one by one, drop off to sleep, like innocent children, till the bright and Morning Star arises in perfect beauty, and we go to dwell with Him in the New Jerusalem.

And here I must warn you against crafty and treacherous proposals which are often being made, of “slight alterations” in the Prayer Book, and of concession in things of little moment. The situation the Church of England holds is a very peculiar one. She is like Jerusalem in her rebuilding. “Every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon. For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded.”<sup>14</sup> We have been all along opposed to two classes of enemies, Romanists and Dissenters. But they used to attack us in different ways. They hated each other more than they hated us. Their principles were directly opposite. In learning and piety, and in the affections of her sons, in steadiness to her own principles and confidence in her own primitive belief, the Church has vanquished them hitherto. But now they have joined together in an unholy alliance against us. There has never been so complete a union before, though King James did all he could to bring it about in a dishonourable underhand way. They court the world’s favour that they may have the power to do us an injury. There is not a point in our doctrine, discipline, government, education, or services, where an enemy is not lying in wait. If therefore it were really desirable to make any changes, this is not a safe time to do it in. It is wrong to attempt it, so wrong that no well-meaning views or policy will serve to excuse it. We

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<sup>14</sup> Neh. iv. 18.

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are keeping a jealous guard, and the enemy is wakeful. If we relax one moment, if we open one entrance, however small, we cannot tell what evil may befall us. Concession is as much a sign of weakness in times of difficulty, as it is of power in times of peace. Besides, what have we to concede? and who are those to whom we should concede it? Our treasures are not our own to give up: they are the gifts of the Church of God. We received them from our fathers: we must hand on the precious deposit to our children. This is a sacred duty. The world would fain be thought our friend; and it is the world which advises us to concede. It bade our forefathers concede to the Puritans. But they were wiser with an evangelical wisdom, and heeded not the admonition. It is well for the world to concede. All it has is variable, and earthly, and it is its own. Temporal good, which is but a choice of evils at the best, is all it looks to. Therefore it is not the Church's friend, and cannot be, for it does not understand her spiritual rules of action. Besides, the friendship of the world is enmity with God.

Much that I have already said might have come more properly under the third and last head, THE STABILITY OF THE CHURCH. "Wisdom and knowledge," saith Isaiah, "shall be the stability of thy times:"<sup>15</sup> and doubtless the stability of the Church arises, in a great degree, from that DEPOSIT of pure and uncorrupt doctrine which she has kept with most jealous faithfulness. But, however this may be, as a matter of fact, obvious to all men, the Church has a stability which other religious bodies do not possess. Read the names of the early sects and heresies: Where are all these now? Departed, as if they never had been; forgotten, unknown, save to the scholar, who seeks them out in the records of antiquity. Nay, look even at far later periods in our own history. The names of nearly a hundred sects

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<sup>15</sup> Isaiah xxxiii. 6.

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flourishing in the days of king Charles the Martyr, of blessed memory, are duly recorded by historians: of these all but two or three are passed away, and those live only in name, differing widely from their predecessors. The reason of all this is, that sects adapt themselves to an ever-changing world; which the Church, blessed be God! does not. Sects, from this very cause, seem often to have more success than the Church. They make more noise about it. But “growth is slow when roots are deep;” and the Church, like her Master, lifteth not up her voice in the streets. The world goes its way; and the Church hers. They get further apart every day; and now they will never meet again till that day when too late the world shall discover its mistake, “when the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond man, and every free man, shall hide themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains, and shall say to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of His wrath is come; and who is able to stand?”<sup>16</sup> We all of us feel that one of the strongest wants of our nature is rest. There is no end to our weariness and trouble, to our vexation and harassment of spirit. We would fain have the wings of a dove, that we might flee away and be at rest; and where in this broad earth shall we find a resting-place for the sole of our feet, if we once desert the ark of Christ’s Church? The waters are still out upon the land; there is not so much as a twig of green olive for us to gather and refresh ourselves withal. The world is very tempestuous without: but our vessel rides safely. She is full of living energy within herself. She has One on board, who, though He may *seem* to sleep, can rise when He will, and bid the wind and the sea be still; and when we have Him with us, immediately we are “at the

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<sup>16</sup> Rev. vi. 15.

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haven where we would be!”

Our history is thickening, and getting more confused every day. But a churchman does not view history as a literary or worldly man does. For history is the record of God’s providence getting Himself honour out of man’s sin. It is so in little things as well as great, though we do not see it so plainly. We never get to see quite clearly in spiritual matters. We judge things by their outward seeming. But we know that, if by any means the scales could fall from our eyes, we should behold a scene no less wonderful and cheering than that which was revealed to the servant of Elisha. We see the host of the enemy and are afraid; and, because we cannot see, we scarcely will believe of the horses and chariots of fire, wherewith the mountain is full, the host of heaven which encampeth round about the righteous. The way of the world and its history are very perplexing; and we get confused when we look for any length of time upon it. It seems to be travelling its own reckless way with fearful swiftness; and our eyes cannot see in what all this will end. But we know that in its most furious tides, its most capricious changings, there is a hand keeping it under all the while, that it is compelled against its own will and against its own thought to accomplish day by day in all its wild workings His purposes of mercy and of judgment, and that whatever and whenever the end of all shall be, it must of necessity work together for good to them that love God, and wait for His appearing. We see this every now and then when great providences happen amongst us, and startle us for a moment into religion. It is then that God puts forth His Hand visibly, as it were, from underneath the veil of the holy Place, and we fall back to worship.

The history of the Church of England is rife in great providences. Since the Reformation the land has been thrown into confusion by a most fearful rebellion. An Archbishop and a king have been martyred by the lawless

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people. The government has been changed for many years. The Church has been forcibly put down, so far as the hand of man and the power of law could put down the ordinance of God. Since then two kings have sat upon the throne of England, who were aliens from our faith, members of the Church of Rome, our bitter and cruel enemy: and by the latter of them, King James, the Church was persecuted, her Bishops committed to prison because they opposed his unprincipled conduct, and no means, honest or dishonest, left untried to work her ruin. Then another violent change took place. The succession was altered, and the crown assumed by another branch of the family. William was a foreigner, and knew absolutely nothing of the English Church. Besides he was surrounded by worldly and irreligious men, and cowardly money-loving, self-seeking Bishops, and, being himself a latitudinarian, as from the sin and bloodguiltiness of his early years he might well be, the Church cannot be said to have been fostered and encouraged by him. Neither has it owed anything to the state since then except an abundant measure of forgiveness. Truly the movements of the world are very troublesome: yet we are the same. Our Cathedrals and Churches, our Sacraments and Prayers, our Government and Ministers still remain as of old, while everything else around us has changed, and changed many times since then. The laws and constitution have never done changing. Religious sects only live by change and false excitement. The very external face of the country is changed by the springing up of large and populous cities. The Church has not changed. She has indeed silently and gradually extended herself, so far as she had the means, and so far as political jealousy would allow her, with the growing population. She has quietly raised her towers, and spires, and altars, among the new towns, and given the bread of life to her new sons. But to them she has brought the old laws and ministers and services. She stands among us as a type, and the only one, of that eternal and

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unchanging home, where she would fain bring us all at the last, and for which end she has been placed here by her Lord. Why will men struggle against her? They will not come off conquerors.

THE END.