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A COMMON SENSE VIEW

OF

The Athanasian Creed Question

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With Appendix.

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“The cause of Truth universally, and not least of religious Truth, is benefited by everything that tends to promote sound reasoning and facilitate the detection of fallacy. The adversaries of our Faith would, I am convinced, have been on many occasions more satisfactorily answered, and would have had fewer openings for cavil, had a thorough acquaintance with Logic been a more common qualification than it is.”—*Archbishop Whately.*

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“HALF the controversies in the world are verbal ones: and could they be brought to a plain issue, they would be brought to a prompt termination. Parties engaged in them would then perceive, either that in substance they agreed together, or that their difference was one of first principles. This is the great object to be aimed at in the present age, though confessedly a very arduous one. We need not dispute; we need not prove; we need but define. At all events, let us, if we can, do this first of all; and then see who are left for us to dispute with, what is left for us to prove. Controversy, at least in this age, does not lie between the hosts of heaven, Michael and his angels on the one side, and the powers of evil on the other; but it is a sort of night battle, where each fights for himself, and friend and foe stand together. When men understand what each other mean, they see for the most part that controversy is either superfluous or hopeless.”*

The above passage, written thirty years since by one of the most intellectual, learned, and earnest men of the age, and whose testimony to the Truth is in no way

* Newman's 'University Sermons.'

affected by events which have since taken place, forms an appropriate introduction to the following remarks. It describes, if not the beginning, at least the earlier stages of that want of logical accuracy and sound reasoning which enters so largely into the controversies of the day, whatever the subject, whether Civil, Ecclesiastical, Political, or Social. We see disputants either repudiating the conclusions which follow logically from their own admitted premisses and acknowledged principles; or refusing to give up the latter when shown to lead necessarily to conclusions which themselves repudiate. Whether arguing deictically or elenctically, whether by demonstration or refutation, we find the same want of consistency and fair reasoning. Whether this arises from an intellectual defect, or the want of fairness, or from that temper of the times which, impatient of argument and accustomed to address popular audiences and minds of an inferior order, refers the decision of great questions to the passions rather than the reason, I am not concerned now to show. But in nothing has this been more conspicuous than in the discussions, at least on one side, which have arisen on the subject of the Athanasian Creed.*

It is earnestly hoped, however, that the Title prefixed

* Let me here take the opportunity of offering my thanks to Mr. MacColl and the Dean of Norwich for their admirable works on the question. They should be carefully read by everyone who wishes to make himself master of the subject.

to these remarks will not lead anyone to infer that the great and sacred truths with which they are indirectly connected are made subject to the treatment or the rule expressed by it. To subject the great and saving doctrines of the Gospel, as such, to the final test of Human Reason, or to treat from an external point of view that in which we have so deep and personal an interest, would be as repugnant to my feelings as it would be to the principles of Revealed Truth and the faculties to which it addresses itself. It is the external arguments by which the Athanasian Creed is assailed to which these remarks chiefly apply; to the doctrines themselves only indirectly, and so far only as may be necessary for the purposes of illustration.

The grounds on which the assailants of the Creed clamour for its excision or optional use may be said to be mainly:—1. The preciseness of its definitions; 2. The Anathemas pronounced on its rejection—or, as they are otherwise termed, its warning or (by others) damnatory clauses. It will be found that the arguments against the first apply in their degree to *all* Creeds and confessions of faith; and that those against the second apply equally to the necessity of *any* belief being necessary to Salvation. Let me take the latter first.

It would tend much to clear the ground for a due consideration of this question, to enter one's protest at once and summarily against that monstrous assertion

which the enemies of the Creed have so unblushingly and persistently set forth,—that by this Creed and the warning clauses appended to it, the Church denounces and consigns to perdition those who do not receive it. Nothing can be more untrue; and it is lamentable to see men in high places, who ought to know better, thus throwing dust into the eyes of the ignorant, and stirring up their passions. So far from condemning, the Church in this Creed neither speaks *of* or *to* those without. She speaks in the name of and to her own members, as the terms on which she is commissioned to offer Salvation through Christ; and puts in their mouths this outpouring of belief and praise, accompanied by warnings of the danger of neglecting or departing from it. To others she speaks not—nor of them, till called upon to do so in her missionary character; and then, like every other religious community, declares the substance of that mission and her terms of communion. Wisdom speaks to her own children; they understand her, and of them she is justified. To others she speaks not, or in a different language. Yet men who ought to know better persist in repeating this untruth, regardless of all the considerations by which such a statement should be tested, whether of fact or analogy. The Law spoke to those under the Law. While to the Israelites it denounced idolatry as one of the greatest sins, and as an act of high treason against the Most High, yet it did not preach a crusade against the heathen. It left them

to be judged by the different Law under which God had placed them. Human law, as such, is only addressed to subjects of that law. Foreigners are not under English law till they come to England. Our Lord's words before His Ascension were not uttered against all who believed not the Gospel, but those who, after receiving the message which immediately preceded them, wilfully rejected it. St. Paul's fearful "Anathema Maranatha" was not uttered against those who had not had the opportunity (of which God alone is judge) of knowing and "loving the Lord Jesus Christ," but against those to whom He had offered Himself, and of whom He had said that it would be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of Judgment than for them. Nay, I would go further and say that if any of her own children were to tell her that they had a difficulty in believing the Catholic Faith as therein stated, not from a spirit of proud defiance or self-satisfied independence of thought, but from causes which they could not control but would not be unwilling to see removed, the Church, while feeling that *she* had no power to alter her message or relax her terms of communion, would not abandon hope for them at the Judgment Seat. It is worse than idle to speak of the Church as condemning in this Creed all who do not accept it. If such an assertion proceeds from ignorance and thoughtlessness, it is from culpable and responsible ignorance; and when put forth and acted upon, as has

been recently done by persons in high places, who are bound by virtue of their position and office to know better, it admits of no excuse.

To revert now to the main question :—

Let me premise here that I ask of those to whom I address myself nothing but candour and clear logical common sense ; that they will state frankly, first, what they *do* admit, and next, that they adhere to it, and not retract it, as many disputants do as soon as they find that it is against their own foregone conclusions ; like the well-known automaton chess-player, whose owner boasted that he had never been beaten, from the simple fact that, whenever he found the game going against him, he put an end to it by knocking over the table.

I would begin, then, by asking them whether they admit that *any* belief is necessary to Salvation : whether they believe our Lord's words, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved ; but he that believeth not shall be damned," or any of those passages dispersed through the New Testament which connect Faith with Salvation ? If they do not, I have nothing further to say ; we have no common ground on which an argument can proceed. If they do, they at once concede the principle involved in the warnings of the Athanasian Creed.

I would ask them next, Would you object to these clauses being appended to the Apostles' Creed, which is chiefly confined to a recital of facts, all of which be-

lievers in the New Testament, whether in the Church or not, profess to receive? If they would retain the clauses for this simple Creed, I would ask them if they would allow them for the Nicene Creed, which adds to the historical facts of the other a few definitions of the nature of the Godhead. If they admit these, I would go on to the Athanasian Creed, and ask them to state the points in these closer degrees of definition at which the clauses or our Lord's words ought not to be applied. That is the point to be drawn from them, assuming that there is *anything* which they admit to be "necessary to everlasting Salvation:" they must, by the terms of the discussion, be tied down to this admission.

Or I would reverse the process: I would begin with the Athanasian Creed, and ask them to strike out the various parts to which, in their judgment, the clauses ought not to be applied. I would ask them to do the same with the Nicene, and, if necessary, the Apostles' Creed. If they would retain the warning clauses with the slightest remnant after these excisions, they concede the whole principle. If they will not retain them, how do they dispose of our Lord's words before referred to, or words of like import?

I am aware that an answer will be given by many to the effect that they receive our Lord's words as applicable to a *general* belief in the main doctrines of the Gospel, but not beyond that point at which men split

off into various sects; still less as applicable to the stricter definitions and finer distinctions contained in the Athanasian Creed. Now here again is a fallacy (not morally wrong like the charge, before spoken of, brought against the Creed, and representing it as saying what it does not pretend to say, but), one showing a great intellectual defect, and one which, if persisted in wilfully, assumes the character of a grave moral defect also. As the understanding has much to do with the commencement of this fallacy, it makes this question one on which a common sense view is especially required.

I would observe, then, that the common expression of "Believing in Christ" has no definite meaning. You cannot believe in a *term*. The subject of belief must be a *proposition*, expressed or understood; and though, for the conveniences of language and expression, the predicate and copula are frequently merged and resolved into the abstract instead of the concrete, and then appended to the subject in the genitive case, as *e. g.* the Resurrection of the body, the Divinity of Christ, the Communion of Saints, the Divinity and personality of the Holy Ghost, yet strictly speaking, the subject of belief is the proposition that the body will rise again; that Christ is God; that the Saints have communion; that the Holy Ghost is God and distinct in Person. When therefore people talk of believing in Christ, they may fairly be asked *what* they believe respecting

Him, or as that which may be predicated or said of Him. That one bearing that Name lived and died? No one will question that, any more than the existence of Mahomet. We may all safely profess that in that sense we believe in Mahomet or Alexander, Julius Cæsar or Pontius Pilate. If you say you believe in Him as the Saviour of mankind, as He that saved mankind, the question presents itself—saved them from what? how? and this at once opens the question connected with and dependent upon the person, character, and power of the Agent. If you say you believe in Him as the Son of God, then arises the question, In what sense, Son? In the orthodox sense, or the Unitarian? and thus you are brought, not only to the threshold, but actually into the precincts of the ground occupied by the Athanasian Creed.

Or, to begin with our Lord's own words which speak of believing (in one word), with Baptism, as essential to Salvation: Believing what? Here we are of course referred, first to the "Gospel" which he had just before commanded the Apostles to preach. But what is implied by this word? In what does the Gospel consist? For this we are referred necessarily to historical testimony, beginning with the Acts of the Apostles and passing from Scripture into the history of doctrine and controversy, until, through the decrees of various councils, we find ourselves landed in the definitions of the Athanasian Creed.

Nor can this be regarded as other than a necessary consequence. For, to begin again with our Lord's words, and again asking the question, "Believe what?" the earliest and shortest expansion of the words will be found either in the confession of Martha before His Passion, "I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world;"* or in that of the Eunuch (uttered, be it observed, after Philip's declaration of the necessity of believing, without defining the subject), "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."† In both these replies the nature of the Sonship and the office of Christ are left unexplained. That they require that explanation is evident from the host of controversy which has arisen respecting them. That our Lord did not design them to be unexplained is evident from the momentous consequences attached to their acceptance or rejection. Nor is it less true that the instrument by which He ordained that these great truths should be gradually unfolded and established was controversy. If we trace this through its various stages, we shall see how these various successive enunciations of doctrine were drawn forth defensively by assaults upon the Faith, till they may be said to culminate in the fuller and more precise definitions of the Athanasian Creed.‡ Hence the *negative* character which

* John xi. 27.

† Acts viii. 37.

‡ "The first generations of the Church needed no explicit declarations concerning His Sacred Person. Sight and hearing superseded

pervades them so largely, stating what the truth is *not*, against the apostles of false doctrine. I would therefore again say to the assailers of the Creed, Take your choice: If you believe the declarations of Holy Scripture, our Lord's words in particular, that any definite faith is necessary to Salvation, say what that faith is; but do not shelve or evade the question by platitudes about simplicity of faith, dislike of controversy, and the like. Go on with the Eunuch's definition or that of Martha; and go, as far as you will, through the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds, and say at what point, in these gradually-unfolding statements,

the multitude of words; faith dispensed with the aid of lengthened Creeds and Confessions. There was silence. But when the light of His Advent faded, and love waxed cold, then there was an opening for objection and discussion, and a difficulty in answering. Then doubts had to be allayed, questions set at rest, innovators silenced. Christians were forced to speak against their will, lest heretics should speak instead of them. In the New Testament we find the doctrine of the Incarnation announced clearly indeed, but with a reverent brevity. 'The word was made Flesh.' 'God was manifest in the Flesh.' 'God was in Christ.' But we are obliged to speak more at length in the Creeds to meet the perverse ingenuity of those who, now that the voices of the Apostles have died away, can with impunity insult and misinterpret the letter of their writings. Nay, further, so circumstanced are we, as to be obliged not only thus to guard the Truth, but even to give the reason of our guarding it. For they who would steal away the Lord from us, *not content with forcing us to measures of protection, even go on to bring us to account for adopting them, and demand that we should put aside whatever stands between them and their heretical purposes.*"—NEWMAN'S PAROCHIAL SERMONS (Vol. II.), "On the Incarnation." (The italics are mine.)

you withhold the application of the words you profess to admit. But in doing this you are bound, in candour and logical consistency, to answer in some other way the question that must and will arise, while you repudiate these.

Or begin, if you will, at the other end; strike out, one by one, the Articles in the Athanasian Creed, the belief in which ought not, in your judgment, to enter into the terms of Salvation; go on till you come to those to which you think our Lord's words *are* applicable: still you have not escaped the difficulty. Stop, if you will, at our Lord's Sonship, His death, and its object; if you are asked to explain the nature of the Sonship, His relation to the Father and the Holy Spirit, as distinguished from Sabellianism or Tritheism, and the results of His sacrifice, you are bound to do so, affirmatively or negatively, having admitted that the belief in them is necessary to Salvation. The minor proposition or question must arise out of each succeeding one which you admit. This minor proposition is no less requisite in Faith than in Morals and Religion. In the latter it involves the application of the major proposition or principle, and constitutes its practical test. The Pharisees were ready enough to admit the general principle; the test was its application in the minor proposition, "Who *is* my neighbour? What *is* murder? What *is* adultery?" and this they evaded. Analogous to this is the conduct of

those who make war on creeds and would abolish them. The necessity of Faith they cannot well repudiate, nor do they care to do so as long as they think it pledges them to nothing. It is the minor proposition constituting the Creed (the Catholic Faith is *this*, &c.) and forming the test, at which they rebel; but if you receive our Lord's words that *any* thing is necessary to Salvation, you have no alternative but to go on whither the Church has gradually extended the application of those words, whether affirmatively, or negatively and defensively. If you reject the definitions of the Athanasian or the Nicene Creed, stop where you will, the same question arises. You have no alternative but to reject our Lord's words or accept their legitimately involved consequences. You may, if you will, reject one by one, the articles of each Creed in succession; but if you receive the New Testament so far as to believe our Lord's parting words to His Church, or those of like import in the New Testament, you cannot, by any rule of fair reasoning or common sense, deny that there is *some* profession of Faith, *some* creed to which the words attach—"This is the Faith which except a man believe faithfully he cannot be saved;" and that faith must be expressed by a definite proposition stating what is to be believed, not by a mere *term* through which the profession of the Latitudinarian and the unbeliever alike evaporate. The man who proposed to get rid of a mound of earth by digging a

hole and burying it, was at least as sensible in his generation as those who, while admitting the necessity of some profession of faith, would abolish all Creeds.

The so-called Evangelical party, many of whom have joined in the assault on the Athanasian Creed, will perhaps say, as I believe they hold, that faith is not belief in a proposition, but rather a trust in a person; so that the faith declared to be necessary for Salvation only implies a filial acceptance of Christ as our Saviour. But this does not answer the question, nor does it obviate the necessity of reducing this to a definite proposition to give it any real meaning. If they say that Christ is their Saviour, they cannot escape answering the question, saved them from what? and how? And I believe that this party are very sensitive as regards anything which will sanction a doubt of our Lord's Divinity or the Atonement, the assertion of which, if truly made, involves propositions to that effect. It is the absence of these definite statements which swells their ranks by the accession of those who are willing to admit the general expression of belief in Christ, and of justification by faith, yet would fall off if made to state what they do believe concerning Christ, or if required to acknowledge His Godhead and impeccability.

If they leave these vital points an open question, merging the whole in a vague general declaration of justification by faith, trust in the Saviour, &c., yet not

saying what it is which constitutes justifying faith ; *what* they must believe as the title to justification ; *who* the Saviour is, and from *what* He has saved them ; they may retain in their ranks these irregular allies ; but if they venture to state definitively what I believe most of them sincerely hold, they would find themselves deserted by them. It was this, I believe, which, many years ago, led to the disruption of the Bible Society, and the establishment of the Trinitarian branch.

It is not to be denied that this attack is not against this Creed alone, but all Creeds, this one being singled out first, as presenting features on which an appeal can be made to the passions of the unthinking and ignorant. The so-called spirit of the age revolts against restrictions on thought, even those which Revelation and Philosophy alike declare to be essential for the due development and strengthening of our moral and intellectual faculties, and rails against dogmatic teaching (as if there were any subject having its own rules and principles which is *not* taught dogmatically and without appeal from its decisions). Men have not yet arrived at that point at which they may avow themselves unbelievers. The tone of the public mind is not yet ripe, or rather sufficiently decayed, for that. The enemy of souls has devised a readier way for accomplishing his object without prematurely arousing suspicion or alarm, and that way is not only to allow unbelievers to profess a sort of Pantheism or Deism,

but to allow a large and increasing body of nominal Christians to make a general profession of faith, and at the same time to divest it of all that can give it substance and reality, among whom are to be found those of whom the kind-hearted Dean of Westminster seems to have constituted himself the champion, and whose principle seems to be to have a religion without a creed, and to separate the religious life from a definite religious faith. This party act not without reason; the Christian Faith is for the most part practical. Faith is represented by a series of propositions or articles, each of which enunciates some fact or doctrine involving motives of obedience, and forming its test. The Gospel is essentially a Religion of motives: Christ's relation to His people is a personal one; their duty in relation to Him is personal; they are not their own, but bought with a price. Those who cannot realize these motives, yet can fulfil outwardly the ordinary claims of society without them, become hostile to the doctrines from which they flow, and which only serve to condemn them. That this should be so is nothing surprising; but it is sad to see earnest-minded religious men, who do truly believe in their Saviour and Sanctifier, and acknowledge to the full what they owe to them, throw their weight into the scale with these men, adversaries of the Faith, and join in their onslaught upon it. It may be possible, nay easy, to pass a short Act of Parliament, as is now threatened, for the excision of this Creed from the ser-

vices of the Church; but those better men who are encouraging this onslaught would do well to ask themselves why the same rule should not be applied to other things, and why the Apostles' Creed, or our Lord's words before His Ascension, and the like passages, should not be subjected to the same treatment, or their recital made optional.

Let me add a few words on the agitation which has been got up on this subject, which, while it shows the hollowness and injustice of the demand, illustrates a lamentable feature in our national character, the source of many troubles, Moral, Religious, Social and Political. There is a close resemblance between this case and that styled the "religious difficulty" in the Education question. It has been truly stated that the religious difficulty was not made *by* the poor, but *for* them. It had no existence save in (I will not say the imagination, but) the speeches of dissenting agitators, who, because they thought it *ought* to exist, as promoting their views, maintained that it *did* so. I can only say that in my experience of twenty-five years as Diocesan Inspector of an extensive Deanery, comprising large manufacturing towns, mining districts, rural parishes, and, so far, an epitome and sample of England as a whole, containing many thousand souls and upwards of fifty schools, I have found no sign of its existence. And other Parochial Clergy and School Inspectors, as well as school teachers, will bear the like testimony. Also in

my experience as a Parochial Clergyman, extending over a period of upwards of forty years, although I have ever encouraged their coming to me with their difficulties, I do not remember to have met with any parishioner who made a stumbling-block of the Athanasian Creed. I have heard objections made by strangers in ordinary conversation, and I may have had questions put to me by some of our people who required information, but who were not otherwise than satisfied with the explanation subsequently given. But the agitation has not been got up *by* Churchmen, but *for* them; and this, in many cases, by those who are separatists from our Communion, or sympathise with such. The same may be said of the outcry and agitation against what is termed Ritualism, where the stereotyped phrase is also used that "the Laity must take the matter into their own hands." Of the 20,000 parishes of England and Wales, will those agitators point out half a dozen cases, nay, even two or three, where the mode of conducting Divine Service is against the wishes of the congregation? The grievance, if it exists, is made *for* the congregation, not *by* them; though doubtless they may be stirred up, as they have been on the Athanasian Creed. But this is the peculiar weakness of the English character. They will allow a small knot of turbulent agitators to get up an outcry, and allow themselves to be persuaded that these represent the people at large, and to affix their names to peti-

tions and declarations of which they disapprove, or to which they are indifferent—in the same way that in England a mob of an hundred men and boys will, provided they make noise enough, keep a large town in terror day and night; the inhabitants will see their windows broken, houses fired, and property plundered or destroyed; will telegraph for troops, and stand paralyzed with fear; not reflecting for a moment the immense disproportion which these rioters bear to the population, and that, by their united action, and a bold front, they might of themselves quell a tumult of ten times the amount. We may lament our national folly in the temporal matter; but in the analogous case of spiritual ones, those awful words rise up and seem to address us, “Whosoever is ashamed of Me and of My words in this sinful and adulterous generation, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed when He shall come in the glory of His Father with the Holy Angels.”

In the foregoing remarks, I have taken our Lord’s words before His Ascension as the simplest Scriptural declaration of the necessity of some form of belief for Salvation. If any are disposed to entertain the question recently revived as to the genuineness of these words, any of the numerous passages in the New Testament which connect Faith with Salvation will equally serve the purpose. Once admit that any faith is necessary to Salvation, we have right to ask what that faith is, what is its subject, and the rest follows as a necessary logical

sequence. But let me again say, in conclusion, that this only regards the external view of the question. The Christian verities are in themselves not the subject of argument, but of faith. Faith is a spiritual gift; the effect of grace on the heart, not the result of an intellectual process. In the preliminary stages, Intellect, Reason, Imagination, and other faculties have their part assigned them in the Divine Economy—a subject full of deep interest, though one into which it is not necessary for me to enter now; but the final reception of the Truth rests with the heart; and the force of Christian evidence will rise and fall according to the spiritual capacity of the latter, whether as affected by our mode of life, our activity or the reverse in spiritual exercise and watchfulness, or the partial obscuration which God may allow for purposes of trial. But in every case the Great Truth remains, that “with the Heart man believeth unto righteousness”;* and “that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost.” †

* Rom. x. 10.

† 1 Cor. xii. 3.

H. A. W.

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APPENDIX TO SECOND EDITION.

THOSE persons who attach so much importance to a personal trust, not only as distinguished from the acceptance of a definite and objective faith as expressed by the Creeds, but opposed and in disparagement of it, appeal to the faith exhibited by our Lord's disciples before His Passion and by the recipients of His miraculous cures—constituting in fact their qualification for partaking of them. But this is not to be confounded with the faith declared in our Lord's parting words to constitute the condition of salvation, nor with that required by the Church as entering into her terms of communion. Though not opposed, they were distinct. The former was doubtless a personal trust in the main; but its subject was a temporal one, having regard to His power to heal ("faith to be healed"), and the blessing which followed it was temporal. But even this faith was not only capable of being expressed by a definite proposition, but was in some cases required to be so expressed: "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" "Yea, Lord" [We believe that thou art able, &c.]. Also, [I believe that] "if I may but touch his garment I shall be whole."

In short, in all His miraculous cures it may be said that the *credendum* was "He hath power to do this;" the trust was personal, the subject of *fiducia*; but the thing believed was a fact, the subject of *fides*. The *fides* expressed by the proposition was the practical application of the *fiducia*: the one precedes the other but cannot supersede it.

In fact it is difficult to understand how there can be trust in a person without something to form the subject of that

trust, though of the most general kind ; and capable of being expressed by a definite proposition, though in most general terms. "It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good," virtually affirms the belief of the speaker that "whatever God does is right." The words "shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" not only affirm the same fact as a proposition, but, as an enthymem, assign the reason also.

But that trust in Christ which, while He was on earth and the Gospel scheme of salvation as yet unrevealed, took the form of belief in His power to heal (its merciful exercise being the subject of prayer), became, after His Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension, and the Coming of the Holy Ghost, a belief in the efficacy of His Atoning Sacrifice and prevailing Intercession ; and these rested on facts of which the Articles of the Creed form a brief summary, and in which the convert thereby expressed his belief.* But the full efficacy of His Atonement and Intercession involves truths connected with His Person which form the subjects of the more expanded creeds of Nicæa and Athanasius, these last being rendered necessary by the denial, on the part of heretics, of the truths which these Creeds re-affirm or the assertion by heretics of false doctrine which the Creeds deny. There may be as much personal trust in our Lord now as before His Passion ; but now it is founded rather on what He *has* done for us, though, like the faith before His Death (yet in an infinitely higher degree and directed to infinitely higher objects), it looks forward to what *He will* do, the Faith founded on the "experience which worketh hope."

Many parochial clergy, in visiting the sick, have met with the difficulty presented by persons respecting whose state they have reason to feel uneasy, yet who seem to have no fear whatever of death or judgment to come, taking refuge in

* Cf. Acts xiii. 26, 39 ; 1 Cor. xv. 1, 11.

what they term "trust in the Blessed Lord." Yet the lives of these persons, whether as careless or evil liver, have been sadly at variance with a belief in the great Christian verities on which salvation ultimately depends and which the Creed brings before us. This may be called a personal trust; but it is not one to which the Divine subject of it holds out hope, to the neglect of the great truths embodied in His Life and Death. There was much wisdom and mercy in the provision which, not only in the Baptismal Service made the convert's profession of faith to consist in an assent to "the Articles of the Christian faith," but also in the Visitation of the Sick required the repetition of that assent to precede the work of examination, and, if need be, of Confession and Absolution. I do not say that this is fully carried out in practice, nor that in every case it could be so done; but we may safely question whether a great help and many an opportunity has not thereby been lost of bringing persons to the practical conviction of sin, to which the vague undefined personal trust will not awaken them.

Neither do I think it wise to discourage, to the extent to which it is done, the use of the Creed in private prayer. As a *substitute* for prayer it may be right to do so, but as an *addition* it is different, provided persons are taught to examine themselves by it, and to see how far they have fulfilled or violated the obligations involved in the several truths it enunciates.

Let me here mention, for the benefit of any younger brethren into whose hands this tract may fall, that I have usually recommended to sick persons who, either from never having learned or from physical weakness or blindness, are unable to read their Bible, to repeat to themselves the Creed—slowly—few clauses at a time—and to meditate on them with prayer, showing them that it was the best substitute for

reading the New Testament, bringing before them, in a short compass, what their Saviour had done and suffered for them, and serving at the same time, less directly, as an aid to self-examination. And I have been assured of the blessed comfort which they have derived from this. It made to them the Christian Faith a Reality, instead of a mere name.

I may also take the opportunity of mentioning, as it bears on the same subject, that in my office as Diocesan Inspector and in instructing my own National Schools, and also in public catechizing in church, I frequently make the children, in rehearsing the Creed, prefix the words "I believe" before each separate Article, with the view of making them and the congregation see more clearly the Reality of the Christian Faith. If this were more generally done, we should witness less of that profane hurried gabbling of this important part of Divine Worship which disgraces not only our parish churches but even our cathedrals. If the children were taught to say of our Blessed Lord, "They believe that He was crucified, they believe that He died, they believe that He was buried;" we should not hear these important Articles of the Christian Faith jumbled together and fused into the unintelligible and irreverent formula *Crucifydeadunburied*. These three truths are kept distinct in the Thirty-nine Articles as well as in the Creed. Why are they to be thus irreverently jumbled together in the professions of Faith in God's house?

Unless we try to show our people the reality of the Christian Faith, what it consists of, what is involved in its various parts, we cannot feel surprise if those who do know what the Creeds say, but know it only to tremble at their admission, should find ready hearers among those who have never been taught their value and blessedness. With the fulcrum thus supplied by this popular ignorance, the deep-

seated hostility has now assumed the character of open war. The Athanasian Creed stands in the front, and has to receive the first onslaught. Let us not deceive ourselves that it will stop there. It may be the commencement of the open attack, but it marks a much more advanced stage in the long brooding hostility to the faith of Christ. The Creed itself is the standing record of that hostility. Had attacks not been made on the faith by heretics, these definitions and dogmas had never been called for. Again and again have the errors they were designed to meet revolved in cycles, and as often have they been confronted by these and like statements. To abandon the latter now, would be to throw down our fortifications against invasion, while the enemy is allowed to retain his standing army and weapons of war. But to conclude, as I began, with appeals to the common sense view of the matter, I will leave these two questions to be answered by the assailants.

I. Do you believe that *any* Faith is necessary to salvation? If so, state what it is.

II. If you say that "belief in Christ" is all that is required, tell me in what respect that belief, as expressed by and limited to those three words, differs from belief in Mahomet, Julius Cæsar, or Pontius Pilate?

In replying to the latter, you concede the principle of the definitions of the Athanasian Creed; in the other, that of its warnings.

The details of these definitions do not fall within the scope of these remarks. The warning is best left in our Lord's own words, or in the brief and close paraphrase by which the Church has here rendered them.









