

touches laymen in a very much less degree. These articles are Articles of *Religion*, and not of *Faith*. They bind the Clergy, and form part of the conditions under which they hold office in the Church, but they do not in any way bind the consciences of the Laity. They consist of a series of propositions about the Christian religion, which were drawn up in Queen Elizabeth's reign to meet the exigencies of the times, and to include men of various opinions within the fold of the Anglican Church.

They were Articles of concord and union, but in no sense are they on a level with the Creeds.

The Three Creeds form the Rule of Faith for all English Churchmen, and in setting forth the four essential conditions of reunion with non-Episcopal Communion, the Lambeth Conference of 1888 carefully and wisely avoided any mention of the Anglican Articles of Religion. In the encyclical Letter of the Conference allusion is made "to the cases of Native and growing Churches, on which it would be unreasonable to impose, as conditions of Communion, the whole of the xxxix Articles, coloured as they are in language and form by the peculiar circumstances under which they were originally drawn up."

But notwithstanding these drawbacks, and the insufficiency of statement in some of the Articles, we do not wish to undervalue them.

They are not as valuable, as a theological formulary, as the Church Catechism is, but they possess a real and undoubted value of their own.

We have alluded to the Articles solely to prove our point that they do not concern laymen so nearly as the General Councils do. It would be absurd to compare the value and authority of the Articles, which are the work of the Provincial Synod of Canterbury in Queen Elizabeth's reign, with the world-wide authority of the four great General Councils of undivided Christendom.

Directly Queen Elizabeth came to the Throne, the persecuting policy of Queen Mary was stopped by law. In the Act which stopped persecution, the first four General Councils of the Primitive Church are referred to as of authority in matters of Faith.

The English Church has always appealed to the authority of these great Councils of the Catholic Church to justify her position in Christendom. We find this appeal to the General Councils clearly stated in the Preamble to the Resolutions of the Lambeth Conference of 1867. In the days of the four great Councils, Christendom was as yet undivided. Romanism was unknown, and Non-Episcopal Protestantism was equally unknown. The essence of the Anglican Reformation is a return to the pure doctrines of undivided Christendom, as expressed by its Creeds and Councils, and a rejection of "Papal and Puritan innovations," as Bishop Ken said in his last will and testament.

It is natural, then for South African Churchmen to find in the first Article of the Constitution of the Church of this Province these significant words: "The Church of the Province of South Africa, otherwise known as the Church of England in these parts, receives and maintains the Faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, as taught in the Holy Scriptures, held by the Primitive Church, summed up in the Creeds, and affirmed by the undisputed General Councils."

By the phrase "undisputed General Councils" the Church of this Province means the four great Councils of the Church whose authority has been received and unanimously accepted by the undivided Church of Christ.

The first of these Councils was held at Nicæa in A.D. 325; the second in Constantinople A.D. 381; the third at Ephesus in A.D. 431; and the fourth at Chalcedon in A.D. 451. Each Council was summoned to deal with some special development of false doctrine perilous to the very life of Christianity. No Council ever attempted to define a new Article of Faith, as the Vatican Council did in 1870, when it decreed the new dogma of Papal Infallibility.

The function of the Primitive General Council was to find out what the Holy Scriptures and the Apostles taught concerning the points at issue.

The Bishops who composed these Councils came together from the most distant parts of Christendom. They compared notes with regard to the interpretation of Holy Scriptures which had been handed down to them from the Apostles, and thus they represented the *consentient witness* of Christendom. "Indeed, it is only when we keep this principle in mind that the deference we pay to the decision of General Councils becomes intelligible. But our deference to them becomes quite intelligible when they are considered simply as machinery for registering the agreement of the Churches, and when it is further borne in mind that their authority only became decisive after their verdict had been accepted in the Church at large."

We quote the above statement, by the Rev. C. Gore, of the Pusey House, Oxford, because we believe it to be the most accurate and concise definition of the authority of Councils which has yet been written.

The function of the Primitive General Councils was to meet innovations in doctrine by a reassertion of Scriptural and Apostolic teaching. They acted on the aphorism, "What is true is not new, and what is new is not true." It was on this principle that the four great Councils treated the great doctrine of the Incarnation of our Lord. At Nicæa the Nicene Creed was drawn up to affirm the Scriptural truth, that our Lord was "of one substance with the Father," against Arius, who denied the Godhead of our Lord.

In a few years the pendulum of error swung back in an opposite direction, and in A.D. 381, the Council of Constantinople had to complete the Nicene Creed, and to affirm the truth of our Lord's Manhood against Apollinaris, who denied that our Lord possessed a human soul, or was capable of human sympathy with mankind.

In A.D. 431, the Council of Ephesus had to affirm the fact that the Godhead and Manhood are really united in the One Person of our Lord, against Archbishop Nestorius of Constantinople, who denied this central truth of Holy Scripture. But in opposing Nestorius, an eminent ecclesiastic of Constantinople named Eutyches rushed into the opposite pole of error, and taught that the Manhood was absorbed in the Godhead of our Lord in such a manner that He had only One Nature. The fourth General Council of Chalcedon met in A.D. 451, to confute this error by affirming the Scriptural truth that the Godhead of Manhood are *Two distinct Natures*, united in the *One Person* of our Lord.

Thus as the result of these Scriptural definitions of the General Councils, we find that the Incarnation (which is the central doctrine of the Catholic Faith) is clearly stated and guarded against error.

We make no apology to our readers for this elementary lesson in Church History which we have given them. We have known instances of Clergymen who never tell their people anything about these great Councils of Christendom to which we owe so much. We have known instances of laymen who know nothing of the origin of the Creeds they repeat in Church Sunday by Sunday. And further we believe that there is much vague and unguarded language used amongst us with regard to the doctrine of the Incarnation which can only be corrected by a knowledge of the Scriptural truth set forth by the *decisive authority* of the first four General Councils of the Catholic Church.—*The Southern Cross, Port Elizabeth.*

## SUPPRESSING PROTESTANTISM.

An extract from a new book, entitled *A Manual of Church History* (vol. II.), by the Rev. T. Gilmartin, Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Maynooth College, and issued with the approval of Archbishop Walsh, of Dublin, may serve to show what might be expected in Ireland if the Protestant population became subject to *Rome Rule*.

"Professor Gilmartin, in his chapter on 'The Inquisition,' declares that 'universal religious toleration is as indefensible in theory as it has been found impossible in practice.....And the more one loves religious truth, and the spiritual interest of his neighbour, the more must he seek, within the limits of justice and prudence, to stamp out heterodoxy' (p. 226). One of the methods approved by the author for 'stamping out' heresy is that which was adopted by his Church in the Dark Ages, namely the inquisition, 'The action of the Church,' he writes, 'in using the State during the Middle Ages to punish religious dissent, can be easily defended on sound principles of theology and canon law (p. 227). .....The 'principles' to which the Professor refers include the following, as expressed by himself:—(1) 'There should be a reunion between the Church and State as between the two great constituent elements of one moral body, each working in its proper sphere for the common good.' This means that the Church of Ireland having been severed from its connection with the State, the Church of Rome should take its place. '(2) This union must be effected by subordination of the one to the other, and not by co-ordination.' Rome will not be satisfied with toleration and equality. She must be mistress or nothing. '(3) As one of the powers,' writes Professor Gilmartin, 'must, therefore, be subordinate to the other, it follows, as a matter of course, that the spiritual should rule, at least so far as to define the limits of its authority, and direct the movements of the State according to the law of God [which in this case means the law of the Pope], as the human soul directs the body' (pp. 227, 228)."

The *Protestant Observer*, commenting on this passage, asks:—

"When the 'Union of the Church and State' becomes a fact in Ireland, what will be their attitude towards Protestantism? How will they carry out into practice the 'principles' thus laid down by Maynooth College? Let Professor Gilmartin himself answer:—'From these principles,' he writes, 'it follows: (a) that the State can punish heresy as an evil in itself and as an offence against the Church; and (b) the Church can require the assistance of the State in