

The Church.

THEREFORE I WILL NOT BE NEGLIGENT TO PUT YOU ALWAYS IN REMEMBRANCE OF THESE THINGS, THOUGH YE KNOW THEM AND BE ESTABLISHED IN THE PRESENT TRUTH.—2 PETER, I, 12.

VOL. I.]

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Original Poetry.

For the Church.

A PENITENT'S DEATH-BED.

It was a scene of magic beauty,
Through the star-illumined depths of ether
Cynthia walked queen-like and unclouded;
And moving in silent glory onward,
She gave to view the sparkling pyramids
Of Mount Blanc and Savoy's glittering glaciers,
While she poured a flood of light luxuriant
O'er Geneva's lake and its environs,
Of varied beauty. Calm was that far-famed
Sheet of water—calm as the passionless
Thoughts of infancy; for Heaven's rude winds
Were hush'd in deep repose: perfum'd zephyrs
Alone were waking.

Sheltered by trees of stately
Growth on a vine-clad cliff, against whose base
Geneva's waters gently murmured,
A lonely cottage stood in beautiful
Seclusion. Oh moon! thou bright, thou beautiful,
How many are the scenes of woe on which
Thy pure light beameth!—Beside a moon-lit
Casement of that sequestered dwelling,
On a couch of death reclined, a youthful
Form, which once had been purely beautiful
As the untouch'd snow that crowns those alpine
Heights, which to man are inaccessible;
But such she was no longer! That fearful
Change guilt ever causeth had o'er her passed,
And in Heaven's high court a crime of deepest
Die against her was recorded; for a husband's
Sacred home she had forsak'n for one who
Was of such a sacrifice unworthy.
With innocence fled peace; for conscience kept
Untiring vigil in her soul, and in
Their stead came suffering and remorse, sin's
Bitter fruits, which soon had power to steal
From passion's erring victim that beauty
Once so delicately bright, so wondrous.

Beside her sat an aged man,
Whose countenance was eloquent of grief,
Resign'd. He was her father, and bitter
Was that woe which she had made him feel; but
Though guilt's dark shade was on her brow, and its
Degradation with a cloud of midnight
Gloom o'ershadow'd her, yet she was his child—
And what can rend a tie so sacred? what
Can separate a daughter from a father's
Love? He was a minister of the most
High; one who practis'd the religion which
He taught, and with words of holy comfort
He tried to calm the anxious doubts and fears
Of the repentant being, whose feeble
Spirit linger'd near that eternal world
She wish'd, yet feared to enter. "Imagine!
Thou errest in limiting the mercy
Of Him who in light unapproachable
Dwelleth! Has He not declared it boundless
As His own home of immortality?
'Tis true, thou guilty one, that thou must stand
Before God's throne of judgment, far above
Those glittering worlds which look so coldly
On our misery, while against thee a bright
Intelligence will bring a heinous charge.
Yet fear not; for a mighty Advocate
Will plead in your behalf that sacrifice
Which can for every crime atone
Make, and thou wilt be forgiven." To such
Whisperings of peace, the erring creature
Listened with an eagerness the dying
Can only feel. A ray of hope, sent from
The Mercy-seat, broke slowly through despair's
Fearful gloom, and a smile of happiness
Over her ghastly features stole. Few were
The words she uttered, for the feebleness
Of death was on her; but her heart was full
Of peace. Through the lonely hours of that sad
Night, the father watch'd beside his dying child,
In silent anguish. The awful moment
Came: at length the struggling spirit from its
Mortal tenement departed; and as
It passed, the dying eyes with a ling'ring
Look of gratitude unutterable,
Turned on him whose affection unwearied,
Deep, had her only solace been in days
Of remorse and misery.

E. V. N.

Toronto, 16th May, 1838.

THE ATHANASIAN CREED.

While the love of novelty, and prejudice against whatever bears the stamp of antiquity, are in the present age seducing many from our communion, and rendering others still more hostile than they were, the minds of those who value and admire our Church, and who, in the language of the poet, can say, "With all thy faults, I love thee still," are from the above circumstances more frequently than formerly induced to institute a diligent scrutiny into her public services. This is confessedly an age of inquiry; and far from shrinking from the test, or fearing the charge of bigotry, we may confidently affirm, that our devotional formularies are based upon Scriptural principles, and will bear an impartial examination in connexion with the word of God. The Church of England, indeed, professes in her articles of religion to make the Bible her rule of faith; "so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation;" and as of the other creeds which she propounds to her members, so likewise of the Athanasian, she asserts (in Article viii.) that they "ought thoroughly to be received and believed; for they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture."

Of those portions of our Liturgy which, from ignorance or prejudice, have been more commonly objected to than others, this creed has been an especial subject of cavil; and even by some ill-informed or lax members of our Church has been considered untenable, or, at least, questionable; yet it will be found, on a candid inspection, to be a scriptural declaration of the revealed will of God. The author of this exposition of the Christian faith (commonly ascribed to Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, who lived in the fourth century) is not positively known, though several reasons have induced the learned to infer that it was framed by Hilary, bishop of Arles, about half a century later than the time of Athanasius, and subsequently named after the latter, as expressing most fully the doctrines which he maintained with considerable firmness and perseverance against the heresies which existed in his days.

Much of the objection to this "Confession of our Christian Faith" has arisen from persons not duly distinguishing between the doctrinal and the argumentative or explanatory clauses.—For, unlike the other creeds, it not only asserts, but also explains "the Catholic Faith," which by the word of God we are enjoined to believe, under the penalty of eternal condemnation; but which in no wise applies to the proofs that are adduced in support of the doctrine.

It has been further urged by some opponents, that in the early period of Christianity there were no such creeds in use; as, for instance, the Eunuch's declaration of faith to Philip (Acts, viii. 17); in answer to which we may indeed confess, that it would have been happy for the Church of Christ if her creed could have remained thus simple; but heresies have compelled her to make a full and guarded exposition of her belief; and those persons who complain of the confinement of a creed would do well to consider that it is such who have occasioned, if it may be so termed, the necessary evil. There is, moreover, a continual need of the public use of such declarations, in order to instruct the ignorant, to admonish the wavering, and to guard against the re-introduction of past errors; since "the thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done, is that which shall be done; and there is no new thing under the sun."

ANALYSIS, SCRIPTURE PROOFS, &c., WITH REFERENCES TO THE HERESIES OPPOSED.

Introduction.

Whoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic faith.

Whoever will, means whosoever wishes to be saved. (Catholic signifies universal, (Heb. xi. 6; Rom. x. 9, 10)

Which faith, except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.
Mark, xvi. 16; 2 Thess. ii. 12.

Doctrine of the Trinity asserted.

And the Catholic faith is this; that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity.

Deut. vi. 4; Gen. i. 26, iii. 22; Isai. vi. 8; Matt. xxviii. 19; 1 John, v. 7; 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

Neither confounding the persons, (as the Sabellians and Swedenborgians) nor dividing the substance, (as the Arians, Socinians, &c.)

John x. 30, v. 23, xiv. 8—10; Eph. ii. 18.

Argument or Explanation.

For there is one person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost.

Exemplified at the baptism of Christ (Matt. iii. 16, 17). But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one; the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal.

Isai. vi. 3 (holy thrice repeated); Rev. iv. 8.

Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost. The Father uncreate, the Son uncreate, and the Holy Ghost uncreate.

Ps. xc. 2; 1 Cor. viii. 6; Exod. iii. 14; John viii. 58; Heb. xiii. 8, ix. 14.

The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible.

Incomprehensible means not confined to any limits.
2 Chron. vi. 18; Ps. cxxxix. 1—12; Prov. xv. 3; Jer. xxiii. 24; John, i. 48, iii. 13; Ps. cxxxix. 7, &c.

The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Ghost eternal.
1 Tim. vi. 16; Deut. xxxiii. 27; Mic. v. 2; Rev. i. 8; Heb. ix. 14; Gen. i. 2; John, xiv. 16.

And yet they are not three eternals; but one eternal. As also there are not three incomprehensibles, nor three uncreated; but one uncreated, and one incomprehensible.

Is. xlv. 6; xlv. 9; 1 John, v. 7.

So likewise the Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty, and the Holy Ghost Almighty. And yet they are not three Almighties, but one Almighty.

Gen. xxviii. 3; 1 Tim. vi. 15; Rev. i. 8; Job, xxxii. 8, xxxiii. 4; 1 Cor. xii. 4—11.

So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God. [This the Macedonians denied.] And yet they are not three Gods, (as the high Arians pretend) but one God.

1 Cor. viii. 6; Eph. iv. 6; 1 Pet. i. 2; John, i. 1; Rom. ix. 5; Heb. i. 8; Luke, i. 35; Acts, v. 3, 4; 1 John, iv. 15, with 1 Cor. iii. 16.

So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Ghost Lord. And yet they are not three Lords, but one Lord.

Acts, iv. 26, 29; Rev. xi. 15; Luke, ii. 11; Is. vi. 1, 3, 5; Col. iii. 24; 2 Thess. iii. 5; Numb. vi. 24—26.

For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every person by himself to be God and Lord; so are we

forbidden by the Catholic religion to say, There be three Gods, or three Lords.

Deut. vi. 4; Gal. iii. 20. Creation is ascribed to the Father (Gen. i. 1; Acts, xvii. 24, 25) Also to the Son (John, i. 3, 10; Col. i. 16; Heb. i. 2, 10). And to the Holy Ghost (Job, xxxiii. 4; Gen. i. 2, 26; Ps. xxxiii. 6; Job, xxvi. 13) Sanctification also, the immediate work of the Holy Ghost, is ascribed to the Father and the Son (Rom. xv. 16; 1 Pet. i. 2; Jude, i. 1; Heb. ii. 11). Ministerial appointment is the work of the Trinity in Unity (2 Cor. iii. 5, 6; 1 Tim. i. 12; Acts, xx. 28).

The Father is made of none, neither created nor begotten.

Nehem. ix. 6; Ps. xc. 2; Is. xlv. 9, 10; 1 Cor. viii. 6; 1 Tim. i. 17.

The Son is of the Father alone, not made, nor created, nor begotten.

Ps. ii. 7; Prov. viii. 22—31; John, i. 1, 2, 18; iii. 16; Heb. i. 5, 6.

The Holy Ghost is of the Father, and of the Son; neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding.

John, xv. 26; xvi. 7; xx. 22.

So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts.

Eph. iv. 4—6.

And in this Trinity none is afore or after other; none is greater or less than another. But the whole three persons are co-eternal together, and co-equal. So that in all things, as is aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity, is to be worshipped.

In Matt. xxviii. 19, the Father is mentioned first; in 2 Cor. xiii. 14, the Son is ranked first; in Eph. iv. 4, the Spirit is put first, and in Rev. i. 4, before the Son. In Luke, i. 25, the Son is spoken of as proceeding from the Holy Ghost; and in John, xvi. 7, the Son sends forth the Holy Ghost. He therefore that will be saved must (ought to) thus think of the Trinity.

Will here means wishes to be saved. Mark, xvi. 16; John, xiv. 1, 11; Col. ii. 2; Gal. i. 3; 2 Thess. ii. 12; 1 John, v. 10.

Doctrine of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ asserted.

Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation, that he also believe rightly the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

John, iii. 36; 1 John, iv. 2, 3; 2 John, 7, 9.

Argument or Explanation.

For the right faith is, that we believe and confess, that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and man. [The Ebionites, Cerinthians, Arians, and Socinians deny that he is God; and the Docetæ, Apollinarians, and Eutychians deny that he is man.]

John, xi. 27; 1 Tim. iii. 16.

God, of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds; and man, of the substance of his mother, born in the world.

John, i. 1—3, xiv. 9, xvii. 5; Heb. i. 3; Rom. i. 3, 4; John, i. 14; Gal. iv. 4; Luke, ii. 7.

Perfect God and perfect man; of a reasonable soul, (in opposition to the Apollinarians) and human flesh subsisting.

Is. ix. 6; Acts, xx. 28; Rom. ix. 5; Col. ii. 9; Phil. ii. 6—8; 1 Tim. ii. 5; Heb. ii. 16, 17; Luke, ii. 40, 52.

Equal to the Father, as touching his Godhead; and inferior to the Father, as touching his manhood.

John, v. 18, 21, 23; x. 30; xiv. 28; xvii. 10; Phil. ii. 6, 7; 1 Cor. xi. 3; xv. 27, 28; Heb. i. 5; ii. 9; v. 7—9.

Who, although he be God and man, yet he is not two, (not two agents, as the Nestorians affirm) but one Christ.

John, i. 14, x. 30, xiv. 11; Heb. i. 8.

One, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh; (which the Apollinarians affirmed) but by taking of the manhood into God.

He was still omniscient (Matt. ix. 4; Luke, v. 22; John, ii. 24, xvi. 30; Heb. iv. 13) Still omnipotent (John, v. 21, x. 38) Still omnipresent (John, i. 48, iii. 13; Luke, xix. 30, xxii. 10—12)

One altogether; not by confusion of substance, (in opposition to the Apollinarians and Eutychians) but by unity of person.

John, v. 26, xx. 28; Tit. ii. 13.

For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ.

The union of soul and body is as great a mystery to us, as the union of the Godhead and manhood in Christ. (1 Tim. iii. 16; Col. ii. 9.)

His work for our Redemption.

Who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead.

1 Pet. iii. 18; Heb. v. 9; ix. 28; Luke, xxiii. 43; Acts ii. 31; Luke xxiv. 46; 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4.

He ascended into heaven, he sitteth on the right hand of the Father, God Almighty; from whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

Mark, xvi. 19; Eph. i. 20; 1 Pet. iii. 22; Heb. viii. 1; 2 Tim. iv. 1; Acts, x. 42.

At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies; and shall give account for their own works.

2 Cor. v. 10; 1 Cor. xv. 20; Matt. xvi. 27; John, v. 25—29.

And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting; and they that have done evil, into everlasting fire.

Dan. xii. 2; John, v. 29; Matt. xxv. 41, 46.

Conclusion.

This is the Catholic faith; which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved.

Mark, xvi. 16; 2 Thess. ii. 12; Gal. i. 8, 9; 1 Cor. xvi. 22.

BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE HERESIES REFERRED TO.

1. The Ebionites and Cerinthians believed that Jesus Christ was a mere man, born according to the common course of nature. These heresies existed in the first and second century.

2. The Docetæ (in the second century) taught that the human