

thing that was very real, and for want of which the Church to-day is distinctly poorer. If it is our duty to disseminate the truth of the Gospel all through the world, then it is equally our duty to preserve that truth in its integrity. We are bound to maintain in its fulness, and hand down unimpaired to those who are to follow us, the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. The task is not an easy one, and we may at times be tempted to forsake it in the interests of what the world calls charity; but the Church must ever remember that the stern necessities of truth must not be made subservient to sympathy, nor must the clear outlines of truth be lost sight of in the obscuring charms that belong to personality.

Out of this corporate sense of stern responsibility for truth entrusted came the Church's Creed. It came as a natural and necessary development. The faith received passed by a natural evolutionary process into the faith formally expressed. The process was a self-protective one. By nothing but the fact that almost from the first beginning there was this formal expression of the faith could it have been kept so harmonious in outline and complete in its content. Always and everywhere, consciously and unconsciously, the Creeds have been the court of appeal in Christian controversy. Read the history of the Church, and what do you find? First one doctrine, and then another, coming into special prominence, but never one to the full and final exclusion of any other. And what has been the secret of adjustment? How has the faith been preserved in its proportion? Largely, I believe, by the regular and reverent recital of the Creed in public worship; so that it is almost true to say that the pew rather than the pulpit has been the real conservator of the faith.

Did time permit, it would be easy to speak of the inspiring power of the Christian Creed. A few moments ago, we stood together, and made our common profession of a common faith. Was that a small thing to do,—an insignificant detail in the rich order of our service? Yet the formal act gathers grandeur as we remember that in the same moment, and in the same simple act, we made our lives the link between the future and the past. And how splendid has been the history of the Creed! Its mutterings were heard first in the secret darkness of the Catacombs. Its challenge was flung forth with defiant faith upon the blood-stained arena of a Roman holiday, and, as in the strength of its inspiration, men had learned to live,—so in the sweetness of its solace they found strength to die. It swept like wintry surges across the mighty empire of the ancient world. It broke in irresistible power upon the shores of pagan Britain. The thunder of its message awoke the sleeping soul of Europe. It was caught up and declaimed in the islands of the Seas. India, China, and Japan, heard and welcomed it until at last the

".....Church unsleeping;
While earth rolls onward into light,
Through all the world her watch is keeping.
And rests not now by day nor night."