

THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH.

No. 2.

NOW applying the principles we have evolved to what we see around us at the present day, what is the proper conclusion to arrive at?

We find three large bodies of Christians who possess the first requisite, viz: the three-fold ministry of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. These bodies which now exist are lineal successors of bodies which, at one time in the history of the church, were in intercommunion with each other. We refer to the Greek, Roman, and Anglican churches. Secondly, they all profess the Faith as set forth in the Nicene Creed, the two latter bodies also profess to believe in the article embodied in the interpolation of the words, "and the Son," to which we have referred. We are not, however, at present concerned with additions to the Faith, we will refer to them hereafter. Thirdly, they all celebrate the two sacraments of our Lord's appointment, viz: Baptism and the Holy Eucharist. The Roman church in the administration of the latter however, departing from the usage of the church of which the fathers spoke. These bodies having so much in common, let us briefly glance at what divides them, and we find that it is because they do not agree as to certain additions which the Roman Church has assumed to make to the ancient creed of the Holy Catholic Church, or they differ in certain practices, which none of them pretend are of the essence of the Christian religion. Now, however, we may regard these misbeliefs and these practices about which there is contention, the question to be considered is, Do these misbeliefs, and adoption of these practices, so utterly nullify all those points of unity which still exist, as to render these bodies no longer entitled to be regarded as constituting the Catholic Church? We should say in all Christian charity they do not. And that although these bodies may contend and be at variance with each and refuse to hold intercommunion, yet for all that, in those positive principles and practices in which they still agree, both with each other and the church of which the fathers spoke, there is still a real and vital unity.

Let us now turn to our various Christian brethren of the manifold denominations of Protestantism, and we are compelled to admit that in them we find no historical continuity of existence extending back more than 300 years of the 18 centuries of Christianity. Not one of them professes to have any historical succession, or continuity with any church existing before the Reformation era, they are professedly new churches, organized on new principles, which had not prior to the Reformation, anywhere prevailed in any part of the one Catholic Church. How, therefore, as organizations of Christians, can they be now deemed parts of the Christian Society the fathers had in view?

None of these bodies have the Apostolic ministry of bishops. None of these accept the

Nicene Creed in its entirety, they all give to the article concerning the church, a meaning its framers could never have intended. Some are vitally heretical concerning the Divinity of Christ. Some reject one and some (e.g. the Quakers) both of the sacraments our Lord appointed. These organizations cannot therefore, as Christian organizations, be considered as forming a part of the Society which the fathers called on Christians to believe in.

The position of individual members of such bodies, will be considered in our next and concluding article.—H

NOTES ON THE SPIRITUAL LIFE.

NO 1

ALL who have even set themselves, with any real earnestness, to live a religious life, have felt the need of helps and counsels, to meet them in their doubts and difficulties, and perplexities. Even when we have no serious doubt, on the subject of duty, or how to act in a certain emergency, it is useful to have our judgment confirmed by that of another, and especially to know what has been thought and said by the acknowledged masters of the spiritual life.

It is, of course, true that we have our Bible; and nothing can ever take the place of that. But experience teaches us that the Bible itself may become more precious to us by our learning how it has affected and influenced others besides ourselves. Accordingly, many books have been written on the subject of the life of grace, which have become classics and which hold a very dear and sacred place in the hearts of God's people, we need only mention "The Imitation of Christ," "The Spiritual Combat" of Senpoli, the "Devout Life" of S. Francois de Sales, "Holy Living" and "Holy Dying," by Jeremy Taylor, William Law's "Christian Perfection," Goulburn's "Personal Religion," to which we might easily add a good many others hardly inferior to them.

These "Notes," which we propose to continue for two or three months, are not intended to take the place of those excellent books which we have mentioned. Our aim is simply to help those who are striving after the life of holiness to have a clearer view of the subject, a more distinct and definite purpose, and to guide them to those helps by which they may surmount the difficulties that stand in their way, and make more wise and diligent use of those means of grace whereby they may grow in grace and in the knowledge of God in Christ.

We begin with religious or spiritual Life, its true idea and significance.

It is very difficult to define this word *Life*, as it is to define all words representing simple ideas which can be resolved into nothing more elementary than themselves. Thus we find one definition which runs as follows: "That state of an animal or plant in which its organs are capable of fulfilling their functions," which is very good, but the word *animal* contains the very idea which it is introduced to define. Mr. Herbert Spencer defines Life to be "corres-

pondence in the environment," and this definition is adopted by Mr. Drummond in his book on "Natural Law in the Spiritual Life." There are some difficulties about the application of this definition. The Supreme authority has declared: This is life eternal, that they should know Thee the only true God, and Him who Thou did'st send, even Jesus Christ." This, then, is life—the heart knowledge of God in Christ, and when this exists, all the energies and manifestations of life will be discerned.

We shall, hereafter, have much to say, if it please God, on the origination and development of this life; but it may be helpful to note the appropriateness of the designation in regard to man's relation to God. Life, it has been noted for many ages, has many forms, from the lowest vegetative life to the highest rational and spiritual. In the lowest plant life we have a very simple organism with the power of nourishing itself from without, then comes the life of sensation and locomotion, then above that comes the life of reason and of definite will and purpose. Where any of these powers are lacking in an existence to which they properly belong, we declare that this existence is dead. We never call a stone dead, for instance, because it has no life. But a lifeless plant or animal or man is dead, because life is needful for the completeness of any of these existencies.

We can now see, without much difficulty, what we mean by spiritual or religious life or death. We mean a life, or the want of that life, which has relation to God. Thus to begin with the life of sensation, a man is dead who has no sense of God, who does not feel that his life is from God and in God's hands, and that it should be lived to God. A man cannot be said to be truly alive to God who has not true knowledge of God; of course, there is a kind of religious life that has no true knowledge of God—the life of the idolator who makes a god in his own image, the life of the mere mystic who loses himself in the infinite, without any definite thought of the Divine attributes, the life of the mere Deist who has a notion of a Creator, who may perhaps be the Ruler of the world, or may be leaving it to go on under the domain of the laws which He has prescribed to it. These and other forms of religious life, are clearly different from the life of which Jesus Christ has spoken, from the life which He came to impart. The spiritual life of the Christian, is that which places his whole nature in a true relation to God as its source, its centre, its support, its controller, its end. To live to God, is to know God as He is revealed in Jesus Christ, holy, wise, loving, omnipotence. It is to know Him as a Father in Christ; it is to come to Him as a child; it is to find one's highest satisfaction and joy in Him; it is to be constrained to render Him a ready and cheerful obedience; it is to find it a sorrow and a misery to disobey Him, not because punishment will certainly ensue, but because it is a grief to resist One who is altogether loving and tender and compassionate; because it is a wrong and an evil to cross the will of One who is absolutely righteous and good. It is to have