

MINIMIZING THE FAITH.

CANON LIDDON, in a recent sermon at Oxford, has some good words upon the popular tendency to union among Christians, on the basis of negation. Our "common Christianity" would do well to read, mark, and inwardly digest the following:—

There is a vague but creditable desire for fellowship in religious sentiment which belongs to our day, in religious sentiments rather than in religious truth. This desire for religious fellowship is most Christian in its origin, and it is aided by the great facilities for intercommunion which our modern life has created. But when it becomes practical, what is it that frequently happens? The smallest of several coöperating creeds becomes of necessity the basis of the coöperation. Its mutilated and impoverished form is assumed, with whatever amount of hardihood, to contain the whole substance of revelation, to be what we call, with a strange indifference to its variable and ever shifting area, "our common Christianity." As each applicant for admission to the alliance comes, bringing with him a smaller and yet smaller creed, the process of minimizing necessarily goes forward, and in the end it seems to be supposed that a service is somehow rendered, at once to Christ our Lord, and to Christians, if a Christian religion can be shown to cover very, very little ground indeed. And thus men have come to substitute for the Apostolic injunction, "Therefore, leaving the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection," the modern exhortation, "There-

fore, leaving the Creeds of the Apostolic Church, let us do what we may to reduce the Christian faith to a working minimum." Everything is discarded on which there have been difficulties. Men retain only that on which for a moment they agree, and so they tell us sometimes that the character of God and the character of Christ are the only permanent elements in Christianity. But surely such a Christianity as this, if it can be accepted as meriting the name, is, in reality, open to at least as many critical objections as the larger Creeds which it is meant to supersede. Who does not see that our Lord's human character can only be described as perfect, if His right to draw the attention of men in terms which befit only a super-human person, be frankly conceded? Who does not know that the existence of a moral God, the Maker and Ruler of this universe, is more clearly and forcibly contested by a large class of influential writers, than any subordinate or derived truths whatever—that whatever may have been the case in the last century, atheism is even more earnest in rejecting, in our own day, the specific doctrines and the Creed which comes from Jesus Christ? Surely, then, brethren, it is our wisdom, as Christian believers, while the day of life lasts, to make the most, and not the least, of such religious truths as we know.

AN important German work is going on in various towns in Connecticut, under the charge of Rev. J. Rockstroh, formerly a Lutheran minister. He will soon present 20 candidates for Confirmation.