

FAITH AND OPINION.

BY THE REV. A. W. SNYDER.

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Churchmen ought to distinguish very clearly between that which is of the Faith and that which is merely matter of opinion. The fact of the being of God is of the Faith; so, too, are all the Articles of the Creed. That God is "the Maker of all things, visible and invisible," is of the Faith; but it has nothing to say as to the method of creation. A Christian may, if he will, think the world created in six days, or six years, or sixty million years. All that he is required to believe is that God created the heavens and the earth. Again, it is of the Faith that Jesus Christ our Lord, "for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven;" that "He suffered, and was buried, and the third day rose again." That He died for our sins, and rose again for our justification, is of the Faith; but this or that attempted explanation or philosophy of His atoning death and sacrifice is very much a matter of opinion. John Calvin, John Wesley, Jonathan Edwards, and many others, have set forth a philosophy of the Atonement, that is—their opinion as to the necessities and nature of it. But it is matter of little importance what these men have thought or said or written about it. We accept the fact set forth in the Faith. We are not pledged to any human philosophy of the fact.

Opinion has to do with manifold questions which may indeed be both interesting and edifying, yet have never been authoritatively adjudicated by the Church Catholic. Outside the Faith, there are numberless questions about which men differ, and always have differed, and, furthermore, have a perfect right to differ. Ignorance or forgetfulness of this has been an occasion of endless strife, bitterness and misery among Christian men. Because of it, Fra Dolcino was torn in pieces, Savonarola and Huss were burnt at the stake, and thousands of others hunted to the death. It is perhaps safe to say that nine-tenths of the strife and tumult and so-called religious wars that have raged throughout Christendom had their origin not so much in heresy as in differences of opinion wherein men had a right to differ. For mere notions and opinions, men have not hesitated to rend Christ's Mystical Body, the Church, and bring in endless discord, division and strife. Not one schism in a hundred has had its origin in an explicit denial of the Faith; but rather in some small matter of opinion, contention as to some text or word, some matter of ritual observance, the mode of administering a Sacrament, or something of even less importance. There is no opinion so small, no notion so narrow, no fancy so fanatical, but it has found minds small enough to be filled with it, almost to the exclusion of the great verities of the Faith. The Russian Church has long been cursed with schisms, which had their origin in a protest against smoking tobacco and eating potatoes; or again, as to whether the officiating priest, in pronouncing the benediction, should raise three fingers of the right hand, or only two. Silly questions they seem to us, yet more silly and incomprehensible to them seem the small and endless grounds of separation and strife which obtain with us. It is the way of the separatist and sectary to make much of mere matters of opinion, but with a Churchman it should not be so. He knows what the Faith is. Every time he joins in the worship of the Lord's House he stands up and repeats it. To deny it or any article of it would be heresy, from which we say, "good Lord deliver us." But as to that which is of opinion, it is quite another matter. Therein men may differ. But if they must, it should be without strife or breach of Christian charity. Life is too short and its work too serious to spend time or strength in controversy over non-essentials.

Those of another and wiser generation will, no doubt, wonder how those of this could have

been so blind and narrow as to fight and wrangle and divide and sub-divide on mere matters of opinion. There is no good reason, to-day, why all Christians who accept the Nicene Creed should not come together and dwell together in unity of faith, of work, and of worship. Our generation is not ripe for it. By denominational pride and prejudice, the eyes of many are so hidden, that they do not see the folly or admit the sin of the "unhappy divisions" that now separate those who are alike devoted to a common Lord and Saviour. Let us hope that those of a near-coming day will be wiser than those of this. We believe that for all who love God and man, the great question of all questions will soon be, How can we heal the wounds of Christ's Mystical Body? How can a broken up and divided Christendom be one again? It is not at all necessary that we should hold the same opinions. Let it suffice for Churchmen that they gladly confess the same one Faith, once delivered to the saints, and be at agreement as to those great characteristic notes of the Divine Kingdom which have obtained from the beginning. It is enough that it may be said of us as it was of those of the Church of the first days: "They continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of the bread, and in the prayers."

ENGLISH BUDGET.

Rev. H. A. Walker has resigned the incumbency of Hatcham.

The seventh anniversary of the enthronization of the Bishop of Lichfield was celebrated by a special service at the Cathedral on the 11th ult., at which there was a large attendance of clergy.

Church extension in Leicester, in the Diocese of Peterborough, is so marked as to warrant special commendation by the Bishop. The Church of St. John, Clarendon Park, is the gift of Miss Barlow, in memory of the late John Clay Barlow. Miss Barlow has given £3,000 towards this object. The Church of St. Barnabas, at New Humberstone, erected mainly through the liberality and efforts of Mr. Cooper, of the Framework Knitters' Company, London, will cost £7,000, and is nearly completed.

The Wesleyans have been having a Choral Service at Canterbury, presided over by the chairman of the district, and under the management of the organist of Canterbury Chapel. The *Te Deum*, *Jubilate*, Anthems and Wesley's Hymns were sung, and an address on Music in the Church given. The choir visited the Cathedral, and were conducted through it by the Dean and Canon Fremantle.

A public meeting in aid of the fund for the formation of the Bishopric of Wakefield, Yorkshire, was held at the Mansion House, London, and was largely attended. Lord Fitzwilliams made a gift of £1,000 towards the object, and the Bishop of Ripon, Archbishop of Canterbury and others spoke strongly in favor of the movement.

The total amount subscribed by Churchmen towards the formation of the five new dioceses already formed has been £273,332, not including the annual sums contributed from the endowments of previously existing bishoprics, estimated at a capital sum of £130,000.

The funeral of Bishop Moberly took place on the 10th July, and was very largely attended.

At the Ossory Diocesan Synod, lately held, the Bishop announced that a clergyman had put into his hands £2,000 for the Superannuation Fund of the Diocese of Leighton.

Canon Liddon has been ordered by his medi-

cal adviser to go abroad at once in order to recruit his health.

Truth says that Lord Salisbury will recommend the Queen to appoint Canon Liddon to the See of Salisbury.

The Bishop of Lincoln (Dr King), at the laying of the foundation stone of a new church near Louth, wore the mitre presented to him by his Oxford friends, and also the handsomely embroidered cope; the crozier being carried before him in the procession.

The Bishop of Lincoln has sold the country palace, and is going to live in Lincoln, near the Cathedral, following the example of the late Bishop Selwyn, in refusing to be separated from his people.

The Ven. J. Lionel Darby, M.A., Archdeacon of Chester, has been installed as Residentiary Canon of the Cathedral.

GOD'S HOUSE.

From the beginning holy men and women have set apart places like this for God. They have separated them from all common uses. And you, dear people, will try—will you not?—to remember that this is God's house. And when you come into it you will not talk in the same voice you would talk when in your own houses. Sometimes people go up and down in a consecrated building as if it belonged to them or was not different from any ordinary house. But you will speak in a different voice. You don't know how that cultures reverence. I have seen it. And I hope you will consider if some arrangement is not possible amongst yourselves, by which you may be able to keep this place always open, so that anybody who has not much room in their own cottage may be able to come in quietly here and sit down and think of God, and the blessed ones who have gone into Paradise, and of the beautiful world above, and of Jesus Christ, and looking up at the end of the church may see him hanging on the cross; and that if they are too tired to pray they may kneel down in the quiet to worship God and then go on their journey. You will try to do that. That is the idea of it. That is why the best things are put all over the church; because it is offered to God. This little building is our sort of offering to God. I dare say you have seen a little child that could not speak go and gather a simple flower, and then put it into its mother's hands and bury its face in her lap and kiss her. Well, that little flower is what this building is to us. We feel sometimes we cannot praise God; we have not the power to worship Him. We are looking forward to the day when with the holy ones we shall praise Him for ever and ever. But now we cannot; so we bring this place to God; we put it into His hands and say, "This is the best that we can give. Allelulia! Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. We offer and present it unto Thee, O God most holy, O God most mighty. Allelulia!" And then we are quite quiet. That is all it means.—*From a Sermon preached by the Bishop of Truro at the Opening of a new Church at Port Isaac.*

You were not at service, but your pew was there—your family pew—and its deserted look saddened the service of God's sanctuary. Its vacancy told of carelessness and lukewarmness, of mercies slighted, of blessings lost. Its emptiness echoed back with an unholy mockery the blessed promises of God's most holy word. Its barren coldness chilled the words of the preacher before they reached the full pews beyond. Perhaps you have never thought of all this. I pray you to think of it; "not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another."—*Parish Index.*

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