

are in favor of the principle of reformation, being branded as "Puseyites," while those who take the other view are by many called "*Low Churchmen*," but with what show of reason it is hard to divine, for clearly it must be simply a question of facts, and not of opinions. Whether or no the sixty odd millions of Oriental Christians, form one great apostate church, which we are bound to convert and gather anew within our western "*sheep-folds*," is certainly not a question depending for its solution on the opinion of Mr. A, or Mr. B; or, upon what is said in the eloquent pages of this or that celebrated traveller. It is a question of far too deep and vital importance thus to be settled according to one man's theory or another's prejudice. It is, as we have said, a question of facts; of facts laboriously and carefully collected, impartially and carefully weighed. It is a question to be decided and acted upon, not by individuals but by Churches, and that too, only after earnest prayer for the guidance of God's Holy Spirit. For, upon the true solution of this question it must logically depend, whether or no, in our missionary zeal, we be found fighting under the true banner of Christ, or the false colors of his adversary. If the Oriental church be not apostate, any attempt on the part of another church to withdraw the sheep from her fold and place them in another, must be looked down upon by the great Head of the Church with deep displeasure: while, on the other hand, if she be apostate, any attempt to fraternize with her would be both wrong and dangerous. If, then, it be a question involving such deep results, the effects of a practical solution of which may fell vastly for good or for evil upon future generations in the church, does it not become us representatives, to this age of the world, of what we maintain to be one of the purest branches of Christ's Church, to look well in this matter to our steps, lest we be found working against Christ?

But why, we would ask, need the Oriental Church be a doubtful field of labor? Is there no means of telling whether she is now orthodox and living, or apostate and dead? There was once a way in the universal church, of getting at a knowledge of such things, and all the civilized nations of the world, in their intercourse with one another, still practise it; and we see the reason why it should not now hold good in the intercourse of churches, and that is by an Embassy. The late intercourse between this country and Japan is a case in point. We wished to know something more than we did about Japan, and especially why it was that two nations which were not at war, should be holding no intercourse one with another. To this end we sent an embassy, composed of those in whom we had confidence, and so ordered, as regards power and numbers, as to insure respect. Now are not we, as a church, placed in very much

the same position as regards the Eastern communion? We wish to know more about the Greek Church; and especially why it is that two churches which have never excommunicated each other, are not now in actual communion; whether this alienation has come about from mere circumstances, such as distance, ignorance, or prejudice; or, whether, in the belief and practice of the two churches, there does exist some actual bar to union? And all this could be better learned by an embassy than in any other way. Let some of our best men, one or two Bishops, and six or eight Priests, noted alike for their piety, their orthodoxy, and their theological learning, be chosen for this ecclesiastical embassy, and sent to the chief pastors of the Oriental Church, to gain information, and to open communications; the result of which would either be a conference, an offer of communion, or a letter of excommunication; the last two, of course, dependant upon the concurrence of the church at home. In the meantime, missionary operations, whether on the principle of proselytism or of non-interference, would be suspended.

A plan like this may, perhaps to many, seem strange and Utopian. But let them weigh it carefully, and try it by the canons of the early church, by the law of nations, and by the inherent principles of right and wrong, and all its strangeness and unreality will vanish away. That it would be attended with practical difficulties, none need doubt. But even if it would be hard to find men who *speak* the Greek language, or difficult to determine who are our most pious, orthodox, or learned divines: still, these are difficulties on our side, and should never be made the cause for acting in so important a matter, either in ignorance, or in opposition to the principles, and canons of the universal church. And, if, as ever, christian, of whatever language or shade of faith, earnestly desires, the Oriental Church should be proved to be not apostate, but to be still clinging, notwithstanding persecution, ignorance, and superstition, to the "precious stones of that faith which was once delivered to the saints;" and to be desiring about with her, those elements of reformation, which, in the case of our Mother Church, from a state as, if not more, corrupt, sprang up into such glorious life: how grateful will be the task to extend the same to her, by support and affection; and to bring her from buried truth to the light of day.