

What Does the English Church Stand For?

The next question you propose is, "What does the Church of England stand for?"

I should reply, she stands first of all for the witness to the gift of faith in the Incarnation, the certainty that our Lord Jesus Christ is God and Man, in two natures one divine Person. And I should venture to claim that when we put that doctrine first in teaching we have an advantage over those who begin with the claims of a society or a book. The society, divinely erected and created, comes on the authority of the Person, and the inspired book is presented by the society on the same authority: but the Person of our Lord comes first.

His name and something of His claims are known to all Europeans, and to an increasing number of non-Europeans, as the centre of Christian faith and life, and we invite all men to seek for the mysterious power enabling them to be certain of His claims by the gift of their Maker.

The reformed Church of England also stands in Christendom as the exponent of the *via media* between Rome, grounding all on one earthly vicar of Christ, and Protestantism, rejecting all supernatural commission of the ministry; between Rome propounding doctrines as becoming necessary which had not been necessary before, and Protestantism allowing each man to devise his own creed from the Scriptures. We say, "Nothing new"—non nova sed novo, as Vincent of Lerins puts it—"everything old."

No Hypocrisy.

There is the feeling you mention that men demand sincerity in us who teach, and in themselves who are taught. They would say: "I want beyond all things to know that I am not a hypocrite, and it is something towards it if I am quite sure that my teacher is not a hypocrite!"

I should say to the man who is of this mind: "No one asks you to say you are certain till you are." Every man in the world has the light of conscience if he does not quench it by the darkness of doing what he knows he ought not to do.

When a man becomes a believer in Christ the light becomes glory, life the dawn becoming sunshine. But he must not pretend to have the sunshine when he only has the dawn, though he may ask for it. When once (through prayer, and helped by all the considerations that make for probability) he believes in our Lord he is within reach of the sunshine.

If he can see that our Lord has instituted a Church, a judging priesthood, and sacraments he will be helped by them. If he honestly cannot come to that, the difficulty may arise from the sins of us who are Catholics. The man may be as truly turned from sacraments by scandals as by ignorance or distance: without doubt countless Protestants are forgiven. If he can only take the assurance from the Roman Catholics, I am not going to press on him those reasons which, in spite of very powerful attraction, keep me from throwing myself into the great organisation, but leave me still trying to promote the difficult revival. Above all things let him be sincere, but do not let him mistake cowardice for insincerity, and let him trust the guidance of God in answer to prayer.

Comradeship Without Christianity.

Last of all, what are we to say about the splendour of comradeship. First, is not this a separate question? Is it not quite apart from difference between Christians?

No one doubts the wonderful experiences of what men will do for men. No one doubts that, when a man has felt sick at the staleness of the religion he has known, and the quarrels of Christians, comradeship comes to him as a light and a joy. It is no doubt a clear gain. But we, who are sure of our Lord, must be quite certain that comradeship will be on the side of faith in the end. The man who is feeling the power of the wine of comradeship says: "This is from Christ." And some say: "Yes, it is." He Himself said that those who had no lamps to trim, or talents to use, would show that they belonged to Him by feeding the hungry and clothing the naked. A man goes on doing this, and if Christ sees that he knows no more, that will do for him. Having not the (Christian Church) law, he is a law unto himself.

But we (God forgive us for being unworthy of it) know for certain that there are lamps to burn in honour of the heavenly Bridegroom and talents to use for the perfect Master. If you have been baptised you have within you an undeveloped gift—the mind of Christ—which will one day show you this. If you are not baptised you may one day come across some Gordon, some Lawrence, some holy nun or devoted nurse who will show you what it is to serve Him, not only in comradeship, but in the life of praise, the life of freedom, the life of comradeship, not only with man but with God.

The first Christians kept their best things secret. But new Christians and good heathens are mixed up everywhere. All that comradeship

means to you is hidden in what goes on when men take the sacrament. There may be false brethren—is it impossible that somewhere there may be even a false comrade?—but ever since the night before His death, and all through the wonder of His risen life, there have been men and women to whom the bread and the cup that have been made in a sacrament, His body and blood, are gifts beyond words, beyond thought. When a man knows this he will want the lamps and the talents: till then he must feed, clothe, visit.

Calendar for September.

- 2nd.—14th Sunday after Trinity.
- 9th.—15th Sunday after Trinity.
- 16th.—16th Sunday after Trinity.
- 19th, 21st and 22nd.—Ember Days.
- 21st.—St. Matthew.
- 23rd.—17th Sunday after Trinity.
- 29th.—St. Michael and All Angels.
- 30th.—18th Sunday after Trinity.

Greek Church Friendly.

In Greece Dr. Garbett, Archbishop of York, was deeply touched by the warm welcome and friendly co-operation of the heads of the Orthodox Church, not least the Archbishop of Greece. The Regent was responsible for placing at his disposal any of the churches he cared to use, and in Athens, Dr. Garbett discovered, chaplains are regularly holding services in churches which have been handed over to them by the Greek Church authorities.

A BLACK AND WHITE

Recently the Bishop of Accra was asked to confirm candidates from the Air Force stationed in his diocese. Hearing that a Confirmation was to be held at Winneba, 70 miles from Accra, the airmen asked if they could go there, as they would much prefer to be confirmed along with the African candidates.

The African Christians were intensely pleased, and prepared a great welcome for the airman. "The Confirmation," writes the Bishop, "was one of the most beautiful and reverent that I can call to mind."

There were 40 African candidates and 32 airmen, and a number of brother soldiers came to support them. One by one they came up, Africans and Europeans alternately, and were called upon by name to make their promise; and Europeans and Africans knelt together side by side for the laying-on of hands.