

**THE ENGLISHMAN'S
BRIEF ON BEHALF OF
HIS NATIONAL CHURCH**

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The Englishman's Brief on Behalf of His National Church by Thomas Moore

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THOMAS MOORE

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THE
ENGLISHMAN'S BRIEF
ON BEHALF OF
HIS NATIONAL CHURCH.

NEW, REVISED, AND ENLARGED EDITION.

PUBLISHED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE TRACT COMMITTEE.

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PREFACE TO REVISED AND
ENLARGED EDITION.

The first Edition of this book having been very favourably received by the Press and Public, numerous applications were made to the Author—by Clergy and Laity—for a cheaper issue in order to insure a wider circulation.

The Author submitted the book with these suggestions to the Committee of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and he is glad to say that they have undertaken the publication of this revised and enlarged Edition.

THE ENGLISHMAN'S BRIEF

ON BEHALF OF HIS NATIONAL CHURCH.

PART I.

**In what sense is the Church of England Catholic,
and on what is her claim to Catholicity
founded?**

I. The Church of England does not profess to be *the* Holy Catholic Church of Christ, but she does profess to be a very important branch of that Church¹; and especially does she profess to be the true, right, and lawful representative of it to the people of this land. Indeed she is the only Church through which the people of this land have for many centuries expressed their religious life. She can claim for herself Apostolical origin. Her doctrines are thoroughly based upon Holy Scripture. Her Sacraments are of Divine institution. Her polity and government are, in the main, founded upon Apostolic precept and precedent. If in anything they are not so founded, they contain nothing to the contrary. For hun-

¹ See Manifesto of the Archbishops and Bishops of the English Church in the face of the Papal aggression, March 1851, also the preface to the Resolutions of the Lambeth Conference of Bishops, 1867. J. L.

dreds of years they have received the sanction of the highest human wisdom and experience.

In days passed away she may not have been, in many respects, faithful to her sacred trust; she may not have been fully alive to the responsibility of her Divine work; she may have been to a great extent wordly in spirit, and corrupted by her connection with the Church of Rome, but she has never ceased to be what she was then, and what she is now, a true branch of the Church of Christ Universal, and its accredited and authorized representative to the people of this country. Her Divine charter, in mercy, has never been cancelled, her candlestick has never been removed, and to-day she shows forth, as clearly as she ever has done, that light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

In all her official acts she never forgets that she lives not for herself, ministers not for herself, and seeks not her own glory. She remembers always that she is not the whole, but only a part, of the Church universal. When a child is brought into the congregation to receive the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, she, through her minister, offers her prayer at the font, *not* that it may be received mercly into the Church of England, but that it may be 'received into Christ's Holy Church,' 'into the ark of Christ's Church.' Again, when it is baptized she does *not* say, 'we receive this child into the congregation of the Church of England,' but she does say, 'we receive this child into the congregation of Christ's flock.' And she declares it to be grafted *not* into any local Church, but 'into the body of Christ's Church.'

And when a bishop confers upon any one the office of a deacon, he does *not* say, 'take thou authority to execute the office of a deacon in the Church of England,' but he does say, 'take thou authority to execute the office of a deacon in the Church of God.' Or when he commits to any one the holy office and work of a priest, he does *not* say, 'receive the Holy Ghost for the

office and work of a priest in the Church of England,' but he does say, 'receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a priest in the Church of God.'

Our Church thus, in Holy Baptism and in the ordination of her ministers, as in all her official acts, loses sight of her own individuality as a local Church, and thinks only of, and acts only in the name of, that Holy Church throughout all the world, of which she confesses herself to be but a part. Again, in all her public worship she ever bears in mind the same blessed truth. In the *Te Deum* she does *not* address God saying, 'the Church of England doth acknowledge Thee,' but with exultant voice she sings, 'the Holy Church throughout all the world doth acknowledge Thee.' In her solemn Litany her prayer to God is, 'that it may please Thee to rule and govern Thy Holy Church Universal in the right way.' In the first prayer for the Ember weeks she addresses God as having purchased to Himself 'an universal Church.' In the prayer for all sorts and conditions of men, she offers to God petitions not merely for the good estate of the Church of England, but for 'the good estate of the Catholic Church.' In her Communion service she prays that God may 'have mercy upon the whole Church,' and she addresses her congregation saying, 'Let us pray for the whole state of Christ's Church Militant here in earth.' And while bending low at the mercy seat, she beseeches God, saying, 'inspire continually the Universal Church with the spirit of truth, unity, and concord, and grant that all they that do confess Thy holy name may agree in the truth of Thy holy word, and live in unity and Godly love.'

And again, in her faith she is essentially Catholic; she has ever retained and set forth the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian creeds, as the sacred summaries of all Christian truth. And in those creeds she declares her belief 'in the Holy Catholic Church,' 'in one Catholic and Apostolic Church,' and in the necessity of holding rightly 'the Catholic faith.'

Then again, she shows her Catholicity by constantly keeping before her mind the oneness of Christ's Holy Church, both militant and triumphant, and by cherishing and preserving in her services the sacred and dear memories of prophets, apostles, and saints, who have long since departed this life in Christ's faith and fear.

Nor does the Church of England cherish the memories of those only who lived and died in her fold as the Church of England, but of those saints also who departed this life faithful to their Saviour in communion with any part of Christ's Holy Catholic Church. Thus, in the Apostles', the Nicene, and Athanasian creeds, we have the blended voices of fathers, confessors, and martyrs, still speaking out to the Church and to the world, in solemn form, the faith of Christ once delivered to the saints. These are dear and sacred mementoes of the greatness of departed Christian heroes, who, as unflinching standard bearers, once led the hosts of Christ's army to conflict and victory. Such men have left their footprints visible and definite upon every pathway of the Church's history. Their noble achievements and triumphs are still handed down to us as legacies of priceless value, legacies of which the Church regards herself as the faithful guardian and keeper.

By all these means she endeavours to foster in the minds of her children the idea of her Catholicity, and she brings prominently before their attention the blessed purpose of our Lord Jesus as revealed in His holy word, which is ultimately not to present to Himself a number of individual congregations or churches having no connection or union with each other, but *one* universal 'glorious Church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.'

She further shows her catholicity of spirit in tenderly, reverentially, and lovingly cherishing in her midst the dear names and memories of the faithful dead. As often as her members on earth join in the service of the Holy Communion, she, through her ministers, gives thanks to