

**CHURCH AND CREED:  
SERMONS PREACHED IN  
THE CHAPEL OF THE  
FOUNDLING HOSPITAL**

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Church and Creed: Sermons Preached in the Chapel of the Foundling Hospital by Alfred Williams Momerie

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**ALFRED WILLIAMS MOMERIE**

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From the author

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# CHURCH AND CREED

Sermons Preached in the Chapel of the  
Foundling Hospital

BY

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## *The Church.*

“The general assembly and Church of the first-born, who are written in heaven.”—HEBREWS xii. 23.

“God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him.”—ACTS x. 34, 35.

OUR Ritualistic friends very much dislike to hear the Church spoken of as a sect,—as merely one among a number of opposed and competing denominations. Now I quite agree with them that a Church is, or should be, something essentially different from a sect. But I do not think they generally see in what the true difference consists, nor all that that difference involves.

The etymology of the terms may help us here. It is as a rule desirable, when we wish to find out the best use of words, to inquire into their

derivation. We are not obliged, of course, to follow this slavishly ; but the study of derivations is always suggestive, and generally speaking the root-meaning of the word is the best. Now church comes from the Greek word *κύριος*, and means therefore that which belongs to the Lord. Sect is derived from the Latin *sequi*, to follow. A sect consists of those who follow some particular man, as for example Wesleyans, Sandemanians, Swedenborgians, Irvingites ; or of those who follow some particular tenet, as for example the Baptists, whose leading doctrine is immersion ; or the Independents, whose fundamental principle is that every congregation should manage its own affairs. We shall not be far wrong if we say that the root idea in the word church is God, and the root idea in the word sect is man. It will be worth our while to inquire how far these etymological meanings are borne out in actual fact.

To see this we must first distinguish between *the* Church and *a* Church,—between the Church and Churches. What is meant, or rather what should be meant, by the Church ? We were most of us, I suppose, brought up to think that

*our* Church was *the* Church,—the English Church if we happened to belong to that, or the Romish Church if we chanced to be Roman Catholics. But a little reflection will show the absurdity, or perhaps I should say the blasphemy, of such a thought. This is very well explained in the last chapter of Mark Pattison's *Memoirs*, where he describes his deliverance from the thralldom of sectarianism. He was brought up originally in the narrow faith and sympathies of Puritanism. But by-and-by he came to believe in the Anglican Church, and afterwards in the Catholic Church, whose members, united by a common creed, were to be found in all parts of the world. This idea at first filled him with enthusiasm. But even in this broader notion he could not ultimately rest. "The idea of the Catholic Church," he says, "is only a mode of conceiving the dealings of divine Providence with mankind. But reflection gradually convinced me that this theory of the relation of all living beings to the Supreme Being was too narrow and inadequate. It makes an equal Providence, the Father of all, care only for a mere handful of the species, leaving the rest to the