

THE PRINCIPLES OF THEOLOGY

**AN INTRODUCTION TO THE THIRTY-NINE
ARTICLES**

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CONTENTS

Article

Introduction

- I. Of Faith in the Holy Trinity
- II. Of Christ the Son of God
- III. Of His Going Down into Hell
- IV. Of His Resurrection Articles 4-10
- V. Of The Holy Spirit
- VI. Of the Sufficiency of the Scriptures
- VII. Of the Old Testament
- VIII. Of the Three Creeds
- IX. Of Original or Birth-Sin
- X. Of Free-Will
- XI. Of Justification Articles 11-21
- XII. Of Good Works
- XIII. Of Works before Justification
- XIV. Of Works of Supererogation
- XV. Of Christ Alone without Sin
- XVI. Of Sin after Baptism
- XVII. Of Predestination and Election
- XVIII. Of Obtaining Salvation by Christ
- XIX. Of the Church
- XX. Of the Authority of the Church
- XXI. Of the Authority of General Councils
- XXII. Of Purgatory Articles 22-25
- XXIII. Of Ministering in the Congregation
- XXIV. Of Speaking in the Congregation
- XXV. Of the Sacraments
- XXVI. Of the Unworthiness of Ministers Articles 26-35
- XXVII. Of Baptism
- XXVIII. Of the Lord's Supper
- XXIX. Of the Wicked Which Eat Not the Body of Christ
- XXX. Of Both Kinds
- XXXI. Of Christ's One Oblation
- XXXII. Of the Marriage of Priests
- XXXIII. Of Excommunicate Persons
- XXXIV. Of the Traditions of the Church
- XXXV. Of the Homilies
- XXXVI. Of Consecrating of Ministers Articles 36-Appendix
- XXXVII. Of Civil Magistrates
- XXXVIII. Of Christian Men's Goods
- XXXIX. Of a Christian Man's Oath

INTRODUCTION

Revelation

[This section is summarised from the writer's article "Revelation," in Hastings' One Volume Bible Dictionary. The subject is also treated with great fullness and force in the earlier part of Revelation and Inspiration, by James Orr.]

The word "Revelation" almost suggests its own meaning of the unveiling of something hidden. It corresponds to the Greek word "Apocalypse" or "Uncovering" (Rev. 1:1). In the present connection the word refers to the Revelation of God, the "Unveiling" of the Unseen God to the mind and heart of man. While the term is variously applied, [The widest use is found in Gwatkin, The Knowledge of God, Vol. I, p. 5, "Any fact which gives knowledge is a revelation...the revelation and the knowledge of God are correlative terms."] there are certain specific uses which call for definite consideration.

(1) There is the Revelation of God through Nature, referring to the indications of wisdom, power, and purpose in the world around (Rom. 1:20).

(2) There is the Revelation of God in Man, referring to the traces of God's "image and likeness" in man's conscience, emotional nature and personality in general, involving the consciousness of obligation, the desire for fellowship, and the craving for satisfaction.

(3) There is the Revelation of God in History, which means the marks of an overruling Providence in the affairs of the human race, and the traces of a progress in the history of nations and mankind in general.

(4) There is the Revelation of God in Judaism. The Old Testament involves and records a special supernatural communication of God to man, a disclosure of His character and relationship. (5) There is the Revelation of God in Christianity. This is the crowning feature of God's self-manifestation in the Person of Christ for human redemption.

The problem of Revelation is the correlation of the supernatural disclosure of the character, purpose, and grace of God with the historical and fragmentary process by means of which this progressive revelation has become a received tradition. [2 Cor. 3:14 illustrates both aspects, objective and subjective, of the "unveiling".] It is essential that justice be done both to the supernatural fact and also to the human elements of the Revelation. In the course of this we are brought face to face with the antitheses of Revelation and discovery, of Revelation and speculation, of Revelation and evolution; and while accepting to the full all historical processes we are led to the conviction

(1) that Christianity is only adequately explained as a Personal Revelation of God, Who used and guided history for this purpose; and

(2) that history, discovery, philosophy, and evolution are simply the means or channels by which the Revelation has come.

The possibility of Revelation is based on two grounds:

(1) The Being of God as Supreme (which for the moment we assume) must necessarily be able to reveal Himself. A Personal God necessarily involves the power of a self-revelation. Theistic belief makes Revelation possible.

(2) The nature of man bears the same testimony, for the fact of his personality with all its desires and possibilities involves a capacity for communion with a being higher than himself.

The probability of Revelation is also based on two grounds:

(1) Granted a Supreme Personal Being, we are compelled to predicate His willingness as well as His ability to reveal Himself. Even human personality with its desire for self-revelation makes a revelation of God antecedently probable.

(2) The needs of man point in the same direction, for as man, and still more as a sinner, he needs a Divine Revelation to guide and guard, to support and strengthen him amidst the problems and dangers of life.

The proofs of Divine Revelation are varied, converging, and cumulative.

(1) Speculatively, we argue that “the universe points to idealism, and idealism to theism, and theism to a Revelation.” [Illingworth, *Reason and Revelation*, p. 243.]

(2) Historically, the Christian religion comes to us commended by the testimony of

- (a) miracle;
- (b) prophecy; and
- (c) spiritual adaptation to human needs.

(3) Behind these are the presuppositions of natural religion, as seen in nature, man and history.

(4) But ultimately the credibility of Christianity as a Revelation rests on the Person of its Founder, and all evidences converge towards and centre in Him. The fact that God has made other manifestations of Himself in the course of history does not set aside the culmination of Revelation in the Person of Christ. All truth, however mediated, has come from the primal source of truth, and the genuineness of Christianity does not set aside the genuineness of other religions as “broken lights.” The real criterion of all religions claiming to be Divine is their power to save. Not truth in itself, but truth in life, and truth as redemptive, constitutes the final and supreme test of religion.

The method of the Christian Revelation is first and foremost one of Life; that is, it is a revelation of a Person to persons. Christianity is primarily a religion of facts with doctrines arising out of the facts. All through the historic period of God's manifestation, from patriarchal times to the period of Christ and His Apostles, Revelation was given to life and manifested through Personality. But the Divine life has been expressed in Word, first oral and then written. Both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament we see first what God was and did to men, and afterwards what He said. So that while we distinguish between the Revelation and the Record, the former being necessarily prior to the latter, yet the Revelation needed the Record for accuracy, and also for accessibility to subsequent ages. Then, too, Scripture is not merely a record of Revelation, for the history itself is a Revelation of God. While from one point of view the Bible is a product of the Divine process of self-manifestation, on the other the Bible itself makes God known to man. It is in this sense that Christianity, like Judaism before it, is a book religion (though it is also much more), as recording and conveying the Divine manifestation to man. A Revelation must be embodied if it is to be made available for all generations, and the one requirement is that the medium of transmission shall be accurate. Christ as our Supreme Authority needs for His manifestation to all ages the clearest and purest available form.

Revelation having been mediated through history has of necessity been progressive. The first stage was primitive Revelation. How men first came to think of God is, and probably must remain, a matter of conjecture, for as so little is known about primitive man there must also be little known about primitive religion. One thing, however, is clear, that the terms "savage" and "primitive" are not synonymous, for the savage of today represents a degeneration from primitive man. Analogy favours the idea that primitive Revelation was a sufficient manifestation of God to enable man to receive and retain a true relation with his Creator; that man, when created, had an immediate capacity for entering into fellowship with God, and with this religious endowment we assume a measure of Divine Revelation sufficient to enable man to worship in an elementary way, and to remain true to God. Some such assumption is necessary for the very conception of Revelation, unless we are to resolve religion into merely human conjectures about God. There is no argument against primitive Revelation which is not valid against all Revelation, Christianity included. Then followed in due course the Revelation of God in the Old Testament, and whatever views may be held as to its origin and character it is impossible to avoid being conscious of something in it beyond what is merely human and historical. It does not merely represent human endeavours after worthier ideas of God; it records a true idea of God impressed on the people in the course of history under definite direction. The Old Testament presentation of God is so different from that which obtained elsewhere that apart from a supernatural Revelation it is impossible to account for so marked a difference between peoples who were in other respects so much alike. The New Testament Revelation was the crown and culmination of the Divine self-manifestation. It was given at a particular time, mediated through one Person, and authenticated by supernatural credentials. In Jesus Christ the self-disclosure of God reached its climax, and the New Testament is the permanent, written embodiment of the uniqueness of Christianity in the world. "God, who in ancient days spoke to our forefathers in many distinct messages and by various

methods through the prophets, has at the end of these days spoken to us through a Son” (Heb. 1:1, 2; Weymouth).

The purpose of Revelation is also life, God’s life, to be received and possessed by man. This practical character is marked everywhere. The “chief end of Revelation” is not philosophy, or doctrine, or enjoyment, or even morality. Christianity has these, but is far more than them all. It is the religion of Redemption, including Salvation past, present, and future. The “chief end” of God’s self-manifestation is the union of God and man, and in that union the fulfilment of all the Divine purposes for the world. Man is to receive God’s grace, recognise His will, reproduce His character, render Him service, and rejoice in His presence here and hereafter.

Faith

The subject of Revelation naturally leads on to that of Faith, which is a matter of vital importance to Christianity and the Christian. Faith is the human attitude to the Divine Revelation, the attitude of the soul to Christ as the manifestation of God. Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and Faith is the means of man’s coming to God by Him (Mat. 11:27; John 1:18, 14:6). It is not difficult to understand the interest and importance of Faith. As it is the foundation principle of earthly life in every aspect of relationship, from that of childhood through school days to maturity, in personal, social, commercial, and national affairs, so it enters into religion, and we are thus able to see the meaning of the words, “Without faith it is impossible to please Him” (Heb. 11:6). Trust is the only adequate answer to God’s Revelation. Just as the absence of faith makes it impossible for human beings to have any dealings with each other, so the absence of faith in God makes it wholly impossible for us to have any association with Him. “He that cometh to God must believe” (Heb. 11:6). Trust is thus the correlative of truth. Faith in man answers to grace in God. As such, it affects the whole of man’s nature. It commences with the conviction of the mind based on adequate evidence; it continues in the confidence of the heart or emotions based on the above conviction, and it is crowned in the consent of the will, by means of which the conviction and confidence are expressed in conduct. This is perhaps the meaning of the words, “Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1). The passage is not so much a definition of faith as a description of it in relation to life, and as such it is illustrated by the examples of faith throughout that chapter. Thus faith is the outgoing of the whole nature to what it believes to be true, or rather, to Him Who is held to be the Truth. It is this that Richard Hooker meant when he spoke of faith as including

(1) the certainty of evidence, and

(2) the certainty of adherence. Faith is not blind, but intelligent, since it rests on the conviction of the authority of Christ as Teacher, Saviour, and Lord. The threefold Revelation of Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King, revealing, redeeming, and ruling, is met by the response of the whole life, intellect, emotion, and will. This combination of

all the elements in human nature involves a moral decision which is illustrated in almost every part of the New Testament (Acts 2:41, 17:11; 1 Thess. 1:5; Jas. 1:21).

But it is necessary to note that the word Faith is also used for the substance of doctrine as well as for the attitude of the soul, for *fides quae creditur* as well as *fides qua creditur*. This is sometimes spoken of as “the Faith”, meaning the Christian truth which is everywhere believed among Christians. It is seen in such expressions as “the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints” (Jude verse 3, R.V.); “the common faith” (Tit. 1:4); “the faith of the Gospel” (Phil. 1:27). This twofold use of the term “Faith” necessitates the greatest possible care in distinguishing between believing truths and trusting a Person. The Church Catechism first of all refers to believing “all the articles of the Christian Faith”; that is, the various parts or points of the Christian religion. But this is only a means to an end, since the supreme object of Christian faith can be none other than God Himself. Consequently, the Catechism appropriately follows the rehearsal of the Creed by the Question and Answer, “What dost thou chiefly learn by these articles of thy belief?” “I learn to believe in God.” It is only too possible to believe with an intellectual conviction the facts and truths of Christianity, and yet to fall short of full trust in God. When we read that the devils believe and tremble (Jas. 2:19), we see the difference between intellectual conviction and personal trust. These two elements of faith are found from time to time in Holy Scripture. Thus our Lord speaks in one passage, first, of “hearing His Word”; that is, receiving and accepting intellectually what He said; and, then, of believing on God Who sent Him; that is, personal trust in God arising out of the acceptance of Christ’s Word (John 5:24). Nothing short of the latter can satisfy the requirements of the Christian religion. [Bishop Pearson (Creed, Article I) quoting Durandus, says: “...*credere in Deum’ non est praecis actus fidei, sed fidei et caritatis simul.*”] All facts and truths are intended as the food, warrant, and inspiration of full trust, and are intended only to lead to this outgoing of the whole soul in personal confidence in and dependence on God. Danger lies in the frequent implication that man only needs instruction, while overlooking the solemn truth that by reason of sin he needs illumination as well. So that while the intellect is not to be neglected, faith is very much more than knowledge. It is not mere belief in a thought, or conception, or idea. It is the expression of the whole nature of man in response to God’s approach in Christ. As such, it involves personal committal and confidence. Conviction alone stops short with orthodoxy, and is liable to lead to formalism, but to be orthodox is not to be saved. Faith is the surrender of the soul to God and the appropriation of the grace which saves. Correct views of Christ are essential and vital. It behoves us to be thoroughly acquainted with the facts and truths of the Christian religion related to the Person of Christ, His Resurrection, the Holy Spirit, the Bible, and all else. But it must not be assumed that all is settled when the facts of the Christian religion are guaranteed and understood. We may inspect the records and make sure of the history and all the while may only obtain information about God without a personal experience of Him in the soul. Intellectual beliefs are valuable as means to ends, but not as ends themselves. In all true faith, therefore, there will of necessity be the three elements of knowledge, assent, and confidence, and anything short of these will never give the full Christian trust. The knowledge of God consists in sympathetic understanding of His character. We only know our friends

so far as mutual sympathy gives us insight into their real nature. There are certain distinctions in the original languages of the Creeds, the Latin of the Apostles' Creed and the Greek of the Nicene Creed, which help to make this clear. In Latin, *Credo Deum* (esse) means, "I believe God exists"; *Credo Deo*, "I believe what God says"; *Credo in Deum*, "I trust God."

[“In every movement of faith, therefore, from the lowest to the highest, there is an intellectual, an emotional, and a voluntary element, though naturally these elements vary in their relative prominence in the several movements of faith. This is only as much as to say that it is the man who believes, who is the subject of faith, and the man in the entirety of his being as man” (Warfield, Princeton Theological Review, Vol. IX, p. 566)]

When once we have learned that God is the True Object of faith and we have been made acquainted with the substance of Christian truth, we naturally enquire what precisely we are to believe about God as essential, as distinct from that which is purely accidental. Our enquiry is met by being directed to Holy Scripture. This is the guide and standard of our faith, and the, supreme authority as to what we are to believe. We shall see in Article VI that this is the fundamental principle of the Church of England.

“Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.”

God has given His people a written Revelation of Himself, and this tells us clearly all that it is necessary for us to know about God. The more we ponder this Revelation the more we shall learn to know and trust God Who is revealed here. “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God” (Rom. 10:17). The Bible is therefore of first importance for Christian knowledge and life. In theological language it is “the Rule of Faith,” affording us information about truth and preserving us against error. The Creeds which we accept and hold are summaries of what the Bible contains, and are subordinate to the Bible as a secondary Rule of Faith.

Doctrine

The New Testament has two words for doctrine, διδαχή, and διδασκαλία (2 Tim. 4:2, 3; Tit. 1:9). Both together they occur about fifty times. The word “doctrine” itself is colourless, and is therefore used for truth and error: (a) doctrine of God (Tit. 2:10); of Christ (2 John verse 9); “sound” (1 Tim. 1:10); “good” (1 Tim. 4:6). (b) Of men (Col. 2:22); of demons (1 Tim. 4:1); every wind (Eph. 4:14); divers and strange (Heb. 13:9). This necessitates the use of the term “Christian” doctrine to express the truths of Divine Revelation, and perhaps we may define Christian doctrine as the fundamental truths of revelation arranged in systematic form. Dogma, like other Greek words in *μα*, stands for something fixed, completed, *quod statutum est*.

["A dogma is not a δόγμα, not a subjective, human opinion, not an indefinite, vague notion; nor is it a mere truth of reason, whose universal validity can be made clear with mathematical or logical certainty: it is a truth of faith, derived from the authority of the word and revelation of God;— a positive truth, therefore, positive not merely by virtue of the positiveness with which it is laid down, but also by virtue of the authority with which it is sealed" (Martensen, Christian Dogmatics, p. 1)]

Theology

The term "theology" is used for the scientific expression of all truths relating to divine revelation. Just as nature has to be distinguished from science, so has revelation from theology. Science is the technical expression of the laws of nature; theology is the technical expression of the revelation of God. It is the province of theology to examine all the spiritual facts of revelation, to estimate their value, and to arrange them into a body of teaching. Doctrine thus corresponds with the generalizations of science. Theology, as the science of religion is concerned with all the phenomena of revelation recorded in Holy Scripture.

Special attention has been given of recent years to what is now known as Biblical Theology, which means theology drawn direct from the Bible and formulated along the lines in which it is there presented. It possesses at once variety and unity; variety, because it was not given all at once, but at stages; unity, because the Bible is held to contain a complete view of theological thought. It is the work of Biblical Theology to set forth this variety and unity of truth.

Dogmatic Theology is the systematised statement of truth deduced from the Bible, the intellectual expression in technical language of what is contained in the Word of God. Martensen defines dogmatics as "the science which presents and proves the Christian doctrines regarded as forming a connected system." [Christian Dogmatics, p. 1.] Dogmatic Theology is not necessarily non-Biblical, and Biblical Theology itself depends on the standpoint of the writer.

["Biblical or New Testament theology deals with the thoughts, or the mode of thinking, of the various New Testament writers; systematic theology is the independent construction of Christianity as a whole in the mind of a later thinker. Here again there is a broad and valid distinction, but not an absolute one. It is the Christian thinking of the first century in the one case, and of the twentieth, let us say, in the other; but in both cases there is Christianity and there is thinking, and if there is truth in either, there is bound to be a place at which the distinction disappears" (Denney, The Death of Christ, p. 5)]

There is obvious danger in every attempt at systematizing Christian truth, as we may see from the great works of men like Thomas Aquinas and John Calvin. The human mind is unable to find a place for every single Christian doctrine, and it is far better to be content with "Articles," or "points," with gaps unfilled, because it is impossible for

thought to be covered by them. General lines of Christian truth are far safer and also truer to the growth of thought and experience through the ages. This method prevents teaching becoming hardened into a cast-iron system which cannot expand. It is the virtue of the Church of England Articles that they take this line and do not commit Churchmen to an absolute, rigid system of doctrine from which there is no relief and of which there is no modification.

Creeds, Confessions, and Articles

Faith is response to divine revelation, and confession is the expression of faith.

“What song is to the victory it celebrates, confession is to the religious spirit. ... Religion, like Science, not only seeks and finds the hid treasures of truth, but is fain to cry ‘Eureka.’...Religion only betrays an instinct which is universal throughout all the higher interests and activities of humanity when it thus gives utterance, in language as august as lips can frame, to its mature convictions.”
[W. A. Curtis, History of Creeds and Confessions of Faith, p. 2.]

Every religion has a Creed in one form or another, and we are therefore not surprised to find that the confession of the Christian faith has taken various shapes through the ages. The Creed, properly so-called, is a short, comprehensive statement of belief suitable for discipleship and worship. The earliest form of this was personal, expressive of personal confidence in Christ; it was the natural outcome of the possession of spiritual life. But even here the intellect was necessarily involved, for to believe in Christ was to take up some intellectual attitude in relation to Him. Very soon a more elaborate confession of faith was felt to be necessary, and in due course enquiry and examination at Baptism led to further tests and requirements. Later on the pressure of various heresies accentuated the need of a careful statement of the Christian position.

The making of Creeds may be said to have covered the first four centuries of the Christian era, and then nothing of importance in this respect happened until the dawn of new light and life in the sixteenth century, when confessions of faith and full statements of specific belief arose in connection with the Reformation movement. There had been debates and discussions in the Middle Ages, but they were not theological and Christological. There seems to have been no desire to reopen problems settled ages before by the great Councils, but there was much thought and no little discussion on such matters as the Church, Ministry, Sacraments, and personal religion. When, however, the various Reformed Churches broke loose from Rome it was found essential to state their position with reference to the specific reasons for protest. As a result we find entire agreement on fundamental facts with very different expressions of the specific applications of those facts.

Creeds and Confessions are sometimes contrasted to the detriment of the latter, but a study of the historical order of emergence of these documents of the faith suggests a comparison rather than a contrast. As we follow in order the three Creeds

themselves, the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian, we find that there is a tendency to elaboration, to a fuller theological statement, and to an explanation of what is involved in the original summary of belief. The confessions of faith in the sixteenth century are really only an extension, prolongation, and development of the same process.

If it be said that these Articles and other documents of the sixteenth century are incomplete, and do not provide an adequate statement of belief, it may be pointed out that the same is true of the Creeds. There are many subjects unnoticed in the ecumenical documents of our faith, and we believe this is one of the instances in which the Church has been definitely guided by God. The Church Universal is only committed to a comparatively few fundamental realities, and we might as well complain of the incompleteness of any of the three Creeds as criticise the incompleteness of any of the sixteenth-century Confessions of Faith. They must be judged in the light of the circumstances which gave them birth, and with strict and constant regard to their specific purpose.

The Anglican Articles

The Thirty-nine Articles have a threefold value and importance:—

(a) Historical: in relation to their origin. They are part of the Reformation position and protest. Definition was necessary on the part of all who differed from Rome, and as a result all the Reformed Churches drew up their protest in the form of Confessions, or Articles. Our Articles are thus not only analogous to documents of Continental Churches, but were also influenced by them. They cannot be separated from their historical root in relation to Rome. They mark the position of the Church of England as it was restated in the sixteenth century, and they are equally important now for the same reason. They still mark our present position and attitude.

Another aspect of the connection of the Articles with Rome lies in the fact that they were written by men who had been taught and trained in the system of Roman theology, and a knowledge of the Roman Catholic controversy is therefore essential to a full understanding of the Articles. But in addition to the necessity of declaring their attitude against Rome, the Reformers were compelled to take action against dangers from the opposite direction. The inevitable swing of the intellectual and moral pendulums had produced serious errors of many kinds, and these were being charged by Rome on all Reformers and attributed to the Reformation movement in general. It was therefore essential not only to define what the true Reformation position was, but also to do everything possible to safeguard its members from reactionary or other errors which had become rife in different localities.

(b) Doctrinal: in relation to Church doctrine. They are of supreme value as giving the standard of Church of England doctrine on

(1) points identical with the doctrines of other Churches, and on

(2) points characteristic of our own position. They give with exactness, balance, and fullness the supreme voice of our Church on all matters covered therein.

(c) Practical: in relation to the Christian life. The Articles express the intellectual position involved in being a believer, the explicit, intellectual sign of what is spiritually implicit from the first moment of faith in Christ. When He is accepted as Saviour, Lord, and God, everything else is involved and possessed in germ. We commence by faith and go on to knowledge. It is inevitable that we should think out our position. Peter tells us to be ready to give a reason for the hope that is in us (1 Pet. 3:15), and we see the natural order of experience followed by expression.

- (1) Hope possessed;
- (2) having a reason for our hope;
- (3) giving a reason.

The intellectual grasp of Christianity is essential for a strong Christian life, for giving balance and force to experience, for protection against error, for equipment for service. It is possible to be thought spiritual and yet to be only emotional without intellectual clearness and power. This will inevitably produce weakness and lead to the earnest soul becoming a prey to error from one side or another.

It is easy to decry doctrine, and yet the power of science today is in its dogmas, not in its generalizations. Great ideas, like the conservation of energy, gravitation, the indestructibility of matter, as held and taught by scientists, are a great power. In the same way Christianity must be strong in its ideas of the personality of God, the Person and Work of Christ, the Holy Spirit, and other related truths. If it be said that religion is possible without doctrine, it may be fully admitted, and yet the question at once arises of what sort will it be. It can only be suited to spiritual childhood, not manhood. Great music involves the theory of music, and a religion without theory will be like a babe with love, but with no ideas. It is doctrine that makes grown men. It is simply impossible to have a religion worthy of the name without some dogma.

["Undogmatic religion is, strictly speaking, a contradiction in terms. Dogma is not indeed like Faith, the living spirit of religion; but it is at least the skeleton of all embodied religion, the framework, however transitory, of the physical organization of its life. Faith that is real will out. Faith that is uttered in dogma, like life that is born, may perish; but it is the medium of a manifested spiritual life, mortal like flesh and blood, but like them with a sanctity of its own" (W. A. Curtis, op. cit., p. 3)]

It is, of course, essential to remember that theology is not merely a matter of intellect, but also of experience. Theology is concerned with spiritual realities, and must include personal experience as well as ideas. *Pectus facit theologum*. This association of theology with experience will always prevent the former from continuing merely abstract and philosophical. Dogmatics, as Martensen points out, must come from

within the Church, and not from outside. It is a science of faith, with faith as its basis and source.

["It springs out of the perennial, juvenile vigour of faith, out of the capacity of faith to unfold from its own depths a wealth of treasures of wisdom and of knowledge, to build up a kingdom of acknowledged truths, by which it illumines itself as well as the surrounding world" (op. cit., p. 3)]

In past days, theology has been too closely limited to metaphysics, intellectualism, and philosophy. The Articles bear the marks of this tendency of the age which produced them. But while the intellectual element must necessarily always be at the basis of every presentation of Christian truth, the intellect is not the only, perhaps not the dominant factor, and other elements must enter. The feeling equally with the reason must share in the consideration of theology, because theology is of the heart, and the deepest truths are inextricably bound up with personal needs and experiences. The moral consciousness of man must also find a place and conscience be allowed to take its part in the provision of a true Creed. This is only one instance out of many which proves the impossibility of limiting ourselves to that which is merely rational, and also the absolute necessity of emphasizing the personal and ethical in our discussion of theology. Time was when Dogmatics and Ethics were separated, and the latter regarded as subsidiary and supplementary to the former. But this is not possible today. A theology which is not ethical, while it includes ethics, cannot be rightly called theology.

[Fragment of a conversation between a Professor of Moral Science in an American College and a student just about to graduate from a certain Theological Seminary:

Professor: "Are you entirely satisfied with your course in theology?"

Student: "No, the course has been of value to me, but it has one lack."

Professor: "What? I am interested."

Student: "In studying the Bible and Christian doctrine, no connection was anywhere made with moral science."

Professor: "I am not surprised. The theologian is quite wont to forget that a sinner is a man" (O. A. Curtis, *The Christian Faith*, p. 2).]

But here again, we must not allow ourselves to go to the opposite extreme and refuse a place to metaphysics and philosophy in our consideration and construction of Christian theology. It is impossible to keep our view of Christianity in any watertight compartment, be it purely intellectual, or purely emotional, or purely ethical. As Christianity speaks to every part of our nature, so every part must take its share in the reception and expression of Christian theology.

Our study of doctrine must therefore include the consideration of God as its Object of Faith, and the Standard of duty, and the relation between God and man must be shown to include both worship and work, attitude and action, creed and conduct. Our doctrine of Theism, of Christology, of the Holy Spirit, of Divine sovereignty, of the Atonement,

of sin, of justification, and the rest, must be closely and constantly related to life in every part if it is to be of weight in modern days. While not making human feeling the sole standard of truth, or human duty the test of theological accuracy, we must certainly enquire whether our intellectual conception of truth possesses ethical vitality, whether it makes for practical righteousness. History in the past warns us against the tendency to allow the intellectual aspects of Christianity to become abstract. We see this in the dreary wastes of controversy which followed Chalcedon, and again in the era of Protestant scholasticism which followed the warm, living experience of the Reformation Age. On the other hand, recent theological discussions have given us an equally grave warning against the tendency to rest in anything merely emotional without satisfying ourselves of its intellectual validity. Modern impatience against dogma, whether on the part of the Ritschlian theologian, or of "the man in the street," springs essentially from the same fundamental source, and is a phase of that practical agnosticism which would insist that no valid knowledge of God and His truth is possible. We must therefore preserve the mean between these two extremes, neither excluding ethics from theology, nor regarding theology as "a footnote to morality." When Creeds, Confessions, and Articles are thus related to every part of personality – mind, emotion, conscience, and will – we may feel sure that our theology is what it ought to be.

The sole and sufficient guarantee of Christian doctrine being at once intellectual and experimental is its constant and close association with the Person of Jesus Christ. In order to avoid anything dry and lifeless we must relate every truth to the living Person of Him Who declared, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." When it is realised that "Christianity is Christ," that Christ Himself is the substance, source, and spring of all doctrine, our theology will be truly Christian.

THE HISTORY OF THE ARTICLES

Introduction

The Thirty-nine Articles must be viewed as part of a large number of Confessions issued about the same time. Definition of their position was essential on the part of the Reformers, and our Articles were both suggested by Continental Confessions and also influenced by them. For centuries abuses in the Church had been recognised and almost wholly unheeded, but forces were at work which paved the way for Reformation.* The movement in the sixteenth century was a return to the pure and simple faith of Christianity as embodied in Holy Scripture.

[“Beneath the rigorously smoothed and levelled surface of mediaeval Christendom there lay but thinly covered the fruitful seeds of the various outgrowths of the Reformation. It is easy now to discern how far-reaching was the doctrinal and practical preparation for the great movement. For centuries before the crisis was reached, over against the demand of the Roman Curia that all learning and all thought, as well as all political and ecclesiastical life, should be organised in subjection to it, influences had been at work to stimulate freedom of thought and action” (W. A. Curtis, *A History of Creeds and Confessions of Faith*, p. 126).]

There is no distinction in character between our Articles and the Continental formularies such as the Lutheran Confessions. Though Luther and Calvin each emphasised particular doctrines which had been overlain or misrepresented, our formularies show the general attitude of Reformed belief as against Rome. The Reformation was mainly personal, concerned with the application of truth, and there was no desire or intention of questioning the fundamental theistic articles of the Creeds.* Indeed, it is interesting to notice that while the Reformers insisted on the supremacy of Scripture they were anxious to show that their views were also in accord with, and so far subordinated to, the Creeds of the Church.

[“Not the Person and Work of Christ or of the Holy Spirit, not the doctrine of the Divine Trinity, but the doctrines of the means of grace, Church, Ministry, Sacraments, and Scripture, of the processes involved in personal salvation, and of the use of mediators other than the Son of God, were the themes at issue” (W. A. Curtis, *ut supra*, p. 127)]

An additional need for the formulation of the Reformed position was found in the excesses of the Anabaptists and others. The Renaissance was an intellectual new birth, and it is not surprising that on the discovery that much which had hitherto been held sacrosanct was really spurious, some went to extremes and denied the fundamental faith as well as the accretions of Rome. Superstition produces infidelity by a natural reaction. It was therefore necessary for the Reformers to state their position, and in the face of enemies to distinguish themselves from those who went to the extreme of denial. Nor may we overlook the fact that some statement of Protestant

belief was required for the guidance and test of those who were, or wished to be, ministers of the Reformed Gospel. To preach the truth men must know that for which our Reformers stood.

We must therefore judge the character of these formularies of the sixteenth century by the circumstances of their origin and composition. They were due to fierce current controversies, and any resulting disproportion must be taken into consideration.

[“They all bear the marks of their birth-time and birth-place, and it is to the distinctive and often transitory features in them that they draw our chief attention. It is unjust to judge them without regard to their origin and their purpose. Few, if any, of them were fair-weather or leisurely productions laid out for academic criticism or appreciation. Many of them were the work of hunted, outlawed men, and were sealed with martyr blood. They were literally extempore” (W. A. Curtis, *ut supra*, p. 128).]

Lutheran Confessions

Martin Luther’s early efforts against Rome naturally involved an attempt at doctrinal formulation, and the way was gradually prepared for a detailed statement which sooner or later was inevitable. The Greater and Lesser Catechisms of Luther (1527–1529) had great influence in Germany, but something much more definite and theological was soon required. The older Creeds were mainly concerned with the doctrines of the Godhead, but as the Reformation was essentially personal in addition, a Confession of this type was needed. But a special cause was also at work. Some German States were in danger of suppression by the Emperor for their Reformed opinions. The Diet of Speier (or Speier), 1529, protested against any forcing of conscience in religious matters, and so in 1530 a Diet met at Augsburg and stated its beliefs. There had been two or three earlier, but more limited, statements like the Articles of Schwabach, 1529, and of Torgau, 1530, but the Confession of Augsburg was by far the most important document of the Reformation, and has attained a permanent position and value. This was drawn up by Melancthon and Luther, subscribed June 1530, and publicly read. It consisted of two parts:

- (1) Faith, covering twenty-one Articles;
- (2) Abuses, covering seven Articles.

Thus it is concerned with positive beliefs and protests against abuses. There was a strong desire for reformation within the Church, if at all possible. But though signed by representatives of Church and State it failed to accomplish its purpose of producing peace, and soon gave rise to further developments in the reforming direction. Yet it left its mark on all subsequent documents, and abides to this day as a monument of influence in Lutheran Churches.

[“The ‘Augustana’ (or Confession of Augsburg) is the classical statement of Lutheran doctrine, and has remained to the present day the bond between all

Lutheran Churches. Its dignified simplicity, its moderate tone, and its Christian spirit have endeared it to successive generations, and have made it the model as well as the mother of later Confessions. Portions of it have become obsolete. The piety and thought it has fostered have outgrown their original vestments. But its profound loyalty to the best traditions of the Catholic Church and the great Fathers, its faithfulness to Scripture, none the less impressive because it is unlaboured and unobtrusive, and its deep note of evangelical experience, have secured for it a sacred place, perhaps beyond all other Confessions, in the living faith of its ministers and people” (Curtis, *ut supra*, p. 142 f.).]

[“The whole Confession...is eloquent of its author’s yearning to promote the reunion of divided Christendom; it breathes the spirit of defence, not defiance. It emphasises points of agreement before it affirms points of conscientious difference. To many Romanists it was an amazing revelation of the essential Catholicism of Lutheran teaching. To all it was proffered as a *via media* between the paths of sharp divergence” (Curtis, *ut supra*, p. 149). Melancthon wrote an “Apology” of it a year later.]

The next Reformation Confession is known as the Articles of Schmalcald, 1537, which have been described as “Luther’s last contribution to the Confessions of Protestantism.” There was the expectation of a Council at Mantua, summoned by Pope Paul III, and Luther prepared these Articles for presentation to that assembly. There was no intention on the part of Protestants to appear at Mantua, but it was thought necessary to state the Protestant view, and Luther did so without any qualification. This statement of belief did much to bring about the final separation.

Other documents were the Saxon Confession, 1551, and the Confession of Wurtemberg, 1552, drawn up respectively by Philipp Melancthon and Johannes Brenz (Brentius) in view of the meeting of the Council of Trent. The latter consisted of Thirty-five Articles framed on the model of the Confession of Augsburg.

Of all these Lutheran documents the two of most importance for the Church of England were the Confessions of Augsburg and Wurtemberg. The former, as we shall see later on, influenced the Articles of 1553,

[“That Confession is most intimately connected with the progress of the English Reformation; and besides the influence which it cannot fail to have exerted by its rapid circulation in our country, it contributed directly, in a large degree, to the construction of the public Formularies of Faith put forward by the Church of England. The XIII Articles, drawn up, as we shall see, in 1538, were based almost entirely on the language of the great Germanic Confession; while a similar expression of respect is no less manifest in the Articles of Edward VI, and consequently in that series which is binding now upon the conscience of the English clergy” (Hardwick, *ut supra*, p. 13), and the latter those of 1563.]

Other Lutheran documents were subsequently forthcoming in connection with Reformation controversies which came to a head in the *Formula Concordiae*, the authoritative books of the Lutheran Church. These deserve notice because, as will be observed, in them the doctrine of our Article XXIX of 1571 is clearly denied and denounced. Although never so authoritative as the Confession of Augsburg, the *Formula Concordiae* is a document of great importance.

“Reformed” Confessions

While the Reformation in Germany was, as we have seen, largely subjective, that in Switzerland, under Zwingli and Calvin, was also objective. Although none of the documents connected with the “Reformed” Churches seem to have had a direct influence on our Articles, yet they are useful, if not essential, for comparison of views.

1. – Creeds connected with Zwingli

- (a) The Sixty-seven Articles of Zwingli, 1523.
- (b) The First Confession of Basle, 1532.
- (c) The First Helvetic Confession, 1536.

[“The Reformation produced no more impressive or thought provoking document” (Curtis, ut supra, p. 195).]

[“It owed its origination to the peace-making genius of the Strassburg theologians, Bucer and Capito, who made it their great aim to reconcile the Swiss and Lutheran schools of Protestant doctrine — and also to the prospect of an Ecumenical Council being convened at Mantua” (Curtis, ut supra, p. 203).]

2. – Creeds connected with Calvin

- (a) Calvin’s Institutes, 1549.
- (b) Second Helvetic Confession, 1566. The work of the great Henry Bullinger, “last and greatest in the Zwinglian series.”
- (c) The Synod of Dort, 1619.
- (d) The Westminster Confession, 1647.

[“If it inspired instant alarm in Romanist quarters, or won converts from them, if its pellucid Latinity and its masterly theology won admiration alike from foes and from rivals, it became for Protestants of well-nigh every type a veritable oracle, a source from which confessional, catechetical, and homiletic wants were unfailingly supplied. In diction, in structure, in comprehensiveness, in sheer mass and weight, in unflinching interest and power, in dignity and severe simplicity, it has all the characteristics of a classic. While recognising that it can never be for

us what it was to earlier centuries, we cannot but lament that, in an age which so freely proclaims its emancipation from its spell, so few should read it for themselves, so many should condemn it cheaply and at second hand. Signs are not wanting that at no distant time justice will be more generally done to Calvin as a prince among systematic theologians not less than a prince among Christian exegetes” (Curtis, *ut supra*, p. 207).]

[“No other Confessions, save its immediate predecessor, the Heidelberg Catechism of 1563, has ever rivalled it in popularity or in authority among the Reformed Churches of the Continent...It is no small tribute to its merits that its appearance was the signal for the cessation of theological controversy and unrest in Switzerland, and that it enjoyed, during so many centuries of eager thought and change, an unchallenged authority” (Curtis, *ut supra*, p. 208).]

[“It marks the maturest and most deliberate formulation of the scheme of Biblical revelation as it appeared to the most cultured and the most devout Puritan minds. It was the last great Creed-utterance of Calvinism, and intellectually and theologically it is a worthy child of the Institutes, a stately and noble standard for Bible-loving men. While influenced necessarily by Continental learning and controversy, it is essentially British, as well by heredity as by environment; for not only is it based upon the Thirty-nine Articles, modified and supplemented in a definitely Calvinistic sense at Lambeth and at Dublin, but it literally incorporates Ussher’s Irish Articles, accepting their order and titles, and using, often without a word of change, whole sentences and paragraphs” Curtis, *ut supra*, p. 275).]

Now, although, as it has been said, no direct and specific influence, such as came from Augsburg and Wurtemberg, can be traced from these formularies in the wording of our Articles, the documents themselves are valuable as showing the essential harmony of doctrine among the Reformers amid many details of difference. Expressions on doctrine like Predestination differ, but the difference is one of degree rather than of kind. There is nothing more striking than the fact that while our Articles are often verbally identical with those of Augsburg, their doctrine of the Sacraments is, and always has been, of the “Reformed,” not the Lutheran type. And in the reign of Elizabeth Convocation ordered Bullinger’s Decades “to be read and studied by the clergy.”

The Church of Rome

The Reformation movement could not help affecting Rome, and it had therefore been determined that Protestants were not to be conciliated, but, if possible, crushed. Hence came the exclusion of Protestants from the Council of Trent, which made it impossible to do justice to the Reformed position. The result was the Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent, 1545–1563, of which it has been well said, “The decrees are the utterance of jealous defence, the Canons with their anathemas are the challenge of proud defiance.” [Curtis, *ut supra*, p. 107.] These were followed by the Creed and Catechism of Pope Pius IV, 1564, intended for younger clergy and now used for

Protestant converts to Roman Catholicism. These are all authoritative documents today. The Council met in December 1545, and sat until 1547, when it was suspended until 1551. Then it sat until April 1553, when it was suspended until 1562, and at length its deliberations were completed in January 1564.

There was a distinct alternation of views between Rome and Protestantism. The two parties worked in sight of each other, and everything done by the Council up to 1551 was in clear view of the English revisers in 1553. [“In several letters of Reformers we observe the interest with which they were watching the contemporary disputations at Trent, especially in the course of the eventful year, 1551: e.g. Cranmer’s Works, I, 346, 349” (Hardwick, ut supra, p. 84, footnote 1).] That the Protestants were interested in and informed of what was going on at Trent is abundantly clear. Further evidence will be given when particular Articles are considered, but whether or not our formularies refer to Trent, there is no question about the attitude of our Articles to Rome, and great care must be taken lest we obtain a wrong impression of their character.

[“Cranmer, just before the issue of the revised Second Prayer Book in 1552, and the first appearance of the Articles in 1553, wrote to Calvin (20th March 1532): ‘Our adversaries are now holding their Councils at Trent for the establishment of their errors; and shall we neglect to call together godly synod, for the refutation of error, and for restoring and propagating the truth? They are, as I am informed, making decrees respecting the worship of the host: Wherefore we ought to leave no stone unturned, not only that we may guard others against this idolatry, but also that we may ourselves come to an agreement upon the doctrine of this sacrament’ (Cranmer, *Miscellaneous Writings*, p. 432 – Parker Soc.). Sir John Cheke, tutor to the King, and one who had been consulted by Cranmer about the Articles before they were published, wrote to Bullinger on 7th June 1553, after their publication, saying that the King ‘has published the Articles of the Synod of London, which, if you will compare with those of Trent, you will understand how the spirit of the one exceeds that of the other. Why should I say more? I send you the book itself as a token of my regard’” (Original Letters, p. 142).]

The Eastern Church

This Church has always prided itself on its steadfast adherence to the orthodox Faith, based on the seven General Councils, the Trullan Council, 692, and the Second Council of Nicaea, 787. But even this Communion could not help being influenced to some little extent by what was going on in Western Europe. Cyril Lucar, Patriarch successively of Alexandria and Constantinople, imbibed Calvinism in Switzerland in the seventeenth century, but he suffered by reason of his Protestant opinions. [A clergyman of the Cypriote Greek Church told the writer in 1907 that Cyril Lucar was not really Calvinistic, and referred to *Revue Internationale de Theologie*, Avril-Juin 1906, No. 54, pp. 327–330, and No. 53, pp. 17–20. But see Curtis, ut supra, p. 253, and references in Note.] The Eastern Church repudiated his teaching, publicly and formally, and it has since formally adopted the doctrine of Transubstantiation, so that

its Confessions include not only the worship of Images, but Transubstantiation, both name and thing. Thus Cyril Lucar in no sense represents the teaching of the Eastern Church at the present day. The Eastern Church does not really abide by the ancient Councils, but even since the Western Reformation has modified its standpoint in a Rome-ward sense. The “unchanging East” has, in fact, altered its standards more recently than the Western Churches of the Reformation.

THE ENGLISH ARTICLES IN THE REIGN OF HENRY VIII

The English Reformation

There was a decided difference as well as a real oneness between the English and Continental Reformations. The latter were first religious and then political; the former was first political and then religious. Up to the sixteenth century the English Church had long been virtually and for practical purposes a part of the Church of Rome, in the same sense that the Churches of the other nations of Europe were. Our Reformers were all priests of that Communion, and both in doctrine and organisation there was fundamental identity, the English Church, that is, the organised society of baptised people in England, being an integral part of the great Western Church. “No tie of an ecclesiastical or spiritual kind bound the Bishop of Chichester to the Bishop of Carlisle, except that which bound them both to French and Spanish Bishops.” [Maitland, Canon Law. See also, Smith’s Antiquities of Anglicanism, and Child’s Church and State under the Tudors.] The assertions of independence from time to time came from Parliament, but never touched questions of doctrine. On the eve of the Reformation this was the general situation.

[“We see the Church of England on its clerical side more and more separated from the civil power from the Conquest to the Reformation; more and more identifying itself with the Church of Rome from Henry I to the Reformation. The Crown had its share in encouraging Papal domination, from its being continually in need of the influence of the hierarchy; but Parliament, so far as its direct enactments went, resisted Papal usurpations, and was the only body in the Constitution that maintained a consistent attitude of independence in regard to the See of Rome” (Hole, A Manual of English Church History, p. 113; see also pp. 28, 53, 72 f., 83)]

The movement in the reign of Henry VIII was very gradual, being almost wholly personal and scarcely at all doctrinal. But it was impossible to ignore what was going on in Germany and elsewhere on the Continent, as well as among the laity in England, in the direction of Reform, and though no doctrinal break with Rome was possible during the reign of Henry VIII there were forces at work tending to produce effects which would inevitably bring about great changes. It was four years after the Confession of Augsburg that Henry’s final break with Rome took place. Yet this did not involve any breach of essential doctrine, but only the severance from Papal authority, the King being substituted for the Pope as supreme Head.

The break on personal grounds through Henry's divorce afforded the opportunity of realising the King's idea of making the Church as national and English as it had been Roman since the days of Alfred. But we must distinguish between the occasion and the cause. King Henry's domestic and dynastic circumstances were the occasion, but certainly not the cause of the Reformation, for there were forces at work which were all tending to produce far-reaching effects. The Reformation

“...experienced at Henry's hands as much embarrassment as help, and, though his mind had many enlightened sympathies, the royal 'Defender of the Faith' was not the real inaugurator of Reform. The land of Magna Charta and of John Wycliffe could not keep still while the rest of Northern Europe was in the throes of the struggle for religious liberty. It was not likely to submit for ever to an Italian Papacy in the realm of truth and order.” [Curtis, *ut supra*, p. 165.]

Thus we may see two movements proceeding side by side; the spiritual and the political, quite separate and, during the life of Henry, actually opposed, yet each doing its own part towards freeing our country from the errors and chains of Rome. Cranmer, as Archbishop of Canterbury, was on the one hand a help towards Reformation, and yet on the other his relation to the King made it practically impossible for him to move far or fast. Cranmer's convictions, like those of Luther, were, as we shall see, very gradual, and though the Lutheran Reformation naturally affected the English, there was no slavish following of Luther, while Calvin had no influence until 1550.

[“The English was essentially a native Reformation, though assisted from abroad. Much as the English Articles, accordingly, owed to Wittenberg and Switzerland, they retained a character of their own. Like the English Church organization, service, and traditions, they are not to be summarily described as Lutheran, Zwinglian, or Calvinistic” (Curtis, *ut supra*, p. 165).

“It is abundantly clear that the Anglican Church, since its break with Rome, has been in profound sympathy with the great leaders of the Continental Reformation, both German and Swiss, but it is not hastily to be identified with either of the historic groups” (Curtis, *ut supra*, p. 166).]

Speaking generally, the two greatest names are those of Cranmer and Ridley, whose connection with the Articles of 1553 was close and even predominant, but Parker, in 1563, and Jewel, in 1571, as the final editor, have very great weight. In all stages of the doctrinal movement in England these four men occupied a dominant position, and from their writings may be obtained a clear idea of their position, and consequently a guide to the interpretation to be placed on the formularies for which they were thus responsible.

The position following Henry's severance from Rome was at once interesting and difficult. There were two parties, headed respectively by Gardiner and Cranmer. To Gardiner, who had been made Bishop of Winchester, 1531, the rejection of Papal supremacy was sufficient, and when he saw the endeavours being made towards

Reformation he opposed them with all his power. Cranmer, on the other hand, as Archbishop of Canterbury, was the leader of the reforming opinions, and saw that in addition to the repudiation of Papal supremacy, doctrinal errors and moral abuses would have to be corrected. But the conflict between these two men was only the personal aspect of far deeper and greater issues. The progress of reforming opinions in England could not fail to be affected by similar movements in Germany, and in addition there were political influences at work which made Henry VIII look in that direction. He had quarrelled with Luther in 1521, but that trouble had passed with the years, and Henry was known to have formed a high opinion of Melanchthon, and he even invited him to England. The community of interests between England and Germany in regard to national independence of the Papacy was a special reason for Henry's action, and we are therefore not surprised to find a delegation sent from England to Germany, 1535, the object of which was to find a basis for Henry's association with the German Princes. But Gardiner, then Ambassador at Paris, was the means of preventing any definite political action and also of making Henry hesitate, though the Conference of the English delegates with Lutheran theologians went on, Luther and Melanchthon being present.

The outcome was seen in the Ten Articles of 1536, two years after the separation from Rome, six after Augsburg, and three after the appointment of Cranmer to Canterbury. These Articles consisted of two parts; five dealing with Doctrine and Sacraments, and five with Ceremonies. They were proposed by the King to Convocation, and after much discussion were accepted and published by royal authority. They were entitled, "Articles to establish Christian Quietness and Unity among Us and to avoid Contentious Opinions." The Anabaptists had begun to be troublesome in England and were bringing the Reformation into disrepute, and these Articles were largely directed against them. They did not indicate any positive advance towards the Reformation, though they were clearly influenced by the Reform Movement, for they had three Sacraments, including Penance, which even Luther retained for a long time. There was also an attempt to remove abuses. No general subscription was required, though many Bishops accepted them. They represented a compromise between the old and the new. It was a period of transition, and these Articles showed the oscillation of views. Foxe described them as intended for "weaklings newly weaned from their mother's milk of Rome." While there were three Sacraments there was no mention of the word Transubstantiation, though a doctrine of "impanation" was clearly taught.

[The Tenth Article affirms that "under the form and figure of bread and wine is verily, substantially, and really contained the body and blood of Christ, which 'Corporally, really and in very substance is distributed and received to all them that receive the said sacrament.'"] Images were regarded as representing the Godhead, but were not to be worshipped; saints were to be honoured, but not like God; prayers could be addressed to the saints, but as intercessors, not as redeemers. Papal supremacy was rejected and the royal supremacy substituted. Prominence was given to Holy Scripture as authoritative, the Rule of Faith being the Bible, the Creeds, the Councils, and the Tradition of the Fathers in harmony with Scripture. The following opinions of their character and tendency are worthy of notice —

“It is only when these Articles are read along with the Injunctions issued in 1536 and 1538 that it can be fully seen how much they were meant to wean the people, if gradually, from the gross superstition which disgraced the popular mediaeval religion. If this be done, they seem an attempt to fulfil the aspirations of Christian Humanists like Dean Colet and Erasmus.” [Lindsay, ut supra, p. 334.]

“The Ten Articles thus authoritatively expounded are anything but ‘essentially Romish with the Pope left out in the cold.’ They are rather an attempt to construct a brief creed which a pliant Lutheran and a pliant Romanist might agree upon – a singularly successful attempt, and one which does great credit to the theological attainments of the English King.” [Lindsay, ut supra, p. 335.]

“These Articles, with all their caution, are unmistakably on the side of such reformation as Luther demanded. They were meant to unite old-school and new-school Christians, and to be tender towards everything hallowed by tradition, so long as superstition was not necessarily involved in it. Agreement on a more advanced basis of doctrine was at the time impossible. It is something that Transubstantiation was ignored, that the risks and fact of idolatry in church observances were proclaimed, and that in the Injunctions of 1538 a large public Bible was enjoined to be placed in every parish, within the reach of all.” [Curtis, ut supra, p. 168 f.]

The Six Articles of 1539

In 1537, the Ten Articles were practically superseded by a book known as “The Bishops’ Book,” and called The Institution (or Instruction) of a Christian Man. This consisted of an exposition of the Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, the Sacraments, the Ten Commandments, and other points. But as it was not authorised by Convocation or Parliament, it only obtained the authority of its signatories; and so since it never received legal sanction, the Ten Articles remained legally binding until the publication of the King’s Book, 1543. Meantime, after 1536, the parties of Gardiner and Cranmer were engaged in an ever-increasing struggle, while political matters affected and complicated the issues. In spite of the failure of the negotiations between England and Germany in 1535–1536, at the King’s request three Lutheran divines were sent over to England, and were met by a committee of three, nominated by the King, consisting of Cranmer and two other Bishops. It was hoped to arrive at some concordat, but in 1538 an entire change of the national situation took place by the excommunication of Henry by the Pope. This seemed to the King to necessitate his putting himself right in the eyes of Europe by a vindication of his essential orthodoxy, and under the growing influence of Gardiner a Roman reaction set in notwithstanding Cranmer’s opposition. The Conference with the Lutherans resulted in Thirteen Articles, based partly on the Confession of Augsburg and partly on the Ten Articles of 1536, though going beyond the latter in the direction of reform. But they never saw the light till three hundred years later, or acquired any legal force, for the Roman reaction proved too strong.

[It is necessary to observe carefully the circumstances of the publication of this Book. It was issued by Bishops for the very good reason that neither Parliament nor Convocation sat from July 1536 till March 1539, so that their “sanction” was out of the question. And it is clear that Henry VIII was never fully in accordance with this Book, though it is certain that passively, at least, he was concerned in its issue. The preface to the book is an address to the King, reminding him that “Your Highness commanded us now of late to assemble ourselves together, and upon the diligent search and perusing of Holy Scripture to set forth a plain and sincere doctrine” — they “most humbly submit it to the most excellent wisdom and exact judgment of your Majesty, to be recognised, overseen, and corrected.” And to show their determination not to dash with the Royal Supremacy they “knowledge and confess that without the which power and license of your majesty we have none authority either to assemble ourselves together for any pretence of purpose, or to publish anything that might be by us agreed on and compiled.” When after this we find that the King’s printer issued the work, we may be sure that while Henry would not commit himself to any responsibility for the statement of the Book as a whole, he permitted the temporary employment of it until a formal revision could be taken in hand. That this was his attitude we learn from the draft reply to the Bishop’s address printed in Cranmer’s Works (Parker Society), Vol. II, p. 469. The controversy between the King and the Primate on this work is given at pp. 83–114 of the same volume, and as Dr. Jacob observes (Lutheran Movement in England, p. 112), it shows the “essentially Romanistic” position taken up by the King. Cranmer claimed for the Bishops’ Book that it was published by or with the Royal connivance at least. (Cranmer’s Remains, P.S. page 16). And Bishop Bonner five years after the book had been issued required of his London clergy “that you and every of you do procure, and provide of your own, a book called ‘The Bishops’ Book,’ and that you and every of you do exercise yourselves in the same, according to such precepts as hath been given before, or hereafter to be given” (Formularies of Faith, p. 382) It is important to recognise that both at the Visitations of the Bishops, in their synods and consistory courts, and also by the High Commission, many things not enacted by Parliament could be and were enforced without let or hindrance.

Dr. Lindsay says (History of the Reformation, ii. 336): “The King declined to commit himself, on the plea that he ‘had no time convenient to overlook the great pains’ bestowed upon the book, which bore the signatures of Lee, Gardiner, Bonner, and was itself the product of a Royal Commission. So that the book was issued by the body of Bishops and divines, whom the King had summoned to draft it, though the King refused to formally commit himself to some of its statements.” (From the Church Intelligencer, June 1914, p. 94).]

The importance of the Thirteen, however, is very great as indicating the channel through which the Confession of Augsburg influenced each of the Forty-two Articles of 1553. The discovery of the Thirteen Articles among Cranmer’s papers within the last fifty years is as interesting as it is significant. While Cranmer could not effect any doctrinal Reformation as long as Henry was alive, these Articles represent his views at the time of the Conference, and they were found among his papers by Canon Jenkyns and published under the title of The Thirteen Articles of 1538. [Hardwick, ut

supra, p. 60.] One interesting point is that “The only Article, namely, that on the Lord’s Supper, which there is an opportunity of comparing with the conclusions approved by Fox and Heath in Germany, is word for word the same.”

[Hardwick, ut supra, p. 60. An American writer, Professor Preserved Smith, in the New York Nation, 17th December 1914, pointed out that the Thirteen Articles, in turn, were dependent on Seventeen Articles formulated by Luther and Melanchthon at Wittenberg in 1536 and handed to the English Ambassadors, Fox and Heath. This derivation was hardly if at all realised until recent days. The bare existence of the Seventeen Articles had been known from Seckendorf’s *Historia Lutheranismi*, 1596, who called them a *repetitio et exegesis* confessions Augustanae, but the document had been lost and was first rediscovered in the Weimar archives, published, and its relation to the Thirteen Articles demonstrated by Professor G. Mentz in 1905. This evidence of Luther’s own work in England is particularly interesting.]

But the Six Articles of 1539 shelved everything. They were essentially Roman, and the fact that Convocation passed them shows the revulsion of opinion. They maintained Transubstantiation, Communion in one kind, Celibacy of the Clergy, Vows of Chastity, Private Masses, and Auricular Confession. They were well called “The Whip with Six Strings.” Then, in 1543, the Bishops’ Book having been revised, [The Committee of Revision had been at work since 13th April 1540 when Cromwell announced its royal appointment to the House of Lords] was republished under the sanction of Convocation as the King’s Book, or The Necessary Doctrine and Erudition for any Christian Man. The book is a further proof of Roman Catholic influence.

[“It may be said that it very accurately represented the theology of the majority of Englishmen in the year 1543. For King and people were not very far apart. They both clung to mediaeval theology; and they both detested the Papacy, and wished the clergy to be kept in due subordination. There was a widespread and silent movement towards an Evangelical Reformation always making itself apparent when least expected; but probably three-fourths of the people had not felt it during the reign of Henry. It needed Mary’s burnings in Smithfield, and the fears of a Spanish overlord, before the leaven could leaven the whole lump” (Lindsay, ut supra, p. 349 f.)]

All this shows that there was no real Protestantism in Henry’s reign. It was Roman Catholicism with the King instead of the Pope as supreme. But it is interesting and significant to observe that no trace of the language of the Ten Articles or the Six Articles can be found in our present Formularies, though there are clear indications of the influence of the Thirteen Articles of 1538.

The Articles of Edward VI

In view of Edward’s accession in 1547 it has often been a matter of surprise that the Articles should not have been published for six years. The history of this period is somewhat obscure, but certain points stand out. Cranmer was indulging the hope of a

united Confession of all the Reformed Churches, and it was only after strenuous effort that he had to abandon the project. [Hardwick, History of the Articles of Religion, p. 70 f.]

But the Reformed party was at work, while the party headed by Gardiner became less and less influential. In 1547 the Six Articles Act was repealed, and in 1549 the First Prayer Book was issued. Cranmer, too, appears to have been preparing some Articles as a test of the orthodoxy of preachers, and it would seem as though these were the first drafts of several of the Articles of 1553. [Hardwick, ut supra, pp. 77–80.]

Another movement was an Act passed in 1549 for the Reformation of Church Law. A Committee headed by Cranmer drew up the *Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum* which, though never set forth by authority, was in some respects the foundation of our present Articles, or at least it may be said that the doctrine found in the *Reformatio Legum* is in accord, and sometimes verbally, with that which is found in the Articles. [On the *Reformatio Legum*, see below.]

In 1551, certain Commissioners directed Cranmer to prepare a Book of Articles. A sketch was made and submitted to some Bishops, but the matter was not carried further until 1552. In May of that year the Council asked Convocation for them, and they were sent. These numbered forty-five, and their interest and value are that they were the draft of those eventually published a year later. They were returned to Cranmer and by him sent to the King. They were revised by the Royal Chaplain, reduced in number to forty-two, and published in Latin and English, May 1553. Their authors were mainly Cranmer and Ridley, but after consultation with many Bishops and Divines. Their composition was mostly that of Cranmer who, when examined in Mary's reign, acknowledged that they "were his doings". [Harold Browne, Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles, p. 6, Note 2.] He derived much help from the Confession of Augsburg: e.g. in Articles I, II, IV, IX, XIV, XVI, XXIII, XXIV, XXV, though the influence was apparently not direct, but indirectly through the Thirteen Articles of 1538.

It is still undecided whether these Articles were sanctioned by Convocation. Authorities differ widely; some arguing against, and others urging considerations in favour of their endorsement. [Against: Lindsay, The History of the Reformation, Vol. II, p. 364; Gibson, The Thirty-nine Articles, p. 15 ff.; Tyrrell Green, The Thirty-nine Articles and the Age of the Reformation, p. 10 f. For: Cardwell, Synodalia, p. 4 f.; Hardwick, History of the Articles of Religion, pp. 106–115; Curtis, A History of Creeds and Confessions of Faith, p. 171; Harold Browne, Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles, p. 6.] It is probable that the subject will never be settled, as the records of Convocation were destroyed by the Fire of London, 1666. Yet the question is now only one of historical interest, for nothing turns on it. The idea that if they were not sanctioned by Convocation the Church of England was not committed to them [Kidd, The Thirty-nine Articles, p. 29.] is wholly wide of the mark in view of the close association of Church and State in those days. Whether they were sanctioned by Convocation or not they were put forth by royal authority, and became law for the short time that elapsed before the King's death.

The purpose of these Articles was, to use the doctrine of the Reformers, “for the avoiding of controversy in opinions and the establishing of a godly concord in certain matters of religion.” There was obviously no idea, because no need, of a full or systematic statement of beliefs. Like most sixteenth-century documents, they “bore the marks of their birth-time and birth-place,” and it is therefore “unjust to judge them without regard to their origin and purpose.” [Curtis, *ut supra*, p. 128. See above.] Nor have we any means of knowing what revision they would have received at the hands of their authors if opportunity had occurred. It is equally unfair to speak of them as “provisional or temporary,” [Kidd, *ut supra*, p. 25.] simply because they were issued only seven weeks before King Edward’s death. They must be judged by their character and contents, and when this is done we see two things quite clearly: first, Roman errors are definitely condemned (Articles XII, XIII, XX, XXI, XXII, XXIII, XXV, XXVI, XXXI); second, the Anabaptists who caused serious trouble by their excesses are also condemned (Articles VI, VIII, XIV, XV, XXXVII). So that the true and fair explanation is that these Articles represent the Church of England view of the time on the points treated in the light of the necessities of the Reformation. In opposition to Roman and Anabaptist errors they state the position of the Reformers. [Hardwick, *ut supra*, pp. 83–98.]

One thing calls for special attention. It has been represented by writer after writer that the Forty-two Articles represent Cranmer’s view of the Holy Communion as Zwinglian, and therefore at its lowest. [Gibson, *ut supra*, pp. 28, 643; Tyrrell Green, *ut supra*, p. 10; and apparently repeated by Kidd, *ut supra*, p. 35.] But the fact is that Cranmer’s view of the Lord’s Supper was fixed as early as 1548, the year of the Great Debate, [Tomlinson, *The Great Parliamentary Debate*, p. 21.] and this alone proves that there is no inconsistency between the Article on the Sacraments (XXVI of 1553) and that on the Lord’s Supper (XXIX).

For the same reason it is impossible to accept the view that “the opinions of the Edwardian Reformers, such as Cranmer and Ridley, on the subject of the Holy Communion have nothing more than a historical interest for us.” [Gibson, *ut supra*, p. 647.] A truer view is that which regards the opinions of these two Reformers as of great importance for the proper interpretation of the Articles which they put forth.

“It is of consequence to remember these facts. For, if Cranmer and Ridley were the chief compilers both of the Prayer Book and of the Articles; although the Church is in no degree bound by their private opinions, yet, when there is a difficulty in understanding a clause either in the Articles or the Liturgy, which are the two standards of authority as regards the doctrines of the English Church, it cannot but be desirable to elucidate such difficulties by appealing to the writings, and otherwise expressed opinions of these two reformers. It is true, both Liturgy and Articles have been altered since their time. Yet by far the larger portion of both remains just as they left them.” [Harold Browne, *ut supra*, p. 7.]

Then, too, the views of all the Elizabethan Bishops, with two exceptions (Cheney and Geste), were identical with those of Cranmer.

The Thirty-Eight Articles of 1563

The death of Edward VI might have been thought to put an end to the Reformation, and so it did for a time, until an event took place which more than anything else made the Reformation popular and universal. By a natural rebound the martyrdoms during the reign of Mary gave a depth and an intensity to religious feeling on behalf of the Reformation, which had never been experienced either under Henry, or even under Edward VI.

["The event, which seemed to crush the Reformation in the bud, in fact gave it life. Neither clergy nor people appear to have been very hearty in its cause, when it came commended to them by the tyranny of Henry, or even by the somewhat arbitrary authority of Edward and the Protector Somerset. But when its martyrs bled at the stake, and when the royal prerogative was arrayed against it, it then became doubly endeared to the people as the cause of liberty as well as of religion" (Harold Browne, Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles, pp. 7-8).

"However paradoxical at first sight this statement may appear, nothing more effectually tended to the final establishment of the Protestant faith in this Kingdom, and to a deep and lasting aversion to the Roman Catholic Religion than the cruel and frequent executions of this reign" (Lamb, The Articles, p. 5).]

On Elizabeth's accession, 1558, the great majority of the people accepted and welcomed the changes, and the Queen soon showed on which side she intended to be. The Forty-two Articles of 1553, though referred to in a document presented to the Queen in 1559, were not revived and made obligatory for some years, but a preliminary Eleven were issued of a very simple and practical nature. These never became legally binding, though in 1566 they were made legal for Ireland and remained so till 1615, when the Thirty-nine Articles became the legal Formularies for that land also.

Meanwhile, under Parker, the Forty-two were revised and corrected from the Confession of Wurtemberg, 1552, another interesting illustration of the way in which, while Lutheran Formularies were freely used in connection with our Articles, the sacramental teaching was throughout of the Swiss or Reformed, not the Lutheran type. [See articles in The Churchman for January 1920 and 1911, by W. Prescott Upton.] These revised Articles were submitted to Convocation, reduced to Thirty-nine, then one was omitted, almost certainly by the Queen, and finally they were published as Thirty-eight in 1563. The influence of Wurtemberg can be seen in several of the Articles, e.g. II, III, VI, X, XI, XII, XX.

The alterations were numerous and important.

(a) Six Articles were omitted.

Article X. – Of Grace.

Article XVI. – Sin against the Holy Spirit.

Article XXXIX. – The Resurrection of the Dead is not yet brought to pass.

Article XL. – The Souls of Them that do part this Life do neither die with the Bodies, nor sleep idly.

Article XLI. – Heretics called Millenarii.

Article XLII. – All Men shall not be saved at the Length.

(b) Two were united into one (with parts omitted).

Article VI. – The Old Testament is not to be Refused.

Article XIX. – All Men are bound to keep the Moral Commandments of the Law.

Together, these form our present Article VII.

(c) Four were added (by Archbishop Parker).

Article V. – Of the Holy Spirit.

Article XII. – Of Good Works.

Article XXIX. – Of the Wicked which eat not the Body of Christ in the Lord's Supper.

Article XXX. – Of Both Kinds.

Of these, Article XXIX was omitted, apparently by the Queen.

(d) Clauses and words were omitted or added in many other Articles. Details of these will be given in the separate Articles, but the following call for special attention.

Article XX. – Of the Authority of the Church. First clause added, presumably by the Queen, after the Article had left Convocation.

Article XXV. – Of the Sacraments. Several important changes and additions.

Article XXVIII. – Of the Lord's Supper. A change in clause three. The history of each of these points will be given in connection with the Articles themselves.

It is now necessary to enquire into to the character of these Articles.

1. They represent a greater completeness of statement of doctrine by the Church of England, especially on fundamentals. This was felt to be necessary, [Cardwell, ut supra, p. 35], and circumstances were favourable to the realisation, for the Reformation settlement made it possible.

2. But there was no essential doctrinal difference, as the following points indicate.

(a) The Article on Justification represented Luther's views and also the confession of Augsburg.

(b) The Article on Good Works, so far from correcting the Lutheran view of Justification, expressed Luther's own teaching. There was an Article on Good Works in the Confession of Augsburg, 1530.

(c) The omission of the reference to the *opus operatum* view of the sacraments in Article XXV was due to the ambiguity of the phrase. Hardwick, *ut supra*, p. 132.] The other changes in the Article on the Sacraments were introduced to distinguish between Sacraments and other Ordinances, without calling the latter Sacraments, or Sacramental Rites.

(d) Article XXVIII was altered by Parker, who is known to have held (not Lutheran, but) Calvinistic views on the Lord's Supper, in harmony with Cranmer, of whom he was a devoted disciple.

[“Cranmer, his great predecessor, whom he valued so highly, that he ‘would as much rejoice to win’ some of the lost writings of that prelate as he ‘would to restore an old chancel to reparation’ (Hardwick, *ut supra*, p. 117 f.).]

(e) But inasmuch as some endeavour was made to give a Lutheran interpretation to Article XXVIII, Parker introduced Article XXIX to safeguard the true doctrine. [Hardwick (*ut supra*, p. 138) seems to suggest that this change was really against the Swiss School, but Dimock (*Papers on the Eucharistic Presence*, p. 657) proves beyond all question the harmony of Parker's views with those of (not Zwingli but) Calvin, and this is tantamount to saying that he agreed with Cranmer (Dimock, p. 639).] The teaching of this Article is admittedly opposed to Lutheranism. [Dimock, *op. cit.*, p. 667.]

(f) The omission by the Queen of Article XXIX was almost certainly due to her desire to keep Lutheran Reformers in union with other Protestants in support of her Throne. There does not appear to have been any endeavour to favour the Roman Catholic party, a matter which never seems to have entered into the minds of those responsible for the revision and issue of the Articles, as the following point proves beyond all question.

3. The most striking feature is the increased emphasis placed on the anti-Roman character of the Articles in view of the fact that the Articles of 1553 were supposed to represent the high-water mark of Protestantism. This strengthening of the Articles of 1563 in a Protestant direction is particularly noteworthy. Such an intensification of the anti-Roman features at a time when it is alleged by some that Elizabeth was doing her utmost to conciliate Rome is a clear proof that nothing of the kind was intended by the changes made by the Queen and Parker. A reference to the following Articles, and a comparison of their wording with that of 1553 will amply illustrate the position.

Article VI. – Of the Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation. The addition of the reference to the Apocrypha with the distinction made between that and the Canonical Books.

Article XXII. – Of Purgatory. “Doctrine of School authors” changed to “Romish doctrine.”

Article XXV. – Of the Sacraments. The wording about speaking in a tongue understood of the people made much stronger.

Article XXX. – Of Both Kinds. Addition of the Article.

Article XXXII. – Of the Marriage of Priests. Made much stronger.

Article XXXIV. – Of the Traditions of the Church. Addition of a new paragraph claiming authority for National Churches.

Article XXXV. – Of the Civil Magistrates. Addition of a sentence denying jurisdiction of the Bishop of Rome in England.

Facts like these amply suffice to show that conciliation of Roman Catholics was entirely outside the purpose of the Church and the Queen. The policy of Elizabeth was not to win Rome, but to unite all Protestants in support of her position. It was this that led to the omission of Article XXIX, and to acts like the insertion of the Ornaments Rubric. [The Black Rubric is sometimes used as a further proof of this policy, but the Black Rubric was not “omitted,” because it never formed any part of the liturgy of 1552. The revival of 5 and 6 of Edward VI could not therefore include this Royal Declaration, while the Acts giving to Royal Declarations the force of law had meantime been repealed. See Dimock’s pamphlet on the subject, and Tomlinson, *Prayer Book, Articles and Homilies*, Ch. XI.] But even so, it is a mistake to suppose that the Queen’s own view of the Lord’s Supper was Lutheran, for there are proofs of her sympathy with the Swiss or Reformed view. [Dimock, *Vox Liturgia Anglicana*, pp. vi., vii.–xii., 60–63; *Papers on the Eucharistic Presence*, pp. 367–370.] An additional testimony is afforded by the *Reformatio Legum*. [See p. xlvi.; Dimock, *Vox Liturgiae Anglicana*, p. xv., quotes Cardwell, that the *Reformatio Legum* represented “the state and condition of the Church of England in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, when the Reformation may be said to have been completed” (*Synodalia*, pp. x., xi.).] Another witness, speaking of the Articles, says they,

“...expressed the doctrine of the Reformed or Calvinist as distinguished from the Evangelical or Lutheran form of Protestant doctrine, and the distinction lay mainly in the views which the respective Confessions of the two Churches held about the Presence of Christ in the Sacrament of the Holy Supper.” [Lindsay, *History of the Reformation*, p. 411.]

And referring to the Queen's action in regard to Articles XX and XXVIII, he remarks: – "The Queen's action was probably due to political reasons. It was important in international politics for a Protestant Queen not yet securely seated on her throne to shelter herself under the shield which a profession of Lutheranism would give." [Lindsay, *ut supra*, p. 414.]

The Thirty-Nine Articles of 1571

It is a natural question why the Articles should have needed attention again after the short period of eight or nine years. The explanation is found in the attitude of Queen Elizabeth. Although the Articles of 1563 were promulgated by Convocation, authorised by the Queen herself, and printed and published by her own printer, they were not presented to Parliament. Elizabeth apparently refused to allow this, though pressed by Convocation and Parliament to do so. ["Her Majesty considered it an encroachment upon her Prerogative of Supreme Head of the Church" (Lamb, *ut supra*, p. 24).] The result was that for four years after 1563 the Articles do not seem to have been circulated, or appealed to, though they were enforced as far as they could be by the ecclesiastical authority of the Episcopate. [Hardwick, *History of the Articles of Religion*, p. 143.] The delay seems to have been due to political circumstances. All the efforts of Parliament to obtain clerical subscription to the Articles were blocked by the Queen. Her policy at that time was one of religious toleration, and this "non-committal" attitude served her purpose, for as long as the clergy were not required to subscribe to the Articles, the Queen could appear free to deal with Rome, or to negotiate with the Lutherans, while subscription would mean a definite committal to one side. But though the delay was regrettable and in some respects serious, yet the influence of the Bishops, all of whom were Protestant, tended to keep matters fairly straight. In 1570, however, the Queen yielded to the pressure of Parliament. It is usually thought that the primary cause of this sudden, remarkable, and complete change was the Papal excommunication of Elizabeth,* yet even when the House of Commons took action against this aggression of Rome, and also prepared a Bill requiring clerical subscription to the Articles, the Queen opposed it until on the fourth time of reading by the Commons she gave way,

[“This seems to have been the first successful resistance made by the constitutional party in the House of Commons to that arbitrary authority in Church matters, which Henry VIII first assumed, and to preserve which his daughter Elizabeth was peculiarly anxious” (Lamb, *ut supra*, p. 25, Note c)],

and a Bill was passed requiring clerical subscription. During this struggle between the Queen and Parliament, Convocation had been engaged in the revision of the Articles of 1563. This work was due mainly to Jewel, Bishop of Salisbury, though partly also to Archbishop Parker. Jewel prefixed “de” to the Latin titles and “of” to the English, and added the names to the list of Books of the Apocrypha in Article VI. Article XXIX was inserted, and accepted by the Queen, while the first clause of Article XX was accepted by Convocation. Article X was changed to “working with” instead of “working in,” and Article XXVII added “or new birth” to “regeneration.” The only change of importance

was the reinsertion of Article XXIX, and this was profoundly significant of the Church doctrine on the Holy Communion. [The details of the history will be given under the Article itself.]

[“The Papal Bull of excommunication was delayed until 1570, when its publication could harm no one but Elizabeth’s own Romanist subjects, and the dangerous period was tided over safely. When it came at last, the Queen was not anathematised in terms which could apply to Lutherans, but because she personally acknowledged and observed ‘the impious constitutions and atrocious mysteries of Calvin,’ and had commanded that they should be observed by her subjects. Then, when the need for politic suppression was past, Article XXIX was published, and the Thirty-nine Articles became the recognised doctrinal standard of the Church of England (1571).” (Lindsay, History of the Reformation, p. 415.)]

The Articles were submitted to Convocation, passed, and then became law. For the first time clerical subscription was required. They were issued in Latin and English, and both are equally “authentic,” [Dr. Stephens in his speech in the Bennett Case (p. 76), denies that the Latin version is in a legal sense “equally authoritative,” and the “littlebok” enacted by 13 Elizabeth was certainly the English version], one often throwing light on the other.

[“The Articles of our Church were at the same time prepared both in Latin and English; so that both are equally authentic.” (Burnet, Articles, p. xxi.).

“As to the Articles, English and Latin, I may just observe, for the sake of such readers as are less acquainted with these things – First, That the Articles were passed, recorded, and ratified in the year 1562, and in Latin only. Secondly, That those Latin Articles were revised and corrected by the Convocation of 1571. Thirdly, That an authentic English translation was then made of the Latin Articles by the same Convocation, and the Latin and English adjusted as nearly as possible. Fourthly, That the Articles thus perfected in both languages were published the same year, and by the royal authority. Fifthly, Subscription was required the same year to the English Articles, called the Articles of 1562, by the famous Act of the 13th of Elizabeth.

“These things considered, I might justly say, with Bishop Burnet, that the Latin and English are both equally authentic. Thus much, however, I may certainly infer, that if in any places the English version be ambiguous, where the Latin original is clear and determinate, the Latin ought to fix the more doubtful sense of the other (as also vice versa), it being evident that the Convocation, Queen, and Parliament, intended the same sense in both” (Waterland, “Supplement to the Case of Arian Subscription Considered,” Works, Vol. II, p. 316; quoted in Hardwick, p. 156).]

Since 1571, no change has taken place in the Articles, and as we review the period from 1536 onwards, especially the three last stages from 1553, we see that they are

the result of years of controversies, and their wording shows what English theology really was. Their statements must always be taken in the light of the circumstances which brought them forth.

Note On The “*Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum*”

The abolition of Roman Catholic jurisdiction made it necessary to consider the question of the Canon Law and to frame a body of Ecclesiastical Law, especially as a counter-influence to the action of the Council of Trent. In 1544 Cranmer began the work of selection and adaptation, and a Committee was appointed to assist him, including Bishop Goodrich, Dr. (afterwards Bishop) Cox of Ely, Peter Martyr, and Dr. Rowland Taylor. But the King’s death prevented the ratification by Parliament, and for some reasons this result must be regarded as particularly welcome. [“It was as well, for the book enacted death penalties for various heresies, which would have made it a cruel weapon in the hands of a persecuting government” (Lindsay, ut supra, p. 364).] A copy fell into the hands of Archbishop Parker, who edited it, and did not merely reproduce Cranmer’s text. [See Church Intelligencer, April 1909, pp. 60–63.] In 1571, it was published with his consent, but was not accepted by the Queen and Parliament. It is valuable for comparison, and for the elucidation of the mind of Cranmer and Parker. As such, it has a definite bearing on the Articles, throwing light on their meaning and purpose. It is incorrect to call it a draft, or explanation of the Articles, because its character and contents show it to be a code of Reformed Canon Law which was never legally adopted. But on subjects of which the Articles treat it is well worth comparison. Thus one section is on “The Catholic Faith and the Trinity,” another on “Heresies,” and another on “Sacraments.” In considering the Articles on these subjects the *Reformatio Legum* will naturally be used for illustration and comparison.

Interpretation and Obligation of the Articles

At this stage, it is necessary to notice the question of Puritan objections to the Articles. [Hardwick, ut supra, Ch. X.] It is important to observe that these objections were almost wholly concerned with points of Calvinism, for on other subjects the differences were quite insignificant. [“As regards the early Puritans, it must be remembered that there was a well-understood agreement between them and their opponents on matters of doctrine. The questions in controversy were questions, not of doctrine, but of order and discipline and ceremonies” (Dimock, *Vox Liturgiae Anglicanae*, p. xx). Dimock adds that the only exception to this was the observance of the Lord’s Day, which was the first doctrinal disagreement.] On the subject of Calvinism there is the greatest need of care, for nothing is more apt to be misunderstood and misconceived. It may mean so much or so little.

All the Reformers were moderate Calvinists, or Augustinians, Melanchthon as well as Calvin himself. And the opposite view associated with Arminius never had any real footing in the Church of England until the time and through the influence of Laud.** “In the sixteenth century Predestination was universally accepted,” [Sargeaunt, *Journal of Theological Studies*, Vol. XII, p. 428.] and it was only later that Calvinism underwent

further developments. For the balance of our Article XVII we should be rightly grateful, but of its essential Calvinistic doctrine no one who knows the history can have any doubt.

["It is a striking fact that the Protestant theology of the sixteenth century both began and ended in strict theories of Predestination. ..The severe doctrine of Calvin on the subject of Predestination is notorious; but it should be remembered that the teaching of Melanchthon in the first edition of his work was not less severe" (Wace, *Principles of the Reformation*, p. 129).

"No impartial person, competently acquainted with the history of the Reformation, and the works of the earlier Protestant divines, at home and abroad, even to the close of Elizabeth's reign, will deny that the doctrines of Calvin on redemption and the natural state of fallen man are in all essential points the same as those of Luther, Zwingli, and the first Reformers collectively" (Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection*, quoted Wace, *ut supra*, p. 140). (See the entire section, Wace, *ut supra*, pp. 129–153.)]

["Before his time there was a general consent among our divines; for, as Bishop Carleton observes, though disputes arose between the Bishops and the Puritans with respect to Church government, they perfectly agreed in doctrine. Anti-Calvinists have indeed endeavoured to force the Article to speak their own sentiments; yet they must confess, that they would not have expressed them in those words; and a sufficient refutation of their statement is the fact, that Rogers, the first expositor of the Articles, and Chaplain to Archbishop Bancroft, to whom he dedicated his work, maintains that it conveys a contrary meaning" (Macbride, *Lectures on the Articles*, p. 30 f.)]

["It is absurd, with some Anglican writers, to deny the Calvinism of the Articles on this subject; but for Calvinistic influence and example they would not have discussed the subject at all...It is unhistorical to deny the Calvinism of the English Articles, as distinct from the English Service Book to which they were added, merely because they do not, with later Calvinistic Confessions, endeavour to carry out the broad principles of election and grace to their narrowest ultimate conclusions. Anglican Puritanism might not be able to appeal for authority and vindication to the Prayer Book in its entirety, but to the Edwardine Articles it could legitimately look as to the rock whence in England it was hewn. These Articles are not developed, much less exaggerated, Calvinism. They are not Calvinistic in any partisan sense. But with Calvinistic doctrine, as already formulated, they are in unmistakable sympathy" (Curtis, *ut supra*, pp. 176, 177).

The joint letter of Parker and Grindal to Sir William Cecil is a proof of the value set on the Geneva Bible (Correspondents of Parker, p. 261). The influence of Calvin in Elizabeth's reign and the high estimation in which he and his writings were held may be seen in Hardwick (*History of the Articles*, Ch. 7). Hooker's testimony is well known (*Eccl. Pol.*, Preface II, 1). But perhaps the strongest evidence of the hold which

Calvin's teaching had obtained in the Universities is the testimony of Bishop Sanderson, and this is all the more significant as the Bishop did not admire Calvin's theology (Wordsworth, *Eccles. Biog.*, IV, p. 416). As Sanderson is referring to 1603, when the Arminian Movement had already greatly influenced English theologians, the testimony to Calvin's Institutes is particularly remarkable (cf. Carter, *The English Church and the Reformation*, pp. 143–145, for further references).]

A further illustration of the essentially Calvinistic view of the Articles is found in the action of King James I in sending three Anglican representatives to the Synod of Dort, when Calvinistic doctrine was unanimously endorsed, and in 1625, a few years after that Synod, a sermon preached at Cambridge, by Dr. Ward, gave striking evidence of the universal acceptance of Augustinian views from the opening of the Reformation, ["This also I can truly add, for a conclusion, that the Universal Church hath always adhered to St. Austin, ever since his time till now. The Church of England also, from the beginning of the Reformation and this our famous University, with all those from thence till now who have with us enjoyed the Divinity Chair, if we except one foreign Frenchman (Peter Baro), have likewise constantly adhered to him" (Macbride, *ut supra*, p. 31).] while Bishop Hall, one of the three representatives at Dort, bore testimony in the same direction. ["I shall live and die in the suffrage of the reverend Synod, and do confidently avow, that those other opinions cannot stand with the doctrines of the Church of England" (Macbride, *ut supra*, p.33).] The ineffectual attempts of the Puritans in 1604 to get the Lambeth Articles included in our Formularies is another reason for gratitude, and one that makes the positive Scriptural doctrine of the Articles stand out all the more clearly.

History of Subscription

Subscription to the Articles was thought necessary to secure uniformity of doctrine among teachers of the Reformed Faith, and it was enjoined on the clergy as early as 1553, but the death of the King prevented its enforcement. No further action was taken until 1571, when, as we have seen, an Act of Parliament required all clergy to assent to all the Articles concerning Faith and Sacraments. It is interesting to notice that the subscription enforced referred to the Articles of 1563. There seems to have been a certain verbal ambiguity in this order, and some have thought that Parliament intended it to apply only to those Articles concerning Doctrine and Sacraments, and not to those on Discipline.* But the Act says he shall "subscribe to all the articles of religion which only concern the confession of the true Christian faith and the doctrine of the sacraments, comprised in a book imprinted "and requires him to read publicly the "Said Articles." So that it could not be intended that he might skip and omit to read any of the Articles which in his judgment are not doctrinal. Thus the wider interpretation naturally prevailed, and subscription was required to all the Articles. The controversy, however, appears to have led to a good deal of laxity, though Archbishop Whitgift, in 1583, tried to improve matters by proposing a form of subscription from every clergyman, requiring among other things:

That he alloweth the Book of the Articles of Religion agreed upon by the archbishops and bishops of both provinces, and the whole clergy in the Convocation holden at London in the year of our Lord 1562, and set forth by Her Majesty's authority, and that he believeth all the articles therein contained to be agreeable to the Word of God." [Strype's Whitgift, Bk. III, Ch. III.]

[Cardwell's note is as follows: "This view of the matter certainly receives support from the parliamentary history of the time (D'Ewes' Journal, p. 239. Docum. Ann., Vol. I, p. 411), and is also confirmed by the proceedings of the Convocation in 1575, the first year of the primacy of Archbishop Grindal, where the limitation of the statute is distinctly quoted, and applied to all cases of subscription to the Articles (Wilk., Conc., Vol. IV, p. 284). But it is clear that the statute was otherwise interpreted by Sir E. Coke (Inst., Part IV, p. 323); and as the Queen and her Commissioners would not suffer any reserve or qualification, a different practice certainly prevailed in the administration of the Church. From the year 1584, when Archbishop Whitgift issued his orders for subscription to the three Articles, which were afterwards confirmed by King James in the canons of 1603, it appears that no exception or limitation was permitted. In the last Act of Uniformity (13 and 14 Car. II, c. 4) there is no trace of any such distinction being allowed between articles of doctrine and discipline" (Cardwell, *Synodalia*, Vol. I, pp. 61–62). Hardwick (ut supra, pp. 227–229), also discusses the question and says the idea of a limitation was due to "those who were in search of pretexts for their nonconformity." But Whitgift and Rogers both contended that "all and every of the Articles therein contained, being in number nine and thirty" were the subject of the subscription. Rogers adds: "no more, no fewer" (Preface, p. 24). It should be noted that the "Convocation of 1575" merely quotes the *ipsissima verba* of the statute. Then, too, lawyers, who are the fit expounders of statutes, with one consent have interpreted the 13 Elizabeth in the sense of a full subscription. The so-called disciplinary articles are the Church of England's doctrine relating to matters of discipline, and the words of the Act cover the whole. The reference in Cardwell to D'Ewes is really irrelevant, for at the p. 239 cited, Wentworth tells us that the Archbishop had asked him: "Why we did put out of the book the articles for the Homilies, consecrating of bishops, and suchlike?" But Wentworth was compelled to see these very Articles enacted with all the rest and made statutory law. This is a refutation of his entire claim. On the Puritan contention all these articles ought to have been expunged as not binding on the clergy, but the articles were imposed to "avoid diversities of opinion, and establish consent touching true religion," and the "diversities" of their day were not doctrinal, but disciplinary and ecclesiastical.]

Not much was done until the Canons of 1604, when Canon V censured the impugners of the Articles, and Canon XXXVI required all Articles to be accepted *ex animo* at Ordination and Institution —

Canon XXXVI

"Subscription to be required of such as are to be made ministers."

“No person shall hereafter be received into the ministry, nor either by institution or collation admitted to any ecclesiastical living, nor suffered to preach, to catechise, or to be a lecturer or reader of divinity, in either university, or in any cathedral, or collegiate church, city, or market town, parish church, chapel, or in any other place in this realm, except he be licensed either by the archbishop, or by the bishop of the diocese where he is to be placed, under their hands and seals, or by one of the two universities under their seal likewise; and except he shall first subscribe to these three articles following, in such manner and sort as we have here appointed: –

“I. – That the King’s Majesty, under God, is the only supreme governor of this realm, and of all other his Highness’s dominions and countries, as well in all spiritual or ecclesiastical things or causes, as temporal; and that no foreign prince, person, prelate, state, or potentate hath, or ought to have, any jurisdiction, power, superiority, pre-eminence, or authority, ecclesiastical or spiritual, within His Majesty’s said realms, dominions, and countries.

“II. – That the Book of Common Prayer, and of ordering of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, containeth in it nothing contrary to the Word of God, and that it may lawfully so be used; and that he himself will use the form in the said Book prescribed, in public prayer, and administration of the sacraments, and none other.

“III. – That he alloweth the Book of Articles of Religion agreed upon by the archbishops and bishops of both Provinces, and by the whole clergy in the Convocation holden at London in the year of our Lord God 1562; and that he acknowledgeth all and every the Articles therein contained, being in number nine and thirty, besides the ratification, to be agreeable to the Word of God.

“To these three Articles, whosoever will subscribe he shall, for the avoiding of all ambiguities, subscribe in this order and form of words, setting down both his Christian and surname, viz.: –

“I, N. N., do willingly and *ex animo* subscribe to these three Articles above mentioned, and to all things that are contained in them.

“And if any bishop shall ordain, admit, or license any, as is aforesaid, except he first have subscribed in manner and form as here we have appointed, he shall be suspended from giving of orders and licences to preach for the space of twelve months. But if either of the universities shall offend therein, we leave them to the danger of the law, and His Majesty’s censure.” [Cardwell, *Synodalia*, Vol. I, p. 267.]

But this strictness did not continue in the years that followed, and it was only at the Restoration that greater efforts were made to insist on proper and full subscription according to this Canon. While the Act of Uniformity demanded assent to the Prayer Book it did not deal with the Articles. But the Act recognises 13 Elizabeth as “in force,” and its 17th Section extends the operation of the Act to an additional set of persons,

while the 31st Section transfers the reference of Article XXXVI to the Ordinal of 1662. [Tomlinson, Prayer Book, Articles, and Homilies, Ch. XII.]

The attempt in 1689 to bring about comprehension proved unsuccessful, and the usual practice was to combine the terms of subscription required by the Act of Elizabeth and Canon XXXVI with the following form: –

“I, A.B., do willingly and from my heart subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion of the United Church of England and Ireland, and to the three Articles in the Thirty-sixth Canon, and to all things therein contained.”

The effort made in the eighteenth century to obtain relief from subscription, associated with the name of Archdeacon Blackburne, was too definitely Arian to command assent, and it was therefore summarily rejected.

In 1865 the Formula of subscription was altered by the assent being made much more general, the form being —

“I, A.B., do solemnly make the following declaration: I assent to the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, and to the Book of Common Prayer, and of ordering of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons; I believe the doctrine of the [United] Church of England [and Ireland], as therein set forth, to be agreeable to the Word of God: and in public prayer and administration of the Sacraments, I will use the form in the said book prescribed, and none other, except so far as shall be ordered by lawful authority.”

[The words in brackets were, of course, disused after the Irish Church was disestablished in 1869.]

The Act requires that a clergyman on being instituted to a living, or on his first Sunday, “publicly and openly in the presence of his congregation read the whole Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, and immediately after reading them make the Declaration of assent to them.” While they were not to be understood in any non-natural sense, there was to be no narrow interpretation, and the intention of the Act was certainly to grant relief. It is, of course, well known that subscription is only required of the clergy, and that from the laity it is not demanded as a term of Communion. The only lay subscription was that required at Oxford and Cambridge, which was abolished in 1871, except so far as Degrees in Divinity were concerned.

The Royal Declaration

The Calvinistic controversy continued unabated during the reign of James I, when, as we have seen, the deputation to the Synod of Dort, 1618, was the most important feature. On the accession of Charles I in 1625 he found the Church much agitated by factions and controversy, and issued a Proclamation forbidding the clergy to introduce principles which were not clearly those of the Church. In 1628 he ordered Archbishop Laud to reprint the Articles and to prefix a Declaration that no one was to wrest them,

but to take them in their literal and grammatical sense. This project was not submitted to Convocation, but was issued on the King's authority alone. As Parliament at once replied against the King the Declaration did not acquire any legal force.

Purpose of the Articles

It is sometimes said that the Articles are ambiguous and were intended as a compromise, and that therefore any clear, definite statement of Church doctrine is impossible and not to be expected. But this does not agree with the facts of the case. Cranmer's object in promulgating the Articles was clearly expressed in his letter to John a Lasco, 1548: –

“We are desirous of setting forth in our churches the true doctrine of God, and have no wish to adapt it to all tastes and to trifle with ambiguities, but, laying aside all carnal and prudential motives, to transmit to posterity a true and explicit form of doctrine agreeable to the rule of the sacred writings.” [Original Letters, vol. I, p. 17.]

The words used in 1563 are evidence of the same intention:

“For the avoiding of the diversities of opinions, and for the stablishing of consent touching true religion.” [Tyrrell Green, *ut supra*, p. 14.] The same intention is seen by the requirement of clerical subscription, for the purpose was obviously to obtain consent to a recognised statement of doctrine. [“One fact is plain, viz., that the Articles thus drawn up, subscribed, and authorised, have ever since been signed and assented to by all the clergy of the Church, and until very lately by every graduate of both Universities; and have hence an authority far beyond that of any single convocation or parliament, viz, the unanimous and solemn assent of all the bishops and clergy of the Church, and of the two Universities for well-nigh three hundred years” (Harold Browne, *Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles*”, p. 10).]

That the Articles were intended to be the legal and authorised statement and test of Church of England doctrine on all subjects treated in them is quite dear from all that we know of their origin, history, and purpose. From the first they were regarded as affording the supreme test of Churchmanship, and from this standpoint there is nothing to compare with them. In order that this may be quite clear, it seems necessary to state as fully as possible what subscriptions and declarations have been required and made since the time the Articles were first promulgated. [These materials are taken in substance from Dean Goode's pamphlet, *A Defence of the Thirty-nine Articles* (Hatchard & Son, 1848).]

1. The Act of 13 Elizabeth, 1571, required a declaration of assent, and a subscription to the Articles expressive of “unfeigned assent” and against the maintenance or affirmation of any doctrine “directly contrary or repugnant.”
2. Canon XXXVI of 1603–1604, as already seen, states that the Articles are “agreeable to the Word of God,” and that every clergyman must subscribe “ex animo” to them.
3. The Act of Uniformity, 1662, is virtually to the same effect, as already observed.
4. The title of the Articles is “for the avoiding of the diversities of opinions and for the stablishing of consent touching true religion.”
5. The Canons of 1571, though not legally binding, enable us to see the mind of the Bishops and the Crown. Preachers are to subscribe to the Articles, and promise to maintain and defend. “that doctrine which is contained in them as most agreeable to the verity of God’s Word.”
6. A Canon of the Provincial Synod, held in London, 1575, issued with royal sanction and authority, speaks of the profession of the doctrines expressed in the Articles, and all ministers are to render an account of their faith “agreeable and consonant to the said Articles, and shall first subscribe to the said Articles.”
7. Canons drawn up in 1584 and again in 1597 have similar directions, requiring a statement of faith “according to the Articles of Religion.”
8. Canon XXXIV, of 1603–1604, makes the same demand on all applicants for Holy Orders.
9. The Royal Declaration prefixed to the Articles by Charles I in 1628 speaks of the Articles containing “the true doctrine of the Church of England,” and prohibits “the least difference from the said Articles.”
10. The statute law of the realm as seen in the Act of 1571, already briefly mentioned, speaks very definitely about those who maintain or affirm “any doctrine directly contrary or repugnant to any of the said Articles,” while no one is to be admitted as a minister unless he professes “the doctrine expressed in the said Articles.”
11. In 1566 Archbishop Parker drew up a document containing a petition of the Bishops to the Queen to obtain a Bill “concerning uniformity in doctrine and confirmation of certain Articles.” This consent and unity of doctrine is said to be necessary to quiet and safety, and that great distraction and dissension existed “for want of a plain certainty of Articles of Doctrine by law to be declared.”
12. In 1721 the Crown issued directions for unity and purity of faith, requiring the clergy not to preach any other doctrines than “what are contained in the Holy Scriptures and agreeable to the three Creeds and the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion.”

13. Thomas Rogers, Chaplain to Archbishop Bancroft, published an Exposition of the Articles in 1607, in which the Articles are constantly spoken of as “the doctrine of our Church,” and that by them “there is now a uniformity likewise of doctrine by authority established.” Further, he teaches that the doctrine of our Church is to be judged by the Articles. To the same effect testimonies can be adduced from representative men like Burnet, Hall, Stillingfleet, and Beveridge.

14. The Act of 28 and 29 Victoria requires everyone instituted to a living to read the whole of the Thirty-nine Articles and to declare his assent to them. And this is all the more remarkable that while, up to the year 1865 a clergyman was required to read over the whole Morning and Evening Service as well, the latter was dispensed with, the requirement to read the Articles was retained.

From all these facts and documents the conclusion ought to be obvious that the Articles pledge their subscribers to certain definite doctrines, and that for the Church of England the Articles are an adequate safeguard of orthodoxy. It is clear, therefore, that subscription to the Articles is to be regarded as a definite adoption of their doctrines and something very much more than the negative position of restraint within their limits.

[“Although the latter view has been occasionally advanced by writers of the highest reputation and ability, the former seems to be consistent with the nature and intention of the Articles as well as with the principle embodied by the Church of England in the Canons of 1571” (Hardwick, *ut supra*, p. 222).] Hardwick, following earlier writers, suggests the desirableness of the following rules or Canons of interpretation as both reasonable and suitable to the situation:

“First, to weigh the history of the Reformation movement in the midst of which the Articles had been produced.

Secondly, to read them in this light, approximating as far as possible to the particular point of view which had been occupied by all the leading compilers.

Thirdly, to interpret the language of the formulary in its plain and grammatical sense (i.e. the sense which it had borne in the Edwardine and Elizabethan periods of the Church), bestowing on it ‘the just and favourable construction, which ought to be allowed to all human writings, especially such as are set forth by authority.’

Fourthly, where the language of the Articles is vague, or where (as might have been expected from their history) we meet with a comparative silence in respect of any theological topic, to ascertain the fuller doctrine of the Church of England on that point, by reference to her other symbolical writings – the Prayer Book, the Ordinal, the Homilies, and the Canons.

Fifthly, where these sources have been tried without arriving at explicit knowledge as to the intention of any Article, to acquiesce in the deductions which ‘the catholic doctors

and ancient bishops' have expressly gathered on that point from Holy Scripture; in accordance with the recommendation of the Canon of 1571 in which subscription to the present Articles had been enjoined upon the clergy." [Hardwick, ut supra, p. 224.]

While making every allowance, therefore, for the fact that these Articles exhibit marks of the circumstances which gave them birth, and on this account cannot be regarded as a full and systematic statement of Anglican theology, yet on the subjects with which they deal their character and purpose are easily understood when the above facts are weighed, and the use made of them for the last three centuries considered. The Articles represent one of the most remarkable theological documents ever seen. They were the result of two generations of controversy. Parties were face to face, and every word was weighed. The Scholastic theology had been working itself out and the result was seen in the Reformation. The actual words show what their theology was, and bear clear testimony to the meanings of Roman and Reformed doctrines. The Articles can only be understood in the light of their history, and when thus considered they are as weighty as any formula in existence. ["The Articles, if viewed under one aspect, were pacificatory; they strove by silence, or at least by general statements, to divert and calm the speculations of the English clergy on mysterious and scholastic questions which remain unsolved in Holy Scripture, and transcend the present limits of the human understanding. On the other hand those Articles were meant to be denunciatory; plain and positive errors were unsparingly rebuked. Criteria had been provided, so that advocates alike of Romanism and Anabaptism, Papist and fanatic, Puritan and Zwinglian, 'sacramentary,' were all excluded from the office of public teachers in the Church of England" (Hardwick, ut supra, p. 159).]

Interpretation of the Articles

It is sometimes urged that the Articles being incomplete are to be interpreted in the light of "Catholic principles." This means that they are to be distinguished rigidly from the Protestant Confessions of the sixteenth century in spite of their evident connection with and imitations of them. On this view our Articles are held to condemn extreme mediaevalism, but not the recognised doctrines of the Church of Rome, and it is said that our Church occupies a middle position between two extremes, being neither Roman nor Puritan, but "Catholic". It is, of course, correct to say that truth is often found between two extremes (*in medio tutissimus ibis*), and that in many respects the Church of England stands for a *via media*, but this is very different from saying that our Church is "midway" between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. On the contrary, no Roman Catholic could do anything but admit that our Articles are essentially Protestant. Further, our Formularies on many vital points are fundamentally at one with Continental Protestantism. The history of our Articles has already shown their close association with the Confessions of Augsburg and Wurtemberg. And it must never be forgotten that "there are only two systems of Dogmatic Theology, coherent in structure and capable of scientific exposition, the Romish and the Protestant; these words being understood not in the popular sense, but of the principles of the respective systems, as they are found stated in the public Confessions of Faith, and elaborated

in the works of the principal theologians, on either side since the Reformation.” [Litton, Introduction to Dogmatic Theology, Second Edition, p. xviii.]

It is well known that the experiment of a *via media* theology was made by Newman in connection with Tract 90. But it soon proved to be utterly impossible, and “the golden mean, in its actual application, was found to involve as many difficulties as either extreme.” [Litton, *ut supra*, p. xviii.] Indeed, the fact that Newman himself was compelled to set it on one side and join the Roman Church is the strongest possible testimony to the essential Protestantism of the Anglican Formularies. In view, therefore, of these statements it is impossible to avoid drawing the conclusion in regard to Newman of one of the ablest thinkers of the last century: –

“A writer may be pardoned who accepts the judgment of so great a master, and ventures to think that nothing in Dogmatic Theology that will satisfy the demands of consecutive thinkers is likely to be produced except on the lines either of genuine Romanism or of genuine Protestantism.” [Litton, *ut supra*, p. xix.]

It is a simple matter of fact that no trace can be found of any such idea as that represented by the phrase “Catholic principles”. The plain grammatical sense of the Articles in the light of Holy Scripture is the Anglican position, and the appeal to Scripture shows what is our ultimate authority. The Church, and even the Creeds, are subject to Holy Scripture (Articles VI, VIII, XX).

[Three recent testimonies to this are to the point:

“Is it not then entirely inconsistent with this principle of our Church to say, as is constantly said by many among us, that the Prayer Book and Articles were to be read and interpreted in the light of the belief and practice of the Catholic Church? Her principle demands, on the contrary, that our formularies, and more particularly our Articles, should be interpreted in the light of Holy Scripture, rather than in that of mediaeval theology” (Wace, *Principles of the Reformation*, p. 248).

“Is it quite accurate to say that the appeal of the English Church is to the Scriptures and the primitive fathers? I should have thought that the sixth Article was sufficiently conclusive. ‘Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation.’ Nothing is to be received which is not read therein nor to be proved thereby. The English Church, as it seems to me, claims to rest upon the rock of the Bible, and the Bible only, as exclusively as any body of Protestants in Christendom” (Simpson, *The Thing Signified*, p. 13).

“It may be convenient to assert that a particular statement in the Articles is ‘patient’ of a certain interpretation, but it is obviously important to know whether that interpretation is consistent with the sense in which, and the purpose for which, it was originally set forth” (Tait, *Lecture Outlines on the Thirty-nine Articles*, p. 8).]

Analysis of the Articles

It has already been shown that the Articles do not present a complete system of doctrine because they were largely due to the historical circumstances which called them forth. If they had been intended as a complete, systematic statement of Christian doctrine the logical place of Articles VI–VIII would have been first instead of as at present. But the fundamental doctrines of Articles I–V were doubtless put in the foreground in order to show the vital agreement of Reformation doctrine with that of the mediaeval and primitive Church on the realities of Christian Theism. But there is more fullness and completeness of teaching than many are inclined to believe. The main omission is in connection with Eschatology, and on this, the History of the Forty-two Articles is interesting and perhaps significant. The Articles, as they stand, are best divided as follows:–

I. – The Substance Of Faith (Articles I–V).

1. The Holy Trinity.

2–4. The Son of God.

(a) The Word or Son of God, which was made very Man.

(b) The going down of Christ into Hell.

(c) The Resurrection of Christ.

5. The Holy Spirit.

II. – The Rule Of Faith (Articles VI–VIII).

6. The Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation.

7. The Old Testament.

8. The Three Creeds.

III. – The Life Of Faith (Articles IX–XVIII). Personal Religion.

A. – Its Commencement (Articles IX–XIV). Doctrines connected with Justification.

9. Original or Birth-sin.

10. Free-will.

11. The Justification of Man.

12. Good Works.

13. Works before Justification.

14. Works of Supererogation.

B. – Its Course (Articles XV–XVIII). Doctrines connected with Sanctification.

15. Christ alone without Sin.

16. Sin after Baptism.

17. Predestination and Election.

18. Obtaining eternal Salvation only by the Name of Christ.

IV. – The Household Of Faith (Articles XIX–XXXIX). Corporate Religion.

A. – The Church (Articles XIX–XXII).

19. The Church.

20. The Authority of the Church.

21. The Authority of General Councils.

22. Purgatory.

B. – The Ministry (Articles XXIII, XXIV).

23. Ministering in the Congregation.

24. Speaking in the Congregation in such a Tongue as the people understandeth.

C. – The Sacraments (Articles XXV–XXXI).

25. The Sacraments.

26. The Unworthiness of the Ministers, which hinders not the effect of the Sacrament.

27. Baptism.

28. The Lord's Supper.

29. The Wicked which eat not the Body of Christ in the use of the Lord's Supper.

30. Both Kinds.

31. The one Oblation of Christ finished upon the Cross.

D. – Church Discipline (Articles XXXII–XXXVI).

32. The Marriage of Priests.

33. Excommunicate Persons, how they are to be avoided.

34. The Traditions of the Church.

35. The Homilies.

36. Consecration of Bishops and Ministers.

E. – Church And State (Articles XXXVII–XXXIX).

37. The Civil Magistrates.

38. Christian men's Goods, which are not common.

39. A Christian man's Oath.

The scope of the Articles covers the twofold ground of

(1) Divine Revelation: its fact and evidences;

(2) Human Response: its method and consequences.

The contents of Divine Revelation may perhaps be stated thus –

1. The Doctrine of God. Theology. God in His Being, Character, and Relationships.
2. The Doctrine of Man. Anthropology. Before and after the Fall.
3. The Doctrine of Christ. Christology. His Person, Nature, and Work.
4. The Doctrine of Redemption. Soteriology. Its need, nature, means, and effects.

5. The Doctrine of the Spirit. Pneumatology. The Spirit in the Old Testament, the New Testament, the Christian Church.

6. The Doctrine of the Church. Ecclesiology. The Church, the Ministry, and the Sacraments.

7. The Doctrine of the Future. Eschatology. Death, Life, Heaven, Hell.

[Another outline, which may be compared with the above, will be found in Outlines of Theological Study, compiled and published with the approval of the Committee of the Conference upon the Training of Candidates for Holy Orders, pp. 29–32 (London: George Bell & Sons). The entire pamphlet is one of great value for all students.]

It will be seen that with the exception of the last section the Articles have something to say on all essential points, and in regard to Eschatology, the Church has probably been wise in omitting the controverted subjects stated in Articles XXXIX, XL, XLI, and XLII of 1553, and limiting the teaching of the Church to the brief but plain statements of the three Creeds.

Article I

Of Faith in the Holy Trinity.

There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts, or passions; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the Maker and Preserver of all things both visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead, there be three Persons, of one substance, power, and eternity; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

De Fide in Sacrosanctam Trinitatem

Unus est vivus et verus Deus, aeternus, incorporeus, impartibilis, impassibilis; immensae potentiae, sapientiae, ac bonitatis; Creator et Conservator omnium, tum visibilium, tum invisibilium. Et in unitate hujus divinae naturae, tres sunt Personae, ejusdem essentiae, potentiae, ac aeternitatis; Pater, Filius, et Spiritus Sanctus.

Important Equivalents

Without body = incorporeus.

Without parts = impartibilis

Without passions = impassibilis
Infinite = immensae.

Of this Godhead = hujus divinae naturae.

Of one substance = ejusdem essentiae.

It was essential to put this subject in the forefront to show the fundamental beliefs of the Reformers as against Rome, and also as against extremists on the Protestant side, some of whom had gone so far as to deny the doctrine of the Trinity.

The Article, which dates from 1553, is drawn mainly from the First Article of the Confession of Augsburg, 1530, and the Thirteenth Article of the Concordat of 1538. It can also be illustrated by the *Reformatio Legum*, where the same language is seen.* The main truths of the Article are two: (1) the Unity of the Godhead; (2) the Trinity in the Godhead, the former being the necessary foundation and presupposition of the latter. But in the course of the statement there are several aspects of truth connected with the Deity which call for attention.

[*“De Deo. – Ecclesiae magno consensu apud nos docent decretum Nicenae Synod, de unitate essentiae, et de tribus personis, verum et sine ulla dubitatione credendum esse. Videlicet, quod sit una essentia divinae, quae appellatur et est Deus aeternus, incorporeus impartibilis, immensa potentia, sapientia, bonitate, Creator et Conservator omnium rerum visibilium et invisibilium, et tamen tres sint personae ejusdem essentiae potentiae, et coaeternae, Pater, Filius, et Spiritus Sanctus; et nomine personae utuntur ea significatione qui usi sunt in hac causa scriptores ecclesiastici, ut significet non partem aut qualitatem in alio, sed quod proprie subsistit”* (Gibson, *The Thirty-nine Articles*, p. 90).]

I. – The Existence Of God

“There is...God.” This is the general theistic position on which all religion rests, and as the Article starts here, it seems necessary to discuss briefly the grounds of Theism. The word “God,” according to Skeat, comes from the Indo-Germanic “Ghu”, “to worship”. It does not mean, as often formerly suggested, “good”. The Article treats belief in God in two parts, dealing first with that which is common to all theistic religions, and then stating that which is distinctive of Christianity. Theism is, of course, not peculiar to Christianity, and definitions of God differ. Although for convenience the order of the Article is followed it is not necessary to think that Theism rests on two separate and distinct foundations, natural and supernatural, for our highest authority for God is Revelation, not Nature (Rom. 1:20). Following Scripture, the Article does not argue or prove, but assumes the existence of God. “There is...God.” “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Gen. 1:1). “But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him” (Heb. 11:6). Our aim, therefore, is not so much to prove as to explain what the existence of God is and involves. Scripture recognises a natural knowledge of God (Rom. 1:19).

What is the origin of the idea of God? There are two general explanations. By some the idea of God as a Supreme Being is regarded, in technical language, as “an intuition of the moral reason”. Paul seems to have recognised in the mind an innate perception of God (Acts 17:28). This means that the belief in a Personal God is born in every man, not as a perfect and complete idea, but as involving a capacity for belief when the idea is presented. If this is so, it is one of the primary intuitions of human nature. It is certainly a mistake to suppose that we derive the idea of God from the Bible, for races that have never heard of the Bible possess a definite belief in a Supreme Being. The Bible reveals God’s character and His purpose for man, and thus gives us a true idea of the Divine Being, but the emphasis is on the truth rather than on the mere fact. In the same way it is equally incorrect to say that we obtain the idea of God from reason, for reason is not in this respect origination. [“We do not reach the idea of God as the final and irrefragable result of a long chain of syllogistic reasoning. Neither do we find God vindicated to the intellect as the crown of a slow and patient induction from data given to us in consciousness. No doubt the apprehension of God is an intellectual act, but it is an intellectual act that is saturated with emotion” (Miller, *Problem of Theology*, p. 13 f.; see also Note B., p. 306).] By reflection we can obtain a fuller conception of God, but the reason itself is not the source of the conception. By those who hold that our idea of God is intuitive the conception of God is analysed into three elements: first, a consciousness of power in God which leads to a feeling of our dependence on Him; second, a consciousness of His perfection which leads to a realization of our obligation to Him; third, a consciousness of His Personality which leads to a sense of worship of Him.

Others object to the idea of God as intuitive, and say that it is the result of the reason instinctively recognizing Truth, Beauty, and Goodness, and that these coalesce in the thought of one Reality. On this view these three elements afford an argument for Theism. [Everett, *Theism and the Christian Faith* (Unitarian and Hegelian).]

But however it comes, natural religion means the idea of God formed by men independently of Revelation, and one thing is quite clear, the belief is universal. This is usually termed the *Consensus Gentium*, and is a fact which has to be explained, since “a primitive Revelation presupposes a Revealer: an innate idea presupposes an Author.” [Litton, *Introduction to Dogmatic Theology*, Second Edition, p. 61; see also Strong, *Manual of Theology*, p. 33; Miller, *Topics of the Times*, “The Idea of God,” pp. 10, 23.] It shows that religion is not illusive, but real, and that the universe is spiritual. [Peake, *Christianity: Its Nature and Truth*, Ch. IV.]

This universal belief in the existence of God is confirmed by arguments suggested by the world without and man’s nature within, and it is necessary to enquire as to these proofs of the existence of God. While we may rightly deny the possibility of finding God by reason only, the proofs usually adduced are valuable and, indeed, essential for the knowledge of the Divine Nature and for the vindication of the convictions otherwise obtained. There are two ways of procedure. Some maintain that it is possible to prove the existence of God on a priori grounds. By reasoning from the nature of things it is urged that we may deduce the proof of God’s existence. This was attempted in the

eighteenth century by Dr. Samuel Clarke, and called by him "A Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God." In the nineteenth century the same method was seen in "The Argument a priori for the Being and Attributes of the Living God," by W. H. Gillespie, [T. & T. Clark, 1906.] who was dissatisfied with Dr. Clarke's work. By means of a series of propositions it is argued that "there is a Being of Infinity, of Expansion, and Duration"; and that this Being is a Spirit, All-Knowing, the Creator and Governor of all things. But it may be questioned whether this metaphysical method will satisfy many minds. It is an attempt to demonstrate a First Cause by showing that however far back we go every effect must have a first adequate cause, and that the mind must at last come to an existence without a cause, an uncaused cause. But it is at once better and certainly easier to proceed along the other, the a posteriori road. The questions of natural religion are facts and must be dealt with inductively and by the same processes we apply to all other realms of knowledge. This does not mean that the results of the a priori method are barren, for once the existence of God has been established on a posteriori grounds we are inevitably led to attribute to Him the conceptions of Infinity, Eternity, and Spirituality which the a priori method emphasises.

[“It is very doubtful whether a single individual has ever found God as the sequence of a syllogistic process. Today the agnostic points out hopeless flaws in the argument, and the vast majority of intellectual believers ground their faith on a totally different basis. But though we cease to hold these arguments as demonstrations of God's existence they are still essential elements in enriching our knowledge of God. Rightly apprehended, they have an all-important place in the communion of the soul with God, and in strengthening those tendrils of faith with which the human spirit grasps the Divine” (Miller, ut supra, p. 16 f.).]

We have already seen that Scripture never attempts to prove God's existence, but always assumes and affirms it (Ps. 19:1). It may be questioned whether the existence of God is really capable of direct proof, for there seems no line of evidence absolutely conclusive to the mind of man. This fact has been said to show that belief in God is not like a mathematical axiom, self-evident. But since demonstration is impossible, for then there would be no room for faith, so the non-existence of God is equally impossible of demonstration. Many of life's essential elements are of this character, and the true position is that of Butler: "Probability is the very guide of life." This probability admits of degrees from the lowest possibility to the highest moral certainty, the latter reaching to the strongest kind of proof.

It is important to note the reason why it is said that we can have no demonstrable proofs for the existence of God. This is not due to the fact that belief in God is unreasonable, but because the fact to be proved is in the very nature of the case so great as not to admit of strict demonstration. To demonstrate God would require some greater truth or truths by which to prove our point. Indeed, it may be said without any question that the existence of a God of reason and love is so certain and fundamental a fact that it actually has to be assumed in all our thought and life. So that it is a fact which cannot be proved because it is the foundation of all proof, the postulate without which we should have to give up the possibility of rational thought. Hence, this position

really gives in a way the deepest proof that we could possibly have, and that, in spite of the fact that strict mathematical demonstration is impossible.

The truth is, as we shall see in the course of our consideration, that it is impossible to distinguish between the existence and the character of God. The two ideas are inextricably bound up together, so that as we ponder what are often called the proofs of God's existence we are all the while giving attention to the necessary elements of the Divine character. While, therefore, there are no direct proofs of the Divine existence, there are several indirect proofs involving evidence which points to it as the essential basis of all other existence. These proofs are not all of the same value, but they call for separate attention, and also combine to produce cumulative force.

1. The Ontological Proof. – By this is meant that a subjective conception in man implies an objective existence apart from man. It is sometimes expressed by saying that the thought of God is latent in the mind, but is not produced by the mind. Man “claims to interpret the nature outside him on the analogy of his own.” [Strong, *ut supra*, p. 25.] The unity he imposes on nature is modelled on his knowledge of himself. We have an idea of an independent perfect Being, and when the thought of this comes to us we inevitably think of Him as existing, and as necessarily existing. It must be admitted, however, that many scholars regard this proof as of only small value. Thus, Dean Strong says it is an assumed claim which cannot be proved, and an ideal which cannot be realised. [Strong, *ut supra*, p. 27; see also Litton, *ut supra*, p. 59 f.] On this view the argument seems rather to assume God's existence while proving His perfection. But it is still possible to use it as a way of stating the fact that belief in God's existence is a necessity of the practical reason. [Litton, *ut supra*, p. 60.] And as Orr says: – “It would be strange if an argument which has wielded such power over some of the strongest intellects were utterly baseless...Kant himself has given the impulse to a new development of it, which shows more clearly than ever that it is not baseless, but is really the deepest and most comprehensive of all arguments.” [Orr, *Christian View of God and the World*, Tenth Edition, p. 103 f. “I cannot but maintain, therefore, that the ontological argument, in the kernel and essence of it, is a sound one, and that in it the existence of God is really seen to be the first, the most certain, and the most indisputable of all truths” (Orr, *ut supra*, p. 106).]

2. The Cosmological Proof. – This means that every effect must have its adequate cause. Antecedents and consequents are insufficient because they only imply succession. Sequences of events are not merely chronological. It is true that night follows day, but not as effect following cause. Yet there is a cause both to day and night. The universe is an effect because it had a beginning (Gen. 1:1), and its only adequate cause is the First Cause, God. Everything, therefore, in existence must have had a cause to produce it. The world exists and must have had a cause, and as God is the only adequate Cause, God exists. This means that the mind intuitively perceives a cause from what is visible (Rom. 1:20). Matter must have been created. Motion must have had an impetus. Life must have had a Life-giver. The argument has been stated thus:

- (1) The process of development in the universe, or in any part of it, had a beginning;
- (2) this requires a cause;
- (3) this cause was not physical;
- (4) the only non-physical cause is will or mind;
- (5) these imply a personal being.

[A. D. Kelly, *Rational Necessity of Theism*, pp. 142–149.] According to Huxley, Causality is the first great act of faith on the part of a man of science. [A. D. Kelly, *ut supra*, pp. 50, 156.]

Another recent statement of the same position is worthy of mention:

- (1) every phenomenon must have a cause adequate to produce it;
- (2) the universe must have a cause;
- (3) whatever is intelligible bears witness to a cause that is intelligent;
- (4) the universe, being intelligible, proclaims its cause to be intelligent;
- (5) in all phenomena controlled by human agency, regularity and uniformity are the evidences of design and intention;
- (6) the universe, being full of regularities and uniformities, demands for its explanation a purposive causative agency;

(7) human personality is constituted by the attributes of consciousness, intelligence, and purposive will;

(8) the same attributes would constitute personality in the cause of the universe, which is, in effect, the contention of Theism. [Warschauer, *The Atheist's Dilemma*, p. 22 f.]

By some it is urged that apart from Scripture it cannot be proved that the universe had a beginning, but the argument now stated is valid and strong for the probability and reasonableness of the Divine existence as the only adequate cause.

["This common-sense Theism, however roughly defined, has elements of truth in it. No sophistry will prevail on us to throw it away. It is held that the great Greek philosopher, Aristotle, in his doctrine of a first cause of motion outside the universe, stated a cosmological proof for the being of God" (Mackintosh, *A First Primer of Apologetics*, p. 35). See also Orr, *ut supra*, p. 95.]

3. The Teleological Proof.—This is better known as "the argument from design." There are evidences of design in nature, e.g. the adaptation of means to end imply a designer, a personal, purposive cause. The gills of a fish in relation to water, the wings of a bird to air, the teeth of animals to tearing, the hand of man to work, the solar system with its fixed orbits, unchanging speeds and distances calculated according to mathematical law – all these things, and many more besides, suggest the presence of mind and purpose in the universe. In his *Natural Theology*, Paley used the illustration of a watch, which could not make itself, the mechanism presupposing a watchmaker, and although the form of the argument may have changed since his day the fact

remains the same, that the world as a whole shows evidence of design, that it could not make itself, but must have had a Maker, that Maker being God.

Objection is sometimes raised to this argument, because as it rests on finite data it is urged that it cannot prove God's infinity or eternity. But it is at least an argument for the rationality of the universe. While it may not be possible, following Paley, to argue design from particular details, yet viewing the universe as a whole the argument is as valid as ever.

["The Design argument is the expression of a deeply-rooted and reasonable conviction that a world existing apart from purpose is not a rational world at all, that is, it is not a world which answers to the demand of our reason. As stated in its traditional form it lacks convincingness. But if we turn our minds from adaptations manifested in a particular organism to the fact of the universe as a whole – to the fact that the universe is a Cosmos not a Chaos, the old argument regains its old force" (A. D. Kelly, *ut supra*, p. 155)]

"Man expects to find the world a coherent whole." [Strong, *ut supra*, p. 20.] This is the necessary basis of all thought and experience, for in the use of the various avenues of life man naturally and rightly expects to find all the facts harmonise.

["Man has five senses. Each one of these admits him into a different world. The world of sight is not the same as the world of sound, or the world of sound as the world of smell. But man's capacity to live and utilise his experience depends upon his being able at will to translate the reports of one sense into terms of another, and to feel himself certain of the truthfulness of his results" (Strong, *ut supra*, p. 21).]

The very word universe implies mind.

4. The Anthropological Proof. – This means an argument from man to God, from the human nature to the Divine. Man's mental, moral, and spiritual natures demand God as their Creator. The existence of human free will implies a greater Will. The fact of conscience with its emphasis on law involves a Law-giver. When man says, "I ought," he means, "I owe it," and herein lies one of the essential distinctions between man and the lower animals. Man's conscience can be trained to the highest degree, but it is impossible to train that which does not exist, and the lower animals can only be compelled to certain actions by a sense of fear, never by a consciousness of right and wrong. The fact of personality in man is also an argument for the existence of God, since it is impossible to conceive that man's personality is the only or highest in existence. Personality is the supreme element in the universe, as Julian Huxley himself admitted in one of the latest of his writings. ["I cannot conceive how the phenomena of consciousness as such, and apart from the physical processes by which they are called into existence, are to be brought within bounds of physical science" (Quoted in A. D. Kelly, *ut supra*, p. 29).] All this tends to show that mind cannot come from matter, or spirit from flesh, or conscience from anything purely

physical, and for this reason a Being possessing both mind and spirit must have made man. This Being was God, Who therefore exists.

Further, man is impressed by the three ideas of Truth, Goodness, and Beauty, and these point to the character of God in Whom they are fully realised. Some thinkers have rested their view of God on one or other of these alone. Plato laid stress on the beautiful, Spinoza on unity, Kant on morality. But the whole man demands attention. The idea of truth argues for unity, and this in turn involves the eternity, omnipresence, and omnipotence of God. The idea of goodness argues for the character of God as love. The idea of beauty implies the glory of God, as seen in the manifestations of the Divine nature and work. According to the law stamped on all life, like begets like, flower begetting flower, animal begetting animal, man begetting man. And so we believe God "created man in His own image" (Gen. 1:26, 27). [Orr, ut supra, "God as Religious Postulate." Appendix to Lecture 112, p.]

Here, again, because man is finite it may not be possible to argue God's Infinity, but it certainly postulates Personality. There are four great facts in nature: Thought, Forethought, Law, and Life, and these demand respectively a Thinker, a Provider, a Law-giver, and a Life-giver. We must beware of the fallacy of personifying Nature and Law, which are expressive only of method, not of source.

It is sometimes said that the doctrine of Evolution has destroyed the cosmological, and especially the teleological, proofs of the Divine existence, that the Darwinian doctrine of Natural Selection is not concerned with ends, but results, and for this intelligence is not required. But this position involves much that is open to question and calls for serious consideration. It is sometimes thought that the Christian Church has been needlessly suspicious of Evolution and far too slow in applying it to religion. But it should never be forgotten that Evolution entered the world originally, not simply as a theory of science, but as an ally of a philosophy of materialism which, if true, would have banished Christianity, and, indeed, all spiritual religion from the earth. It was hardly to be expected, therefore, that the Church could give a welcome to a theory which entered in connection with such associations. Then again, time has shown that the Darwinian theory is not necessarily to be identified with the general doctrine of Evolution. It has been pointed out by several writers that there are factors of which Darwin took little or no account, and these factors have led to a decided modification of the original theory of Natural Selection. [Henslow, Present-Day Rationalism critically Examined; Orr, God's Image in Man; Otto, Naturalism and Religion. It is also obvious that Natural Selection cannot apply to the inorganic world which is dead, and yet the geological strata, comprising over a hundred zones, are without exception advantageous to man. This is a clear proof of the force of the Teleological argument in the inorganic realm.]

There is scarcely anything more important than a clear understanding of what Evolution means. The term is commonly used in a very indefinite way. It may mean little or it may mean much. There are three main divisions commonly included in the word "Evolution"; the sub-organic, the organic, and the super-organic. The first refers

to the development of matter without life, and is generally applied to the formation of the solar or stellar systems from some more crude conditions of matter. Organic Evolution is the name for a process of derivation or development for the forms of life, vegetable and animal, that have existed, or now exist in the world. Super-organic Evolution refers to the same process in non-material spheres. But even in connection with organic Evolution there is a very wide divergence of opinion as to the use of the term. It is applied also to ordinary growth, and also to gradual, progressive development made without interference from without, but by the inherent potentiality of some primordial germ up to all the varied forms of life on the globe. Yet again, Evolution may be regarded as either causal or modal, as the cause of all life or as only the mode by which a Personal Creator has brought about the diversity which now exists. In other words, Evolution may be regarded as atheistic or as theistic. Now there can be no doubt that if Evolution is considered to be causal, it is entirely opposed to all theistic conceptions. But the causality of Evolution is very far from being proved; indeed, it is entirely opposed to all that is known of science. Evolution within certain limits is a fact, but it has not yet been proved to be of universal application. There are physical gaps, to say nothing of mental and moral chasms. By means of a good deal of vagueness and inaccuracy of thought, men frequently speak of the uniformity of nature, but they forget that man is included in nature, and man's life is very far from uniform by reason of his possession of will. So that while we may rightly accept Evolution as a working hypothesis, and within certain limits an undoubted truth, yet this is wholly different from regarding it as the full explanation of all things in the universe. ["We may otherwise make too much of the effect of the discovery of the principle of 'natural selection.' It is very doubtful whether this principle will be found able to bear all the burden which some would place upon it. ... It is by no means plain that current theories of 'evolution' have so disposed of the Argument for Design in every possible form as is sometimes hastily assumed" (Webb, Problems in the Relations of God and Man, p. 161).] If, however, we regard Evolution as modal it is not only not anti-theistic, but in many respects gives a far deeper, richer and fuller conception of the Divine working than the older theories. It is only opposed to Theism if regarded as causal and materialistic. Testimonies to this can be found in the writings of scientific men like Julian Huxley, Ray Lankester, and others. ["There is a good deal of talk and not a little lamentation about the so-called religious difficulties which physical science has created. In theological science, as a matter of fact, it has created none. Not a solitary problem presents itself to the philosophical theist at the present day which has not existed from the time that philosophers began to think out the logical grounds and the logical consequences of Theism...The doctrine of Evolution is neither theistic nor anti-theistic. It simply has no more to do with Theism than the first book of Euclid has" (Quoted in A. D. Kelly, ut supra, p. 37).] The best thought of today tends more and more to agree with the opinion expressed by Sir Oliver Lodge, that "the existence of a great World-soul is the best explanation of things as they are."

[For the general subject of Evolution and the Christian Religion see, in addition to the works quoted or referred to above: Stokes, Gifford Lectures, Second Series, Lecture X; McCosh, The Religious Aspect of Evolution; Gurnhill, Some Thoughts of God, Chs. VII, VIII; Gant, Modern Natural Theology, Ch. I; Kennedy, Natural Theology and

Modern Thought, Ch. III; Salmon, *Evolution and Other Papers*, Ch. I; Fairhurst, *Organic Evolution Considered*; Orr, *God's Image in Man*, s.v. *Evolution*.]

The place and value of these proofs vary with different writers, though there is a general agreement that they do not amount to a demonstration of the existence of God. But in their place and for their purpose they are as valuable as ever. ["Considered as proofs, in the ordinary sense of the word, they are open to the objections which have been frequently urged against them; but viewed as an analysis of the unconscious or implicit logic of religion, as tracing the steps of the process by which the human spirit rises to the knowledge of God, and finds therein the fulfilment of its own highest nature, these proofs possess great value" (Caird, *Introduction to Philosophy of Religion*, p. 133). See also Litton. *ut supra*, p. 62 ff.; Webb, *ut supra*, pp. 154–188; Orr, *ut supra*, p. 94.] The main point of importance to remember is that these proofs are hardly capable apart from Revelation of assuring us of a Personal God, with the attributes associated with Him.

["The old theistic proofs have their value. Yet it is doubtful how far, apart from revelation, reason can make us sure of a personal God; and it is certain that only revelation can do what is of vital importance for us – introduce us to God's friendship. Moreover, Kant seems to strike the right note at least in this respect, when he tells us that we are concerned to be certain of God, of immortality, and of free will. The Christian knowledge of God (whatever previous elements it may take up into itself) is the knowledge of God in Christ as our Friend and our Saviour. Where do we see God acting a Father's part? Where does He directly manifest Himself as a Person, personally interested in the welfare of beings who seem so often the sport of Nature's isms? How can we obtain permanent, lasting assurance of His favour? There is only one answer" (Mackintosh, *A First Primer of Apologetics*, p. 38 f.).]

One thing is absolutely certain, that it is only by Revelation we attain to fellowship with God as a Personal Redeemer. ["But no one of these methods conducts a man to a true knowledge of the nature of God so long as he is ignorant of the revealed testimonies which Christianity awakens around us and in us" (Martensen, *Christian Dogmatics*, p. 74).] And it is for this reason that modern thought tends increasingly in the direction of Revelation for the main support of the theistic position. While ready to give reason its due and to allow it its proper place, there still remains the consideration that for the character of God we need the knowledge that Revelation alone can provide. The main objection taken to the usual proofs, as now set out, is not their error so much as their inadequacy — "The God whom they prove may be God, but He is not the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." [W. Adams Brown, *Christian Theology in Outline*, p. 125. See also Mullins, *The Christian Religion in its Doctrinal Expression*.]

This tendency of recent thought to regard natural religion as secondary and to make the Christian Revelation our primary ground for Theism is undoubtedly important and needs careful consideration. It is urged that while belief in Christ presupposes natural

theology, yet the latter is difficult because it tends to become metaphysical and philosophical,

[“Sanctioned by usage as it is, the distinction which the epithet connotes is open to question; Natural Religion, like the social contract, exists for thought rather than in things...No one ever held or taught it; it is an abstraction or residuum left behind by concrete religions when the rest of the conception has been thought away. The evidences of religion are historical and psychological; religion is part both of civilization and of the furniture of the mind. But the isolation of such notions as God, freedom, and immortality is formal; the proofs, however irrefutable, do not convince” (Review of Ms. A. J. Balfour’s “Theism and Humanism” in *The Nation*, and October 1915)]

...so that our true method is not so much to reach through God to Christ as through Christ to God. But, nevertheless, we must not deny natural theology by undue emphasis on belief in God through Christ. To natural theology we may rightly look for indications of the existence of God, though as inevitably we turn to Christianity for the marks of the Divine character. The Nature of God in the abstract may be inferred from natural theology, but His personal character as Love comes from Christ. For this reason we must therefore give attention to the next line of proof.

5. The Christological Proof. — The Incarnation of Christ, which for the present we assume to be true, corresponds with the foregoing considerations and demands a belief in God. God can only be adequately known in Christ, and any speculations about God which stop short of Christ’s revelation are necessarily inadequate. The bearing of this on the theistic controversy is important, for all objections proceed on the fallacy of excluding from consideration our Lord’s life and teachings and endeavour to place our knowledge of God on a natural basis. Now though we do not now prove Christ’s words to be a revelation of God, we have a right to say that no philosophy is scientific which fails to notice the testimony of Christ as, in any case, the greatest human experience on the subject. No testimony ought to be excluded from notice, and we hold that God was revealed in Christ because nature alone was insufficient to reveal Him in the character and attitude essential for human life, as good and gracious.

The New Testament claims that Christ revealed God, and this proof consists of several elements:

- (1) The character of Christ;
- (2) the fulfilment of prophecy;
- (3) the elements of the supernatural and miraculous;
- (4) the character, claim, and power of the Bible;
- (5) the existence and growth of the Christian Church;
- (6) the progress and power of Christianity in the world;
- (7) the moral miracle of personal and corporate regeneration and renovation.

These matters are necessarily left for detailed consideration and proof, and are mentioned here simply as parts of the Christological proof of the existence and character of God. They require nothing short of a Divine presence and power to account for them. Thus this Christological conception confirms our belief in a First Cause, a Personality, and a Moral Governor of the universe, as set forth in the previous considerations.

As we review these five lines of argument we observe that their force lies in their combination. As each thread of a rope may be easily broken while separated, though the rope as a whole may be unbreakable, so it may be said that each of these proofs taken alone may be inconclusive, but when all five are united they are conclusive of the Personal existence of God. Nor are we concerned with the essential difference between theology and other sciences in regard to nature and method. While no science proves its own first principles, but must derive them from elsewhere or assume them, theology uses the fact of the existence of God both as premise and conclusion. [Strong, *ut supra*, p. 2 f.]

“To take a parallel case, the evidence for the existence of our own personality is of the same character as the evidence for the existence of God. It appears both as conclusion and as premise. To prove the existence of my own personality, I must assume it...The evidence we allege in proof of the fact proves also that the investigation is reasonable only when the fact is assumed — that is, that the existence of God is the hinge upon which the whole process turns” (Strong, *ut supra*, p. 3)]

So that if we grant belief in the existence of a Personal God the value of these proofs may be stated as follows: The Ontological argument proves God’s Perfection; the Cosmological argument proves God’s Causality; the Teleological argument proves God’s Intelligence; the Anthropological argument proves God’s Personality; the Christological argument proves God’s Character as Love.

It is also important to remember that belief in God always contains a moral element and cannot be limited to that which is merely intellectual. [Strong, *ut supra*, p. 7 f.] It is for this reason that the various proofs associated with natural theology cannot originate the idea of God in one who does not possess it. The idea must first of all be postulated, and then the proofs become powerful and cumulative. [Miller, *Topics of the Times*, “The Idea of God,” pp. 6–11.] While, therefore, we must not undervalue natural theology, [“A thoroughgoing denial of natural theology has usually proved a help to religious scepticism rather than to the assertion of revelation” (Mackintosh, *ut supra*, p. 33)], yet to Christians the argument from nature is rather the confirmation of our belief in God than the foundation of it. Christian Theism is not merely natural theology in the light of Christ’s teaching, or even Christ added to the God of natural theology; it is Theism embodied in and expressed by Christ, so that in Him we see Who and what God is and are thereby satisfied (John 14:8). Thus “Theism needs Revelation to complete it.” [Orr, *God’s Image in Man*, pp. 77–79, III.]

It may be well to point out at this stage that the position of this Article is a testimony to the fact that the doctrine of God is fundamental for all else, settling everything. As this is, so will be our idea of Religion, Christ, the Bible, Man, Sin, and Revelation. It is the regulative idea and covers the whole of life.

II – The Nature Of God

Heresy compelled the Church to provide a closer definition than would have otherwise been necessary, and to this is due the difference of tone between Scripture and philosophical theology. Nevertheless, we believe that all is implicit in Scripture and that the statements, abstract though they be, are only the explicit expression of what is implied and contained therein. There are five aspects of the Nature of God stated in the Article.

1. His Unity. – “There is one...God.” This is much more than anything merely numerical; it is essential. Plurality is impossible (Deut. 6:4; Is. 41:4, 44:6, 48:12). The mind demands a First Cause, and the word “universe” points in the same direction, though it does not for a moment mean that the universe is God. God is the Infinite Being Who includes all in Himself. As such, He is our highest conception and loftiest principle, and there can be no other. This does not mean the “Infinite and Absolute” that “leaves room for no other and can brook none,” but it does mean that whatever plurality of beings there are in the universe there is One Who is “highest of all.” [Ward, *The Realm of Ends*, p. 443 and p. 436.]

2. His Life. – “There is one living...God.” The word is *vivus*, not *vivens*. God is life and its source. Scripture lays much stress on the “Living God,” especially as against idolatry (Josh. 3:10; Ps. 42:2; Jer. 10:10; Dan. 6:26; Mat. 16:16; John 6:57; Acts 14:15; Rom. 9:26; Heb. 3:12; Rev. 7:2).

3. His Truth. — “There is one living and true God.” The word is *verus*, not *verax* (true, not truthful), and answers to *αληθινός* rather than *αληθής*. But the two words are found in Scripture descriptive of God as “true.” The latter means faithful, as against falsity (Tit. 1:2); the former means substantial, genuine, as against unreality (John 17:3).

4. His Eternity. — “There is one living and true God, everlasting.” This, too, is a necessity in a First Cause, and is accordingly emphasised in Scripture (Rom. 1:20; 1 Tim. 1:17). It means a Being with no limitation of space and time. As He is not limited in space, so He is not limited in time. This statement should be carefully compared with the Creed, which emphasises the Almightyness of God. [Westcott, *The Historic Faith*, p. 36 f.]

5. His Spirituality. — “Without body, parts, or passions.”

(a) “Without body,” *incorporeus*; that is, without limitation of power and space (John 4:24). Yet, as we shall see, God’s Infinity is always to be regarded as personal.

(b) “Without parts,” *impartibilis*; that is, incapable as a Spirit of being represented in bodily shape, and without change, without imperfection, indivisible, and with no possibility of conflict.

(c) “Without passions,” *impassibilis*; that is, incapable of being subsected with anything by an agent stronger than Himself (*sub-fero*). This simply denies His impotence and imperfection. But it is essential to distinguish it from the voluntary suffering endured by God on account of sin. As everyone that loves suffers, so God must suffer by reason of His unrequited love to man. This, however, is a self-limitation of God associated with the Divine Self-sacrifice. So that when the Article speaks of God as “without passions” it is manifestly unfair to say that it denies to God any moral character. [For the truth in the Patripassian heresy, see Fairbairn, *Christ in Modern Theology*, p. 483 f.; and for a fine treatment of the sense in which God is capable of suffering, see Bushnell, *The New Life*, Sermon XVII. See also Platt, *Immanence and Christian Thought* pp. 414–418.]

Objection is sometimes raised to the Biblical conception of God as anthropomorphic, but the objection is not sound because we must use human language, and the conceptions of man and personality are the highest possible to us. It is obviously better to use anthropomorphic expressions than zoo-morphic or cosmo-morphic, and when we attribute to God emotions and sensibilities we mean to free Him from all the imperfections attaching to the human conceptions of these elements. In revealing Himself God has to descend to our capacities, and use language which can be understood. But this can never fully reveal Him since that which is finite could never explain the Infinite. So that God must necessarily speak of Himself as a Man, for so only could we comprehend anything about Him. Hence, both as to Person and actions, everything is spoken of after the manner of men. But all these are only figures of speech, by which alone we can obtain an idea of the reality. Any objection to such anthropomorphism only has force so far as man’s thoughts of God are unworthy and untrue. [“The God of religion and therefore of religious doctrine is always conceived anthropopathically or anthropomorphically; an abstract idea, such as that of the absolute, can never occupy the place of a religious conception of God; therefore the idea of personality, which is never entirely free from figure, is absolutely indispensable” (De la Saussaye, *Manual of the Science of Religion*, p. 230). See also Kennedy, *ut supra*, p. 260 ff.; Strong, *ut supra*, p. 39; Platt, *Immanence and Christian Thought*, p. 219.]

III. – The Attributes Of God

By an attribute is to be understood “any conception which is necessary to the explicit idea of God; any distinctive conception which cannot be resolved into any other.” [H. B. Smith, *Systematic Theology*, p. 12; see also W. Adams Brown, *ut supra*, p. 100 ff.] The Article describes God as “of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness.”

1. “Infinite power” (*immensae potentiae*). — This, which may be called physical, means power adequate to all possible requirements. There is no sphere higher than His (Ps.

135:6; Rev. 1:8). By this idea of omnipotence we are not to think of anything that is contradictory of any other Divine attribute, or as ruling out the conception of self-limitation such as is involved in the creation and redemption of man. The Latin, "*immensae*," referring to infinity, may be compared with the similar phrase in the Athanasian Creed, "*Immensus Pater*."

2. "Infinite wisdom" (*immensae sapientiae*). — This is the intellectual aspect expressed by the word "omniscience." It implies that nothing can escape the Divine knowledge (Ps. 139:2-3, 6; 145:7). He is "the only wise God" (1 Tim. 1:17).

3. "Infinite goodness" (*immensae bonitatis*). — This is the ethical attribute and emphasises the Divine benevolence and beneficence.

It is, of course, in the moral attributes of God that natural religion is most defective. The Old Testament revelation is mainly concerned with the Holiness of God (Is. 6:3), [George Adam Smith, *Isaiah*, Vol. II.] and the New Testament with the Divine Love (1 John 4:8). So we may say that the characteristic revelation of God in the Bible is that of Holy Love. [See Forsyth, *The Holy Father and the Living Christ*, *passim*.] The reason why the statement of the Divine character is incomplete is probably due to the fact that the main object of the Article is to affirm the doctrine of the Trinity. For this reason it names no other moral attribute than goodness. At this point it is therefore fitting to introduce the special teaching of John in reference to the Divine character —

(a) God is Spirit (John 4:24). This refers to God in Himself, and perhaps may be spoken of as the metaphysical aspect.

(b) God is Light (1 John 1:5). This refers to God mainly in relation to creation, and may perhaps be described as the moral aspect.

(c) God is Love (1 John 4:8, 16). — This refers to God in relation to man and redemption, and may be regarded as His personal aspect.

Of these, the first speaks of God as He is in Himself; the second seems to refer largely to inanimate beings; while the third is concerned with creatures capable of making a response. It is essential to take care that in our conception of God physical and metaphysical elements are not permitted to predominate over the ethical elements, lest belief in a Divine Incarnation becomes difficult and almost impossible. It has often been pointed out that in the New Testament God is not defined as "Being," or "Infinity," or as "Substance," but by predicates that involve ethical ideas and ideals, Spirit, Light, and Love, ideals that appeal to the intellect, the will, and the heart, and all pointing to the possibility of God Himself becoming incarnate in human nature. And, as we shall see, Divine Revelation tells us that He has actually entered into human life in the Person of Jesus Christ in Whom all the fullness of the Godhead permanently dwells.

IV – The Manifestation Of God In Nature

The Creeds connect creation with the existence of God, and the Article naturally follows the same line. [Litton, ut supra, p. 95.] “The Maker, and Preserver of all things both visible and invisible.”

1. “The Maker of all things.” — This implies the simple but obvious truth that matter is not eternal. To use modern phraseology, it teaches that God is Transcendent.

2. “The Preserver of all things.” — This means that God has not left the world He has created. It teaches what may be called the Immanence of God. If man is above the world, much more is God, and it may be said without any hesitation that there never has been a religion worthy of the name which did not believe that its God was above the world. Christianity, in particular, has always taught the Immanence of God. [Illingworth, *Divine Immanence*; Platt, *Immanence and Christian Thought*.] While emphasising the Transcendence in association with the Divine Personality, Christian theology in all ages has always taken account of the presence of God in the world and in human life. But there is an un-Christian view of Immanence as well, which is rightly described as Pantheism. Christianity is neither deistic in the sense of making the Divine Transcendence absolutely remote from life, nor pantheistic in the sense of absorbing God in His Creation; on the contrary, it teaches the essential truth of both positions. If Immanence is over-pressed God becomes limited within creation and incapable of exceptional action.

Reviewing the statement of the Article, so far, we observe its clear implications against Atheism, Materialism, Polytheism, Pantheism, Deism, and Agnosticism, all these being in one way or another opposed by the teaching of the Article. In regard to the last point, it may be specially noted that facts compel us to predicate a knowledge of God, for it is impossible for the mind to remain in suspense. [“Agnosticism assumes a double incompetence — the incompetence not only of man to know God, but of God to make Himself known. But the denial of competence is the negation of Deity, and it is impossible to assert the non-existence of God; for before one can say that the world is without a God, he that makes this great denial must first have become thoroughly conversant with the whole world” (Miller, *Topics of the Times*, “The Idea of God,” p. 13).] In the same way the Article clearly opposes Dualism and Monism. The former teaches that there are two first principles, the latter the converse, that there is only one principle, thereby making God the Author of evil.

The various human conceptions of Deity have always lain between the two extremes of infinite impersonal power, as in Pantheism, and a Finite Person, as implied in Polytheism. Polytheism must involve finiteness of person, because only one God can be infinite, and personality is not strictly allowed by Pantheism. Of course, the problem is how to reconcile the thought of absoluteness and infinity with personality, since personality is assumed to imply limitation. But when we speak of the Infinite we do not intend thereby an impersonal substance, but One Who is a Person. [‘Infinite’ (and the same is true of ‘absolute’) is an adjective, not a substantive. When used as a noun,

preceded by the definite article, it signifies, not a being, but an abstraction. When it stands as a predicate, it means that the subject, be it space, time, or some quality of a being, is without limit" (Fisher, *The Grounds of Theistic and Christian Belief*, p. 69). "Even when religion and philosophy both agree to speak of God as 'the Infinite,' for the one it is an adjective for the other a substantive" (Aubrey Moore, *Lux Mundi*, p. 65. Tenth Edition).] Our conception of God must be found between the two extremes. We must find room for the infinity of Pantheism while rejecting its impersonality, and we must find room for the personality of Polytheism while rejecting its finiteness. Pantheism, because it is almost always and wholly speculative and philosophical, never has been, never can be the religion of the masses of people. On the other hand, Polytheism is equally impossible because of its association with a crude and impure Theism. ["So far is Monotheism from having been evolved out of an original Polytheism, that Polytheism is rather a diseased outcome, through the influence of language, of an original Monotheism, which, amid all the forests of myths and rabble rout of divinities, may distinctly be traced at every stage of their existence in one and all of the ethnic religions of which history has preserved a record" (Miller, *Topics of the Times*, "The Idea of God," p. 32).] The conception of Personality is central and fundamental, and no religion is possible unless God is regarded as at once Transcendent and Personal. This idea of the Personality of God has to be faced in every system of Philosophy, and is the determining factor of success or failure. Polytheism is therefore impossible and Monotheism is essential, and one of the greatest needs is a right conception of the One God as righteous. It is doubtless difficult to harmonise Personality and Immanence, but this is mainly due to the fact that the mind is apt to hold too material a conception of Immanence. Instead of conceiving of it as some extended or diffused matter or substance, we ought to regard it as the sustaining will of God active in every part of the universe. [Platt, *ut supra*, p. 205.] "God is where He acts." In this sense the Immanence of God is merely His dynamic presence in every part of creation, together with the denial of the independence of the universe at any point. The doctrine is a welcome and salutary recognition of the fact that God is necessary to the world at all points, and it is intended to bring home to men the conviction that the only power in the universe is finally the power of God Himself. When this is understood there need be no insuperable difficulty in harmonizing the ideas of Immanence and Personality. There is great danger in speaking of God as the Absolute, as though this meant independence of all relations. This is not our ordinary use of the term when applied to "absolute monarchy," etc., for it only means that God is not to be limited by anything or anyone outside Himself. The term is virtually synonymous with infinite, though emphasising the independence rather than the greatness of God. But in any case Personality is essential and indispensable so long as we are careful to remove from the idea of Divine Personality all our conceptions of change and development. We must hold His essential attributes of Omnipotence and Omniscience together with the perfection of His moral character. However difficult it may be for us to conceive of it, He is the "Absolute Person," and in this term we unite the two extreme conceptions of the Supreme Being.

Divine Personality seems to call for particular emphasis at present because of certain current scientific conceptions of the universe which, by reason of the evolutionary idea,

tend in the direction either of Deism or Pantheism. Nature and Evolution are apt to shut God from sight, but, as we have already seen, Evolution is nothing but modal, and Nature is not personal, and we must therefore not allow them to be associated with anything materialistic or non-theistic.

So that the Divine attributes are Omnipotence, Omniscience, Transcendence, and Immanence, the last-named being perhaps somewhat more than the old Omnipresence. [Platt, *ut supra*, p. 71.] The Divine character includes Truth, Holiness, Faithfulness, Wisdom, and Benevolence.

Reviewing our consideration thus far, we have arrived at a view of God which predicates Unity, Rationality, Morality, and Personality. But it is perhaps necessary to say again that we must not think our Christian Faith rests on Nature together with Scripture; on the contrary, our full view of God rests solely on Christ's Revelation — "The Christian doctrine of God is a Theism enriched by what was given historically in and through Jesus Christ." [Paterson, *The Rule of Faith*, p. 205.]

The problem of the Divine existence and character is complicated by the fact of sin. The difficulty is undoubtedly serious, and men frequently express their inability to believe in a Loving Father Who could create man and involve him in such sorrows as the human race knows in sin and suffering. It may be said at once that the problem of evil is incomprehensible in full, and it is hardly possible to think that human limitations will ever permit of our fully understanding it during earthly life. [Litton, *ut supra*, pp. 87–95.] But there are certain considerations which help to relieve some of the pressure with which this forces itself on the thought of mankind. Whatever may have been the origin, and whatever is the present power of evil, it cannot be said to defeat the purpose of God with regard to moral and spiritual progress. On the contrary, there is ample proof that God actually overrules the power of evil for the purpose of accomplishing His own designs. Further, sin is only temporary, and as it had a beginning, so it is to be believed that it will have an end, since the permanent presence of wrong seems incompatible with a universe created by a perfectly good God. A consciousness of a fundamental distinction between right and wrong is rooted in the very idea of things, and man's conscience testifies to the fact that sin is a violation of the Divine law and therefore repugnant to God's character. Then, too, it is quite impossible to contemplate the fact of sin without the fact of redemption. Whatever we may say in regard to the Divine permission of sin there can be no doubt about the Divine provision of redemption, which more than meets the effects of human wrongdoing. There were only two possible ways in which man could have been created; either as a machine, compelled to do always and only what is right, or as a moral being, with the risk of wrongdoing through the power of choice. So that objection to God because of sin is really an objection to our very creation, which is obviously futile. Whether we like it or not, we have been created with all the solemnity of responsibility for character and action, and in the midst of our circumstances of probation God has, we believe, provided a remedy for the wreck wrought by sin, and the vital question now is not how, or why, sin has been permitted to come into the world, but how we are to get rid of it by redemption, and why we should not accept

God's perfect deliverance. As succeeding Articles will show, there has been a Revelation of Redeeming Grace provided for men in Jesus Christ, and all the ravages caused by sin are more than met and healed by the wondrous provision made by God for salvation.

The moment we come to the conclusion that God is personal the question arises whether He is interested in us, and whether He can communicate with us. Still more, the enquiry is made whether He has actually done so. The answer is found in God's Revelation in Christ, which is the subject of the next section of the Article.

V – The Revelation Of God In Christ

Christianity agrees so far with natural theology, but adds its own specific view of God, the Trinity. This is the distinctive doctrine of Christian Theism. Its basis is the Unity of God, for the Trinity is essentially Monotheistic. While it is true that the Trinity in Scripture is almost always concerned with Redemption, this aspect of Revelation is necessarily based upon an essential Trinity. [“A trinity of Revelation is a misrepresentation if there is not behind it a trinity of reality” (Dormer, quoted in O. A. Curtis, *The Christian Faith*, p. 484).] This distinction between a Trinity of Revelation and a Trinity of Reality is sometimes expressed by the words “Trinity” and “Tri-unity”. [So W. N. Clarke, *An Outline of Christian Theology, and The Christian Doctrine of God.*]

[“It was, therefore, with a sound instinct that the Christian Church, in the first period of its history, devoted its thinking mainly to the elucidation and consolidation of its knowledge of God. It was a task which entailed centuries of controversy, for the problem was a difficult and complicated one. The hard problem for theology was to combine the doctrine of an ethical monotheism, which it took over from the Old Testament, with the new matter that was given in the mediatorial work and the Divine Sonship of Christ, and in the economy of the Holy Spirit” (Paterson, *ut supra*, p. 203).]

1. The Doctrine Stated. [This is taken in substance from the article “Trinity,” by the author, in Hastings' one-volume Bible Dictionary.] — By the Trinity we mean the specific and unique Christian idea of the Godhead, and we must always understand by it both the doctrine of Trinity in Unity and the Unity in Trinity, for the Trinity should suggest the Unity quite as much as the threefold-ness of the Deity. But the specific Christian thought of God is that of a Spirit in the unity of whose Being is revealed a distinction of Persons whom we call Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; the God from Whom, through Whom, and by Whom all things come – the Father as the primal Source, the Son as the Redemptive Mediator, and the Holy Spirit as the personal Applier of life and grace. The Christian idea of the Trinity may be summed up in the words of the Athanasian Creed: “The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God. And yet there are not three Gods, but one God. The Godhead of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit is all one, the Glory equal, the Majesty co-eternal. And

in this Trinity none is afore or after other; none is greater or less than another, but the whole three Persons are co-eternal together and co-equal.”

2. The Doctrine Approached. – It is sometimes asked why we are not given a definite statement that there are three Persons in the Godhead. One reason for the absence of any such categorical teaching is probably to be found in the fact that the earliest hearers of the Gospel were Jews, and that any such pronouncement might (and probably would) have seemed a contradiction of their own truth of the unity of the Godhead. Consequently, instead of giving an intellectual statement of doctrine, which might have led to theological and philosophic discussion, and ended only in more intense opposition to Christianity, the Apostles preached Jesus of Nazareth as a personal Redeemer from sin, and urged on every one the acceptance of Him. Then, in due course, would come the inevitable process of thought and meditation upon this personal experience, which would in turn lead to the inference that Jesus, from Whom, and in Whom, these experiences were being enjoyed, must be more than man, must be none other than Divine, for “Who can forgive sins but God only?” Through such a personal impression and inference based on experience, a distinction in the Godhead would at once be realised. Then, in the course of their Christian life, and through fuller instruction, the personal knowledge and experience of the Holy Spirit would be added, and once again a similar inference would in due course follow, making another distinction in their thought of the Godhead. The intellectual conception and expression of these distinctions probably concerned only comparatively few of the early believers, but, nevertheless, all of them had in their lives a definite experience which could only have been from above, and which no difficulty of intellectual correlation or of theological coordination with former teachings could invalidate and destroy.

3. The Doctrine Derived. — The doctrine of the Trinity is thus an expansion of the doctrine of the Incarnation, and emerges out of the personal claim of our Lord, as seen in the New Testament. In the Gospels we note that our Lord’s method of revealing Himself to His disciples was by means of personal impression. His character, teaching, and claim formed the centre of everything, and His one object was, as it were, to stamp himself on His disciples, knowing that in the light of fuller experience His true nature and relations would become clear to them. We see the culmination of this impression in the confession, “My Lord and my God” (John 20:28). Then in the Acts of the Apostles we find Peter preaching to Jews, and emphasizing two associated truths: (1) the Sonship and Messiah-ship of Jesus, as proved by the Resurrection; and (2) the consequent relation of the hearers to Him as to a Saviour and Master. The emphasis is laid on the personal experience of forgiveness and grace, without any attempt to state our Lord’s position in relation to God. Indeed, the references to Jesus Christ as the “Servant (wrongly rendered in A.V. ‘Son’) of God” in Acts 3:13, 26 and 4:27, seem to show that the Christian thought regarding our Lord was still immature so far as there was any purely intellectual consideration of it. It is worthy of note that this phrase, which is doubtless the New Testament counterpart of Isaiah’s teaching on the “Servant of the Lord,” is not found in the New Testament later than these earlier chapters of the Acts. Yet in the preaching of Peter the claim made for Jesus of Nazareth as the Source of healing (3:6, 16), the Prince of life (3:15), the Head Stone of the corner (4:11), and

the one and only way of Salvation (4:12), was an unmistakable assumption of the position and power of the Godhead.

In the same way the doctrine of the Godhead of the Holy Spirit arises directly out of our Lord's revelation. Once grant a real personal distinction between the Father and the Son and it is not difficult to believe it also of the Spirit, as revealed by the Son. [“The doctrines of the Incarnation and the Trinity seemed to me most absurd in my agnostic days. But now, as a pure agnostic, I see in them no rational difficulty at all. As to the Trinity, the plurality of persons is naturally implied in the companion doctrine of the Incarnation. So that at best there is here but one difficulty, since, duality being postulated in the doctrine of the Incarnation, there is no further difficulty for pure agnosticism in the doctrine of plurality” (Romanes, *Thoughts on Religion*, pp. 174, 175).] As long as Christ was present on earth there was no room and no need for the specific work of the Holy Spirit, but as Christ was departing from the world He revealed a doctrine which clearly associated the Holy Spirit with Himself and the Father in a new and unique way (John 14:16, 17, 26; 15:26; 16:7–15). Arising immediately out of this, and consonant with it, is the place given to the Holy Spirit in the Book of the Acts. From chap. 5, where lying against the Holy Spirit is equivalent to lying against God (5:3, 4, 9), we see throughout the Book the essential Deity of the Holy Spirit in the work attributed to Him of superintending and controlling the life of the Apostolic Church (2:4; 8:29; 10:19; 13:2, 4; 16:6; 20:28).

Then in the Epistles we find references to our Lord Jesus and to the Holy Spirit which imply quite unmistakably the functions of Godhead. In the opening salutations Christ is associated with God as the Source of grace and peace (1 Thess. 1:1f.; 1 Peter 1:2), and in the closing benedictions as the Divine Source of Blessing (Rom. 15:30; 2 Thess. 3:16, 18). In the doctrinal statements He is referred to in practical relation to us and to our spiritual life in terms that can be predicated of God only, and in the revelations concerning things to come He is stated to be about to occupy a position which can refer to God only. In like manner, the correlation of the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son in matters essentially Divine is clear (1 Cor. 2:4–6; 2 Cor. 13:14; 1 Pet. 1:2). It is the function of the Spirit to make redemptive history live again before the gaze of faith.

[“It is natural to think of the doctrine of the Trinity as a later growth. So, in one sense, it is. It is not complete until we come to the enlarged form of the Nicene Creed and the Council of Chalcedon, in A.D. 451. But all that is essential in the doctrine – the main lines – were already laid down when Paul wrote his first two groups of Epistles, in the years 52, 53, and 57–58. In the very earliest of all his extant letters, Paul solemnly addresses the Thessalonian Christians as being ‘in the fellowship of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,’ placing the two names in the closest juxtaposition, and giving to them an equal weight of authority. And from the date of his second Epistle to the same Church onwards, he invokes ‘grace and peace’ also ‘from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,’ making them the one conjoint source of Divine blessing.

“And if it is urged that this is but the first stage in the history of the doctrine, we have only to turn to the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, written, in any case within a year or two of A.D. 57, and we have there the familiar benediction at the end of the Epistle, in which the Name of the Holy Spirit is associated on equal terms with that of God the Father and God the Son; while in the body of the Epistle, as in two almost contemporary Epistles — 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 8 — the doctrine of the Holy Spirit has already received a considerable development. I say a development, but only in the sense that the doctrine comes to us as a new one. Paul himself does not teach it as if he were teaching something in itself wholly new. He assumes it as already substantially understood and known. Does not this cast back a light upon, and does not it supply an extraordinary confirmation of, what the gospel tells of the promise of the Comforter, and what the Acts tells us of the fulfilment of that promise? When we are brought so near in time to our Lord’s own ministry upon the earth, can we help referring this rapid growth of a doctrine, which seems to us so difficult, to intimations directly received from Him? But, indeed, the greatest difficulty in the doctrine of the Trinity was already over, and the foundation-stone of the doctrine was already laid, the moment that it was distinctly realised that there was walking upon the earth One Who was God as well as Man. If the Son of God was really there, and if there was, nevertheless, a Godhead in the heavens, then, in the language of men, we must needs say that there were two Persons in the Godhead; and if two, then it was a comparatively easy step to say that there were three. The doctrine of the Trinity is only one of the necessary sequels of the doctrine of the Incarnation” (Sanday, Church Congress, 1894).]

In all these assertions and implications of the Godhead of Jesus Christ, it is to be noted very carefully that Paul has not the faintest idea of contradicting his Jewish Monotheism. Though he and others thus proclaimed the Godhead of Christ, it is of great moment to remember that Christianity was never accused of Polytheism. The New Testament doctrine of God is essentially a form of Monotheism, and stands in no relation to Polytheism. There can be no doubt that, however and whenever the Trinitarian idea was formulated, it arose in immediate connection with the Monotheism of Judaea; and the Apostles, Jews though they were, in stating so unmistakably the Godhead of Jesus Christ, are never once conscious of teaching anything inconsistent with their most cherished ideas about the unity of God.

4. The Doctrine Confirmed. — When we have approached the doctrine by means of the personal experience of redemption, we are prepared to give full consideration to the two lines of teaching found in the New Testament.

- (a) One line of teaching insists on the unity of the Godhead (1 Cor. 8:4; Jas. 2:19); and
- (b) the other reveals distinctions within the Godhead (Mat. 3:16-17, 28:19; 2 Cor. 8:14).

We see clearly that

(1) the Father is God (Mat. 11:25; Rom. 15:6; Eph. 4:6);

(2) the Son is God (John 1:1, 18; 20:28; Acts 20:28; Rom. 9:5; Heb. 1:8; Col. 2:9; Phil. 2:6; 2 Peter 1:1);

(3) the Holy Spirit is God (Acts 5:3, 4; 1 Cor. 2:10, 11; Eph. 2:22);

(4) the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are distinct from one another, sending and being sent, honouring and being honoured. The Father honours the Son, the Son honours the Father, and the Holy Spirit honours the Son (John 15:26, 16:13-14; 17:1, 8, 18, 23).

(5) Nevertheless, whatever relations of subordination there may be between the Persons in working out redemption, the Three are alike regarded as God. The doctrine of the Trinity is the correlation, embodiment, and synthesis of the teaching of these passages. In the Unity of the Godhead there is a Trinity of Persons working out Redemption. God the Father is the Creator and Ruler of man and the Provider of redemption through His love (John 3:16). God the Son is the Redeemer, Who became man for the purpose of our redemption. God the Holy Spirit is the "Executive of the Godhead," the "Vicar of Christ," Who applies to each believing soul the benefits of redemption. We see this very clearly in Heb. 10:7–17, where the Father wills, the Son works, and the Spirit witnesses. The elements of the plan of redemption thus find their root, foundation, and spring in the nature of the Godhead; and the obvious reason why these distinctions which we express by the terms "Person" and "Trinity" were not revealed earlier than New Testament times is that not until then was redemption accomplished.

5. The Doctrine Supported. – When all this is granted and so far settled, we may find a second line of teaching to support the foregoing in the revelation of God as Love. Following the suggestion of Augustine, most modern theologians have rightly seen in this a safe ground for our belief. It transcends, and perhaps renders unnecessary, all arguments drawn from human and natural analogies of the doctrine. "God is Love" means, as someone has well said, "God as the infinite home of all moral emotions, the fullest, and most highly differentiated life." Love must imply relationships, and as He is eternally perfect in Himself, He can realise Himself as Love only through relationships within His own Being. We may go so far as to say that this is the only way of obtaining a living thought about God. Belief in Theism postulates a self-existent God, and yet it is impossible to think of a God without relationships. These relationships must be eternal and prior to His temporal relationships to the universe of His own creation. He must have relationships eternally adequate and worthy, and when once we realise that love must have an object in God as well as in ourselves, we have the germ of that distinction in the Godhead which is theologically known as the Trinity. [Paterson, ut supra, p. 220 f. See an able presentation of this doctrine of a "Social Trinity" in "Monotheism and the Doctrine of the Trinity," by A. T. Burbridge, London Quarterly Review.]

6. The Doctrine Anticipated. – At this stage, and only here, we may seek another support for the doctrine. In the light of the facts of the New Testament we cannot refrain from asking whether there may not have been some adumbrations of it in the Old Testament. As the doctrine arises directly out of the facts of the New Testament, we do not look for any full discovery of it in the Old Testament. We must not expect too much, because, as Israel's function was to emphasise the unity of God (Deut. 6:4), any premature revelation might have been disastrous. But if the doctrine be true, we might expect that Christian Jews, at any rate, would seek for some anticipation of it in the Old Testament. We believe we find it there.

(a) The use of the plural "Elohim" with the singular verb, "bara" is at least noteworthy, and seems to call for some recognition, especially as the same grammatical solecism is found used by Paul (1 Thess. 3:11, Greek). Then, too, the use of the plurals "us" (Gen. 1:26), "our" (3:22), "us" (11:7), seems to indicate some self-converse in God. It is not satisfactory to refer this to angels because they were not associated with God in creation. Whatever may be the meaning of this usage, it seems at any rate to imply that Hebrew Monotheism was an intensely living reality. [Ottley, *The Incarnation*, p. 183 f.]

(b) The references to the "Angel of Jehovah" prepare the way for the Christian doctrine of a distinction in the Godhead (Gen. 18:2, 16; 17:22 with 19:1; Josh. 5:13–15 with 6:2; Jud. 13:8–21; Zech. 13:7).

(c) Allusions to the "Spirit of Jehovah" form another line of Old Testament teaching. In Genesis 1:2 the Spirit is an energy only, but in subsequent books an agent (Is. 40:13, 48:16, 59:19, 63:10 f.). (d) The personification of Divine Wisdom is also to be observed, for the connection between the personification of Wisdom in Prov. 8, the Logos of John 1:1–18, and the "wisdom" of 1 Cor. 1:24 can hardly be accidental. (e) There are also other hints, such as the Triplicity of the Divine Names (Numb. 6:24–27; Ps. 29:3–5; Is. 6:1–3), which, while they may not be pressed, cannot be overlooked. Hints are all that were to be expected until the fullness of time should have come. The special work of Israel was to guard God's transcendence and omnipresence; it was for Christianity to develop the doctrine of the Godhead into the fullness, depth, and richness that we find in the revelation of the Incarnate Son of God.

7. The Doctrine Justified. – It is sometimes urged by opponents of the orthodox faith that the doctrine of the Trinity cannot be defended on rational grounds, and has to be received simply upon the authority of revelation. But it should be noticed that the element of mystery in this doctrine is really due to the fact that it is a doctrine of God rather than a doctrine of the Tri-unity of God. From the very nature of the case we can only know God in part and cannot possibly grasp the infinite reality with our finite powers. If, therefore, our doctrine of God, apart from the Trinity, is to be set aside because of its element of mystery, then nothing but agnosticism is possible. So that while fully admitting the mystery associated with the doctrine of the Trinity it is important to remember that this mystery is not exclusively associated with the conception of God as Three in One. And although the knowledge of God as Triune

comes to us through revelation, yet we believe that having thus received the knowledge it can be justified on perfectly rational grounds. Before attempting to state this, it is necessary to point out that there can be no a priori objection to the doctrine since we can know God only as He reveals Himself. The facts alone must settle His character, and on this basis alone we are prepared to justify the position.

(a) The Facts of Scripture.—The doctrine of the Trinity is entirely without any trace of Hellenic or mythological influence. It is derivable solely from the record of Scripture concerning the Person and claim of Christ. [“If in Scripture the nature of the Holy Spirit is left mysterious and undefined, only some strong impulse and necessity of Christian thought could ever have driven either Christian thinkers to formulate, or the Christian Church to accept, a doctrine so difficult as the personality of the Spirit and the Triune nature of God” (Lendrum, *An Outline of Christian Truth*, p. 71).] The doctrine is an expansion, extension, and necessary sequel of the doctrine of the Incarnation. “If the Incarnation, in the Christian sense, be true, the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is true also. For there is no break between them; they are parts of one and the same truth.” [Strong, *ut supra*, p. 142.] The doctrine of the Trinity is thus no independent speculation, or intellectual figment, but is historically traceable to the facts of Christ’s consciousness and claim. Christ’s revelation of Himself implies and unfolds mutual relations between Himself and God which are unique, and in the course and issue of His revelation He reveals a doctrine of the Holy Spirit that demands coordination with that of the Father and the Son.

(b) The Facts of Christian Experience. – It is simple truth to state that Christians of all periods of history claim to have personal direct fellowship with Christ. This claim must be accounted for. It is only possible by predicating the Deity of our Lord, for such fellowship would be impossible with One Who is not a God. [“As to the Trinity, I do understand you. You first taught me that the doctrine was a live thing, and not a mere formula to be swallowed by the un-digesting reason; and from the time that I learnt from you that a Father meant a real Father, a Son a real Son, a Holy Spirit a real Spirit, who was really good and holy, I have been able to draw all sorts of practical lessons from it in the pulpit, and ground all my morality and a great deal of my natural philosophy upon it, and shall do so more” (Kingsley, *Letters and Memories of His Life*, 1877).]

(c) The Facts of History.—Compared with other religions, Christianity makes God a reality in a way in which no other system does. The doctrine of the Trinity has several theological and philosophical advantages over the Unitarian conception of God, but especially is this so in reference to the relation of God to the world. There are two conceivable relations —as Transcendent (in Mohammedanism), or as Immanent (in Buddhism). The first alone means Deism, the second alone Pantheism. But the Christian idea of God is of One Who is at once Transcendent and Immanent.

[“It was to maintain this double relation that Philo conceived of the Logos as a middle term between God and the creation and the Neo-Platonists distinguished between God, the *νοῦς*, and the soul of the world. When a middle term is wanting

we have either, as in the later Judaism and Mohammedanism, an abstract and immobile Monotheism, or, in recoil from this, a losing of God in the world in Pantheism. In the Christian doctrine of the triune Son we have the necessary safeguards against both these errors, and at the same time the link between God and the world supplied which speculation vainly strove to find" (Orr, *The Christian View of God and the World*, p. 276).]

It is, therefore, the true protection of a living Theism, which otherwise oscillates uncertainly between these two extremes of Deism and Pantheism, either of which is false to it. It is only in Christianity that the Semitic conception of God as Transcendent and the Aryan conception as Immanent are united, blended, correlated, balanced, and preserved. One of the most striking illustrations of this is found in the speech of Paul at Athens, when he, a Semite, was addressing Aryans. First of all he presented his gospel to them on its Semitic side, God being declared to be Judge, King, Creator, and God of Righteousness. But there was a further message to this Aryan audience, providing the answer to their yearnings for fellowship with the Divine. "He is not far from each one of us, for in Him we live, and move, and have our being." So the truth the Semites saw and the truth the Aryans saw are harmonised in the gospel, and the two truths run through the whole teaching of the New Testament. On the surface they may seem contradictory, and during the centuries of Christian history one has obtained the upper hand at times, the other at others. In the Puritan age and the Deistic period which arose after it, the Semitic conception dominated thought. Then came the pantheistic tendency of the Aryan rebellion against the Semitic conception, and this tendency has been found in the philosophical thought of German writers and in devout circles in Mysticism. But whenever this tendency spends its force there is an inevitable reaction towards Semitic modes of thought. Deity is never a bare unity, but always a fullness of life and love. Fatherhood and sonship are archetypes of human relationships, and the escape from all reactions and extremes is found in Jesus Christ, in Whom, as Pascal says, "all contradictions are reconciled." Some time ago a Jewish Rabbi, speaking at a meeting of Christian ministers, said that "the Jews have a higher, clearer vision of God because they are able to see Him without the garment of flesh which seems so necessary to Christians. Christians have not yet grown up; they need illustrations, and Christ is their picture of God." To this the answer is obvious. "No man hath seen God at any time." And that the modern Jew has a higher conception of God is amply disproved by the spiritual sterility that has overtaken the race, a sterility which is true of every Unitarian conception. There are men, both Jews and Gentiles, who have remarkable powers in art, in music, in finance, and in other natural abilities, whose mental powers are of the highest, and yet in moral force they are decidedly lower and their conception of God has been tried and found wanting. The one thing lacking in their vision of God is that reality which is so characteristic of the Christian conception. ["Every Church which has departed from this Faith has ipso facto sealed its own death-warrant. It is beyond question that those Churches, and congregations, in England and in Ireland which, in the eighteenth century, let go the doctrine of the Trinity, faded away and disappeared" (Cooper; *Religion and the Modern Mind*, "The Doctrine of the Holy and Undivided Trinity," p. 145).]

(d) The Facts of Reason. – It is simple truth to say that if Jesus be not God, Christians are idolaters, for they worship One Who is not God. There is no other alternative. But when once the truth of the doctrine of the Trinity is regarded as arising out of Christ's claim to Godhead as Divine Redeemer, reason soon finds its warrant for the doctrine. Every theist wants to believe in a self-existent Deity, and yet it is impossible to conceive of One Who has no relationships. This is the only way of obtaining a living thought of God. Philosophy is always faced with the question whether matter or spirit is the ground of things, and a conception is needed which will include the incomprehensibility of Agnosticism, the immanence of Pantheism, the transcendence of Deism, and the personality of Theism. It is only Christianity that does this. Thus while the doctrine of the Trinity comes to us by revelation and not by nature, it is seen to have points of contact with thought and reason.

["It started in the concrete with the baptismal formula...emanating from Jesus Christ. And throughout the history of its dogmatic formulation, we are confronted with this fact. It was regarded as a revelation by the men who shaped its intellectual expression; and it was only in the process...of that expression, that its congruity with human psychology came out, that psychology in fact being distinctly developed in the effort to give it utterance...They did not accommodate Christian religion to their philosophy, but philosophy to their Christian religion. It appeals first to elemental humanity in the hearts of unsophisticated men; far removed from Alexandria or Athens; yet the very words in which it does so, turn out, upon analysis, to involve a view of personality which the world had not attained, but which, once stated, is seen to be profoundly, philosophically true" (Illingworth, *Personality Human and Divine*, p. 212 f.)]

And it is a perfectly rational belief when it is not misinterpreted. While necessarily it transcends reason it does not contradict it, and any contradiction is due not to the doctrine, but to our misunderstanding of it.

["The result seems to be that the New Testament, besides revealing the economical Trinity, or the Trinity as related to the Church and operative ad extra, furnishes a revelation of the same Trinity as it exists intrinsically, and is operative ad infra, and teaches that apart from all manifestations of God in creation or in redemption, He is, in Himself, not an abstract Monas, but a Trinity of immanent relations expressed under the terms, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; that is, that in the Godhead there exist energies which terminate in itself" (Litton, ut supra, p. 103).

See also Illingworth, ut supra, p. 73 f.; *The Doctrine of the Trinity*, pp. 144, 254; Orr, *The Christian View of God and the World*, Lecture VII.] And so we do not hesitate to affirm that if the Trinitarian view is omitted, nothing characteristic is left in the Christian conception of God.

These considerations may perhaps be brought to a close by a reference to certain analogies which, as they are not proofs, do not carry us far, though they are useful as

illustrations. Everywhere in nature unity coexists with plurality, unity in plurality being a distinctive mark of all organic life. The only perfect concord of music is a trinity, ["It is curious how the number three starts up to meet us unsought and unexpected" (Mackintosh, ut supra, p. 38).] consisting of the fundamental note with its third and fifth which proceed from it and form the complete chord, known as the Perfect Triad. From this chord all other harmonies are built, and the moment we add any other note we get what is technically known as a discord, a chord which requires resolution, which leaves the ear unsatisfied, and which must invariably be resolved on to the concord of the Perfect Triad before the musical sentence can be satisfactorily finished. Then, too, there are three instruments of progress: Religion, Science, and Art. And according to recent science the universe is triune, consisting of Ether as invisible substance, Matter as visible fact, and Energy as consisting of the forces of heat, light, sound, and electricity. The rays of light are also threefold. There are heat rays which are felt but not seen; light rays which are seen and not felt, and actinic rays which are known only by the effects of their chemical action (as in photography), being neither seen nor felt. So also is it with vapour, which we have invisible in the air, visible in the form of water, and experienced in its effects. Nor may we overlook the analogy of human personality in Thought, Feeling, and Will, and the human constitution as consisting of Spirit, Soul, and Body. It is impossible to avoid noticing the coexistence of the unity of the soul with its plurality of faculties. Even Kant, when adducing his moral argument for Theism, recognised three postulates, God, Freewill, Immortality. Reference has already been made to the singular threefold-ness in Scripture (Numb. 6:24–26; Is. 6:3). The value of analogy is to suggest that numerals are found elsewhere than in theology.

To sum up: the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is evidently and eminently one for faith. The title of the Article suggests this, "Of Faith in the Holy Trinity," and the Collect for Trinity Sunday points in the same direction, "Keep us steadfast in this faith." It is a doctrine for the apprehension of faith, not for the comprehension of reason, and its truth is really independent of all that technical terminology which necessarily came at a much later time.

The History Of The Doctrine

[Bethune-Baker, *An Introduction to the Early History of Christian Doctrine*, pp. 139–147.]

In the sub-apostolic Church the outstanding feature is Christian experience, not theological technicality. While the doctrine of the Trinity is clearly implied, yet it is rather spiritually apprehended than intellectually expressed. Towards the end of the second century more formal language was used in the *τριάς* of Theophilus of Antioch and the *Trinitas* of Tertullian. But here again it was heresy that compelled closer definition, and the terms *Person* and *Substance* became used. Heresies as to the *Person* of Christ necessitated emphasis on His *Deity* and His distinctness from the Father, and so came *substantia* in Tertullian to emphasise the essential oneness with the Father. Greek writers used *ουσία* and *υπόστασις*. In opposition to this came the Sabellians, who taught that the Trinity were temporary distinctions only, simple manifestations of the

one Divine essence. It was this that compelled the Church to use the word "Person." The general impression left on the reader is that the doctrine was a matter of spiritual apprehension during the first three centuries, though this became the foundation of that mental apprehension and expression which first found authoritative utterance in the Council of Nicaea. What, then, was the doctrine of Nicaea in regard to the Trinity?

1. The word "Trinity" does not occur, nor even the word "Person" in the Nicene Creed.

2. In the Creed, as then promulgated, the only reference to the Holy Spirit was "The Lord, the Life-giver." It is clear that the Council of Nicaea desired to keep as closely as possible to the spiritual apprehension of the Trinity, but its inadequacy is seen in the way in which the doctrine is stated, partly as a spiritual reality and partly as a mental concept. Thus ουσία is used for "substance," though in the anathemas υπόστασις is found as an equivalent.

3. But this position was not tenable for long, since it was essential to show not only the relation of the Father and the Son, but also the relation of the Holy Spirit to both. While Nicaea used υπόστασις in reference to the oneness of the Son to the Father, Athanasius does not employ it in regard to the Holy Spirit. But the use of terms like "substance" and "Person" led to great discussion, and the result was that πρόσωπον was disused, as implying a mere aspect and not an essential distinction. Then ουσία became applied to the Divine Nature, and υπόστασις was employed to indicate the distinctions in the ουσία. The outcome was the formula μία ουσία εν τρισιν, υποστάσειν.

4. But this made a difficulty in the West, where *substantia* was equivalent to *essentia*, and as the Latin could not possibly say *tres substantiae*, the terminology became fixed as *una substantia, tres personae*.

5. The term "Person" is also sometimes objected to. Like all human language, it is liable to be accused of inadequacy and even positive error. It certainly must not be pressed too far, or it will lead to Tritheism. While we use the term to denote distinctions in the Godhead, we do not imply distinctions which amount to separateness, but distinctions which are associated with essential mutual co-inherence or inclusiveness. We intend by the term "Person" to express those real distinctions of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit which are found amid the oneness of the Godhead, distinctions which are no mere temporary manifestations of Deity, but essential and permanent elements within the Divine unity.

While, therefore, we are compelled to use terms like "substance" and "Person," we are not to think of them as identical with what we understand as human substance or personality. The terms are not explanatory, but only approximately correct, as must necessarily be the case with any attempt to define the Nature of God. As already noted, it is a profound spiritual satisfaction to remember that the truth and experience of the Trinity is not dependent upon theological terminology, though it is obviously essential for us to have the most correct terms available.

Article II

Of the Word or Son of God which was made very man.

The Son, which is the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, and of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the Blessed Virgin, of her substance: so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and Manhood, were joined together in one Person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God and very Man, who truly suffered, was crucified, dead and buried, to reconcile His Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for all actual sins of men.

De Verbo, sive Filio Dei, qui verus homo foetus est.

Filius qui est Verbum Patris, ab aeterno a Patre genitus, verus et aeternus Deus, ac Patri consubstantialis, in utero beatae Virginis ex illius substantia naturam humanam assumpsit: ita ut duae naturae, divina et humana, integre atque perfecte in unitate personae, fuerint inseparabiliter conjunctae: ex quibus est unus Christus, verus Deus et verus homo: qui vere passus est, crucifixus, mortuus et sepultus, ut Patrem nobis reconciliaret, essetque hostia non tantum pro culpa originis, verum etiam pro omnibus actualibus hominum peccatis.

Important Equivalents

Of one substance with the Father = *ac Patri consubstantialis*.

Man's nature = *naturam humanam*.

Of her substance = *ex illius substantia*.

So that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and Manhood, were joined together in one Person, never to be divided. = *ita ut duae naturae, divina et humana, integre atque perfecte in unitate personae, fuerint inseparabiliter conjunctae*.

Very = *verus*.

Sacrifice = *hostia*.

Original guilt = *culpa originis*.

It is appropriate that after the Article on the Christian Doctrine of the Trinity we should be led to consider that doctrine on which the Trinity mainly rests, the Doctrine of the Person of Christ. So that the Article is a corollary of Article I since the doctrine herein stated is at once the complement, presupposition and exposition of Trinitarian doctrine.

[“The dogma of the Trinity is closely bound up with the dogma of the Person of Christ. The former is concerned with the inner life of the eternal Godhead, and the place therein of the only-begotten Son; while the latter deals with the mode

of the existence of the Son as incarnate, and this both in His estate of humiliation and exaltation. The doctrine of the Person of Christ is at once a presupposition and a consequence of the doctrine of the Trinity” (Paterson, *The Rule of Faith*, p. 224).] This, too, was placed in the forefront of the Reformation to show the essential unity of the Reformed with the mediaeval Faith, and also because of the denials of the doctrine of the Incarnation seen at an early period of the Reformation movement. [Hardwick, *History of the Articles of Religion*, pp. 89, 90; Boulton, *The Theology of the Church of England*, p. 15.]

The Article is derived from the Third Article of the Confession of Augsburg. Its title in 1553 was *Verbum Dei verum hominem esse Factum*, “That the Word or Son of God was made a very Man.” The phrase descriptive of our Lord’s eternal generation and consubstantiality, “Begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, and of one substance with the Father” was inserted in 1563 from the Confession of Wurtemberg. There were other verbal but insignificant changes in 1563 and 1571.

Comparison should also be made with the statement in the *Reformatio Legum*. [*“Credatur etiam, cum venisset plenitudo temporis, Filium qui est Verbum Patris, in utero beatæ virginis Mariæ, ex ipsius carnis substantia, naturam humanam assumpsisse, ita ut duæ naturæ, divina et humana, integre atque perfecte in unitate Personæ, fuerint inseparabiliter conjunctæ; ex quibus unus est Christus, verus Deus et verus homo: qui vere passus est, crucifixus, mortuus et sepultus, descendit ad inferos ac tertia die resurrexit, nobisque per suum sanguinem reconciliavit Patrem, sese hostiam offerens illi, non solum pro culpa originis, verum etiam pro omnibus peccatis quæ homines propria voluntate adjecerunt.”* (De Summa Trin., c. 3).]

The problem then, as now, was how to reconcile and harmonise the two natures in the one Person of Christ. How was the union to be conceived and expressed? The Article naturally follows the orthodox interpretation of Christology, derived from the formula of Chalcedon. [*“We teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in Manhood, truly God and truly Man, of a reasonable soul and body; consubstantial with the Father according to the Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to the Manhood, in all things like us without sin ... in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, according to the Manhood, one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably, the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only-begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ”* (Schaff, *Creeks of Christendom*, Vol. II, p. 62 ff.).] We must, therefore, look first at this as it is, and then enquire as to any modern variations. The earliest commentator on the Articles, Thomas Rogers, sets forth four propositions as covering the teaching:

- (1) Christ is very God;
- (2) Christ is very Man;

- (3) Christ is God and Man in one Person;
- (4) Christ is the Saviour of Mankind.

I – The Divine Nature Of Christ

Although this is involved in the teaching of Article I, it is necessarily repeated here.

1. The title, “Son”. – The term “Son” is used in several connections in regard to the earthly life of Christ, meaning thereby His Sonship by the Incarnation, e.g. Luke 1:35; John 1:34; Rom. 1:4; Heb. 1:2–5. [Pearson, On the Creed, Article II, Ch. III.] But here the word is, of course, to be referred to our Lord’s personal relationship with the Father. [Note the Greek (ἰδιος) of John 5:18 and Rom. 8:32. See also Mat. 11:27 (Greek).] No two titles are more frequently used in the Fourth Gospel than “Father” and “Son,” and these are correlatives, for as God was eternally Father, so Christ was eternally Son. It is a serious error to limit our Lord’s Sonship to the Incarnation even while we hold to His eternity as the Word. Doubtless the term “begotten” seems to imply an event in time, but care is needed in the use of human language to express transcendental truths. The New Testament is clear that Christ’s full title as “Son of God” is part of His Divinity, and is not to be limited to the Incarnation. This is the force of such phrases as, “The Son of His love”; “God sent forth His Son”; “Sent His Son to be the propitiation.” These and similar passages clearly imply a Sonship prior to the Incarnation, and point back to eternity. Then, too, the word “Son” in Scripture often means something more and other than mere descent, e.g. “Sons of Thunder”; “Son of Consolation”; “Sons of Disobedience.” [The distinction between “children” (τέκνα) and “sons” (υιοι) is frequently ignored in the English Versions. See Rom. 8:14-17.]

2. May not “Son of God” in its fuller meaning be used without any reference to the Incarnation? If it be said that μονογενής implies “begetting,” it is noteworthy that the Hebrew term, found nine times, is translated μονογενής by the Septuagint, with the meaning, “Darling,” or “Beloved” (Gen. 22:2, 12; Jer. 6:26; Amos 8:10; Zech. 12:10). This is the thought in Luke 7:12, 8:42, 9:38. May it not be so with Christ as well (John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9)? It is, of course, true that the ordinary meaning of πρωτότοκος, “firstborn,” is that of a first child (see Mat. 1:25; Luke 2:7). But in Heb. 12:23, it has a spiritual meaning, implying dignity and privilege, so that it is impossible to limit it to the Incarnation (cf. Rom. 8:29, Col. 1:15, 18; Heb. 1:6, Rev. 1:5). Further, we can see this view of the meaning of “Son of God” by contrast with the term, “Son of Man,” which is used eighty times in the New Testament, and all except three by Christ Himself. The fundamental idea seems to be the impersonation of humanity.

The title, “Son of God” is found in three forms in the Greek, sometimes with the article before each of the two words, sometimes with the article before “God” only, sometimes the article is omitted altogether. It seems impossible to think that there is not some distinction intended by these different usages. In the first of the three, at least, it must be a title of Deity, and it is found in this form twenty-five times (cf. Mat. 16:16; Rev. 2:18) In these words, the Sanhedrin adjured Jesus Christ to declare Himself, and, on His acceptance of the title, He was condemned (Mat. 26:63, Luke 22:70; John 19:7).

It was not a claim to Messiah-ship, but to Deity (John 8:58-59, 10:31, 33). So, at the close of His ministry, the disciples confessed not what He became at Bethlehem, but what He had been from eternity (John 16:30).

2. The title “Word”. — This is found in two passages (John 1:1, 14; Rev. 19:13). Two questions are usually asked with regard to it:

- (1) Where did it come from;
- (2) What did it mean.

Opinions differ as to whether the Apostle John was influenced by Philo in his use of this word, but there is now a general opinion that, whether derived from this source or not, the meaning is fundamentally different. There seems to be no doubt that, as used by John, the term is intended to express One who is a personal revelation of God, who is also essentially one with God Himself. The eternity and the identity with the Father are both implied and understood in it.

[“The conception of the Logos as taken over in the Johannine Theology was undoubtedly enriched by the notion of a personal life and of personal relations to the Father; and it cannot be supposed that the Catholic theologians fell back from the Apostolic testimony on the position of Philo, and regarded the Logos as a mere impersonal link between God and the world” (Paterson, *ut supra*, p. 219).

For further consideration of the contrasts between John’s doctrine of the Logos and other ideas of the “Word,” see Alexander’s *Leading Ideas of the Gospels*, p. 185.]

These two terms, “Son” and “Word” are complementary. The former guards the personality, and emphasises the distinctness of the Son from the Father, though by itself it might easily suggest an essential subordination as of a Son to a Father. The latter guards the identity, and emphasises equality with the Father, though by itself it might easily suggest impersonality. When, however, the two are taken together, we have at once the doctrine of the Son who is distinct from the Father and of a Personal Word who is one with the Father. As Son, He is the impersonation of the character and attributes of God; as Word, He is the perfect expression of the mind of God. Both connote essential Deity. Thus the two together express the two sides of the truth concerning our Lord’s Divine nature.

3. “Begotten from everlasting of the Father.” — This is an attempt to express in human language the two aspects of our Lord’s relation to the Father. For this, it is essential to distinguish between priority of order and superiority of nature. “Begotten” calls attention to priority in order of the Father to the Son; “from everlasting” calls attention to the Son’s coexistence with the Father. Thus the phrase teaches us that we must not regard this “begetting” as an event in time, or else there would have been a time when the Father was not Father, and the Son was not Son. It is an eternal relation or fact of the Divine nature. It is only so that the truth can be safeguarded and the various passages of Scripture harmonised. If it is urged that “begotten” implies inferiority, the

following phrase must be at once associated with it “from everlasting”. There is a constant and yet an inevitable danger in the use of human terms to express Divine realities. Thus, it has been pointed out that we may say:

Mary was the Mother of our Lord.
Our Lord was God.
Therefore, Mary was the Mother of God.

Our premises are absolutely correct; our logic perfectly flawless, and yet we know that the conclusion is strictly untrue, since there is another thought implied (our Lord’s humanity) which finds no place in the syllogism. So, in the same way, our use of the word “begotten” must always be safeguarded by the association of “from everlasting.”

[“Many times, and even in recent years, we have been told that this eternal generation, or begetting, of the Son of God is empty verbiage, a sort of theological rhetoric, incapable of conception by the human mind. I entirely fail to respond to the objection; and I fail to comprehend how any thinking man, familiar with the struggle over the Athanasian contention, can ever have even the slightest difficulty in clearly grasping the meaning of Athanasius...I will dare to affirm that this eternal generation of the Son is not only conceivable, it is also one of the most fruitful conceptions in all Christian thinking. It helps us to understand all those sayings of Christ where, at one stroke, He insists upon both His equality with the Father and His dependence upon the Father, for these sayings reach widely beyond our Saviour’s temporary condition of humiliation” (O. A. Curtis, *The Christian Faith*, p. 228).]

4. “The very and eternal God, and of one substance with the Father.” This naturally follows from the foregoing statement — “The logic of the position seemed to be: Christ is known to be God, and if now God, He must have been God eternally. If not God eternally He is not God even now.” [Paterson, *ut supra*, p. 209]

Arianism rendered it necessary to speak of Christ as “the very and eternal God”, “the One Who is absolutely, genuinely God”; “Deity”, according to Article I. The term, “Of one substance with the Father” is the great word of the Nicene Creed, which formed the battleground of controversy. It was rejected by the Arians, but insisted on by Athanasius as the only way of expressing the truth of the essential Deity of the Son. The Arians were ready to place our Lord at any point above manhood so long as He was kept lower than Deity, but this only predicated a Being neither man nor God, who was unknown and really unthinkable. It was this, more than anything else, that led to the Nicene Fathers insisting on the proper Deity of the Son, and the truth that He was not merely “like the Father” (ὁμοιούσιος, *homoiousios*), but with every qualification identical with the Father (ὁμοούσιος, *homoousios*).

[“Upon this term substance a surprising amount of learned research has been expended with a small amount of philosophical insight. The instant meaning of the word is of little concern, for it was nothing but a weapon, and an accidental

weapon at that, to protect an underlying and extremely important idea, namely, that the Father and the Son are what they are by means of one and the same organism; that they are, therefore, structurally necessary to each other, so that neither can exist at all without the other” (O. A. Curtis, ut supra, p. 227)]

Although there was a natural hesitation about using it because it had been employed in a different connection before, yet circumstances made it necessary to use it to express the oneness of essence with the Father, and this was an entirely new meaning to the term, and altogether different from former interpretations. There was no thought of addition to Scripture, but only the explanation of that which was implied and involved in the Scripture teaching concerning Christ. The truth safeguarded by this word is seen in such passages as Mat. 11:27; John 1:1, 3:13, 5:19-20, 8:54, 17:10; Phil. 2:6 (Greek, see Lightfoot); Col. 2:9).

The Deity Of Christ

Two great truths occupied the attention of the early Church with regard to the Lord Jesus Christ: the fact and the method of the Incarnation. The problem with regard to the former was as to how Christ could be both Divine and human. At first the Ebionites went to one extreme and denied His Deity. Then the Docetae went to the other and denied His humanity. Then later came Arianism, which denied both, and made Christ a sort of *tertium quid* (an unknown or indefinite thing related in some way to two known or definite things, but distinct from both). Docetism, which taught the illusory appearance of the Deity, had but few followers, but Ebionism was more prevalent, and, in the Monarchianism of Paul of Samosata, it assumed a refined form similar to the Humanitarianism of modern days. Socinianism and Arianism show the same fundamental tendency. [Paterson, ut supra, pp. 209, 213.]

The prolonged discussions argue powerfully for assuming the reality of the union between God and man in Christ. The notion of a real Incarnation does not appear to have been inherited from Judaism or Hellenism, but was indigenous to Christianity itself, and the idea took firm hold of the entire Church, including the keenest minds. This belief in a real union between God and man arises inevitably out of the claim and character of Christ as depicted in the Gospels. It is impossible to deny the New Testament picture of our Lord's unique relation to God.

[The evidence can be seen in Whitelaw, How is the Divinity of Christ depicted in the Gospels? Parkin, The New Testament Portrait of Jesus; Holdsworth, The Christ of the Gospels; Hoyt, The Lord's Teaching concerning His own Person], and the significance of His claim to authority cannot be exaggerated in its relation to Christology. [Streatfield, The Self-Interpretation of Jesus Christ: The Incarnation; Johnston Ross, The Universality of Jesus; Griffith Thomas, Christianity is Christ, with Bibliography]

Modern solutions of the union between God and man in Christ call for attention. One is that of the essential oneness of Divinity and Humanity, so that we may speak of the humanity of God and the Divinity of man, thereby making the union credible. But this

is too easy for the solution of the problem, and is merely poetical or rhetorical. If Divinity and Humanity are identical terms, then we can dispense with one of them. This would solve the problem by denying its existence. Another suggestion is that the union between Christ and God, and therefore between God and man, is moral and not metaphysical. But this only amounts to moral likeness, not essential union. The fact is that Humanitarianism under any form cannot provide a satisfactory explanation of the Incarnation. It is helpless before the problems. The New Testament has to be accounted for. Christ is unique. If there was no real Incarnation we have no real knowledge of God in relation to man's life, especially in regard to sin and deliverance from it, except so far as the (by itself) imperfect revelation of the Old Testament is concerned. Unitarianism is a failure, because it cannot bear the stress of the doctrine of the Divine Fatherhood.

[Gwatkin, *The Knowledge of God*, Vol. II, p. 298.] If the Incarnation be denied Christianity cannot long survive. Besides, the truth is that of God becoming Man rather than of man becoming God. No mere Immanence will suffice, and certainly no apotheosis. [Warfield, *Princeton Theological Review*, Vol. IX, p. 689]

It must never be forgotten that there is vital, essential, and intimate connection between our Lord's Deity and His work of redemption. It is not merely that one man is made unique, but it is a case of God coming to the world in human form, "for us men and for our salvation".

"The Incarnation may be inexplicable as a psychological or ontological problem; but it satisfies the yearnings of those who are seeking after God and His righteousness." [Mead, *Irenic Theology*, p. 257.]

It is this that has made the Church so persistent in her determination to be satisfied with nothing less than the real and complete Deity of Christ. "A Saviour not quite God is a bridge broken at the farther side." [Bishop Moule, *Preface to Sir Robert Anderson's The Lord from Heaven.*]

Herein lay the vital problem raised by Arianism at Nicaea, and it is imperative that the bearings of the conflict should be thoroughly known. It is a very shallow and superficial view that regards that great battle as merely metaphysical and intended for doctrinal accuracy. In reality it was something infinitely more important, because reaching deep down to the needs of human life. Christian men were conscious of salvation from sin associated with Jesus Christ. For generations they had inherited the primitive interpretation of the connection between His work of redemption and His unique Person, and the real spiritual experience of Apostolic and sub-Apostolic times was potent at that period and could not be set aside. They worshipped Christ as God, and recognised that His redemption was nothing short of a Divine work, while instead of this Arianism offered them One Who, after all, was only a creature of God. It is the consciousness of this remarkable but significant fact that leads the truest thinkers to believe that the victory of Arianism would have swept Christianity entirely away. It was with no desire to indulge in mere metaphysics that Athanasius insisted upon the

doctrine of the Homoousios, but because of the real subtlety of Arianism. Up to that time ordinary practical experience had sufficed, but now it was proving inadequate, and so the Church was compelled to insist upon the truth of Jesus Christ being "Very God of very God, Begotten, not made, Being of one substance with the Father."

It has often been pointed out that today's peril lies in Agnosticism in Christology. Ritschlianism teaches that Christ has the value of God for us, but will not allow any discussion of His fundamental relation to God. And yet if Jesus Christ has for man the value of God He must in some way or other be Divine and not simply human. No creature could remain a creature and still act for God and on behalf of man beyond the range of finite power and experience. It is therefore essential to have a Christology that answers to the facts of Christian experience, since life, not philosophy, is at stake. Agnosticism in Christology inevitably tends to empty the work of Christ of its redemptive power. If Christ be a creature, however great, there is no redemption, because there is no real point of contact between the sinner and the Holy God. Our Christology must be adequate to the facts of redemptive experience. In connection with certain recent discussions it has been pointed out.

[This section is greatly indebted to a paper by Principal P. T. Forsyth, written during the "New Theology" controversy. The latest, and, in some respects, the best argument in favour of an agnosticism in Christology will be found in Loof's What is the Truth about Jesus Christ? But there could not be adduced a better testimony to the uniqueness of our Lord's Personality as stated in the traditional Christology]

That the importance of Christ made flesh lies in its bearings on Christ made sin, since this is the true proof and reason of the Incarnation. No mere Immanence will suffice for redemption, for while Immanence overcomes the Deistic position it cannot touch the Unitarian, since many Unitarians hold the Immanence of God in nature. Then, too, Immanence alone is defective in regard to guilt and grace. It "antiquates the Reformation, and every tendency is to be discredited that does that." Redemption must, therefore, be preserved and not lost in evolution. "Immanence gives us a lapse, but not sin, a relative Saviour, not an eternal one." Herein, therefore, lies the vital question of the Deity of Christ, since no salvation can possibly come to us except by means of miracle, and miracle implies the ultimate power of the spiritual to control the material. Amid all the changes and chances of this mortal life, amid all the principles of science and the revelations of law, the heart demands salvation; salvation is only possible by Divine grace, and grace can only come through a Divinely human Saviour. It will be seen from this that the very nature of Christianity is at stake, and all that Christianity means in regard to salvation from sin.

II – The Incarnation Of Christ

The Article continues to employ terms inherited from the controversies of the first five centuries, and it will be well to consider the results before becoming acquainted with the details of the process by which they were arrived at.

1. The Human Nature. – “Took Man’s nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin, of her substance.” This teaches the reality of the human nature of Christ which is so dear in the New Testament. The method of His entrance upon human life shows that He did not assume an adult personality, or else there would have been two persons, the Divine and the Human. Human nature was necessary for the redemption of mankind, and this beyond all else is the reason why our Lord assumed it.

2. The two Natures. – “So that two whole and perfect Natures; that is to say, the Godhead and Manhood.” The phraseology is very important, and both the Divine and the Human Natures are described as “whole and perfect,” that is, possessing all the properties perfect in each. According to the orthodox Christology settled at the Council of Chalcedon, it was Human Nature, not a Human Person that the Son of God took into union with Himself. By Human Nature is to be understood all those qualities which the race has in common. By a Human Person is meant a separate individual possessing the distinctive power known as personality. Adam did not transmit his personality, which is incommunicable, but his nature, so that personality can be distinguished from nature. Human nature is organised on a new personality in each individual. There is no concrete humanity, but there are concrete persons.

3. The One Person. – “Were joined together in one Person, never to be divided.” This is a further statement of the result of the Incarnation as it affected the Man Christ Jesus as depicted in the Gospels. The union of the two natures in one Person is sometimes called the Hypostatic Union; that is, two natures in one, *υπόστασις* (hypostasis). In the New Testament there is a clear unity of consciousness throughout, and it is often quite impossible to distinguish between the human and Divine elements. It is, of course, a great mystery how two natures can be joined together in one Person, never to be divided, and the distinction between nature and Person must not be unduly pressed. Our knowledge of personality, as of psychology in general, is only small, and it is impossible to fathom the mystery of the union of two natures in one personality. We must emphasise the Divine Nature, the Human Nature, and the Divine Personality, without expecting to solve the problem of their correlation. The consideration of our Lord’s life on earth tends to make some people lose sight of the Divine in the human, and the result is often a merely humanitarian Christ. On the other hand, a consideration of the glorified Lord tends to make some lose sight of the human in the Divine, and the outcome is often a craving for some Mediator between the Divine Lord and ourselves. Our safety will always be found in emphasising and balancing both aspects, the Divine and the human. However difficult it may be to conceive of it, our Lord’s Human Nature was somehow or other taken up into the Personality of the Word, and the three differences between His Humanity and ours:

- (a) no human Father;
- (b) no human Person;
- (c) no sin; do not touch the integrity and perfection of His Human Nature.

[Bruce, *The Humiliation of Christ*, p. 169.]

4. The One Christ. – “Whereof is one Christ, very God, and very Man.” Here, again, the Article endeavours – to state what is clearly seen in the New Testament, a unity of consciousness in the one life of Jesus Christ, and yet while one Christ, He is very God and very Man. Theology sometimes speaks of this as *communicatio idiomatum*, that is, the conjunction of natures is so close that we can attribute to the one Person what is really only appropriate to one of the two natures. Thus, we read of “the blood of God” (Acts 20:28); “The Son of Man which is in heaven” (John 3:13); “Crucified the Lord of glory” (1 Cor. 2:8). [Hooker, Ecclesiastical Polity, Bk. V, Ch. 53, Section 4.] This statement is simply an effort to express what is found in Scripture; the reality of Christ’s Humanity, the reality of His Divinity, and withal the unity of His Personality.

“We can discern in the separate moments of the doctrine a religious justification or necessity, while the synthesis in which they are united is difficult and even bewildering. The constituent elements of the doctrine were the truths which remained after the exclusion of the apparently impossible positions.” [Paterson, *ut supra*, p. 227.]

These four statements may be said to sum up the Christology of Chalcedon, which substantially completed the orthodox Christology of the ancient Church, and this is now the common heritage of Greek, Latin, and Evangelical Christendom, except that Protestantism naturally reserves the right of searching afresh into the profound mystery of the Christ of the New Testament. It should never be forgotten that Christ is of necessity infinitely more than any human formula. This is true even of human personality, and much more is it true of the Divine. Statements such as those of the Creeds and this Article are intended to guide and guard our thought, enabling us to form clear conceptions and indicating limits within which our thoughts may move in safety. The decision of Chalcedon cannot be said to preclude discussion, but only to indicate the lines on which it is thought a true statement of Christology will be made. Chalcedon has been rightly described as a lighthouse to show the channel between the reefs of Nestorian Dyophysitism and Eutychian Monophysitism. We may sum up the leading ideas of Chalcedon as follows:–

1. The true Incarnation of the Divine Logos.
2. The distinction between Nature and Person.
3. The result of the Incarnation as the God Man, Jesus Christ.
4. The duality of the Natures.
5. The unity of the Person.
6. The work of Christ as based upon His Person.
7. The relative impersonality of the human nature of Christ.

On this subject, four heresies are particularly notable, and call for study by all who wish to know the process by which the early Church came to its conclusion concerning the Deity and Incarnation of our Lord.

- (a) Arianism, 325, which denied the true Godhead of Christ.
- (b) Apollinarianism, 360, which denied the perfect Manhood of Christ.

- (c) Nestorianism, 431, which denied the unity of the Person of Christ.
- (d) Eutychianism, 451, which denied the distinction of the natures of Christ.

Against these four errors, the Church, as represented at Chalcedon, emphasised four watchwords. In opposition to Arianism, Christ was declared to be “truly” God (αληθως, alētheōs); in opposition to Apollinarianism, Christ was declared to be “perfectly” Man (τελείως, teleiōs); in opposition to Nestorianism, Christ’s Person was declared to be “indivisibly” one (αδιαίρετως, adiairetōs); in opposition to Eutychianism, the two Natures of Christ were declared to be “unconfusedly” distinct (ασυγχύτως, asunchutōs).

History of Christology

Although the Article states the Chalcedonian Christology, it may be well to keep in mind the three periods of Christology indicated by Dorner.

- (1) Up to Chalcedon, the Church insisted on Christ as being very God and very Man.
- (2) From Chalcedon to 1900 the Church approached, but did not solve, the union of the two Natures. Before the Reformation, the tendency was to lay too great stress on the Divinity, and to exclude the true view of His Humanity. Since the Reformation, the tendency has been to lay too great stress on the Humanity and to exclude the true view of His Divinity.
- (3) Since 1900, thinkers have been attempting to realise the unity of Christ’s personal consciousness as seen in the New Testament, and to harmonise this with the clear distinction of Natures, Human and Divine. It will be seen that the Church has been mainly concerned with the adjustment of the dual aspects of the Nature of Christ. This in various forms occupied attention from the third to the seventh century, and is still a subject of controversy. Apart from Rationalism, pure and simple, which makes Jesus Christ nothing but Man, controversy has not been so much directed to the fact of an Incarnation as to how it is to be conceived and explained. Even Chalcedon which, as we have seen, taught the doctrine of the two Natures in the one Person, did not settle the question, as the subsequent Monothelite controversy shows. Moreover, modern thought is widely dissatisfied with the Chalcedon formula because it is considered unreal and impossible on psychological grounds. The Chalcedon doctrine has been particularly criticised during recent years as unsatisfactory.

[Dykes, Expository Times, Vol. XVII, pp. 7, 55, 103, 151; Garvie, Expository Times, Vol. XXIII, pp. 353, 414, 448, 505, 548; Mackintosh, The Person of Christ, pp. 209–215, and 383 ff]

It is said to be untrue to the gospel picture of Christ, because it is too abstract and because it severs the unity of that picture of Him, destroying the single consciousness of the Gospels, and giving us “two abstractions instead of one reality, two impotent halves in place of one living whole.” [Mackintosh, ut supra, p. 295.] Then, too, its

doctrine of “impersonal humanity” is said to be unthinkable because unreal and untrue to experience. [Mackintosh quotes Dr. Strong, *Manual of Theology*, Second Edition, p. 130, in regard to what is usually called “an impersonal humanity”, that “it suggests a kind of abstract idea of man lying untenanted, and adopted by a Divine Person, and it is obvious that it opens the door to scholasticism of an unduly technical sort (ut supra. p. 386).] The result is said to be a dilemma, “the Scylla of a duplex personality and the Charybdis of an impersonal manhood.” [Mackintosh, ut supra, p. 296.] On this view, genuine faith in Christ is not to be identified with adherence to this Christological formula, [Mackintosh, ut supra, p. 298 f.] and the call comes to reconsider the position, and to interpret the data, because it is essential to have a Christology.

There have been five general ways of explaining the method of the Incarnation.

1. The doctrine of the *communicatio idiomatum* (communication of properties). — This means, as we have seen, the interpenetration of the human nature by the Divine, each nature communicating to the other its properties because of the oneness of the Personality. This doctrine is associated with John of Damascus, in whose hands it means the permeation of the human and Divine. But, of course, it has the obvious reservations that the human cannot permeate the Divine and the humanity cannot contain the Divinity, so that the *communicatio* is one-sided, and as the Logos imparts to the human intellect perfect knowledge, and to the human will Divine Omnipotence, the very attributes essential to humanity are really denied to Christ. In reality this doctrine is a deification of humanity, the Manhood being regarded as the organ through which the Logos manifests Himself. But any real condescension of the Logos is excluded and the humanity is virtually absorbed. This doctrine was fully developed in after times by the Lutheran Church in connection with the Ubiquitarian hypothesis of the Lord’s Supper, which, however, our Church has definitely rejected. The doctrine has been very severely criticised, and Gibbon speaks contemptuously of it as “the deepest and darkest corner of the whole theological abyss.” In the same way modern writers reject it as impossible as a way of explaining the relationship of the Divine and Human in Christ. [Mackintosh, ut supra, p. 241 f.] It is, however, only fair to say that it was never intended to mean any change in the Divine Nature such as would reduce it to the limits of mere humanity, nor does it mean any exaltation of the Human such as would make it entirely different. All that was meant was that the two Natures were so united that the experiences which came from their union was one thing, and not two independent lines of activity. Its aim was to preserve the great and necessary truth that the redemption wrought by Christ was in some way dependent on His Person as the Son of God.

2. Gradual Incarnation. – This is a view which starts with the two Natures, and by gradual growth from embryonic and infantile unconsciousness arrives at a conscious personality which culminates after the Resurrection. This view is associated with the great name of Dorner, but it cannot be said to solve the problem, for the union of two Natures without as yet a personality is still a question. What is a Nature which has no knowledge, love, and will? In ordinary men it is possible to distinguish between the nature, which is the whole constitution, and the person, which is the self-

consciousness alone. But in Christ the matter is different because He had a human soul and will as well as a body.

3. The Kenosis. – This means the self-emptying of the Logos. It is based on Phil. 2:5–8, and is said to involve in some way the laying aside of Divine attributes. The theory takes various forms, [See Bruce, *ut supra*, Ch. IV.] but in spite of the great names, the profound abilities; and, indeed, the genuine aim of those who advocate it, it may be questioned whether any such Kenosis is possible. Laying aside the use of attributes is one thing, but laying aside the attributes themselves is quite another. Jesus Christ had a Divine Nature and a Divine experience, but it was the latter not the former that He gave up, and instead took a human experience. It was therefore impossible for Him to achieve Manhood by renouncing His Deity, since after He became Man He still had Divine attributes. It was the non-use that constituted the Kenosis. These attributes did not appear, and by a constant act of will He voluntarily laid aside equality with God in order to assume human nature. The true interpretation of the passage on which so much is based is that our Lord did not, because He could not, surrender His essential form of being (μορφή, *morphē*). [Gifford, *The Incarnation*, clearly shows that *υπάρχων*, *huparchōn*, in Phil. 2:6 must mean permanent subsistence during His incarnate life, as well as pre-existence, according to Lightfoot's interpretation.] This doctrine of the Kenosis is really an attempt to explain the Humanity at the expense of the Deity, and notwithstanding all that has been urged in its favour it really fails, and thought today is tending more and more away from it. It has well been pointed out that a century engaged in "the Quest of the Historic Jesus" would have been unnecessary if the Kenotic theory is true. It is admittedly only true "provided we are to give weight to the religious considerations which demand the pre-existence of the Son of God, and also to give weight to the evidence of the evangelists who reported to us all that is known of Jesus Christ." [Paterson, *ut supra*, p. 231.]

But this is to admit that there is no real Kenosis, since such a theory does not "give weight to the evidence of the evangelists."

4. One recent attempt to solve the problem is a blend of the second and third views stated above. It starts from the Christ of History, and from Him as Redeemer, not merely as Teacher. [Mackintosh, *ut supra*, p. 306 ff.; 321ff.] His manhood was real, individual, and full, and yet He was a personal manifestation of God in human form. [Mackintosh, *ut supra*, p. 407 ff.] His Incarnation and pre-existence are facts, and there was a self-emptying, though this emphasises principle rather than method. [Mackintosh, *ut supra*, p. 466.] Keeping close to the facts, we may say:– "We are faced by a Divine self-reduction which entailed obedience, temptation, and death. So that religion has a vast stake in the kenosis as a fact, whatever the difficulties as to its method may be. No human life of God is possible without a prior self-adjustment of deity." [Mackintosh, *ut supra*, p. 470.]

This is interpreted to mean a self-abnegation of Deity by which Jesus Christ came to live a life "wholly restrained within the bounds of humanity." [Mackintosh, *ut supra*, p. 479.] In this view no attempt is made to state the theory of the relations between the

Divine and Human in Christ, and there is no reference to the “Word,” or “Son,” apart from the Incarnation, since we know nothing of it. It is represented that only by contracting His Divine fullness within earthly limits could the redeeming Lord draw nigh to man, and so it is said that in Jesus Christ –

“There is realised on earth the human life of God, and it is a life whose chiefest glory consists in a voluntary descent from depth to depth of our experience. It is the personal presence of God in One who is neither omniscient nor ubiquitous nor almighty – as God per se must be – but is perfect Love and Holiness and Freedom in terms of perfect humanity.” [Mackintosh, ut supra, p. 486.]

According to this criticism the defect of Chalcedon is that it leaves no room for growth in the Person of Christ, that growth referred to the Manhood only. But it is said that the Divine element was also gradually developed, that as the work of Christ was a process; so the Person must also grow. Not that He became Divine in the sense of deification, but that there was a development of what was originally Divine and Human. [Mackintosh, ut supra, p. 498 f.] So that side by side with this view of a Kenosis there is the corresponding doctrine of a Plerosis, or the self-fulfilment of God in Christ. [Mackintosh, ut supra, p. 504 f.; Forsyth, *The Person and Place of Jesus Christ*.]

It will be seen that this view endeavours to harmonise the thought of a Kenosis with a gradual development of the Personality, according to Dorner’s view. But it is open to serious objection, and, indeed, its author allows that the problem “contains, and is created by, two imperfectly known factors.” [Mackintosh, ut supra, p. 499.] It is difficult to know what is meant by “a human life of God”; a life “unequivocally human.” [Mackintosh, ut supra, pp. 469, 470.] The theory seems to demand an unthinkable metamorphosis of God into a man. It does not seem to satisfy the conditions of the Gospels, which represent Jesus Christ as at once human and Divine, and it is because this theory fails to satisfy all the conditions required that it has to be set aside as virtually amounting to little, if any, more than the ordinary Kenotic theories. [For an acute criticism of Mackintosh see the *Princeton Theological Review*, Vol. XI, p. 141 ff., by Dr. B. B. Warfield.]

5. The subliminal consciousness Theory. – One more modern view needs attention because it has been presented by Dr. William Sanday. He is unable to accept the Chalcedon doctrine of the two Natures, and in order to have a Christ who in His earthly manifestation was strictly human, he suggests that the Deity underlay the Humanity, as the subconscious element in man underlies his consciousness, that as the place of all Divine action upon the soul is the subliminal consciousness, so the proper seat of Deity in the Incarnate Christ is found there also. But this, as several writers have pointed out, does not meet the difficulty, still less solve she problem, for it really makes Christ to possess one Nature, so that in endeavouring to do justice to the Humanity of Christ Dr. Sanday’s view fails to do justice to His Deity, and instead of deriving his interpretation from the New Testament picture of the Divine-Human Christ, this theory really reduces our Lord to a purely human Christ, in whom God dwelt in fuller measure than He dwells in all men. The theory has been subjected to very acute and severe

criticism, and although it is deserving of the greatest possible consideration, coming from the source it does, it hardly seems likely to be more satisfactory than other theories in solving the problem of the Incarnation.

[For criticisms see Mackintosh, *ut supra*, p. 487 ff.; Garvie, *Expository Times*, Vol. XXIV, pp. 305, 373; Warfield, *Princeton Theological Review*, Vol. IX, pp. 166, 686; Mullins, *The Christian Religion*, p. 199 f.]

It would seem as though, after all, we shall have to be content with the general line of the Chalcedon formula. Not that it explains the mystery, but that it lays down the limits outside which we cannot go without sacrificing the essential truth of the New Testament and Christianity. What is required is a theory that will do justice both to the Deity and the Humanity, as they are both depicted in the Gospels, and it is the virtue and value of the Chalcedon view that it satisfies this requirement while all modern Christologies seem to fail at one point or another.

["It ought by now to be clearly understood that no resting place can be found in a half-way house between Socinianism and orthodoxy. We cannot have a Christ purely Divine in essence and purely human in manifestation. And what on this ground can be made of the exalted Christ? Does He remain after His ascension to heaven the purely human being He was on earth? Or does He, on ascending where He was before, recover the pure deity from which He was reduced that He might enter humanity? In the one case we have no Divine Christ, in the other no human Jesus, today: and the Christian heart can consent to give up neither" (Warfield, *Princeton Theological Review*, Vol. XI, p. 155).]

The objections to the Chalcedon view are obvious and have often been ably stated, and yet in spite of all recent criticisms no better explanation seems to be possible. [An illustration of this is shown in the simple fact that in September 1912 (*Expository Times*) Dr. Garvie strongly objected to the use of the term "Person" for the distinctive doctrine of the Trinity. In January 1913 he had come to favour the use of it.]

Although in connection with Chalcedon the term "impersonal humanity" is used and charged against that decision, yet the proper idea is not that the human nature exists impersonally, but that it is taken up into the Personality of the Logos. The reality of the facts does not stand or fall with our ability to explain all the difficulties. It is worthwhile to remember that heresy sometimes has sufficient vitality in it to be of spiritual blessing to men, [Paterson, *ut supra*, p. 233.] so that we can distinguish between the individual and his system, and even show that while a Humanitarian may be a Christian, Humanitarianism is not Christianity. But it is also true, looking at the entire Christian history, that heresies have one after another proved themselves incapable of bearing the full weight of human need, especially of redemption and all that it involves. There is no need to fetter research so long as all the facts are kept in view. To put it on the lowest ground, the orthodox doctrines of the Trinity and the Person of Christ are "the least unsatisfactory of the attempts that have been made to state the truth." [Paterson, *ut supra*, p. 133.] Meanwhile, we say that "the Father is God, Christ is God, the Holy

Spirit is God, and yet that they are not three, but one God.” This has been the only safe and satisfying foundation of salvation from sin which is the deepest need of the soul. [For a complete statement and criticism of modern Christologies, together with view similar to the above conclusion, see Dr. E. Digges La Touche, *The Person of Christ in Modern Thought*.]

[“The doctrine of the Two Natures does not suppose that there ever existed or ever could exist an impersonal human nature, and never dreamed of attributing any kind of reality to any human nature apart from ‘the unifying Ego’...No one ever imagined a ‘human nature’ which was or could be ‘unconscious and impersonal’. The conjunction of a human nature with a divine nature in one conscious and personal subject no doubt presents an insoluble problem to thought. But this is just the mystery of incarnation, without which there is no incarnation; for when we say incarnation we say Two Natures – or can there really be an incarnation without a somewhat which becomes incarnate and a somewhat in which it becomes incarnate”? *ut supra*, p. 151).

“The stone of stumbling here is ever again ‘the impersonality of Jesus’ human nature.’ The grievance is always repeated: the Christological dogma no doubt teaches that the Logos assumed a complete human nature, but this is really not the fact. If the humanity of Christ was perfect, it should have possessed also personality. It is the intention that no other alternative should be left but this – either an incomplete human nature, or a complete human nature, but then also a human person. And if you take the latter, then you come to the absurdity that two persons are joined together. But the fault of this reasoning lurks in this – that the nature of personality as such is sought in self-consciousness and in free self-determination, as the principle that forms the person; or rather that personality is conceived as a product of the process of self-consciousness and self-determination. This view cannot be right. An hypostasis or person is a substance which exists as a whole and for itself. An hypostasis is nothing else but the Aristotelian *πρώτη ουσία*, the *prima substantia*, therein and for itself an existing individual substance. A nature – divine or human – cannot be actual in its abstract generality, but only in a determinate hypostasis. But the nature can readily belong to a plurality of hypostases. And just so a plurality of natures can belong to one hypostasis. In the case of the church dogma this must be kept in view. There can be a complete human nature, without its existing in a human person, provided that it exists in another higher person, that is, here, in the Logos. No doubt if the human nature had been without any personality, the objection would be just. But when we speak of the en-hypostasia of the human nature of Christ, we mean by it only that this nature does not exist in a human person. And we recognise at the same time its en-hypostatisation in the Logos. It was thus then the Person of the Son which thought and acted in the human nature and had the disposition of all its gifts and powers. I do not suppose, of course, that by this the union of the two natures in the unity of the person is made conceivable for our finite understanding. No, it remains a mystery. But no absurdity. And by what I have said the charge of absurdity only is met. The

human nature was perfect, just because it existed in the Person of the Son” (Honig, quoted in the Princeton Theological Review, Vol. X, p. 337).]

The Virgin Birth

This subject has been one of great controversy during recent years, and it is not surprising, since it has a very definite bearing on the Christological problem. It is impossible to do more than indicate the proper line of approach, leaving the thorough discussion to special works on the subject.

[Orr, The Virgin-Birth of Christ; Knowling, “The Birth of Christ”; Hastings’ Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels; Box, “The Virgin Birth”; Mackintosh, The Person of Christ, p. 527 ff.; Simpson, Fact and Faith, p. 24 ff.; Griffith Thomas, Christianity is Christ, Ch. XII.]

1. The first thing to do is to take the life of Christ and study His sinlessness and uniqueness. How are these to be accounted for apart from some Divine intervention that made them possible?

2. Then we should proceed to the Apostolic interpretation of Christ. To the Apostles Jesus Christ stood in an unique relation to God, and of this, the simplest expression is found in the idea of His pre-existence (1 Cor. 8:6, Col. 1:15 ff., 2 Cor. 8:9; Phil. 2:6). [Denney, Studies in Theology, p. 250 f.]

3. At this point the narratives in the Gospels may be studied. They are very early manifestations, but give no evidence of being inventions, or of having come from earlier sources, or of being of composite character.

4. One of the surest proofs of primitive belief on this subject is the opposition to it and denials from the time of Cerinthus. These disputes have to be explained.

5. Then comes the enquiry as to how Jesus Christ can be accounted for? If He is unique in history, must He not also be so in origin? Every effect must have its adequate cause, and it is only by the Virgin Birth that we can account for the unique earthly life of Jesus Christ. The miracle of the Incarnation is thus fitly expressed in the miraculous entrance, and harmonises with the miraculous departure in the Resurrection.

6. It is believed that a new start was then made, by means of which the eternal Son of God entered into humanity: as the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, did not come by ordinary generation. The first Adam had failed, and a new race was necessary, of which Jesus Christ was the new Head. This necessitated a fresh creation, and the Virgin Birth meant this (Luke 1:35).

7. The decision will depend almost wholly upon our view of the miraculous in general. The Virgin Birth is not impossible unless all miracles are impossible, but if on a priori grounds we believe that no miracle has ever occurred, then the Virgin Birth necessarily

falls to the ground. Yet if we believe that Jesus rose from the dead we shall avoid greater difficulties by accepting the miraculous birth. Thus opinion will depend upon the conception we form of His Person.

8. It is perfectly true that the Virgin Birth had no place in the preaching and teaching of the Apostolic days, and this is only natural and to be expected because the Virgin Birth is no necessary proof of Deity, but only of a Divine Personage. While the rejection of the Virgin Birth would certainly undermine faith, yet its acceptance is quite compatible with the rejection of the Deity of Christ. The truth of His Sonship, as implied in the Virgin Birth, is merged into the profounder truth of His greater Sonship which is proved by the Resurrection (Rom. 1:4). Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi was not due to the Virgin Birth, because "flesh and blood" could easily have revealed this fact to him.

9. Denials of the Virgin Birth proceed from the assertion that a sinless character is possible without a Virgin Birth, or without even ordinary paternity. But the real question is not a sinless character, but a sinless personality. Character is always an attainment, while personality is an endowment.

10. In reality the difficulty is one that Christianity has always had to face, and the force of the objections can easily be perceived. Yet the Gospel has never been destroyed by this weight, and although historical scholarship may still be able to say something in regard to the documents and the historical side, yet in the future, as in the past, the problem will naturally be solved in the light of the complete impression formed of the life of Jesus Christ. We do well to emphasise the almost insuperable difficulties of the mythical theory by asking how the idea of the Virgin Birth arose, if it was not based on fact, and how the narratives could have obtained such appearance of trustworthiness unless they were historical. But the fundamental question is that Christ being such as He was, and coming into this world for the purpose of redemption, it cannot be regarded as either unnatural or incredible that His life should have begun in this way. The ultimate decision will assuredly lie in the realm of effects. If we believe that the world is only imperfect and not sinful we shall be content with an ethical and human Christ. But if there is such a thing as human sin we shall be compelled to fall back upon a miraculous Christ, who was "conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary."

III – The Death of Christ

It is natural that the Article should proceed to state the true idea of the work of Christ in close association with His Person, and the view here taken is in strict harmony with what was taught at and from Chalcedon.

1. The Fact of Christ's Death. – "Who truly suffered." – The emphasis on the reality of the sufferings was doubtless due to the reappearance of Docetic teaching in the sixteenth century, whereby our Lord's sufferings were regarded as apparent only. Since then Swedenborg taught a very similar doctrine. The true interpretation is that

the Person Who suffered is the Son of God, but the Nature in which He suffered is the human nature. We are not saved by the work apart from the Person, but by the Person through the work. The Person gives efficacy to the work. This is the meaning of Hooker's phrase, "The infinite worth of the Son of God," and it was this beyond all else that led to the strong insistence in the early Church on the Deity of our Lord, and the real union of God and man in the Incarnation. This, too, as we have seen, is at the heart of the doctrine of the *communicatio idiomatum*, the prevailing thought being that no one could atone who was not at once perfectly Divine and perfectly human.

2. The Form of Christ's Death. – "Was crucified, dead, and buried." – This reference to the death by crucifixion and the act of burial is in exact agreement with the statement of the Creeds, and, indeed, is intended to express the same truths.

3. The Purpose of Christ's Death. – "To reconcile His Father to us, and to be a sacrifice." – The wording of the Article is sometimes criticised because it is said that reconciliation in the New Testament seems to suggest the man-ward side only. "Be ye reconciled to God." This is true, but it presupposes an already existing reconciliation of God to man by the Death of Christ. We shall see later when we study more closely the doctrine of the Atonement that the statement of the Article is intended to express a real and profound Bible truth. Only on one point might the Article be a little more exact. Reconciliation in the New Testament is associated with God, not with the Father, the judicial rather than the paternal relations are involved. Reconciliation is concerned with the Father as God, not with God as Father. In this respect the wording of the Article might have been kept closer to the New Testament, but apart from this verbal inadequacy the truth implied is undoubted and important.

4. The Scope of Christ's Death. – "Not only for original guilt, but also for all actual sins of men." [The words: "Not only for original guilt, but also for all actual sins of men," are inserted by the Reformers in their Confession with a deliberate and important purpose, in order to state, in the most comprehensive manner, that, in the words of our Prayer of Consecration, our Lord, 'by His one oblation of Himself once offered, made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world. Nothing more can be required by the divine justice in satisfaction for sin, in addition to that one perfect and sufficient sacrifice of Christ' (Wace, Principles of the Reformation, p. 49 f.)] – The phrase "original guilt" apparently means the same as "original sin" in Article IX. At any rate, there is no other statement in the Anglican formularies which seems to distinguish between "original sin" and "original guilt". The Article is thus intended to cover all forms of moral evil, whether those associated with the sin of Adam, or those due to man's personal action. The Bible clearly distinguishes between "sin" and "sins", the root and the fruit, the principle and the practice, and the Article teaches that our Lord's Atonement covers both of these.

These statements of the Article when taken in connection with similar expressions in Articles XV and XXXI give the Anglican doctrine of the Atonement, but it is necessary to pay much closer attention to the subject by reason of its prominence in the New

Testament, in the history of Christian thought, and in various theological discussions today.

The Doctrine of the Atonement

No one can question the centrality of the Cross in the New Testament. It is admittedly the heart of Christianity.

“The centre of gravity in the New Testament...Not Bethlehem, but Calvary is the focus of revelation.” [Denney, *The Death of Christ*, p. 324 f.]

It is obvious that the New Testament connects our salvation with the Death of Christ; indeed, from the standpoint of apologetics Christianity is the only religion with a Cross. Yet few doctrines have given rise to greater differences of opinion. Ever since the days of Paul the Cross has been to some people a “stumbling-block,” and to others “foolishness”. But, meanwhile, Christians continue to say and sing: “In the Cross of Christ I glory.” It is essential, therefore, that we should do our utmost to discover, first of all, what the Bible says about the Death of Christ, and then to get behind this and endeavour to find out what it means.

Before looking at the subject in detail it will be well to consider the meaning of the word “Atonement,” and the history of it is the best clue to its use in theology. It was not originally a religious term, and apparently its admission in a theological sense dates from the latter part of the seventeenth century. The Christian idea of the word is thus much more comprehensive than its original scope, and it is in this that the danger of its misuse lies by those who are unable to accept the profound Biblical doctrine which it represents. As early as the thirteenth century there existed in English an adverbial expression, *at-one*, meaning “agreed”. This phrase was related to the numeral adjective, *one*, then pronounced as we now pronounce *own*. From this came the verb, *to atone*; and at a somewhat earlier date the substantive, *atonement*, the mediaeval form of which was the simple noun, “*one-ment*” (pronounced as “*own-ment*”) About the same time *atonemaker* was introduced as an Anglo-Saxon equivalent for “mediator”. From examples that can be adduced it is clear that the thought conveyed was simply that of reconciliation. Then at a later date theologically the word came to mean the revealed way of reconciliation with God through the mediation of His Son – a far more extensive idea. In the Authorised Version the term *atonement* is used of the Levitical sacrifices to translate the Hebrew, *kippurim* (lit. “cover”), and in one passage of the New Testament (A.V.) in the sense of reconciliation, to represent the Greek *καταλλαγή* (Rom. 5:11). It is, therefore, essential to discover whether the use of the term is intended to represent the Biblical idea of vicarious satisfaction, or merely to designate some thought of reconciliation with God apart from “the blood of the Cross”. Between these two conceptions there is an impassable gulf, and it is necessary to know precisely what we are to understand by the term.

[(1) *Atone*, adv., “agreed” (opp. at odds, atwin).

Chaucer, speaking of the patient Griselda in his Clerk's Tale, says:

"If gentlemen, or other of that contree
Were wroth, she wolde bringen them aton,
So wise and ripe wordes hadde she."

Again elsewhere:

"After discord they accorded...
'Sir,' saiden they, 'we ben aton.'" – Romaunt of the Rose.

It occurs in this sense in our older versions of the Bible: "After this was God atone with the land" (2 Sam. 21:14; Coverdale, 1535).

"We pray you that ye be atone with God" (2 Cor. 5:20; Geneva Version).

(2) At-one-ment. Hence sprang the word atonement, in the sense of "reconciliation."

"What atonement is there between light and darkness?" (Philpot, 1554).

"God hath given to us the office to preach the atonement" (2 Cor. 5:8). – Tyndale, 1526.

"As a perfect sign of your atonement with me, you wish me joy." – Massinger, 1632.

"He was desirous to procure atonement between them and make them good friends (*cura reconciliandi eos in gratiam*)." – Philemon Holland, trans. of Livy (i. 50), 1600.

(3) Atonemaker, i.e. Reconciler.

"There is but one Mediator. By that understand Atonemaker, Peacemaker." – Tyndale, 1533.

(4) To atone

(i) prop., to reconcile.

"I was glad I did atone my countryman and you." – Shakespeare, Cymbeline, 1611.

"I would do much to atone them." – Ibid., Othello, 1604.

(ii) Later, to appease, satisfy for.

"Mankind thought that the principal thing required of them in religion was to atone and pacify the Divine power." – John Owen, Pneumatologia, iv, I, 1674.

"The murderer fell, and blood atoned for blood." – Pope.]

I – The New Testament Revelation

It is best to start here and to make the approach along three lines.

I. In General. – We must first observe the prominence given to the Death of Christ in the New Testament.

(a) In the Gospels attention should be called to the space devoted to the events of the last week of our Lord's life. Thus taking an ordinary English Bible, Matthew has one-third devoted to this week, Mark over one-third, Luke one-fourth, and John five-twelfths, or nearly one-half. There must be something in this proportion, or rather disproportion, in view of the fragmentariness of the remainder of the record connected with the three years of our Lord's ministry.

(b) In the Epistles the prominence is almost equally clear. Thus Paul speaks of the Death as "delivered first of all" (1 Cor. 15:3), while the teaching in such doctrinal Epistles as Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, and 1 Peter is permeated with the truth of the Death of Christ.

(c) In the Apocalypse the central figure almost from first to last is "a Lamb as it had been slain" (Rev. 1:18, 5:6, 12, 12:11, 13:8).

2. In Particular. – A careful survey of the words and phrases associated with the Death of Christ is needed at this stage.

(a) There are six terms calling for attention: Sacrifice, Offering, Ransom, Redemption, Propitiation, Reconciliation.

(1) Sacrifice, θυσία (1 Cor. 5:7, Eph. 5:2, Heb. 10:12). What is its root idea? According to Robertson Smith [The Religion of the Semites.] it is communion with the Deity, but a more recent authority, who adduces proofs of his contention from life among the Bedouin, maintains that expiation is the primary conception. [S. I. Curtiss, Primitive Semitic Religion Today.] The latter seems to be decidedly truer to the Biblical conception than the former, and although nothing is actually said about the original meaning of sacrifice, as seen in the earliest records, yet in the light of all that follows in the New Testament, it would seem as though Abel's sacrifice were best understood as implying sin and redemption in the light of previously given revelation. Certainly the statement that "By faith Abel offered" (Heb. 11:4) seems to imply a prior revelation to which his faith could attend and respond.

(2) Offering, προσφορά (Heb. 10:10, 14). The word is familiar from the LXX rendering of corresponding Hebrew terms.

(3) Ransom, λύτρον (Mat. 20:28, Tim. 2:6). Scripture is silent as to Whom the ransom is paid, and only emphasises the worth of that which was thereby given (cf. Rev. 5:9, Gal. 3:13).

(4) Redemption, απολύτρωσις (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14). The original seems to mean “to loose by a price,” while the English, following the Latin, means, “to buy back”, “to re-purchase” (cf. λυτρουν, 1 Pet. 1:18). The thought appears to be the removal of bondage and thralldom.

(5) Propitiation, λασμός, and λάσκεισθαι (Rom. 3:25, 1 John 2:2, 4:10). No word calls for more careful consideration. In propitiation there must be a subject and an object, one who propitiates and one who is propitiated. It is obvious that God cannot thus propitiate man, while man, himself unaided, is unable to propitiate God. The thought of the word is the removal of God’s judicial displeasure and the taking away of an obstacle to fellowship, the removal being accomplished by God Himself. This is clearly the idea of the word in the publican’s prayer, “God be propitious to me the sinner” (Luke 18:13). [As a confirmation of this interpretation, it may be pointed out that the Greek Papyri are perfectly clear that the meaning of propitiation was that of an offended God, who needed to be appeased. When this conception is purified of its heathen associations the principle seems obvious that propitiation is something offered by God on man’s behalf to God for the purpose of removing judicial displeasure and hindrances to fellowship.]

(6) Reconciliation, καταλλαγή (Rom. 5:10, 2 Cor. 5:18, Eph. 2:16–18). This refers to the adjustment of differences by the removal of enmity and separation. There is practical unanimity among scholars that reconciliation in Paul means a change of relation on God’s part towards man, something done by God for man, which has modified what would otherwise have been His attitude to the sinner. Thus, reconciliation is much more than a change of feeling on man’s part towards God, and must imply first of all a change of relation in God towards man. It is this that the Article was intended to express by the phrase, “To reconcile His Father to us.” If it should be said that such a change in God is unthinkable, it may be answered that even in forgiveness, if we are to understand it aright, there must be some change of attitude, for God cannot possibly be in the same attitude before as after forgiveness.

(b) There are three phrases that need to be studied. “Made sin for us” (2 Cor. 5:21); He died “the just for the unjust” (1 Pet. 3:18); “Made a curse for us” (Gal. 3:13). The true and complete meaning of these words must be insisted on.

(c) There are also four prepositions requiring attention: περί, “with reference to”; υπέρ, [Sometimes υπέρ has a clear substitutionary meaning (John 11:50).] “on behalf of”; διά, “on account of”; αντί, “instead of” (Mat. 20:28; 1 Tim. 2:6). [There are two other words not found in the New Testament which are useful for expressing aspects of the Atonement:

(1) Expiation, i.e. “cancelling by sacrifice” (cf. 2 Cor. 5:21);

(2) Satisfaction, i.e. “restitution for broken law”.]

3. Not least of all, consideration must be given to the Biblical doctrine of sin, its nature and effects, and the Divine attitude towards it.

(a) The words used for sin are important, especially αμαρτία, “failure,” “coming short”; παράβασις, “transgression”; παράπτωμα, “falling aside”.

(b) The consequences of sin are also clearly taught. They seem to be mainly two. A debt (objective), which requires payment, and a disease (subjective), which requires cure.

(c) The term “Wrath of God,” οργη θεου; (Rom. 1:18) must have some meaning, and it seems best to interpret it of God’s judicial displeasure against sin. “This abominable thing that I hate “ (Jer. 44:4).

(d) The meaning of Forgiveness, άφεσις, “the sending away” of sin.

II – The Old Testament Anticipation

I. The New Testament points back to the Old, and sacrificial terms of the former find illumination in the ritual of the Old Testament. It must never be forgotten that nearly all the great terms of the New Testament are stated without any explanation, and apart from the Old Testament through the Septuagint they would be unintelligible. [“It stands to reason that to describe the ceremonialism of Judaism, for example, apart from the cardinal doctrines of Christianity is like writing a history of the acorn and saying nothing of the oak to which it grows; it stands to reason that the theologian who defines the Christian doctrine of the Atonement without reference to the expiatory features of Mosaism might as wisely undertake a philosophical biography and ignore the entire story of childhood and the early display of hereditary tendency” (Cave, The Scriptural Doctrine of Sacrifice, Preface)]

2. The Old Testament sacrifices call for interpretation, for whatever view we hold of the Old Testament they must have had some spiritual meaning. As we contemplate the sacrifices of Genesis, the sacrifice of the Passover, and the various Levitical offerings, they are evidently intended to embody some spiritual reality and to set forth some profound truths.

3. There are several words and phrases in the Old Testament connected with the Atonement, especially a word like kaphar, to cover.

III – The Prayer Book Explanation

We proceed to enquire what use the Prayer Book and Articles make of the Biblical teaching.

1. The Creeds state the fact of the Atonement rather than any theory. They are historical, not theological, and yet even here we are reminded of the uniqueness of the Death of Christ, in that it was “for us men and for our salvation”.

2. In the Collects and Communion Office the devotional aspect of the Atonement is naturally emphasised, but we are reminded of Him “Who made there by His one oblation of Himself once offered, a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world.”

3. In the Articles the subject is dealt with from the doctrinal standpoint, and in particular Articles II, III, XV, XXVIII, and XXXI give the Anglican view of the Atonement. Special attention should be given to all the phrases as they are set forth in these doctrinal pronouncements. In addition to the statement of the Article now under consideration, we have the following: “Christ died for us” (Article III); “He came to be the Lamb without spot, Who by sacrifice of Himself once made, should take away the sins of the world” (Article XV); “our Redemption by Christ’s Death” (Article XXVIII); “the offering of Christ once made, is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction, for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin, but that alone” (Article XXXI).

IV – The Theological Interpretation

When the subject of the Atonement is considered from the historical standpoint the three eras of Athanasius, Anselm, and the Reformation naturally call for special attention.

[For the history, see Cave, *The Scripture Doctrine of Sacrifice*; Crawford, *The Doctrine of the Atonement*; Orr, *The Progress of Dogma*; Mozley, *The Doctrine of the Atonement*.]

Athanasius laid great stress on the moral and spiritual renovation, which resulted from the Incarnation of the Son of God in connection with His Death on the Cross. Anselm laid emphasis on the profound truth of the satisfaction offered to God as caused by the outrage of sin. The Reformation naturally dealt with this subject in connection with its emphasis on the work of Christ and the direct application of redemption to the individual soul. [Most modern writers criticise with great severity the early idea of a ransom being paid to Satan. It would be well, however, if while rightly criticizing and rejecting this view, care were taken to disentangle the truth from the error, and to endeavour to discover the profound reality intended by the conception. It may fairly be argued that the great minds who occupied themselves with this thought were not wholly ignorant of some of the modern implications. A book that endeavours to do justice to this thought, while rightly indicating the error associated with it, is Dimock’s *The Death of Christ*.]

Leaving, however, the historical development of this doctrine, it seems essential to consider it in the light of modern thought, which follows two main lines, subjective and

objective. These are the two classes into which all theories of the Atonement can be divided.

A – Subjective

This is concerned with the Atonement as directed towards man, and from this standpoint the work of Christ is to be understood as a revelation of Divine Love to elicit our repentance. In Ritschl, the Atonement is a test of fidelity to God; with Bushnell it is expressive of God's sympathy; in Maurice and Robertson it is indicative of the surrender of Christ; in McLeod Campbell and Moberly the Atonement is regarded as vicarious penitence. Thus, in one way or another, the Atonement is a revelation of truth and of the Divine character as Love, which is intended to overcome the fears of the sinner, to assure him of God's friendship, and thereby to incite him to rise to a true life.

All this is, of course, so far accurate and helpful, but in itself it is inadequate and therefore unsatisfactory as a full explanation of the Atonement. The illustration has been given of a man throwing himself into the water from a pier to prove his love, but the mere effect of throwing himself into the water without accomplishing a rescue does not seem to be sufficient. The man who rescues another who is drowning at once proves his love and saves the lost. It may also be pointed out that this theory fails to deal with the reality of sin and to justify forgiveness, since evil is passed over and not brought to an end. When a man has gone headlong into sin for years and then sees the horror of it and changes his life, there is still the stain of sin, its effects upon his character, and its results on others. Then, too, the general weakness of this theory is that there is nothing in it to show how those are affected who are unconscious and cannot respond. There are many on whom such a revelation of Divine love cannot possibly make any impression or elicit any response, such as infants, the insane, and the heathen. Are these to be unsaved because they remain consciously uninfluenced?

Of these various interpretations of the moral theory, that of McLeod Campbell and Moberly is at present most prevalent, and it has received additional support through the Essay in Foundations, by Mr. W. H. Moberly, who therein presented afresh his father's view. It would seem, however, as though the criticism of this interpretation is convincing. Thus, the Archbishop of Armagh, Dr. D'Arcy, has asked how penitence can be vicarious any more than punishment, especially since penitence cannot atone for past sin? [D'Arcy, Christianity and the Supernatural, p. 80.] Nor does it explain why the quality of penitence should culminate in the act of death. Then, too, it gives no account of the New Testament imagery of Ransom, Propitiation, Redemption, nor does it explain how the soul is enabled to break the power of sin. Dr. Armitage Robinson is of opinion that the use made by this theory of the word "penitence" is at once unreal and unfamiliar. ["Does not penitence, we are bound to ask, involve as an indispensable element, self-blame, and not merely the sense of shame? Must not its language be, 'We have sinned...of our own fault'? Love's self-identification with the sinner may go as far as the sense of shame, on the ground of physical relationship (as of mother and child) or of deeply affectionate friendship. It may go as far as self-blame

without losing touch with reality, if it is conscious that further effort on its part might have prevented the shameful issue. But can self-blame be genuine where *ex hypothesi* there has been no responsibility for the sin?" (Journal of Theological Studies, January 1913).] To the same effect are the criticisms of Dr. Denney, who holds that to express the Atonement as penitence is really unthinkable. ["No rhapsodies about love, and no dialectical juggling, will ever make this anything but a contradiction in terms. It is a thoroughly false way of describing a familiar fact, which has, no doubt, its significance for the Atonement, though it does not exhaust it... resolved the Atonement into 'a perfect lesson in humanity to the judgment of God on the sin of man'; a response to God which has in it all the elements of a perfect repentance – a perfect sorrow – a perfect contrition – all excepting the personal consciousness of sin.' The exception, it may be said, destroys the theory" (British Weekly).] Indeed, it may be said without much question that such a theory changes the entire meaning of the word "penitence," and involves an utter contradiction.* When Dr. Moberly's book first appeared a similar criticism was made. [H. G. Grey, Introduction to Dimock, *The Death of Christ* (Second Edition); Clow, *The Cross in Christian Experience* (p. 319): "Moberly calls the Incarnation the crucial doctrine. Mark how he gives his case away even in his adjective."] Not least of all, this view cannot find any real foundation in the passages of the New Testament dealing with the Atonement.

[The most recent searching and conclusive criticism of this view, while preserving all its truly valuable features, is "The Vicarious Penitence of Christ," by Dr. H. R. Mackintosh in *The Expositor*, Eighth Series, Vol. XI, p. 81 (February 1916)]

["The theory – unless the whole meaning of the word penitence is altered – is a contradiction in terms. An infinite repentance is performed to avert an infinite penitence. The repentance is for human sin. The repentance is by Him who knew no sin. The guilt is incurred by the human race, and the availing repentance takes place in the guiltless Jesus. How can this be? What element of penitence can enter into the mind of One who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth? One of the most extraordinary passages in theology is that of Mcleod Campbell, when he says that our Lord's mind had 'all the elements of a perfect repentance in humanity, for all the sin of man – a perfect sorrow – a perfect contrition – all the elements of such a repentance, and that in absolute perfection – all excepting the personal consciousness of sin.' Need we point out that the exception is the very essence of the whole? Where there is no personal consciousness of sin, penitence is impossible. Contrition is the sign of an inner change from evil to good. How can such a change take place in the Eternal son?" (Church Family Newspaper).]

B – Objective

This is concerned with the Atonement as directed towards God, and the work of Christ is to be understood as a revelation of Divine righteousness and grace to convict and convert. On this view the Atonement includes three great truths.

1. The Manifestation of Divine Character. – The Death of Christ is a demonstration of God’s righteousness, God’s holiness, God’s love. Very few modern books give any true consideration to a crucial passage like Rom. 3:21–26, where the Cross is shown to be the revelation and vindication of righteousness. Pardon, according to the New Testament, is based on justice as well as mercy. [One of the most useful books discussing the legal aspects of the Atonement is *Law and the Cross*, by Dr. C. F. Creighton. The value of the book is largely due to the fact that it consists of Addresses to Lawyers, Students, and Professors, at College and Law Schools (Eaton & Mains, New York).]

2. The Vindication of Divine Law. – Is not Christ’s Death in some way “penal”? Retribution is in the very constitution of the universe, and on this view God in Christ bears the “penalty”. And yet it has been well pointed out that the transference is not of guilt, or of moral turpitude, but simply of legal liability. [Bruce, *The Humiliation of Christ*, p. 316.] It is surely in this sense that the Death of Jesus Christ is “vicarious”; otherwise what meaning can be attached to that term? If we are not to be allowed to speak of vicarious punishment, why may we speak of vicarious suffering? What is the precise meaning and value of “vicarious”?

3. The Foundation of Divine Pardon. – It is sometimes urged that as human forgiveness does not need an atonement, God’s pardon should be regarded as equally independent of any such sacrifice as is now being considered. But this is to overlook the essential feature of all forgiveness, which means that the one who pardons really accepts the results of the wrong done to him in order that he may exempt the other from any punishment. Thus, as it has been well illustrated, when a man cancels a debt, he of necessity loses the amount, and if he pardons an insult or a blow, he accepts in his own person the injury done in either case. So that human pardon may be said to cancel at its own expense any wrong done, and this principle of the innocent suffering for the guilty is the fundamental truth of the Atonement. It is, therefore, urged with great force that every act of forgiveness is really an Act of Atonement, and thus human forgiveness, so far from obviating the necessity of Divine Atonement, really illuminates, vindicates and necessitates the Divine pardon, for “forgiveness is mercy which has first satisfied the principle of justice.” It is on this ground we hold that Christ’s Death made it possible for God to forgive sin. What His justice demanded His love provided. This fact of the Death of Jesus Christ as the foundation of pardon is unchallengeable in the New Testament. Repentance cannot undo the past; it can only affect the future, and any religion which does not begin with deliverance can never be a success as a discipline. Christ spoke of and dealt with the fact of deformity as well as of growth. “That we being delivered...might serve.” [In various forms this is the essential view of Dale, Denney, Forsyth, and Simpson.]

The value of this view is that it keeps close to the New Testament and gives a satisfying explanation of such words as Redemption, Propitiation, Reconciliation, Substitution, Representation, Identification, Satisfaction. It appeals not only to the heart, but also to the conscience, and is based at once on absolute righteousness and

on the power of Divine grace to undo sin. This is also in harmony with the deepest needs of human nature.

Thus, the Atonement means that God in the Person of His Eternal Son took upon Himself in vicarious death the sin of the whole world. The offer of mercy is made to everyone, since there is no sinner for whom Christ did not die, and every sin, past, present, and future, is regarded as laid on and borne by Him.

[“This, then, is the New Testament doctrine of Atonement, that He whose office it had ever been to reveal the mind of the Father, and who had assumed human form, having passed through this mortal life without sin, and being, therefore, non-amenable to any penalty decreed upon transgression, had voluntarily submitted to that curse of death, with all its mystery of meaning, including the sense of the Divine withdrawal, which He had Himself announced and that submission rendered the forgiveness of sins possible to man” (Cave, ut supra, p. 324).]

V – Practical Observations

1. The true idea of the Atonement is wide and inclusive, and danger lies in limiting it to one explanation. We need at least the four ideas of the representation of the sinner before God: the substitution of the Saviour for the sinner; the identification of the sinner with his Saviour; and the revelation of God in Christ to the sinner. Thus, if only the objective view is accepted as fundamental, there is no reason whatever why all that is true in the subjective theories should not also be accepted as the natural sequel and consequence. As Priest, Christ is our Representative, but as Sacrifice He is of necessity our Substitute. [Bruce, ut supra, p. 307.] If, therefore, as Birks points out, sin were only debt, substitution would be all that was necessary, while if sin were only disease, no atonement but only healing would be required.

“A Creed in which there is no substitution and a Creed in which there is nothing but substitution depart equally on opposite sides from the truth of God.” [T. R. Birks, *Difficulties of Belief*, pp. 176, 179.]

Three aspects of truth should always be included in the true view of the Atonement:

- (a) The removal of sin by expiation;
- (b) the removal of enmity by means of the moral and spiritual dynamic of the indwelling Christ;
- (c) the provision and guarantee of fellowship with Christ by means of our oneness with Him.

Then, too, the word “for”, by reason of its ambiguity, necessarily includes several aspects.

(1) It means Representation. This can be illustrated by the position of a Member of Parliament, or an advocate in a court of law. David may be said to have represented Israel in his fight with Goliath (1 Sam. 17), while we read of the elders representing the people (Lev. 4:15), and princes standing for the entire nation (Josh. 9:11).

(2) It means Exact Substitution. This is the literal idea of the term “vicarious,” and may be illustrated by the well-known instance of a substitute in military service. Scripture has similar instances of exact substitution, as the ram for Isaac (Gen. 22:13); Judah for Benjamin (Gen. 44:33); the Levites for the firstborn (Numb. 3:2); David for Absalom (2 Sam. 18:33); and Paul for Onesimus (Philem. 5:17).

(3) It means Equivalent Substitution. This is to be distinguished from identical or exact substitution, for as it has been illustrated, a man who rescues another from drowning does not substitute himself by being drowned instead, but does what the other is incapable of doing. This is the meaning of the ransom (Lev. 25:47–49), and is illustrated by the payment made for Richard Coeur de Lion in Austria. It is the second of these two ideas of substitution that applies to the Atoning Sacrifice of Christ, and it is obvious that everything depends upon the power of the substitute and the adequacy of his work. No man could accomplish this task; it must be done by someone who is capable of rescuing the whole of humanity, because he himself is more than man. [For a fuller treatment of these various aspects see Girdlestone, *The Faith of the Centuries*, pp. 200–202.]

2. No theory can be satisfactory which does not include and account fully for three factors.

(a) The adequate exegesis of the New Testament teaching both Godward and manward. The true doctrine will never be realised unless it is approached first from the Godward side, as in the New Testament. Every theory must start here or else it will inevitably go wrong. “God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.” The key is found in Rom. 3:25 in which the Divine propitiation is shown to vindicate the Divine righteousness. It is this that warrants the bold and yet true statement that the Atonement was offered by God to God. [By Forsyth. See his books, *passim*.] This is the only feeling that satisfies men who are oppressed with sin. Repentance never suffices. There is always some demand for satisfaction and restitution. Man’s inner sense of rectitude requires that vindication of the Divine law of righteousness be made. Man inevitably feels that God must necessarily demand from Himself that which He requires of man, the vindication of His own righteousness, and the supreme value of the Cross of Christ is that it at once vindicates God’s righteousness, and assures of Divine pardon. It is scarcely possible to exaggerate the importance of insisting upon the fullest, clearest interpretation of all the New Testament passages dealing with the Atonement.

[“There have been conspicuous examples of essays and even treatises on the Atonement standing in no discoverable relation to the New Testament” (Denney, *The Death of Christ*, Preface). “One may, or may not accept the teaching of the New

Testament, but it is at any rate due to intellectual honesty to recognise what that teaching is” (Law, *The Tests of Life*, p. 163). “We must find a theory that will harmonise with everything that comes under New Testament authority” (Creighton, *Law and the Cross*, p. 25.)

(b) The proper interpretation of the Old Testament sacrificial system. Our familiarity with the New Testament tends to make us forget that sacrificial terms and phrases are stated without explanation, and for these it is essential to go back to the Old Testament.

“The institutions of the Old Testament are to a large extent a dictionary in which I learn the true sense of the language of the New.” [Dale, *Jewish Temple and Christian Church*, p. 146.]

(c) The full meaning of Christian Experience. – There can be no doubt that one of the great essentials is a working theory adequate for the experience of ordinary men and women. In all ages the truth that “Jesus died for me” has adequately met and perfectly satisfied the conscience of the sinner, and it will always remain the test of a satisfying doctrine of the Atonement that it meets the demand for peace with God and assures the conscience burdened with sin and guilt. [“This, therefore, must be the test of a satisfactory doctrine of atonement still, viz. its power to sustain the consciousness of peace with God under the heaviest strain which can be put upon it from the sense of guilt, and of the condition which guilt entails” (Orr, *The Progress of Dogma*, p. 235). “Explain it how you will, it yet remains true, and while human nature continues what it is, it will always remain true that no religion will satisfy the heart of man which does not turn upon the presentation of an offering for sin” (Simpson, *Christus Crucifixus*, p. 207)] The idea of substitution has given such unflinching comfort that it cannot be regarded as ethically wrong.* It is, of course, impossible to explain it fully, and no one really believes that the Death of Jesus Christ was demanded by the anger of God. On the contrary, God gave Jesus Christ because before He gave He loved the world. We cannot help speaking in terms of earthly justice by referring to penalties and satisfaction, but we know that the righteousness of God is not contradictory of, but in full harmony with, His love. Yet Jesus Christ died, the just for the unjust, shedding His blood for the remission of sin, and when conscience is aroused in a man the only antidote to despair is the Cross. [A striking testimony to this fact of experience, that a man’s conscience when awakened cannot accept God’s love without atonement, will be found in Falconer, *The Unfinished Symphony*, telling of a conversation with the late Professor Pfeleiderer, who asked for an actual instance. On one being given, Pfeleiderer replied: “If a doctrine really meets a deep human need it must be true” (pp. 243–245).] To those to whom the use of the word “satisfaction” is objectionable it may be said that so long as the truth enshrined in it is emphasised the word itself counts for very little. “If the disuse of a word would reconcile thoughtful men to the truth intended to be conveyed, one might easily forget it.” [Bruce, *ut supra*, p. 316.] All that is desired is that the conscience and heart of a man convicted of sin shall find perfect rest and peace, and apparently this is impossible apart from the acceptance of a Saviour Whose death was at once a vindication of righteousness and a guarantee of pardon.

“We cannot in any theology which is duly ethicised dispense with the word ‘satisfaction’.” [Forsyth, *The Cruciality of the Cross*, p. 214.]

[“Even if the doctrine of penal substitution be regarded as only one among several possible theories, we cannot but appreciate the intensity of the moral earnestness which it presupposed, and also its singular adaptation to meet a deep religious need. It has been criticised as unethical; but it may be doubted if a more splendid tribute was ever paid to the dignity and the claims of the moral law than in the conception that sin is so awful an evil and so shameful a scandal, and that it so entirely merits the extremity of punishment, that it was impossible for God to forgive it in the exercise of a paternal indulgence – that, on the contrary, mercy could only come into play when the appalling guilt had been expiated in the death of the Son of God, who was also the representative of mankind. Regarded merely as a measure of the conception formed of the heinousness of sin, it has no parallel in point of moral earnestness in the speculative thinking of the schools. It is no less obvious that it met an intellectual need of the religious life. We feel more sure of the Divine mercy if we think that we perceive the grounds on which God acted, and by which He was enabled to act, in the dispensation of mercy. The believing soul feels more sure that God forgives for Christ’s sake...There is no theory which is so intelligible as the theory of penal substitution; and there is no religious message which has brought the same peace and solace to those who have realised the sinfulness of sin, and the menace of the retributive forces of the Divine government, as the conception that the penalty due to sin was borne by the crucified Saviour, and that the guilty may be covered by the robe of His imputed righteousness” (Paterson, *The Rule of Faith*, p. 285 f.).]

3. In view of the difficulties connected with this subject some suggestions may fitly be made.

(a) There are scientific difficulties. With the evolutionary theory of man’s origin and nature there seems to be no room for sin, and therefore there can be no room for the Atonement. It is sometimes said that there is no trace of a Fall in nature, and this is, of course, true of physical nature, and it is not to be expected. But what about moral nature? What of the sense of guilt and responsibility? Surely this is a fact in the moral universe. In a recent work, [Stuart McDowall, *Evolution of Atonement*, with Preface by Bishop H. E. Ryle, Dean of Westminster.] the author argues that evolution has really emphasised the need of atonement, but he is careful to insist upon the fact that the doctrine of evolution does not admit of any outsider entering in, so that a theory of substitution which seems to require the entrance of such an outsider is rejected. Such a view seems to come under the condemnation already expressed, that “there have been conspicuous examples of essays, and even treatises on the Atonement standing in no discoverable relation to the New Testament.” If, as one critic [Dr. Hastings in *Expository Times*.] of this book remarked, human thought is moving in the direction of identification rather than simple substitution, yet since, as he proceeds to say, such identification may undoubtedly involve some form or degree of substitution, the theory

of the book will certainly be destroyed. It seems impossible, on any fair statement of the theory of evolution, and on any proper exegesis of the New Testament view of sin and atonement, to explain the Atonement by evolution. Evolution cannot give an ethical basis for a theory of sin, and therefore all definitions of sin furnished by it are at the least defective. Sin concerns the relation of man to God, involving separation from God, and this can never be explained adequately in terms of evolution. It is no case merely of being hindered in upward progress, but, what is much more serious, the consciousness of being alienated from God through sin, for which we are responsible.

Then, too, from a scientific standpoint man's littleness is used as an argument against the thought of the Son of God coming down to redeem him. It is suggested that for such a speck in the universe it would be unworthy and unthinkable of God so to act, but in reply to this it may be at once said that even in nature the value of things is not judged by their size, and for this reason it is impossible to argue fairly from man's relative insignificance in the universe. This would apply equally to the conception of any revelation of God quite apart from the thought of Atonement. On every ground, therefore, we maintain the New Testament position, and notwithstanding all scientific theories which seem to run counter to it we must continue to teach the great realities of sin and redemption.

(b) There are theological difficulties. For many years past there has been in certain quarters a tendency to preach mainly about the Incarnation. But this is not the Gospel. In the New Testament the heart of Christianity is found in the grace of Christ, and recent theological thought has been bringing us back to a truer perspective in which we are enabled to see much more clearly than before the centrality of Calvary. [It is the supreme merit of Denney, Forsyth, and Simpson that they are recalling thought to the right direction. And the recent little volume by Mozley confirms this general line and justifies what the author said a few years ago: "It cannot be said too often that the Cross, not the manger, Calvary, not Bethlehem, is the heart of the New Testament. In England the influence of Dr. Westcott, from Cambridge, and of the Anglo-Catholic successors of the Tractarians, from Oxford, combined, has tended in the opposite direction. In the writer's judgment it is a perilous course to throw the doctrine of propitiatory atonement to the wolves of Rationalism, while yet believing that the Incarnation can be preserved in its integrity; and it is a course against which the New Testament, as he reads it, stands opposed" (Mozley, Review in Record).]

It is also sometimes argued that there is no real reason for the Atonement, since God can hardly be different from man, who is willing to forgive on simple repentance. But we have already seen the essential identity of Divine and human forgiveness, and it may also be answered that the relations between man and man have vital differences compared with those between God and man. In the latter there are governmental as well as personal aspects, and the fact that righteousness is in the very constitution of the universe seems to suggest the impossibility of God overlooking sin, especially with its many and terrible consequences, on the profession of repentance, however genuine. [Mabie, *Under the Redeeming Ægis*, passim.]

(c) There are also moral difficulties. The offence of the Cross has not yet ceased, and it is either a “stumbling-block” or “foolishness” to many today. It is possible to preach the Incarnation in such a way as to exalt human nature. It is possible to proclaim the Trinity in a way to interest, and even please, reason. But the preaching of the Cross tends to humble and even humiliate human nature, because it requires submission to a crucified Saviour. And yet it is the Cross which is the Christian Gospel. If it be said that God is Love, and therefore will deal gently with sinners; if it be said that God is merciful, and therefore will show mercy to the wandering; if it be said that God is Father, and therefore will be pitiful to His erring children – the answer is that the facts are true, but the inferences are wrong, because this is not the Gospel. It leaves out Christ. God is Love; God is merciful; God is Father, but not apart from Christ. “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:10).

Further, this attitude leaves out sin, and yet it is only when we see sin in the light of the Cross that we ever get adequate views of its reality and enormity. If God’s forgiveness can be declared and bestowed apart from the Atonement, we cannot explain Christ’s death at all. Sin is a momentous fact, and Fatherhood is not the only attitude of God to us. He is a Law-giver, Judge, and Ruler, and cannot be indifferent to sin. These elements are all included in the Divine Fatherhood, which is always moral and righteous. The only adjectives used by Jesus Christ of the Father were “holy” and “righteous” (John 17:11, 25). And so it is essential to emphasise the Cross. We must not proclaim the Cross without Christ, the work without the Person; nor must we proclaim Christ without the Cross, the Person without the work; we must not proclaim the substitutionary work without its practical bearing; nor must we proclaim the practical side without the vicarious element. The New Testament teaches the two sides, the objective reality of the vicarious sacrifice and the subjective power in the life of the believer. Christ saves, sanctifies, satisfies. [“There is little doubt that the sympathetic tendency is the more popular today, and to press salvation in a real sense is to be accused of a reactionary bias to theology. But a God who is merely or mainly sympathetic is not the Christian God. The Father of an infinite benediction is not the Father of an Infinite Grace” (Forsyth, *ut supra*, p. 5 8). “If we spoke less about God’s love and more about His holiness, more about His judgment, we should say much more when we did speak of His love...It is round this sanctuary that the great camp is set and the great battle really waged. Questions about immanence may concern philosophers, and questions about miracles may agitate physicists. But the great dividing issue for the soul is neither the Bethlehem cradle, nor the empty grave, nor the Bible, nor the social question. For the Church at least (however it may be with individuals), it is the question of a redeeming atonement. It is here that the evangelical issue lies” (Forsyth, *ut supra*, p. 73).]

Article III

Of the going down of Christ into Hell.

As Christ died for us, and was buried, so also it is to be believed that He went down into hell.

De Decensu Christi ad Inferos.

Quemadmodum Christus pro nobis mortuus est, et sepultus, ita est etiam credendus ad inferos descendisse.

Important Equivalent.

Into hell = *ad inferos*.

History

This Article was derived from the Augsburg Confession in which the statement was incorporated with the Article, *De Filio Dei*. It is natural to enquire why the subject should be so prominent as to have one Article devoted to it. This is probably due to the fact that the Article in its present form is the remainder of the Article of 1553, which had a reference to the spirits in prison (1 Pet. 3:19). This was omitted in 1563. The actual wording of the original portion was as follows:

“Nam corpus usque ad resurrectionem in sepulchro jacuit, Spiritus ab illo emissus, cum spiritibus qui in carcere sive in inferno detinebantur, fuit, illisque praedicavit: quemadmodum testatur Petri locus.”

(“For the body lay in the sepulchre until the resurrection: but His Spirit departing from Him, was with the Spirits that were in prison, or in hell, and did preach to the same: as the place of Peter doth testify.”)

These words were written by Cranmer, and actually signed by the Royal Chaplains, but at the last moment they were omitted before the publication of the Articles. In 1553 there was some acute controversy on the subject, and it is probable that this was the cause of the omission of the latter part of the Article in 1563. [Micronius wrote to Bullinger from London, 20th May 1550: “They are disputing about the descent of Christ into hell” (Original Letters, Vol. II, p. 561). The Bishop of Exeter also alludes to the same subject: “There have been in my Diocese great invectives between the preachers one against the other” (Strype, Annals, I, p. 348). (See Hardwick, History of the Articles of Religion, pp. 98, 137).] Between 1553 and 1563 there was evidently a tendency to a greater moderation of statement on questions connected with the future, and it is impossible to dissociate this omission from the entire omission of the Eschatological Articles, XLI and XLII of 1553. Yet, even after 1563, the subject

continued to be discussed, for in 1597, Bishop Bilson maintained that Christ descended to the lowest hell, there to triumph over Satan in his own dominions.

I – The Meaning Of The Word “Hell”

It is important to pay special attention to the various words associated with this subject. The Latin equivalent for “into hell” is *ad inferos*, “to those below,” *inferi* being the Latin equivalent of *εν-εροι, εν-ερα(γη)*, meaning “subterranean”. The English word “hell” is derived from the Anglo-Saxon *hellan*, “to cover,” meaning the “unseen” or “covered” place. It is thus the exact equivalent of Hades, *άδης*. Unfortunately, however, the word is now used with two different meanings.

1. The Greek Hades corresponds to the Sheol of the Old Testament. It is translated “hell,” as meaning the place of punishment, twelve times in the New Testament, and “hell,” as meaning the place of departed spirits without any reference to personal character, eleven times. It thus seems to be a general term for the unseen world. It includes the souls of the righteous as well as of the wicked, though these are separated by “a great gulf fixed” (1 Sam. 28:19; Luke 16:23, 26). In the Old Testament Hades is placed in antithesis with heaven: “It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell: what canst thou know?” (Job 11:8). It may or may not be significant that the entrance to one is always a going down, the other always a going up. To ascend to Sheol or to descend to heaven is never mentioned in Scripture. Then, too, Hades is never spoken of as the permanent abode of the righteous. Rather it is a place of gloom, out of which they are in constant expectation of a translation into the brightness of heaven (Ps. 49:15, 16:10). And it is significant that after Christ’s triumphal resurrection Hades seems to fade out of the believer’s horizon, and is not used to describe the place for the soul of a believer after the death of Christ.

2. Gehenna. – Quite literally this was the Valley of Hinnom, where malefactors and offal were cast, and from its perpetual fires it became the synonym for everlasting punishment (Josh. 15:8; 2 Kings 23:10; Jer. 7:31). The word is easily identified by English readers of the New Testament, since it is invariably associated with fire, or judgment (Mat. 5:22, 10:28; Jas. 3:6). It occurs twelve times. Gehenna seems to be the abode reserved for the ungodly after the final judgment.

3. Tartarus. – This is found only once, and as a verb (2 Pet. 2:4). It seems to answer to the “deep” or “abyss” (Luke 8:31; Rev. 9:11), and to indicate the place of detention for fallen angels and wicked spirits until their final doom.

4. Paradise. – The word means literally “a pleasure park,” and is found only three times in the New Testament (Luke 23:43; 2 Cor. 12:4; Rev. 2:7). A corresponding word occurs three times in the Old Testament in a secular sense, meaning a “grove” or “forest” (Neh. 2:8; Eccl. 2:5; Song 4:13).

II – The Fact Of The Descent Into Hell

Various passages of Scripture have been used in this connection.

1. Luke 23:43. – The malefactor asked for future blessing and received assurance of immediate happiness. This is the first time that Paradise is mentioned in the Bible in a religious connection. But it is not at all clear that we are justified in using this passage in support of our Lord's descent into Hades. Certainly the passage was never used in early days in this connection, and it is probably best to distinguish clearly between Hades and paradise. A man in the "third heaven" or "paradise" could hardly be in Hades at the same time, and it would seem in every way best to identify paradise with heaven (Rev. 2:7). There does not seem to be any real warrant for supposing that the Jews regarded paradise as a part of Hades.

[Muller, *The Christian Doctrine of Sin*, Bk. IV, Ch. II, Section 6; Dorner, *System of Christian Doctrine*, Section 153 (English Edition): "Paradise indeed is certainly not Hades"; Salmond, Article, "Paradise" in *Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible*: "It is not clear that the lower Paradise was ever conceived to be in the underworld, or that the happy side of Hades was called by that name."]

2. Acts 2:27–31. – See Psalm 16:10. – This is the only clear passage on the subject, and it will be noticed that it simply states the fact without giving any idea as to the meaning or purpose.

3. Eph. 4:9. – There are two views of this passage, some interpreting it of our Lord's descent to earth in the Incarnation, and others of a descent into the unseen world. The passage is a quotation from Ps. 68:18, and the captives to whom the Apostle alludes seem more natural as inhabitants of the unseen world. The quotation refers to some gracious act, and is in close connection with a passage referring to gifts of ministry.

4. 1 Pet. 3:6. – This passage is sometimes used to support the belief in the fact of our Lord's descent into Hades, and its continuance as the Epistle for Easter Eve is thought to confirm this view. But as the passage was deliberately omitted from this Article in 1563, it is obvious that we have no right to use it here or in connection with the similar statement in the Creed. We are bound by the fact of a descent, and not by any particular interpretation of it. Before this omission the descent into Hades could only have been accepted by those who took this view of the present passage. But now we are certainly free, if necessary, from any obligation to interpret it in this way. [If it is permissible to argue elsewhere from omissions, as is frequently done in connection with prayers for the dead in Article XXII, it is certainly allowable to use similar arguments here.]

III – The Meaning Of The Descent Into Hell

Opinions have widely, differed in regard to the purpose of our Lord's descent into the unseen world. The earliest commentator on the Articles, Rogers, has only a brief note expressive of the variety of interpretations:—

“That Christ went down into hell all sound Christians, both in former days and now living, do acknowledge; howbeit in the interpretation of the Article there is not that consent as were to be wished.” [The Catholic Doctrine of the Church of England, p. 60.]

The fact of the descent is clear from Acts 2:25–31, and the main difference of opinion in regard to its purpose largely turns upon the sense given to the word “hell.”

1. Some, like Calvin, regard the meaning as implying that the soul of Christ went to the place of punishment, and that there He suffered “the dreadful torments of a person condemned and irretrievably lost.” [Calvin, Inst., Bk. II, Ch. XVI, Section 10.] This would be for the purpose of being our Saviour, that He might drink of the cup of Divine wrath against sin to the very dregs, and thereby become more perfectly the sinner's substitute, but when the word “hell” is properly interpreted of “Hades” and not of “Gehenna”, this view, though prompted by a true desire to express completely our Lord's redemptive work, is at once and necessarily set aside. Yet it is interesting to notice that this view was held in general by Bishop Beveridge. [On the Articles, pp. 126–137.]

2. Others identify the descent with the burial, considering the phrase equivalent to the former one, “He was buried.” There is some reason to think that this was the view held by Rufinus of Aquileia, in connection with whom the Article is found in the Creed. But whether this was so or not, the Article cannot possibly have this meaning, since it clearly distinguishes between the burial and the descent. Further, there seems no doubt that the Hebrew “Sheol” ought never to be translated “grave,” for it appears invariably to mean the unseen world as distinct from both heaven and hell (considered as the place of final punishment).

3. It has also been interpreted to mean the descent into hell, properly so called, considered as a place of punishment, for the purpose of triumphing over Satan and his powers in their own dominions, Col. 2:15 being quoted in support of this view. But this is, at any rate, an inadequate, if not an inaccurate, interpretation of the passage, and it is difficult to see why our Lord should have done more than He had already accomplished on the Cross.

“Why should He descend to hell to triumph there over them over whom He had already triumphed on the Cross? Why should He go to lead captive those whom He was to captivate when He ascended into heaven?” [Pearson, On the Creed.]

4. The best, and indeed the only, possible interpretation is that the doctrine results from our Lord's oneness with us at this, as at every other point. This would seem to be the real meaning of its place in the Creed, and therefore in the Article. Our Lord is considered to have satisfied every condition of manhood "for us and for our salvation." He was born, He grew, He lived, He died, His body was buried, His Spirit went into the unseen world to await resurrection, He was raised, and He ascended. Thus, both the Creed and Article emphasise the fact, and thereby testify to the reality of His work on our behalf.

"As it stands it completes our conception of the Lord's Death. To our minds death is the separation of body and soul. According to this conception Christ in dying shared to the full our lot. His Body was laid in the tomb. His Soul passed into that state on which we conceive that our souls shall enter. He has won for God and hallowed every condition of human existence. We cannot be where He has not been. He bore our nature as living: He bore our nature as dead." [Westcott, *The Historic Faith*, p. 76 f.]

IV – The History Of The Doctrine

1. The clause, "He descended into hell," is not found in an Eastern Creed, and, indeed, the first Creed of any kind which contains it is apparently an Arian Creed, accepted at Ariminum, 359, a Latin Creed known to us through the Greek version in Socrates' Ecclesiastical History. The wording is interesting: "Was crucified, and died, and descended into hell, and disposed of the matters there; at sight of Whom the doorkeepers of Hades did tremble." The suggestion has been made that the clause may have been inserted in this Creed "the more effectually to blind the eyes of the orthodox." [Heurtley, *Harmonia Symbolica*, p. 134.] But it was not until about 400 that the Article is found in a Baptismal Creed in connection with the Church of Aquileia. Rufinus says that at that time the clause was not in the Creed of the Roman Church. So that we have this curious combination: in the Nicene Creed there is the statement of the burial, not the descent; in the Athanasian the descent, not the burial; in the Apostles' Creed there are both. It was only gradually accepted, and then mainly through the writings of Augustine. In the seventh century occurs probably for the first time the form, *descendit ad inferos*, and after this the two forms are found. In the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States the phrase is optional, and a rubric states the interpretation to be: "He descended into the place of departed spirits."

2. The fact of the descent, although not found in a Creed until the fifth century, was, nevertheless, used definitely in connection with the heresy of Apollinarius. It afforded clear proof that our Lord possessed a human soul, since this alone could have descended into the unseen world. It is therefore curious that this article should occur in an Arian Creed before it appeared in an orthodox one, and it is for this reason that the suggestion has been made that the Arian profession was intended to distract attention from the error of the real question between them and the Church in regard to our Lord's essential deity.

3. It is, however, most noteworthy that much earlier than these credal statements a belief in a descent into Hades was widely adopted. It was already developed in the second and third centuries, and, indeed, the belief may be regarded as unanimous, though there was great difference of opinion as to its meaning and purpose. [Moule, *Outlines of Christian Doctrine*, p. 96; Gibson, *The Thirty-nine Articles*, 175.]

4. But it is important to notice that notwithstanding this widespread and detailed reference to the descent into hell, there does not seem to have been any thought of a purgatory, or of a fresh opportunity for those who had left the earth without the acceptance of Christ. [Moule, *ut supra*, p. 97.]

V – The Descent Into Hell And The Intermediate State

Much attention has been called of late to the doctrine of an intermediate state between death and judgment, and although this doctrine is not based on the Article or the Creed, it seems necessary to consider it. While, as we have seen, the Church no longer binds us to associate 1 Pet. 3:19 with this doctrine, yet because the passage is found as the Epistle for Easter Eve it is often said that usage still indicates the Church interpretation of that passage. There can be no doubt that this was the general view of the Reformers, as seen in contemporary documents.* It will be noticed, however, that these passages for the most part state only the fact that our Lord's Spirit descended into the unseen world. It is well known that the passage is one of very great difficulty, and it is natural to enquire what Christ did in those regions of death. Looking at the passage as a whole (1 Pet. 3:18–4:6) there seem to be two important and distinct parts of His work. He made a proclamation to the imprisoned antediluvian souls (3:18–21), and He liberated those spirits of the righteous, who through fear of death had all their lifetime been subject to bondage (4:1–6). In regard to the former of these acts there are grave differences of opinion as to the identity of "the spirits in prison." The word "prison," which has evil associations, should be noted, and it is also significant that the word "spirit" is never used elsewhere to describe human beings. Then, too, the word "preached" is not the usual term for the Gospel, but indicates the proclamation of a herald. It would seem, therefore, that our Lord proclaimed His victory to "the spirits in prison," and, as the context indicates, thereby proved His supreme authority (ver. 22). But the other commission seems to be quite different. The saints who died before the Incarnation were "prisoners of hope". They were "gathered to their people" (Gen. 25:8), but there does not seem to have been any immediate outlook after death except that which was obscure and depressing. But the death and descent of Christ into Hades wrought a great change for those Old Testament worthies, and no longer do we hear of the abode of the spirits as "down," but as "up," or "away". Such passages seem to indicate the fact that great changes were wrought through the finished redemption of our Lord, that the Sheol of the Old Covenant was emptied of the saints of the former dispensation, and that on our Lord's ascension He carried them with Him in triumph (Heb. 11:40). And then they seem to be described as "the spirits of just men made perfect" (Heb. 12:18, 23); that is, those old Hebrew Christians were now "made perfect," and that with them the New Testament Christians ("the Church") were "brought near". Is it not possible that the widespread belief in the early

Church that our Lord had released the pious souls of the Old Testament saints in Hades and carried them with Him to heaven expressed a great truth? Of course, the extravagant stories added by men's imaginations tended to identify Scriptural truth with human fables, and in the controversies of the sixteenth century it seems pretty clear that the dread of the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory led our Reformers to refrain from giving more thorough attention than they did to the Scriptural doctrine of the descent of Christ into Hades rather than admit any teaching which seemed to favour the *Limbus Patrum* of the Church of Rome. They either ignored the truth of our Lord's having effected any change, or else they allowed themselves to indulge in interpretations which are now seen to be impossible. But we must neither fall into the error of exalting Hades into heaven, nor into the modern danger of reducing heaven to Hades. [I am greatly indebted for the above interpretation to two pamphlets, *The Gospel in Hades*, by the Rev. R. W. Harden (Dublin, Combridge & Co.), and *Hades or Heaven?* by the same author (Dublin, William McGee), where a fuller discussion of the various passages can be seen. For a statement of other interpretations of the passage in Peter's Epistle reference may be made to the present author's *The Apostle Peter* (pp. 222).]

[“Then He truly died, and was truly buried, that by His most sweet sacrifice He might pacify His Father's wrath against mankind, and subdue him by His death who had the authority of death, which was the Devil; forasmuch not only the living but the dead, were they in hell or elsewhere, they all felt the power and force of His death, to whom lying in prison (as Peter saith), Christ preached, though dead in body yet re-lived in spirit” (Catechism of 1554).

“Christum ut corpore in terrae viscera, ita, anima a corpore separata, ad inferos descendisse; simulque etiam mortis sum virtutem, atque, efficacitatem ad mortuos atque inferos adeo ipsos ita penetrasse, ut et incredulorum animae acerbissimam iustissimamque infidelitatis suae damnationem, ipseque inferorum princeps Satanas, tyrannidis suae, et tenebrarum potestatem omnem debilitatam, fractam atque ruina collapsam esse persentiret: contra vero mortui Christo dum vixerunt fidentes, redemptionis suae opus iam peractum esse, eiusque vim atque virtutem cum suauissima certissimaque consolatione, intelligerent atque perciperent” (Nowell's Catechism, 1570).]

It seems necessary to observe that this view of our Lord's having translated the souls of the Old Testament saints by His death is not to be regarded as in any way providing an argument for another opportunity of salvation, or for the doctrines associated with future probation after this life. On the contrary, the passages are to be interpreted strictly in accordance with their context, without drawing from them any doctrine that is not fairly warranted, and in any case, it may be well to bear in mind the solemn words of a great modern writer, and to be content with them –

“It carries light into the tomb. But more than this we dare not say confidently on a mystery where our thought fails and Scripture is silent. The stirring pictures which early Christian fancy drew of Christ's entry into the prison-house of death

to proclaim His victory and lead away the ancient saints as partners of His triumph; or again, to announce the Gospel to those who had not heard it, rest on too precarious a foundation to claim general acceptance. We are sure that the fruits of Christ's work are made available for every man: we are sure that He crowned every act of faith in patriarch or king or prophet or saint with perfect joy; but how and when we know not, and, as far as appears, we have no faculty for knowing. Meanwhile, we cling to the truth which our Creed teaches us. To the old world, to Jew and Gentile alike – and it is a fact too often forgotten – 'the Under World,' Sheol' the place of spirits, was a place of dreary gloom, of conscious and oppressive feebleness. Even this natural fear of the heart Christ has lightened. There is nothing in the fact of death, nothing in the consequences of death, which Christ has not endured for us: He was buried, He descended into Hades, the place of spirits." [Westcott, *ut supra*, p. 77 f.]

There is an extraordinarily strong tradition among the Fathers that Christ descended to the patriarchs and prophets of the Old Dispensation, and preached to them, and bettered their condition. There is no other passage of Holy Scripture from which such a tradition can have originated; and it would therefore seem that the Fathers took it that those mentioned by Peter were but specimens, so to speak, of a class – of those, that is, who had lived and died under the Old Covenant. It may be so. But this is all that can be said. Where Scripture is silent such an inference must be more or less precarious, and though the opinion may appear a probable one, it can only be held (if at all) as a 'pious opinion,' which cannot be pressed upon any as a part of the faith. In any case, it would be rash in the extreme to infer from this passage the possibility of an extension of the day of grace, or an opportunity of repentance beyond the grave, for Christians, whose case is wholly different. It cannot be said that the apostle's words afford the slightest grounds for expecting a second offer of salvation to any of those who have slighted or misused God's revelation made 'in His Son'" (Gibson, *ut supra*, p. 174).

See also Martensen, *Christian Dogmatics*, pp. 316–318; Litton, *Introduction to Dogmatic Theology* (Second Edition), p. 196; C. H. H. Wright, *The Intermediate State*.]