

A THEOLOGICAL  
INTRODUCTION TO THE  
THIRTY-NINE  
ARTICLES  
OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

BY

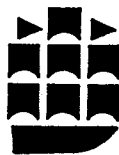
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LATE PROFESSOR OF NEW TESTAMENT EXEGESIS  
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

*Third Edition revised by*

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## PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

SINCE it was first published in 1919 Dr. Bicknell's book has been widely used as a guide to the study of the doctrine of the Church of England. Its qualities are too well known to need description here. Frequent new impressions have now made it necessary to reset the type, and the opportunity has been taken to carry out a revision of the work.

The first aim of the revision has been to construct a new list of books for further reading. The references to theological literature have been found a useful and important feature of the book. If it is to continue to fulfil its author's purpose of acting as a stimulus to wider study its book list must now take account of theological works published in the last thirty years. The new general list has been placed in a form which it is hoped will be found convenient at the end of the volume, and not interspersed, as were the original lists, at the end of sections or paragraphs. On points of detail a number of references will be found in footnotes to the passages concerned. Since the purpose of the general list is to refer the student to books likely to be of most use in the next stage of study it is deliberately selective in character. Room has been made for the newer works in a list of limited scale by the omission of some, but by no means all, of the older authorities. With rare exceptions only books in English (including some translations of foreign works) have been mentioned. A † in the text directs the reader to a section in the list. It is perhaps a sign of the times that more works by non-anglican writers are included than appeared in the original lists. Current doctrinal thinking in the Church of England can hardly be understood and studied without some attention to works coming from outside its borders.

The text itself has been revised on conservative lines. The clear arrangement of the book could not be improved and remains unaltered, but at some points Dr. Bicknell's expositions and discussions have called for reconsideration. In the period since the end of the First Great War new currents of theological thinking have begun to flow strongly and new emphases have appeared at vital points in the system of Christian doctrine. In illustration of this point it is sufficient to mention the revival of interest in the classical theologies of the Reformation period, the powerful neo-Calvinist Movement in dogmatic theology represented by K. Barth and his circle, the new phase of biblical study which is associated with the title 'Biblical Theology', and the increasing interest in problems concerning reunion. Dr Bicknell would certainly not have proceeded on the assumption that the latest work in theology must supersede all that

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has gone before. His mind was too catholic and independent to be swayed uncritically by the most recent fashion in theological thought. If, however, he had lived to revise his book at the present time he would certainly have taken some account of the new trends. In attempting to revise his work I have not engaged in inconclusive speculation about what he would have said. A few paragraphs and sections have been entirely re-written, some paragraphs or notes have been added, and in a number of places the phrasing has been modified. It has usually been a question of restating or further emphasizing a point already contained in the original exposition. On some topics the progress of historical research (as in the history of the Creeds) or the march of contemporary events (as in the section on Church and State) have made revision or additions necessary. The general aim has been to make the book more useful to those who are embarking on theological study in the middle of the twentieth century, without obscuring those qualities of accuracy, clarity, fair balance, and loyalty to the Church of England which have recommended the book to so many for over thirty years.

My thanks are due to the Rev. H. E. J. Cowdrey, Tutor of S. Stephen's House, Oxford, for compiling the index and for assistance in the final reading of the proofs.

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## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

A NEW book upon the Thirty-nine Articles by an author entirely unknown requires an apology. I can only plead that it is an attempt to meet a need openly expressed on all sides by those engaged in the teaching of theology, for a book on new and broad lines. My excuse for undertaking the task is that no one is likely to do so who has not been engaged in lecturing on the Articles, and the number of such is small. The book is intended in the first instance for students, but it is hoped that large portions of it may be found useful by ordinary men and women who are prepared to make an effort to understand Christian doctrine. It makes no claim to originality of thought, but contains a large amount of material collected from various sources into a single volume for the first time.

Proposals have recently been made that the teaching of doctrine in our Theological Colleges should no longer be centred in the Articles. They would then be treated presumably only as a historical document, illustrative of the course of the Reformation in England. However desirable such a reform may be in itself, there are grave difficulties in the way. Not only are all candidates for ordination required to give a general assent to the Articles, but the course at Theological Colleges is of necessity guided by Bishops' examinations. At present these proposals would hardly win acceptance in all dioceses. Moreover, though certain Articles deal with questions that in their old form have no interest for the modern mind, the majority deal with those fundamental problems of theology that are debated anew in every age. Since in certain instances such Articles represent the typical attitude of the Church of England towards such problems, their statements have more than a bare historical interest. These considerations have shaped the arrangement of the book. Like the Articles themselves, it is a compromise. The general scheme of treatment is based on the Articles, but the Articles themselves are grouped quite freely according to subject matter. The reader is asked to study the analysis in order to grasp the principles of this grouping. I would suggest that by this arrangement a minimum of attention need be devoted to obsolete or unimportant details.

Any teacher of theology to-day is faced with a multitude of perplexities due to the increase of modern knowledge. In treating of any subject, it is difficult to know where to make a beginning. All statements of doctrine involve a host of assumptions, philosophical and critical. In a book of this kind these assumptions cannot always be indicated, still less defended. If, for instance, I do not mention 'pluralism', it is not because the theory is unimportant or unknown,

but because I have deliberately rejected it alike on philosophical and Christian grounds. Again, on critical grounds, I accept the authenticity of all the Pauline Epistles, including the Pastorals. Those who disagree with me on this point will need to modify, let us say, the conclusions that are drawn from the Pastoral Epistles in regard to the early ministry of the Church. The old method of 'proof-texts' is gone for ever. It is no longer enough to quote a sentence of Scripture in order to prove the truth of a dogmatic statement. We have rightly come to see that not only is the context all important, but that we must look behind the letter of the text to the mind of the author. We must strive to reconstruct his mental outlook and to test his sources of information. The existence of the Synoptic problem makes it hazardous to lay undue stress on the precise form in which our Lord's words are recorded in any particular Gospel. The evidence of S. John's Gospel is more complex. Personally I have come to believe that on the historical side it gives a more accurate chronological account of certain details of our Lord's life than the Synoptists. Even in the discourses, however much they may be coloured by the lifelong meditation of the Evangelist, I would maintain that we have far more of our Lord's words in their original form than many critics have supposed. At least I would plead that they represent an essential element in His teaching that cannot be minimized or ignored without a serious loss of proportion in our estimate of His teaching and claims. A long list of such presuppositions might be compiled. It is sufficient to ask those who dissent from my conclusions to believe, of their charity, that if philosophical or literary problems are rarely discussed, it is not that they have been rarely considered.

Perhaps the hardest task of a tutor at a theological college is to stir up in a large proportion of his pupils the will to think for themselves. Partly this reluctance to think is due to the English temperament, partly to faulty education received before arrival at the theological college, partly also to the fear of approaching examinations. It cannot be denied that our too short system of theological training encourages intellectual sloth. The ordinary student is almost invited to regard what will help him to pass examinations as more important than the study of the Christian faith for its own sake. It is not the fault of the colleges: it is the fault of the system. I have tried as far as possible to write this book in such a way as to stimulate further study and to discourage cramming. If at times I have been provocative, it is because in too many cases thought needs to be provoked. I hope it may be found useful to lecturers as the basis of a wider discussion.

The book consists in the main of lectures delivered at Bishop's Hostel, Lincoln, rewritten and expanded. I am conscious throughout of the great debt that I owe to the doctrine lectures given to students at Wells by Dr. Goudge. If certain phrases and expressions from these lectures have become so part of my own thought and expression that

I have failed to acknowledge them, I hope that this general acknowledgement may be accepted. Of living writers I am most conscious of the influence of the Bishop of Oxford and Dr. Du Bose. My debt to the books of the late Dr. Moberly will be apparent. I must thank many kind friends for sympathy and help, especially the Rev. J. C. Du Buisson, Warden of S. Deiniol's Library, Hawarden, and the Rev. G. H. Dix, who have given most valuable assistance in revising the proofs, and to the former of whom I have owed many valuable suggestions from the moment that I first contemplated the book. For the opinions expressed I am alone responsible. For any small inaccuracies of reference or fact which have escaped my notice, my only excuse can be the stress of parish work and separation from my books during the revision of the proofs. Finally, I would gladly take for my model the tone and temper of a former lecturer on the Articles and 'claim a right to retract any opinion which improvement in reasoning and knowledge may at any time show me is groundless'.<sup>1</sup>

E. J. BICKNELL

S. MARY'S CLERGY HOUSE, WIMBLEDON, S.W.

<sup>1</sup> Hey's *Lectures on the Articles* quoted by Lightfoot, *Commentary on Galatians*<sup>1</sup>, p. ix.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations are employed throughout the book :

- C.H.S. - Church Historical Society.
- D.C.G. - Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels.
- E.R.E. - Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics.
- H.D.B. - Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible.
- J.Th.S. - Journal of Theological Studies.
- C.Q.R. - Church Quarterly Review.

*N.B.*—The references to Scripture should in all cases be looked up in the Revised Version. Where R.V. occurs, special attention is drawn to the difference between the Revised and Authorized translations.

## INTRODUCTION

§ 1. *The relation of Theology to Religion.*—Theology arises from man's effort to understand his own life. Whether we study the individual or the race, we discover everywhere that 'Man lives first and thinks afterwards'.<sup>1</sup> If we select any department of human experience we can find more or less sharply defined, three stages. In the earliest stage men act with little or no reflection. They are impelled by a blind instinct or custom. They have little desire to explain why or how they act. There are as yet no laws or rules formulated to direct action. In the second stage men begin to reflect on what they have been doing. Man is by nature a rational being, disposed to ask 'Why?' So by reflection and self-questioning men gradually draw out into the light the principles by which they have long been acting. They frame general statements and rules. They attain to science. Science is 'systematized or ordered knowledge'.<sup>2</sup> In the third stage the science thus gained is found most valuable for guiding and correcting future practice. Not only are more certain results obtained by its aid, but the principles that have been discovered can be applied to fresh material. So the field of action is extended, and wider experience is gained, which in turn the mind is called on to analyse and explain. Thenceforward science and action go hand in hand. Science directs practice and practice affords new material for science.

We may apply these thoughts to religion. In whatever way it may be, religion arose. That is, men came to worship a God or gods. They experienced feelings of religious awe and reverence. They desired to please their God by doing His will and to turn away His wrath when He was angry. By sacrifice and prayer they sought to attain His help and to hold communion with Him. In the earliest stage such religion was based primarily upon instinct and custom. But because men were rational beings, they were bound to ask questions about their religion. They wished to make clear to themselves the grounds of their worship and obedience. The service of any God must in the last resort imply certain beliefs about Him, His character and His relation to His worshippers. These beliefs men drew out and stated and formed into a system. So we reach the second stage—the

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Illingworth, *Personality, Human and Divine*, c. i. 'Man lives first and thinks afterwards. . . . He makes history by his actions, before he can reflect upon it and write it . . . thought is always in arrear of life: for life is in perpetual progress.'

<sup>2</sup> We must not limit the term 'science' to physical science. The great advance made in all branches of physical science during the last few years, and its visible results, as shown in everyday life, have encouraged a popular use of the word 'science' as limited to them. Strictly speaking there is a 'science' of painting or music just as much as of chemistry.

formation of a primitive theology. Theology is the science of religion. In the third stage theology begins to react upon religion. The Hebrew prophets, for example, perceived and enunciated certain fundamental truths about the activity and purpose of Jehovah. Hence they demanded that conduct and worship that were inconsistent with such truths should be reformed. As the religion of Israel deepened out of further historical experience its beliefs became more clearly formulated, and this in turn helped to shape the religious practice and observance of post-prophetic Judaism. So in the final stage, theology and religion coexist side by side, theology explaining the principles of religion and setting them forth in an orderly system, and religion striving to realize those principles in a living experience.†

§ 2. *The place of Theology in the Christian Religion.*—The Christian religion is primarily a way of life. In its earliest stages it was known quite simply as 'the Way' (cp. Acts 9<sup>2</sup>, 19<sup>9</sup> and 23 and also 16<sup>17</sup>, 18<sup>26</sup> and 24<sup>14</sup>). But it was never an easy or an obvious way; it was in glaring contrast to the prevalent way of life in the world around it. From the first it always involved certain beliefs about the nature and character of God, the life and claims of Jesus Christ, His Death and Resurrection, the Church and the Sacraments. The Christian lived as he did because he based his life on certain convictions. The Church gradually made clear to itself what these were. Within the New Testament we see a theology growing up. The doctrines of the Christian faith are stated and drawn out, and practical consequences are deduced from them. The purpose of Christian theology is to set forth clearly the truth about God and God's dealings with mankind, as it has been made known. Christian 'Doctrine' is simply Christian teaching. 'Dogmas' are simply fundamental points of doctrine, the primary assumptions that are implicit in all Christian life and experience. No logical proof of them can be offered. Just as, e.g. all geometry rests upon certain assumptions about the nature of space, and if these are not granted, geometry is impossible, so Christian life and experience, if it is accepted as true, and not a mere delusion or fancy, involves certain presuppositions. If these are denied, then all that we can say is that without them the Christian experience could not exist. We may not find universal agreement as to what these 'dogmas' are, but all Christians would agree that there must be some, e.g. the existence and the Fatherhood of God. Christian theology is the attempt to state them in a connected and orderly system.

Theology begins like any other science. It strives to collect and verify the facts, to sift and compare them, to classify them and discover their mutual relations. Then it tries to find language that will express the facts as clearly as possible, and to set them out as parts of one coherent system. All knowledge must be based upon experience. The facts upon which Christian theology is based are found in the revelation of God to Israel, the whole life and witness of the Jewish

Church, then in the life and teaching of Jesus Christ and the whole witness and experience of the Christian Church throughout all ages. Christian theology grows naturally within the Christian religion and has a necessary place in it. But while religion is possible without any formal knowledge of theology, the pursuit of theological enquiry has no meaning apart from the practice of religion. The professional theologian can properly exercise his powers of discrimination, explanation and construction only as a living member of Christ's Body. A full understanding of the great doctrines of the Christian faith can only be based upon some first-hand experience of the Christian life.

We should probably do well to draw a further distinction between theology and religious philosophy. The intellect has a two-fold work. First, to draw out and state those fundamental truths that underlie the Christian revelation, *i.e.* to construct a theology in the strict sense of the word. Secondly, to bring these truths into connexion with the rest of our ideas derived from other sources, *i.e.* to construct a religious philosophy. As rational beings we are bound to wish not only to understand our religion, but to bring our knowledge of it into relation with the rest of our knowledge, to clothe the Christian revelation in the current terms of science and philosophy. This is a right and necessary desire, but it brings its own dangers. Science and philosophy change. Hence the religious philosophy of yesterday, expressed in the scientific and philosophical categories of yesterday, grows obsolete. It demands revision and correction so that it may be brought into harmony with the knowledge of today. The work of the intellect must be done over again. Too often men have identified religious philosophy with theology proper. Because the former has needed restatement they have supposed that the latter needed restatement too. Or it has been supposed that the truth of Christianity itself was bound up with the satisfactoriness of a particular religious philosophy. We need to point out that Christianity is not committed to any one philosophy. Christianity does stand or fall with the truth of certain doctrines, but these are independent of any local or particular science or philosophy. They spring out of the Christian revelation itself. Much unsettlement would have been avoided if men had made the distinction between 'theology' proper, *i.e.* the statement of fundamental Christian doctrines, and 'religious philosophy', *i.e.* the attempt to fit these doctrines into a general scheme of thought.

§ 3. *Theology as a practical necessity.*—On practical grounds theology is indispensable: (a) Some desire to understand his own activity and environment is inherent in man's nature, and religion cannot without grave loss be left outside the scope of this desire. If, while men come to understand more of the meaning of the rest of life, its religious side is left unexamined by the mind and no effort is made to reflect upon it, it will grow weak. In the competition of many interests it will be crowded out. Being intellectually unorganized, it will lack

strength to hold its ground in man's attention. The deepest type of Christian conviction requires and includes some measure of intellectual assent. In an age of increasing knowledge and intellectual ferment such conviction is not likely to be maintained unless a man can give some considered account of the grounds and content of his faith. Moreover, that faith itself, if not embodied in some form of intelligible and coherent statement, may lose its integrity and ultimately its identity. The mind which has not been strengthened by definite Christian teaching according to its capacity will be most exposed to the danger of being 'carried about with every wind of doctrine'. To put the point more religiously, the use of the mind to grasp, so far as may be, the meaning of God's revelation of Himself is part of the total devotion of his powers which is demanded of the Christian. A partial unreflective devotion will stand strain less easily.

(b) Further, the need of some theology is obvious as soon as we consider the social nature of man. Religion is essentially social. The child that is born into the world inherits the religion as he inherits the knowledge and the experience of the society into which he is born. In any society that has risen above the mental level of savages, if there is to be any continuity of religious custom and belief, some intellectual expression of religion is necessary. The moment that any teaching about religion begins, the rudiments of theology are to be found. We cannot teach what we do not in part understand. A religion that possessed no theology, even in the form of myths, would be either purely individualistic or a mere barren ritual coupled with a blind obedience to rules that were out of all relation to the higher elements of life. Christian theology has a necessary place in the furniture of the Christian home. Christian dogma begins at the mother's knee.

(c) From another point of view we must face the fact that Christian morality is the product of certain definite beliefs accepted and acted upon. The Christian type of character is no casual growth. It has been wrought out of a reluctant human nature by centuries of effort.<sup>1</sup> Christian doctrines influence conduct through the medium of the emotions. Where these doctrines are discarded, Christian feeling and standards may last for a while, but in the end they disappear. This has already occurred in certain circles. A generation ago the opponents of Christian doctrine professed themselves anxious to preserve Christian morality as the one thing needful. Their descendants to-day criticize with equal freedom Christian dogma and Christian ethics.<sup>2</sup>†

<sup>1</sup> 'Men are living on a moral sense transmitted and inherited while they are restive under the discipline and claims of the systems which generated that moral sense. They are living on the fruits of a tree of which they are anxious to cut away the roots. . . . A popular audience will always cheer a reference to "true religion stripped of the bonds of theology", i.e. the results of the Christian conscience without the faith that formed it.'—Creighton, *Life and Letters*, vol. ii. p. 191, cp. pp. 245-247.

<sup>2</sup> 'Christian ethics are bound up inseparably with Christian mysteries. Clear away these and, in default of some substituted construction of the over-natural world, what

§ 4. But the fact remains that there exists a not entirely unreasonable prejudice against all dogmatic theology. This is due to many causes.

(a) Partly it arises from the intellectual indolence of the English race. The Englishman hates the trouble of exact thinking. Truth for truth's sake has at all times few attractions for him. He is bored by philosophy. In the case of religion his mental sloth is reinforced by a new motive. A vague religion is a comfortable religion. It makes fewer demands upon his conscience and will. By keeping his Christianity hazy he hopes to escape the moral and spiritual obligations that a definite belief must carry with it. So he has a natural dislike of Christian doctrine.

(b) But he has more worthy reasons than that. The responsibility for the dislike of dogma must largely rest with the theologians themselves. They have confused religious philosophy with theology. Many have claimed to have a much more complete and definite knowledge of God and the world than they really possess. They have yielded to the temptation to stretch God's revelation so as to cover whole tracts of knowledge that it was never intended to cover, as, for instance, when the Bible was made a text-book of science. Again, they have failed to respect the limits of human knowledge. Not only is all our knowledge of real things imperfect, and therefore our knowledge of God, the highest reality, must be the most imperfect of all, but also human words and ideas were formed primarily to deal with objects of this material world. We are compelled to use them in speaking of spiritual things, since we possess no others. But all doctrinal statements must partake of the nature of metaphor. They are true as far as they go, but they cannot represent the whole truth. A metaphor must never be pressed beyond the limits of the truth that it was formed to express. Some theologians have argued from doctrinal statements as if they were a final and adequate expression of divine truth. They have ventured to lay down as a necessary part of the Christian faith the precarious deductions of human logic. The result has been that assertions that rested on purely human authority have been disproved, and Christian theology as a whole has had to share the discredit. Men have failed to distinguish between the primary doctrines of the Christian faith and the fallible speculations of certain individuals or schools of thought.<sup>1</sup>

remains is an ethics without foundation, without end, without character; neither Christian nor anything else; and that love which is the substance of the inward immanent life of the Christian soul, as opposed to the life of outward conduct, gives place to a vague amiability whose roots are nowhere and its branches anywhere.'—Tyrrell, *Through Scylla and Charybdis*, p. 190.

<sup>1</sup> Tyrrell, *External Religion*, pp. 125-126. He speaks of men 'who carry cut and dried answers to all difficulties, wrapped up in pellets to shoot out on occasion; to whom everything is clear and common-sense and obvious; who can define a mystery but have never felt one. That the human words and ideas in which eternal truths are clad cannot, even through divine skill, convey to us more than a shadow of the realities

(c) Again, a protest against theology is often made in the name of religion. 'A living faith' is contrasted with 'dead formulas'. In part this opposition arises from the mortality of human language. Words and phrases grow old and lose their edge. Ideas and expressions change and decay. Every advance in knowledge carries with it a new vocabulary and a new stock of ideas. It revolutionizes the point of view. Each generation acquires its peculiar temper of mind. Evolution, for instance, has changed our whole mental outlook. Accordingly, language that expressed the deepest aspirations and the highest ideas of one generation becomes to the next a string of catchwords from which the life has departed. The phrases of one age are always in danger of becoming formal and unreal to the next. They are felt no longer to protect but rather to stifle religion. Further, at certain periods theology has been allowed to usurp the place of religion. A mere intellectual assent to certain theological statements has been substituted for moral effort as the test of true Christian faith. Orthodoxy, not holiness, has been regarded as the distinguishing mark of the Christian. The gulf between theology and religion has been allowed to widen. We can hardly wonder that in the ardour of a spiritual revival men have been impatient of the pious phrases of their forefathers, or have hastily cast aside doctrines that seemed to have the faintest possible connexion with practical Christianity. The only preventive of this disaster is to insist that theology shall always be in the closest contact with life. The New Testament invariably keeps its theological teaching closely related to the practical duties of worship and conduct. Frequently its most profound statements of doctrine emerge in passages primarily concerned with Christian morals or the Christian character.

To sum up. Those who wish to be both Christians and thinking persons must have a theology. If the individual is left to himself he will probably have a bad theology, a child of his limitations and caprices. To establish the best possible theology will involve the study of the history of Christian Doctrine, the record of the process of thought by which the Church has attempted to make plain to herself the meaning of her own faith and life. But the Church can never cease to reflect on her doctrines. Standing on the foundation of the Scriptures and guided by her own theological tradition, the Church will in every age discover the necessity for renewed theological thought, in order both to maintain her own life and to propagate her faith in the contemporary world.†

they stand for; that they cannot, like numbers, be added, subtracted and multiplied together so as to deduce new conclusions with arithmetical simplicity and accuracy, never occurs to them. . . .

## THE THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES

### THEIR HISTORY AND PLACE IN THEOLOGY

§ 1. Our present 39 Articles are only one out of a large crop of formularies produced in Europe by the general unrest of the Reformation. Even as regards the Church of England, they are only the last of a series of doctrinal statements put forth as occasion demanded. The Reformation was not a single act but a long process, not always in a uniform direction: it was not concluded until far into the seventeenth century. The history of our Articles can only be understood if it is studied in the light of the history of the Reformation in England. Changes in the formularies of the Church in the main run parallel with changes in its worship and order. Either side illustrates the other. In this present chapter the outstanding incidents of the Reformation are alluded to but not explained. They are intended to serve as landmarks by which to estimate the tendency of the various theological statements put forth from time to time. The surest way to understand the account of the Articles given here is to read it side by side with a history of the Reformation.

The actual movement for reform in England may be said to start with the repudiation of Papal authority in 1534. The breach with Rome was complete. In itself a quarrel with the Pope was nothing new. In the past it had not involved any change of religion. But the English desire for independence, the disgust at the greed and exactions of the Popes, the character of Henry himself, and the doctrinal unsettlement both at home and abroad formed a new combination of circumstances about whose issue few could venture to predict. Lutheran ideas had reached England as early as 1521, when a bonfire of Lutheran books was made in front of S. Paul's. Since 1526 the influence of Zwingli had spread through Tyndale's English version of the Scriptures. Anabaptists were propagating tenets subversive of all order in Church and State alike. Abroad, Luther and Zwingli, with a large part of Europe behind them, had broken with the historic faith and discipline of the Catholic Church. Amid the general confusion the Church of England was compelled to raise its voice. The authority of the Pope had been repudiated. In all ranks of life some centre of unity was needed. Within the Church itself there were two main parties, the party of the Old Learning, who desired little more than independence of the Pope, headed by Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, and the party of the New Learning, who aimed at considerable reforms both of doctrine and discipline, headed by Archbishop

Cranmer. The Lutherans in Germany had already set the example of putting forward a public statement of their position. Their object in this was partly, no doubt, to repudiate 'Romish errors', but also to make clear their divergence from the Zwinglians and Swiss reformers. Accordingly, in 1529 the Schwabach Articles were drawn up: the acceptance of these was to be the indispensable condition of membership in a reforming league. On these were based the first great Lutheran confession, the Confession of Augsburg, drawn up in 1530 by Melancthon and approved by Luther. Originally it was simply 'Mr Philip's' (i.e. Melancthon's) 'Apology', but it became the official statement of Lutheranism, and as such was signed by the Elector of Saxony and others and presented to the Emperor. It contained 21 articles on matters of faith and 7 on matters of discipline.<sup>1</sup> In the same year, 1530, Zwingli himself presented a Confession of his own to the Diet of Augsburg. After his death in 1531, the Zwinglian party put forth their views in the Confession of Basel, 1534, and the First Helvetic Confession, 1536. These last had no influence on our Articles. They are interesting only as signs of the times and as examples of the type of formulary that was happily avoided in England.

§ 2. (a) The first attempt of the English Church to state its position was the *Ten Articles* of 1536. Their object is made clear in the title: 'To establish Christian quietness and unity among us and to avoid contentious opinions.' They 'bore the character of a compromise between the Old and the New Learning. The Catholic nation was satisfied that the Catholic faith still remained. The reforming party 'was conciliated by a secret infusion of Lutheranism'. They succeeded in quenching the suspicion that the kingdom had been brought into schism, and helped to reconcile men's minds to the impending dissolution of the monasteries. Politically they served to show foreign powers that England was still a Catholic country. The King had a large share in their composition. But their final form was due to Convocation, with whose authority they were issued. They fell into two parts. The first five deal with questions of doctrine. The chief points to be noticed are:

(i) The rule of faith is based not only on 'the whole body and canon of the Bible' but also on the three Creeds. The authority of the Four Great Councils is recognized and all opinions condemned by them are declared erroneous.

(ii) Three Sacraments only are expounded, Baptism, the Eucharist and Penance. This last is said to be 'institute of Christ in the New Testament as a thing . . . necessary for man's salvation'. The other four of the 'Seven Sacraments' are neither affirmed nor rejected.

(iii) The Real Presence is strongly asserted, but the manner of the Presence is left open. There is no mention of Transubstantiation.

<sup>1</sup> A survey of it may be found in Hardwick, *A History of the Articles of Religion*, pp. 17 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Dixon, *History of the Church of England*, vol. i. p. 415.

<sup>3</sup> The text of the Ten Articles is printed in Hardwick, Appendix.

(iv) The definition of justification was borrowed from words of the Lutheran, Melancthon, but the characteristic Lutheran formulas were avoided. It is to be attained by 'inward contrition, perfect faith and charity, certain hope and confidence'.

The second five concern 'the laudable ceremonies used in the Church'.

(i) Images are retained to be 'the kindlers and stirrers of men's minds', but idolatry is to be avoided.

(ii) Saints are to be honoured and invoked as intercessors to pray with us and for us, 'so that it be done without any vain superstition as to think that any saint is more merciful or will hear us sooner than Christ . . . or doth serve for one thing more than another or is patron of the same.'

(iii) Certain mediaeval rites and ceremonies are to be kept as 'good and laudable', but have not 'power to remit sin', but only to stir and lift up our minds unto God.

(iv) Prayers for the dead are encouraged, and the book of Maccabees is quoted to support them. Our ignorance of the details of the next life is asserted. Abuses connected with Purgatory, and especially the Pope's pardons, are denounced.

We can see how such a formula met the needs of the moment. No final settlement was as yet possible. The Ten Articles remained the authoritative expression of the mind of the Church of England down to 1543.

But meanwhile, in 1537, there appeared *The Institution of a Christian Man*, commonly called *the Bishops' Book*. This was a popular and practical handbook of instruction in faith and morals, based on the Ten Articles and incorporating parts of them. It was drawn up by a committee under Cranmer. It contained explanations of the Common Creed, the Seven Sacraments, the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, the Ave Maria, Justification and Purgatory. The articles on the last two were taken bodily from the Ten Articles. All Seven Sacraments appear, but the three, Baptism, the Eucharist and Penance, are placed on a higher level than the rest. Its lapses from accurate theology, due to haste in composition, offended the refined taste of the King. Hence it never gained his authority, though printed at the King's Press. It rested only on the authority of those who signed it, including all the Bishops.

(b) In 1543 there was published *The Necessary Doctrine and Erudition for any Christian Man*, commonly known as *the King's Book*. It was substantially a revised edition of the Bishops' Book, being based upon the King's own criticisms of the former work. The language was more precise and theological. It was issued on the authority of Convocation, Parliament and the King, who himself wrote the preface. As compared with the Ten Articles, it shows a reaction. This may be explained by the political circumstances of the time. In 1538 the conference between Anglican and Lutheran divines had broken down. The influence of Cranmer had for the moment declined. The character of this new formulary is in keeping with the anti-Protestant legislation of the close of Henry's reign, especially the Statute of the Six Articles. Transubstantiation is taught, though the actual use of the word is avoided. The silence of its articles suggests that all 'Seven

Sacraments' are on a level. Clerical celibacy is maintained, and a loftier view is taken of Orders. Taken as a whole it marked the triumph of the Old Learning. Probably this was designed to be the last and final statement of England's theological position. Such it remained till the death of Henry in 1547.

§ 3. After the accession of Edward VI rapid changes were made in the services of the Church, but no definitely doctrinal statement was issued till 1553. However, as early as 1549 a letter from Bishop Hooper states that Cranmer 'has some Articles of Religion to which all preachers and lecturers in divinity are required to subscribe'.<sup>1</sup> This was probably an early draft of the later Articles, framed as a test of orthodoxy. These Articles were submitted to the Bishops, and, after revision, submitted to the Council in 1552. At this time they were 45 in number. After they had passed the scrutiny of the Council, the King and the Royal Chaplains they were returned to Cranmer and reduced to 42—the famous *42 Articles*. An English edition appeared in May, 1553. The official edition signed by the King followed a week later, and in June a royal mandate commanded subscription from all clergy, schoolmasters and members of a university on taking their degree, in the province of Canterbury. In two later editions, published shortly afterwards, a catechism was added. The exact authority on which they were published is uncertain. It is clear that the catechism issued with them had no authority from Convocation. The titles of all the editions, but not the royal mandate, claim for the Articles the authority of Convocation. Is this true? The records of Convocation perished in the great fire of London. In any case, they were badly kept, 'but one degree above blanks,' and their evidence would have been of little value. Convocation had appointed a commission in 1551 to reform the Canons of the Church. That commission probably produced the Articles and claimed the authority of Convocation for them. In any case the question is primarily interesting as a historical problem.<sup>2</sup> Even if the Church was committed to them, it was only for a few weeks. Edward VI died in the following July. On the accession of Queen Mary they were dropped. As they had never been enjoined by Act of Parliament, there was no need to repeal them.

The 42 Articles are not, as it were, the natural descendants of the previous official formularies, but represent a different line of development that can be traced back as far as 1538. At that time Henry VIII, for political reasons, desired an alliance with the Protestant Princes of Germany. Accordingly, a small body of Lutheran divines was invited over to England to confer with a committee of English Churchmen, headed by Cranmer, with a view to drawing up a joint confession of faith. By the deliberate use of ambiguous language

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Hardwick, p. 72.

<sup>2</sup> For a statement of the evidence on both sides, see Gibson, pp. 15–20.

agreement was reached on certain points of doctrine. But on questions of discipline the conference broke down and the Lutherans returned home. Among Cranmer's papers has been found a draft of 13 Articles of doctrine agreed upon by this committee. These are known as the *13 Articles*. They were never published, and hence possessed no authority. But they were used by Cranmer as the basis of certain of the 42 Articles. Being themselves based upon the Confession of Augsburg, they form the link between the Confession of Augsburg and our own 42 Articles. At first sight the similarities suggest direct borrowing, but it has been proved that all the borrowed portions came through the medium of these 13 Articles.

In reading the 42 Articles it may easily be seen that they are a double-edged weapon, designed to smite two opposite enemies. On the one hand they attack mediaeval teaching and abuses, on the other hand they attack Anabaptist tenets. First they deal with the doctrine of 'School-authors'. This needs some explanation. The doctrines attacked were not necessarily official Roman teaching as revised by the Council of Trent, but popular mediaeval teaching. The Reformation compelled even the Church of Rome to re-state her teaching. The Pope called together a 'General Council' at Trent. In actual fact the Council proved to consist only of Bishops in allegiance to Rome. The Reformers refused to acknowledge it.<sup>1</sup> It held its first meeting in December, 1545, and continued to sit, though with long breaks, until 1563. It was from its own point of view a reforming Council, and did much to purge away mediaeval abuses. In some cases its decrees are prior in time to the Articles of our own Church, in other cases they are later. It is most important to know which is the earlier. Very often the teaching condemned in our Articles cannot be the formal statements of the Council of Trent, because such did not yet exist, but is simply current mediaeval teaching. Upon this the Council of Trent is in many cases as severe as our own Articles. The Reformers kept a keen eye on all the doings of the Council. When the 42 Articles appeared the Council of Trent had only begun its work. Secondly, they oppose even more keenly the teaching of the Anabaptists. These were the extreme Protestants, in no way a single organized sect, but rather an undefined class embracing men of every variety of opinion. The name Anabaptist was given to them from their denial of infant baptism and their custom of re-baptizing converts. There is hardly any error of doctrine or morality that was not proclaimed by some of them. They were a very real danger to all order in Church and State alike. No party had a good word for them. The Reformers feared the discredit that they brought upon the whole reforming movement.

The chief instances in which Roman errors were attacked in the 42 Articles may be summed up thus:

1. The claims of the Pope are denied (Art. 36).

<sup>1</sup> See below on Art. 21.

2. The Church of Rome is declared to have erred in the past and therefore to be liable to err again. So, too, 'General Councils' so called have not always shown themselves infallible (Arts. 20 and 22).

3. The use of the vulgar tongue in Church and the marriage of the clergy are defended (Arts. 25 and 31).

4. Errors about merit, works of supererogation, purgatory and pardons, grace *ex opere operato*, transubstantiation and the 'sacrifices of Masses' are denounced (Arts. 12, 13, 23, 29 and 30).

5. The sufficiency of Scripture is maintained (Art. 5).

The Anabaptists are only mentioned by name twice, but the errors maintained by them and attacked in these Articles include the following:

1. They had revived all the ancient heresies about the Holy Trinity and the Person of Christ. Against these the Catholic position is asserted (Arts. 1-4 and 7).

2. Many of them were Pelagians (Arts. 8-10).

3. Others claimed that being regenerate they were unable to commit sin (Arts. 14-15).

4. Some depreciated all Scripture and placed themselves above even the moral law. Others assigned equal importance to all the Old Testament (Arts. 5-6 and 19).

5. Some denied any need of ordination for ministers, and claimed that the efficacy of all ministrations depended on the personal holiness of the minister (Arts. 24, 27).

6. Infant Baptism was denied (Art. 28).

7. All Church discipline was repudiated (Art. 20 and 32).

8. Many held strange views about the Descent into Hell (Art. 3), the nature of the Resurrection and the future life (Arts. 39-40), the ultimate salvation of all men (Art. 42) and Millenarianism (Art. 41).

9. The authority of the State was impugned and communism demanded (Arts. 36-38).

Taken as a whole, the 42 Articles 'showed a surprisingly comprehensive and moderate spirit. The broad soft touch of Cranmer lay upon them, when they came from the furnace.'<sup>1</sup> Their tone is conciliatory. They aim rather at concord than at accurate definition. Cranmer had a great desire to form a united Protestant Church as against Rome. Such Articles might well be a basis of union. They exclude extremists of all kinds. Again, these Articles make no pretension to set forth a complete system of belief. There is, for instance, no Article on the Holy Spirit. Unlike many continental formularies they do not attempt to embrace all theology, but are content to meet the needs of a particular crisis. They do, indeed, bear unmistakable evidence of Lutheran influence and language. Certain Articles embody whole paragraphs and phrases of the Confession of Augsburg, taken from the 13 Articles. But on the doctrine of justification by faith they avoid

<sup>1</sup> Dixon, vol. iii. p. 520.

Lutheran extravagances. Further, at this time there was violent controversy among the Reformers on the subject of the Sacraments. The Lutherans held that they conferred grace. The Swiss reformers regarded them rather as signs or seals of grace independently received, since only the elect could receive grace. The delay in the publication of these Articles was, according to one account, due to the violent controversy on this point. Cranmer and Ridley on the one side maintained the Lutheran view, Hooper the Swiss view. In the end Cranmer won the day. Both sides agreed to discard the language of the Schoolmen, that the Sacraments 'contain grace', since this failed to emphasize the need of a right disposition in the recipient. But though the actual term 'confer grace' does not occur, the truth that it contained was clearly stated. In Art. 26 Sacraments are said to be 'effectual signs of grace'.<sup>1</sup> In Art. 28 'Baptism . . . is a sign and seal of our new birth, whereby as by an instrument they that receive Baptism rightly, are grafted into the Church'. Only on one point these Articles do fall short of their general spirit of comprehensiveness. In their teaching on the Holy Communion, not only transubstantiation but any doctrine of the Real Presence is denied. This was held by Lutherans no less than Romanists. The explanation of this fall below the Lutheran standard is that Cranmer's views on the Eucharist had been steadily falling. Owing to the influence of the Swiss, and particularly one John à Lasco, he had abandoned any belief in the Real Presence, and adopted the Calvinist view that the presence of Christ is to be found only in the individual soul of the faithful recipient. Any other view was excluded by the language of Art. 26 (with this we must compare the Prayer Book of 1552, into which, before publication, was intruded the famous 'Black Rubric'). So, too, in Art. 26, all use of the phrase *ex opere operato* is condemned, and the title sacrament is practically refused to any rites except Baptism and Holy Communion. On all these points considerable changes were made in 1563. We may also notice that the objectionable title 'Supreme Head of the Church' is employed in Art. 36. In the reign of Edward VI this was inevitable.

Some mention must be made here of a work probably by the same persons as the 42 Articles. We have seen that Convocation sanctioned the appointment of a committee to revise the Canons. Their labours resulted in a document entitled *The Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum*. This work was completed in 1553, but never obtained the sanction of Parliament. Its chief importance is to be found in the light that it sheds on the meaning and purpose of the 42 Articles. Which of the two in its treatment of any subject is the earlier, we cannot now ascertain.

§ 4. When Elizabeth came to the throne in 1558, she had a hard

<sup>1</sup> The phrase 'signs of grace' comes from the Confession of Augsburg, and was deliberately strengthened by the addition of 'effectual'.



task before her. Her aim must be to secure religious unity at home in the face of many active and powerful enemies abroad. She began not with questions of doctrine, but of worship and discipline. She recovered from Parliament the restoration of the Royal Supremacy: enforced by Act of Parliament the new Prayer-book: filled up the vacant sees: took strong measures to enforce a modicum of decency in worship. It was not till 1563 that Convocation began to undertake the revision of the 42 Articles. Till then the Prayer-book was the standard of doctrine. However, in the interval, Archbishop Parker put forth on his own authority the *Eleven Articles*. These were to be read in church by all ministers at their first entry into their cures and twice a year afterwards. Though sanctioned by the Archbishop of York and all the Bishops, they were a temporary expedient, lacking official authority.

(a) In January, 1563, Convocation met to draw up a new formulary. The Archbishop had been using the interval in preparing with Bishop Guest of Rochester a revised edition of the 42 Articles. These were to form the basis of the new formulary. A revival of Lutheran influence can be found in this revision. The Archbishop had drawn upon the Confession of Württemberg, a Lutheran formulary presented to the Council of Trent in 1552 by the ambassadors of Württemberg as an official statement of Lutheran views. Thus a Lutheran confession influenced the English Articles for a second time. The influence of the Confession of Augsburg was indirect, through the 13 Articles. Here the borrowing from the Confession of Württemberg was direct.

When first presented to Convocation the new Articles still numbered 42. Four of the old had been removed and four new ones added. Three were struck out by Convocation, reducing them to the familiar 39. These were passed by Convocation and were then sent on to the Queen. The Queen herself made two important alterations in the draft sent up by Convocation: (i) She struck out our present Art. 29 in order to avoid giving offence to the Romanist party, whom she wished to retain within the Church; (ii) She added the opening clause to Art. 20, drawn from the Confession of Württemberg. This asserted the authority of the Church to decree rites and ceremonies, as against the Puritans, who denied the Church's authority to enforce any rite or ceremony that was not explicitly commanded in Scripture. At the time these two changes rested solely on the Queen's authority: they had no authority either from Convocation or Parliament.

The 38 Articles remained in this condition till the final revision of the Articles in 1571. As the result of the Pope's bull any hope of reconciliation with Rome was destroyed. In obedience to his injunction the Papists had separated themselves from the English Church. Hence there was no longer any need to respect their feelings. Accordingly, Art. 29 was restored. At the same time a number of small changes were made, of which the chief was the completion of the list

of the Apocrypha in Art. 6. In their revised form the Articles were passed by Convocation, and so the opening clause of Art. 20 gained synodical authority.

(b) We may now consider the main changes that are to be found if we compare our present 39 Articles with the 42 Articles of 1553.

1. Certain new articles were added and old articles expanded, apparently for the sake of greater completeness. Thus the statement in Art. 2 of the 'Eternal Generation' and 'Consubstantiality' of the Son and the whole of Art. 5, 'on the Holy Ghost' were added, both practically verbatim from the Confession of Württemberg. In Art. 6 canonical books are stated to be those 'of whose authority there has never been any doubt in the church'. So, too, Art. 11, on Justification, was enlarged and made more definite. Art. 10 was enlarged to fit on better to Art. 9, and a new Art., No. 12, on 'Good Works', was added. All these changes were based on the Confession of Württemberg.

2. Certain articles and statements were omitted, either because the errors attacked in them had now ceased to be formidable, or because it was seen that a greater latitude of opinion might be allowed. Thus four whole articles on Anabaptist errors, such as 'Millenarianism', 'the resurrection being past', 'universalism', 'unconscious existence after death', were removed. The article on 'Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit', the interpretation of S. Peter's word about 'the descent into Hell', the condemnation of the phrase *ex opere operato*, were likewise withdrawn. So, too, the reference by name to the Anabaptists as reviving Pelagianism.

3. A great advance was made in sacramental teaching, parallel to that made in the Prayer-book of 1559 as compared with that of 1552. The language of Art. 28 is at least consistent with a belief in the Real Presence, though the relation of the gift bestowed in the Holy Communion to the visible elements is left undiscussed. The language on Infant Baptism in Art. 27 is strengthened. Also the five 'commonly called Sacraments' reappear in Art. 25, though not placed on a level with the two 'Sacraments of the Gospel'. The withdrawal of any condemnation of the phrase *ex opere operato* in Art. 25 emphasized the objective value of sacramental grace.

4. Art. 37 on the Royal Supremacy was largely rewritten. The title 'supreme Head of the church' was dropped. The character of the supremacy claimed for the Crown is explained.

5. On the other hand the independence of the Church of England as against Rome was asserted and strengthened in certain quite definite ways. The Council of Trent had as early as 1546 issued a somewhat ambiguous decree placing Scripture and tradition side by side as the sources of truth and discipline, including within the canon a large number of apocryphal books. These last it put on a level with the rest as a source of doctrine. In Art. 6 the Church of England de-

liberately dissented from this view, distinguishing between the Old Testament and the Apocrypha, and placing them on different levels. A list of canonical books was given, and the list of apocryphal books completed in 1571. Again, in 1547 the Council of Trent laid down that all Seven Sacraments were instituted by Christ. In the revised form of Art. 25 this is practically denied. So, too, in Art. 24, the Church of England was no longer content to commend the use of the vulgar tongue in public worship. It condemned the use of any other as unscriptural and unprimitive. A new Article (Art. 30) was added to condemn Communion in one kind. Art. 32 on the Celibacy of the Clergy was re-written and strengthened. Art. 36 was re-written to defend Anglican ordinations against Romanist objections. A new clause to Art. 34 was added to assert the rights of 'particular or national' churches. On all these points the revision showed itself anti-Roman.

6. In the opposite direction the revision can hardly have been entirely acceptable to the Puritan party. They must have disliked the changes in Sacramental teaching and still more the Queen's addition to Art. 20. Many of them did not love Art. 34. The authorship of the saying that 'the Church of England has a Popish Liturgy and a Calvinistic set of Articles' is ascribed to Pitt. It has been widely repeated by those who know little of the Articles and neglect the Prayer-book. No doubt the general tone of the Articles is not quite that of the Prayer-book. They reflect the troubled atmosphere of the times in which they were composed. The Prayer-book, being based largely on earlier models, breathes more of the spirit of serene and undisturbed devotion. Its tone is more positive. Further, while the Church of England deliberately aimed at excluding Pelagians, it did not aim at excluding Calvinists. Hence there is much in the Articles which, though it need not be taken in a Calvinistic sense, may be taken in that sense. There was much, too, that was good in Calvinism: if the Articles would never have existed in their present form without the influence of Calvin, that does not mean that they are Calvinistic in the sense that they accept all his teaching. There are several statements in them that Calvinists have always found it hard to accept. Art. 16 says that a man who has received the Holy Ghost and fallen into sin, 'may rise again.' The Calvinist would say 'must rise again'. Art. 2 lays down that 'Christ died for all actual sins of men': Calvinists would say 'Christ died only for the elect'. In Art. 17 the clause 'although the decrees of predestination are unknown to us' was dropped and the phrase 'in Christ' added, both changes tending to soften the language. Further, the same article speaks of God's promises as 'generally' (*i.e.* for all men) 'set forth in Holy Scripture'. So, too, in Art. 9, Man is only 'very far gone from original righteousness', not entirely corrupt, as Calvin taught. But the clearest evidence that the Articles are not Calvinistic is the repeated attempts made by the

Puritans to alter or supplement them. In 1572 the Puritans addressed certain admonitions to Parliament complaining of the inadequacy of the Articles and their dangerous speaking about falling from grace. Further, in 1595, as a result of controversy at Cambridge, a committee, meeting under Archbishop Whitgift at Lambeth, compiled the 'Lambeth Articles', setting out the full Calvinistic system in all its stringency. Fortunately the Queen at once intervened and repressed any attempt to force these on the Church. They never possessed any authority but that of their authors. At the Hampton Court Conference in 1604 the Puritan party again tried to amend the Articles. The Royal declaration prefixed to the Articles, and dating from 1628, is a relic of the controversy that raged during the reign of Charles I, largely round the interpretation of the Articles. When in 1643 the Puritans were triumphant, the Westminster Assembly appointed a committee to amend the Articles. Art. 16 fared badly at their hands. Again, at the Restoration, similar objections were raised by the Puritans, but without success. This bare statement of fact is the best answer to any assertion that our Articles are Calvinistic.

(c) Such, then, is the history of our present 39 Articles. They express the mind of the Church of England on the questions under dispute during the Reformation. They do not claim to be a final and complete system of theology. As Bishop Pearson wrote:<sup>1</sup> the book 'is not, nor is pretended to be, a complete body of divinity, or a comprehension and explication of all Christian doctrines necessary to be taught: but an enumeration of some truths, which upon and since the Reformation have been denied by some persons: who upon denial are thought unfit to have any cure of souls in this Church or realm; because they might by their opinions either infect their flock with error or else disturb the Church with schism or the realm with sedition.' On this point they present a strong contrast with many continental formularies which are 'controversial, diffuse, and long-some'.<sup>2</sup> Our English Articles avoid the sweeping anathemas of the Council of Trent or the 'endless arguings and chidings' of contemporary confessions. They move on a higher level. If we compare them with other performances of the age, we must see in them an example of the special Providence that has watched over the Church of England. Dr Moberly has put very clearly the grounds on which we may be grateful for their tone of moderation and comprehensiveness.<sup>3</sup> 'It might so easily have happened that statements drawn up amid the stress and strain of the vehement passions which were raging in the struggle of the Reformation, would have been just in the form which we, in the sober thought of the nineteenth century, could not have endorsed. But this is just what has not happened. Condemnation of Roman theory or practice, failing to make any necessary distinction

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Hardwick, p. 158.

<sup>2</sup> Dixon, vol. v. p. 396.

<sup>3</sup> Moberly, *Problems and Principles*, pp. 386-387.

or allowances, might so easily have had just the irremediable traces of exaggeration upon them. Approximations to Calvinism or Lutheranism might so easily have gone just beyond the line of what was in the long run rationally defensible. It may even be admitted that, *prima facie*, there is a certain aspect of ambiguity in some of these directions. And yet, on examination, after all, in one article after another, the almost expected overstatement has not been made. You may say that the 17th Article comes very near to Calvinism, or the 11th to the characteristic formula of Lutheran solifidianism. But, on the other hand, as the mind begins to recognize that the lengthy and apparently Calvinistic phraseology of the Article about Predestination just stops short of all that is really offensive in connexion with that theory, remaining after all within those aspects of it which are edifying and true; and again, that the apparent embrace of the cardinal Lutheran principles of justification by faith only is not in the paradoxical terms in which Luther loved to overstate it; there begins to be a certain definite and growing sense that, though the articles may carry us into forgotten controversies, and make some statements which have but little relevance to our modern difficulties, at all events there was, amongst those who drew them, too much of genuine conservatism, of reverence for what was good in old ways, of self-restraint and moderating wisdom, to allow of their committing themselves or us to the extremer and more unguarded statements even of those with whom they greatly sympathized.<sup>1</sup>

§ 5. *Creeds and Articles.*—The significance of our Articles may best be learnt by a comparison between them and Creeds. Both alike are theological statements of belief. Both alike have been employed as tests. Both are attempts to preserve the truth in all its fulness. But while Creeds are a necessity, 'in a world where all expression of spirit is through body,' Articles are a consequence 'not of the Church's existence but of the Church's failure'. 'The Church, without a Creed, would not in human life on earth, however ideally perfect, have been a Church at all. But if the Church on earth had been ideally perfect, or anything even remotely like it, there would never have been any 39 Articles. The one is a necessary feature of spiritual reality. The other is an unfortunate consequence of spiritual failure.'<sup>1</sup>

(i) Creeds are in origin far more than controversial statements. No doubt particular clauses in them have been added or altered at particular times to rule out certain errors, as when 'of one substance with the Father' was added to refute Arianism. But in their essential nature Creeds grew up out of the positive statement of belief required of every Christian at his baptism. The threefold division recalls the baptismal formula. They rose spontaneously out of the life of the Church to meet such a need as this. Though they conform to a common type their origin is veiled in obscurity. Their growth in the

<sup>1</sup> *op. cit.* pp. 378–379.

main has been hidden and spontaneous. Even their developments were largely unconscious. On the other hand, Articles were composed at a definite time for the express purpose of meeting a particular crisis. Their authors are known.

(ii) Creeds have behind them the authority of the universal and undivided Church. Articles have behind them at most the authority of particular or national Churches. In most cases they assume the truth of the Creeds and start from that. Further, creeds are based upon a wide and universal experience. The formularies of the Reformation—though this applies very much less to our own Articles than to others—are the product of a group of men, or in some cases a single individual mind. Hence, Creeds have a permanent value, Articles only a temporary value. We do not condemn, say, the Churches of the East, because they do not possess the 39 Articles. We should condemn a Church that rejected the Apostles' or Nicene Creed. We may reasonably doubt if the Churches of the mission-field need become acquainted with the 39 Articles. But they certainly are bound to receive the Creeds. It is possible even to look forward to a day when the Church of England may exchange or discard our present Articles, though that day is not yet in sight. That would not involve any breach of continuity or catholicity. But to reject the Creeds would be to part company with the life of the Universal Church.

(iii) The Creeds consist in the main of short and simple statements without explanation or argument. They assert simple facts of history and theology. Their field is very narrow. Their theology rarely goes beyond explaining the significance of the historic facts that they record. The whole Creed is grouped round the historical Person of Jesus Christ. The Articles, on the other hand, cover a wider field. They deal not only with the nature and being of God and His great acts of redemption, but with man's inner religious life. Questions about the meaning of sin, the relation of faith to works, grace, free-will and the like are all discussed. The Creeds are positive, Articles are often negative and controversial. The Articles also touch upon an entirely new department, the relation of the Christian to the State. This can be explained by the condition of society in the sixteenth century.

(iv) Lastly, as has already been pointed out, Articles are primarily 'tests for teachers'. They set a limit to official teaching. Creeds are for teachers and learners alike. Belief in the Apostles' Creed is demanded of every candidate for Baptism. A Creed rightly finds a place in public worship. In the service for the visitation of the sick and the dying the Christian is called upon to repeat his baptismal creed as a last act of faith. The Creeds belong to the laymen not less than the clergy. But a loyal churchman may go through his whole life without necessarily coming into contact with the 39 Articles.

To sum up, though both Creeds and Articles have arisen out of the necessity imposed upon the Church to interpret to itself the meaning of its own life: though both have been shaped by that discussion, which alone can sift out error and bring to light the truth: yet in origin, value and aim they differ. Creeds belong to the life of the Church and Articles to its life in a sinful world.

§ 6. *A history of Subscription to the Articles.*—Up to 1571 subscription was required only of members of Convocation. The Queen had not allowed the Articles to be submitted to Parliament. But the open breach with Rome in 1570 and the Pope's excommunication of the Queen obliged her to turn to Parliament in order to strengthen her hands. In 1571 an Act was passed requiring that everyone under the degree of a Bishop who had been ordained by any form other than that set forth by Parliament in the reign of Edward VI, or the form in use under Elizabeth, should subscribe 'to all Articles of Religion, which only concern the confession of the true Christian faith and the doctrine of the Sacraments.' This was aimed at men ordained under Mary. Further, in future no one was to be admitted to a benefice 'except he . . . shall first have subscribed the said Articles'. The Act was ingeniously drawn up in the interests of the Puritans. By the insertion of the word 'only' subscription was made to include no more than the doctrinal Articles: the Articles on discipline were evaded. However, in 1571, after the final revision by Convocation, Convocation on its own authority required subscription to *all* the Articles in their final form. This was enforced by the Court of High Commission, though at times with less strictness. In 1583 Archbishop Whitgift provided a form of subscription included in the *Three Articles*. All the clergy were to subscribe to these. The first asserted the Royal Supremacy. The second contains an assertion of the Scripturalness of the whole Prayer-book and a promise to use the said book and no other in public worship. The third runs 'That I allow the Book of Articles of Religion agreed upon by the Archbishops and Bishops of both provinces and the whole Clergy in Convocation holden at London in the year of our Lord God 1562 and set forth by Her Majesty's authority and do believe all the Articles therein contained to be agreeable to the Word of God.' In this way subscription was once more strictly enforced. In 1604 the Three Articles received the authority of Convocation, being embodied after small alteration in the Canons of 1604 and ratified by the King. The actual form ran: 'I . . . do willingly and *ex animo* subscribe to these three articles above mentioned and to all things that are contained in them.' This form remained in force in spite of various attempts to relax the stringency of it. In practice the form usually employed ran: 'I . . . do willingly and from my heart subscribe to the 39 Articles of Religion of the United Church of England and Ireland, and to the three Articles in the 30th Canon, and to all things therein

contained.' In 1865, as the result of a Royal Commission, Convocation obtained leave from the Crown to revise the Canons. A new and simpler declaration of Assent was drawn up by the Convocations of Canterbury and York and confirmed by royal letters patent. To-day the candidate for ordination is required to subscribe to the following: 'I . . . do solemnly make the following declaration, I assent to the 39 Articles of Religion and the Book of Common Prayer and of ordering of Bishops Priests and Deacons. I believe the doctrine of the Church of England 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.' Two points need to be noted.

(i) The Church has demanded subscription to the Articles from the clergy and the clergy only. The fifth Canon of 1604 at most demands from the laity that they shall not attack them. If other bodies such as the Universities have in earlier days required subscription from their members, they were responsible for the requirement, and not the Church.

(ii) The change of language in the form of subscription was deliberate. We are asked to affirm to-day, not that the Articles are all agreeable to the Word of God, but that the doctrine of the Church of England as set forth in the Articles is agreeable to the Word of God. That is, we are not called to assent to every phrase or detail of the Articles but only to their general sense. This alteration was made of set purpose to afford relief to scrupulous consciences. †