

I. THE SUBSTANCE OF FAITH

ARTICLES I-V

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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 Ghost.

De Fide in Sacrosanctam Trinitatem.

Unus est vivus et verus Deus, æternus, incorporeus, impartibilis, impassibilis; immensæ potentiæ, sapientiæ, ac bonitatis; Creator et Conservator omnium, tum visibillum, tum invisibillum. Et in unitate hujus divinæ naturæ, tres sunt Personæ, ejusdem essentiæ, potentiæ, ac æternitatis; Pater, Filius, et Spiritus Sanctus.

IMPORTANT EQUIVALENTS.

Without body	=	<i>incorporeus.</i>
Without parts	=	<i>impartibilis.</i>
Without passions	=	<i>impassibilis.</i>
Infinite	=	<i>immensæ.</i>
Of this Godhead	=	<i>hujus divinæ naturæ.</i>
Of one substance	=	<i>ejusdem essentiæ.</i>

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.¹ 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 pre-supposition of the latter. But in the course of the statement there are several aspects of truth connected with the Deity which call for attention.

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,

¹ “De Deo.—Ecclesiæ magno consensu apud nos docent decretum Nicenæ Synod, de unitate essentiæ, et de tribus personis, verum et sine ulla dubitatione credendum esse. Videlicet, quod sit una essentia divina, quæ appellatur et est Deus æternus, incorporeusi impartibilis, immensa potentia, sapientia, bonitate, Creator et Conservator omnium rerum visibillum et invisibillum, et tamen tres sint personæ ejusdem essentiæ potentiæ, et coæternæ, Pater, Filius, et Spiritus Sanctus; et nomine personæ 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).

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. i. 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. i. 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. xi. 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. i. 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." St. Paul seems to have recognised in the mind an innate perception of God (Acts xvii. 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 originative.¹ 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 realisation 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 recognising Truth, Beauty, and Good-

¹ "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. 15 f.; see also Note B., p. 306).

ness, and that these coalesce in the thought of one Reality. On this view these three elements afford an argument for Theism.¹

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."² It shows that religion is not illusive, but real, and that the universe is spiritual.³

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.⁴ 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,⁵ 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

¹ Everett, *Theism and the Christian Faith* (Unitarian and Hegelian).

² 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.

³ Peake, *Christianity: Its Nature and Truth*, Ch. IV.

⁴ "It is very doubtful whether a single individual has ever found God as the sequence of a syllogistic process. To-day 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.).

⁵ T. & T. Clark, 1906.

attribute to Him the conceptions of Infinity, Eternity, and Spirituality which the *a priori* method emphasises.

We have already seen that Scripture never attempts to prove God's existence, but always assumes and affirms it (Psa. xix. 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."¹ 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

¹ Strong, *ut supra*, p. 25.

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.¹ 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.² 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.”³

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. i. 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. i. 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.⁴ According to Huxley, Causality is the first great act of faith on the part of a man of science.⁵

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,

¹ Strong, *ut supra*, p. 27 ; see also Litton, *ut supra*, p. 59 f.

² Litton, *ut supra*, p. 60.

³ Orr, *Christian View of God and the World*, Tenth Edition, p. 103 f.

⁴ “ 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).

⁵ A. D. Kelly, *Rational Necessity of Theism*, pp. 142-149

⁶ A. D. Kelly, *ut supra*, pp. 50, 156.

and purposive will ; (8) the same attributes would constitute personality in the cause of the universe, which is, in effect, the contention of Theism.¹

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.²

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.³ “Man expects to find the world a coherent whole.”⁴ 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.⁵ 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,

¹ Warschauer, *The Atheist’s Dilemma*, p. 22 f.

² “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 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).

⁴ Strong, *ut supra*, p. 20.

⁵ “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).

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 Huxley himself admitted in one of the latest of his writings.¹ 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. i. 26, 27).²

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

¹ "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).

² Orr, *ut supra*, "God as Religious Postulate." Appendix to Lecture III, p. 112.

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.¹

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

¹ 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.

in the universe.¹ 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 Huxley, Ray Lankester, and others.² The best thought of to-day 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."³

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.⁴ 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.⁵ One thing is absolutely certain, that it is only by Revelation we attain to fellowship with God as a Personal Redeemer.⁶ And it is for this reason

¹ "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).

² "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).

³ 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.

⁴ "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.

⁵ "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 laws? How can we obtain permanent, lasting assurance of His favour? There is only one answer" (Mackintosh, *A First Primer of Apologetics*, p. 38 f.).

⁶ "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 awakes around us and in us" (Martensen, *Christian Dogmatics*, p. 74).

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.”¹

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,² 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.

¹ W. Adams Brown, *Christian Theology in Outline*, p. 125. See also Mullins, *The Christian Religion in its Doctrinal Expression*.

² “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 Mr. A. J. Balfour's “Theism and Humanism” in *The Nation*, 2nd October 1915).

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 premiss and conclusion.¹ 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.² 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.³ While, therefore, we must not undervalue natural theology,⁴ yet to Christians the argument from nature is rather the confirmation of our belief in God than the foundation of it. Christian

¹ 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 premiss. 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).

² Strong, *ut supra*, p. 7 f.

³ Miller, *Topics of the Times*, "The Idea of God," pp. 6-11.

⁴ "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).

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 xiv. 8). Thus "Theism needs Revelation to complete it."¹

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. vi. 4; Isa. xli. 4; xlv. 6; xlviii. 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."²

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. iii. 10; Psa. xlii. 2; Jer. x. 10; Dan. vi. 26; Matt. xvi. 16; John vi. 57; Acts xiv. 15; Rom. ix. 26; Heb. iii. 12; Rev. vii. 2).

3. His Truth.—"There is one living and true God." The word is *verus*, not *verax* (*true*, not *truthful*), and answers to *ἀληθινός* rather than *ἀληθής*. But the two words are found in Scripture descriptive of God as "true." The latter means faithful, as against falsity (Tit. i. 2); the former means substantial, genuine, as against unreality (John xvii. 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. i. 20; 1 Tim. i. 17). It means a Being with no limitation of space and time. As He is not limited in space, so He is

¹ Orr, *God's Image in Man*, pp. 77-79, 111.

² Ward, *The Realm of Ends*, p. 443 and p. 436.

not limited in time. This statement should be carefully compared with the Creed, which emphasises the Almightyness of God.¹

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

(a) “Without body,” *incorporeus*; that is, without limitation of power and space (John iv. 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 subjected 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.²

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.³

III.—THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

By an attribute is to be understood “any conception which is necessary

¹ Westcott, *The Historic Faith*, p. 36 f.

² For the truth in the Patristic 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.

³ “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.

to the explicit idea of God; any distinctive conception which cannot be resolved into any other."¹ The Article describes God as "of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness."

1. "Infinite power" (*immensæ potentia*).—This, which may be called physical, means power adequate to all possible requirements. There is no sphere higher than His (Psa. cxxxv. 6; Rev. i. 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, "*immensæ*," referring to infinity, may be compared with the similar phrase in the Athanasian Creed, "*Immensus Pater*."

2. "Infinite wisdom" (*immensæ sapientiæ*).—This is the intellectual aspect expressed by the word "omniscience." It implies that nothing can escape the Divine knowledge (Psa. cxxxix. 2, 3, 6; cxlv. 7). He is "the only wise God" (1 Tim. i. 17).

3. "Infinite goodness" (*immensæ 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 (Isa. vi. 3),² and the New Testament with the Divine Love (1 John iv. 8). So we may say that the characteristic revelation of God in the Bible is that of Holy Love.³ 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 St. John in reference to the Divine character:—

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

(b) God is Light (1 John i. 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 iv. 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

¹ H. B. Smith, *Systematic Theology*, p. 12; see also W. Adams Brown, *ut supra*, p. 100 ff

² George Adam Smith, *Isaiah*, Vol. II.

³ See Forsyth, *The Holy Father and the Living Christ*, *passim*.

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 fulness 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.¹ "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.² 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.³ 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

¹ Litton, *ut supra*, p. 95.

² Illingworth, *Divine Immanence*; Platt, *Immanence and Christian Thought*.

³ 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).

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.¹ 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.² 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.³ "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 harmonising 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

¹ "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).

² "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).

³ "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).

⁴ Platt, *ut supra*, p. 205.

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.¹ 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."²

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.³ 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,

¹ Platt, *ut supra*, p. 71. ² Paterson, *The Rule of Faith*, p. 205.

³ Litton, *ut supra*, pp. 87-95.

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.¹ 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.² This distinction between

¹ "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).

² "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).

a Trinity of Revelation and a Trinity of Reality is sometimes expressed by the words "Trinity" and "Tri-unity."¹

1. The Doctrine Stated.²—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 threefoldness 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 Ghost 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 Ghost 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

¹ So W. N. Clarke, *An Outline of Christian Theology*, and *The Christian Doctrine of God*.

² This is taken in substance from the article "TRINITY," by the author, in Hastings' one-volume *Bible Dictionary*.

have been from above, and which no difficulty of intellectual correlation or of theological co-ordination 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 xx. 28). Then in the Acts of the Apostles we find St. Peter preaching to Jews, and emphasising two associated truths: (1) the Sonship and Messiahship 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 iii. 13, 26 and iv. 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 St. Peter the claim made for Jesus of Nazareth as the Source of healing (iii. 6, 16), the Prince of life (iii. 15), the Head Stone of the corner (iv. 11), and the one and only way of Salvation (iv. 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.¹ 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 xiv. 16, 17, 26; xv. 26; xvi. 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. v,

¹ "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).

where lying against the Holy Ghost is equivalent to lying against God (v. 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 (ii. 4; viii. 29; x. 19; xiii. 2, 4; xvi. 6; xx. 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. i. 1 f.; 1 Peter i. 2), and in the closing benedictions as the Divine Source of Blessing (Rom. xv. 30; 2 Thess. iii. 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. ii. 4-6; 2 Cor. xiii. 14; 1 Pet. i. 2).¹ It is the function of the Spirit to make redemptive history live again before the gaze of faith.

In all these assertions and implications of the Godhead of Jesus Christ, it is to be noted very carefully that St. Paul has not the faintest idea of

¹ "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 St. 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, St. 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 xii. and Romans viii.—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. St. 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).

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 Judæa; 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. viii. 4; Jas. ii. 19); and (b) the other reveals distinctions within the Godhead (Matt. iii. 16, 17; xxviii. 19; 2 Cor. xiii. 14). We see clearly that (1) the Father is God (Matt. xi. 25; Rom. xv. 6; Eph. iv. 6); (2) the Son is God (John i. 1, 18; xx. 28; Acts xx. 28; Rom. ix. 5; Heb. i. 8; Col. ii. 9; Phil. ii. 6; 2 Peter i. 1); (3) the Holy Spirit is God (Acts v. 3, 4; 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11; Eph. ii. 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 xv. 26; xvi. 13, 14; xvii. 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 iii. 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. x. 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 St. 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.¹

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. vi. 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 St. Paul (1 Thess. iii. 11, Greek). Then, too, the use of the plurals “us” (Gen. i. 26), “our” (iii. 22), “us” (xi. 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.² (b) The references to the “Angel of Jehovah” prepare the way for the Christian doctrine of a distinction in the Godhead (Gen. xviii. 2, 16; xvii. 22 with xix. 1; Josh. v. 13-15 with vi. 2; Jud. xiii. 8-21; Zech. xiii. 7). (c) Allusions to the “Spirit of Jehovah” form another line of Old Testament teaching. In Genesis i. 2 the Spirit is an energy only, but in subsequent books an agent (Isa. xl. 13; xlvi. 16; lix. 19; lxiii. 10 f.). (d) The personification of Divine Wisdom is also to be observed, for the connection between the personification of Wisdom in Prov. viii, the Logos of John i. 1-18, and the “wisdom” of 1 Cor. i. 24 can hardly be accidental. (e) There are also other hints, such as the Triplicity of

¹ 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*.

² Otley, *The Incarnation*, p. 183 f.

the Divine Names (Numb. vi. 24-27; Psa. xxix. 3-5; Isa. vi. 1-3), which, while they may not be pressed, cannot be overlooked. Hints are all that were to be expected until the fulness 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 fulness, 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.¹ 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."² 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 co-ordination with that of the Father and the Son.

(b) The Facts of Christian Experience.—It is simple truth to state

¹ "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).

² Strong, *ut supra*, p. 142.

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.¹

(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.² 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 St. 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

¹ “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 undigesting 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).

² “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 *vous*, 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).

towards Semitic modes of thought. Deity is never a bare unity, but always a fulness 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.¹

(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.²

¹ "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).

² "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.¹ 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 co-exists with plurality, unity in plurality being a distinctive mark of all organic life. The only perfect concord of music is a trinity,² 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 co-existence 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 threefoldness in Scripture (Numb. vi. 24-26; Isa. vi. 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

¹ "The result seems to be that the New Testament, besides revealing the œconomical 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 intra*, 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.

² "It is curious how the number three starts up to meet us unsought and unexpected" (Mackintosh, *ut supra*, p. 38).

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 DOCTRINE¹

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 *οὐσία* and *ὑπόστασις*. 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 Nicæa. What, then, was the doctrine of Nicæa 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 Nicæa 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 *οὐσία* is used for "substance," though in the anathemas *ὑπόστασις* 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 Nicæa used *ὁμοούσιος* 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 *οὐσία* became applied to the Divine Nature, and *ὑπόστασις* was employed to indicate the distinctions in the *οὐσία*. The outcome was the formula *μία οὐσία ἐν τρισὶν ὑποστάσεσιν*.

¹ Bethune-Baker, *An Introduction to the Early History of Christian Doctrine*, pp. 139-147.

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

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.

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

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.

Filius qui est Verbum Patris, ab æterno a Patre genitus, verus et æternus Deus, ac Patri consubstantialis, in utero beatæ Virginis ex illius substantia naturam humanam assumpsit: ita ut duæ naturæ, divina et humana, integre atque perfecte in unitate personæ, fuerint inseparabiliter conjunctæ: 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	=	<i>ac Patri consubstantialis.</i>	
Man's nature	=	<i>naturam humanam.</i>	
Of her substance	=	<i>ex illius substantia.</i>	
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.	=	{	
	=		<i>ita ut duæ naturæ, divina et humana, integre atque perfecte in unitate personæ, fuerint inseparabiliter conjunctæ.</i>
	=		
	=		
Very	=	<i>verus.</i>	
Sacrifice	=	<i>hostia.</i>	
Original guilt	=	<i>culpa originis.</i>	

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.¹ This, too, was placed in the forefront of the Reformation to show the essential unity of the Reformed with the mediæval Faith, and also because of the denials of the doctrine of the Incarnation seen at an early period of the Reformation movement.²

¹ "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).

² 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*.¹

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.² We must, therefore, look first at this as it is, and then enquire as to any modern variations. The earliest commentator on the Articles, 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.

I. 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 i. 35; John i. 34; Rom. i. 4; Heb. i. 2-5.³ But here the word is, of course, to be referred to our Lord's personal relationship with the Father.⁴ No two titles are more frequently used in the Fourth Gospel than "Father" and "Son," and these are corre-

¹ "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).

² "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, *Creeds of Christendom*, Vol. II, p. 62 ff.).

³ Pearson, *On the Creed*, Article II, Ch. III.

⁴ Note the Greek (*ἰδιος*) of John v. 18 and Rom. viii. 32. See also Matt. xi. 27 (Greek).

latives, 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."¹ 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. xxii. 2, 12; Jer. vi. 26; Amos viii. 10; Zech. xii. 10). This is the thought in Luke vii. 12; viii. 42; ix. 38. May it not be so with Christ as well (John i. 14, 18; iii. 16, 18; i John iv. 9)? It is, of course, true that the ordinary meaning of *πρωτότοκος*, "firstborn," is that of a first child (see Matt. i. 25; Luke ii. 7). But in Heb. xii. 23 it has a spiritual meaning, implying dignity and privilege, so that it is impossible to limit it to the Incarnation (cf. Rom. viii. 29; Col. i. 15, 18; Heb. i. 6; Rev. i. 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. Matt. xvi. 16; Rev. ii. 18). In these words the Sanhedrin adjured Jesus Christ to declare Himself, and on His acceptance of the title He was condemned (Matt. xxvi. 63; Luke xxii. 70; John xix. 7). It was not a claim to Messiahship, but to Deity (John viii. 58, 59; John x. 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 xvi. 30).

2. The title, "Word."—This is found in two places (John i. 1, 14; Rev. xix. 13). Two questions are usually asked in regard to it: (1) Whence it was; (2) What it means. Opinions differ as to whether the

¹ The distinction between "children" (*τέκνα*) and "sons" (*υἱοί*) is frequently ignored by the English Versions. See Rom. viii. 14-17.

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 St. 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.¹

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 a 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 co-existence with the Father. Thus the phrase teaches us that we must not regard this "begetting" as an event of 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 be 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 premisses 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

¹ "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 St. John's doctrine of the Logos and other ideas of the "Word," see Alexander's *Leading Ideas of the Gospels*, p. 185.

the syllogism. So, in the same way, our use of the word "begotten" must always be safeguarded by the association of "from everlasting."¹

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."²

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 battle-ground of controversy. It was rejected by the Arians, but insisted upon 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 upon the proper Deity of the Son and the truth that He was not merely "like the Father" (*ὁμοιούσιος*), but without any qualification identical with the Father (*ὁμοούσιος*).³ 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 Matt. xi. 27; John i. 1; iii. 13; v. 19, 20; viii. 54; xvii. 10; Phil. ii. 6 (Greek; see Lightfoot); Col. ii. 9).

¹ "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).

² Paterson, *ut supra*, p. 209.

³ "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).

THE DEITY OF CHRIST

Two great truths occupied the attention of the early Church in regard to the Lord Jesus Christ: the fact and the method of the Incarnation. The problem in 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 Docetæ went to the other and denied His humanity. Then later came Arianism, which denied both and made Christ a sort of *tertium quid*. 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.¹

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,² and the significance of His claim to authority cannot be exaggerated in its relation to Christology.³

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.⁴ If the Incarnation be denied Christianity

¹ Paterson, *ut supra*, pp. 209, 213.

² 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*.

³ Streatfield, *The Self-Interpretation of Jesus Christ: The Incarnation*; Johnston Ross, *The Universality of Jesus*; Griffith Thomas, *Christianity is Christ*, with Bibliography.

⁴ Gwatkin, *The Knowledge of God*, Vol. II, p. 298.

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.¹

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."²

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."³

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 Homousios, but because of the real subtilty 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 to-day'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

¹ Warfield, *Princeton Theological Review*, Vol. IX, p. 689.

² Mead, *Iranic Theology*, p. 257.

³ Bishop Moule, Preface to Sir Robert Anderson's *The Lord from Heaven*.

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 out¹ 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 clear 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;

¹ This section is greatly indebted to a paper by Principal 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 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, *ὑπόστασις*. 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.¹

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

¹ Bruce, *The Humiliation of Christ*, p. 169.

Person what is really only appropriate to one of the two natures. Thus, we read of "the blood of God" (Acts xx. 28); "The Son of Man which is in heaven" (John iii. 13); "Crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Cor. ii. 8).¹ 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."²

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.

¹ Hooker, *Ecclesiastical Polity*, Bk. V, Ch. 53, Section 4.

² Paterson, *ut supra*, p. 227.

Against these four errors the Church, as represented at Chalcedon, emphasised four watchwords. In opposition to Arianism, Christ was declared to be "truly" God (*ἀληθῶς*); in opposition to Apollinarianism, Christ was declared to be "perfectly" Man (*τελείως*); in opposition to Nestorianism, Christ's Person was declared to be "indivisibly" one (*ἀδιαίρετως*); in opposition to Eutychianism, the two Natures of Christ were declared to be "unconfusedly" distinct (*ἀσυγχύτως*).

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 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.¹ 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."² Then, too, its doctrine of "impersonal humanity" is said to be unthinkable because unreal and untrue to experience.³ The result is said to be a dilemma,

¹ 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.

² Mackintosh, *ut supra*, p. 295.

³ 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. 286).

“the Scylla of a duplex personality and the Charybdis of an impersonal manhood.”¹ On this view genuine faith in Christ is not to be identified with adherence to this Christological formula,² 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*.—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.³ 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

¹ Mackintosh, *ut supra*, p. 296.

² Mackintosh, *ut supra*, p. 298 f.

³ Mackintosh, *ut supra*, p. 241 f.

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. ii. 5-8, and is said to involve in some way the laying aside of Divine attributes. The theory takes various forms,¹ 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*).² 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 to-day 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."³

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.⁴ His manhood was real, individual, and full, and yet He was a personal manifestation of God in human form.⁵ His Incarnation and pre-existence are facts, and there was a self-emptying, though this emphasises principle rather than method.⁶ 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."⁷

¹ See Bruce, *ut supra*, Ch. IV.

² Gifford, *The Incarnation*, clearly shows that *ἐνάρχων* in Phil. ii. 6 must mean permanent subsistence during His incarnate life, as well as pre-existence, according to Lightfoot's interpretation.

³ Paterson, *ut supra*, p. 232.

⁴ Mackintosh, *ut supra*, p. 407 ff.

⁵ Mackintosh, *ut supra*, p. 470.

⁶ Mackintosh, *ut supra*, p. 306 ff.; 321 ff.

⁷ Mackintosh, *ut supra*, p. 466.

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."¹ 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 fulness 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."²

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.³ 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.⁴

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."⁵ It is difficult to know what is meant by "a human life of God"; a life "unequivocally human."⁶ 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.⁷

5. The sub-liminal consciousness Theory.—One more modern view needs attention because it has been presented by Dr. 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 sub-conscious element in man underlies his consciousness, that as the place of all Divine action upon the soul is the sub-liminal consciousness, so the proper seat of Deity in the Incarnate Christ is found there also. But this, as several

¹ Mackintosh, *ut supra*, p. 479.

² Mackintosh, *ut supra*, p. 486.

³ Mackintosh, *ut supra*, p. 498 f.

⁴ Mackintosh, *ut supra*, p. 504 f.; Forsyth, *The Person and Place of Jesus Christ*.

⁵ Mackintosh, *ut supra*, p. 499.

⁶ Mackintosh, *ut supra*, pp. 469, 470.

⁷ For an acute criticism of Mackintosh see the *Princeton Theological Review*, Vol. XI, p. 141 ff., by Dr. B. B. Warfield.

writers have pointed out, does not meet the difficulty, still less solve the 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.¹

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.² 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.³

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.⁴ The reality of the facts does not stand

¹ 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.

² "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, to-day: and the Christian heart can consent to give up neither" (Warfield, *Princeton Theological Review*, Vol. XI, p. 155).

³ 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.

⁴ "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?" (Warfield, *ut supra*, p. 151).

"The stone of stumbling here is ever again 'the impersonality of Jesus' human

or fall with our ability to explain all the difficulties. It is worth while to remember that heresy sometimes has sufficient vitality in it to be of spiritual blessing to men,¹ 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."² 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 that salvation from sin which is the deepest need of the soul.³

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

nature.⁷ 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 οὐσία*, the *prima substantia*, the in and for itself 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 *enhypostasia* 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 enhypostasisation 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).

¹ Paterson, *ut supra*, p. 233.

² Paterson, *ut supra*, p. 235.

³ For a complete statement and criticism of modern Christologies, together with a view similar to the above conclusion, see La Touche, *The Person of Christ in Modern Thought*.

line of approach, leaving the thorough discussion to special works on the subject.¹

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. viii. 6; Col. i. 15 ff.; 2 Cor. viii. 9; Phil. ii. 6).²

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 i. 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

¹ 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.

² Denney, *Studies in Theology*, p. 250 f.

Sonship which is proved by the Resurrection (Rom. i. 4). St. Peter's confession at Cæsarea 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 Ghost, 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 re-appearance 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 manward 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.”¹—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 to-day.

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.

¹ 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 centre of gravity in the New Testament. . . . Not Bethlehem, but Calvary is the focus of revelation.”¹

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 St. 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 mediæval form of which was the simple noun, “onement” (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.² In the Authorised Version the term

¹ Denney, *The Death of Christ*, p. 324 f.

² (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. xxi. 14; Coverdale, 1535).

“We pray you that ye be *atone* with God” (2 Cor. v. 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. v. 18).—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.

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. v. 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.

I.—THE NEW TESTAMENT REVELATION

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

1. 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, St. Matthew has one-third devoted to this week, St. Mark over one-third, St. Luke one-fourth, and St. 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 St. Paul speaks of the Death as "delivered first of all" (1 Cor. xv. 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. i. 18; Rev. v. 6, 12; xii. 11; xiii. 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. v. 7; Eph. v. 2; Heb. x. 12). What is its root-idea? According to Robertson Smith¹ 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.²

(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."—Owen, *Pneumatologia*, iv, I, 1674.

"The murderer fell, and blood *atoned* for blood."—Pope.

¹ *The Religion of the Semites.*

² S. I. Curtiss, *Primitive Semitic Religion To-day.*

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. xi. 4) seems to imply a prior revelation to which his faith could attend and respond. (2) Offering, *προσφορά* (Heb. x. 10, 14). The word is familiar from the LXX rendering of corresponding Hebrew terms. (3) Ransom, *λύτρον* (Matt. xx. 28; 1 Tim. ii. 6). Scripture is silent as to Whom the ransom is paid, and only emphasises the worth of that which was thereby given (cf. Rev. v. 9; Gal. iii. 13). (4) Redemption, *ἀπολύτρωσις* (Eph. i. 7; Col. i. 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. *λυτροῦν*, 1 Pet. i. 18). The thought appears to be the removal of bondage and thralldom. (5) Propitiation, *ἱλασμός*, and *ἱλάσκεσθαι* (Rom. iii. 25; 1 John ii. 2; iv. 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 xviii. 13).¹ (6) Reconciliation, *καταλλαγὴ* (Rom. v. 10; 2 Cor. v. 18; Eph. ii. 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 St. 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. v. 21); He died "the just for the unjust" (1 Pet. iii. 18);

¹ 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.

“Made a curse for us” (Gal. iii. 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”; *ὑπέρ*,¹ “on behalf of”; *διὰ*, “on account of”; *ἀντί*, “instead of” (Matt. xx. 28; 1 Tim. ii. 6).²

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 *ἁμαρτία*, “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,” *ὀργή θεοῦ* (Rom. i. 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. xlv. 4).

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

II.—THE OLD TESTAMENT ANTICIPATION

1. 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.³

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 Sometimes *ὑπέρ* has a clear substitutionary meaning (John xi. 50).

² 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. v. 21); (2) Satisfaction, *i.e.* “restitution for broken law.”

³ “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).

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.¹ 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.²

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.

¹ 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*.

² 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 criticising 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*.

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?¹ 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.²

¹ D'Arcy, *Christianity and the Supernatural*, p. 80.

² "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

To the same effect are the criticisms of Dr. Denney, who holds that to express the Atonement as penitence is really unthinkable.¹ 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.² When Dr. Moberly's book first appeared a similar criticism was made.³ Not least of all, this view cannot find any real foundation in the passages of the New Testament dealing with the Atonement.⁴

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. iii. 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.⁵

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).

¹ "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*).

² "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*).

³ 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."

⁴ 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).

⁵ 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.¹ 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."²

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

¹ Bruce, *The Humiliation of Christ*, p. 316.

² In various forms this is the essential view of Dale, Denney, Forsyth, and Simpson.

whom Christ did not die, and every sin, past, present, and future, is regarded as laid on and borne by Him.¹

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.² 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.”³

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. iv. 15), and princes standing for the entire nation (Josh. ix. 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. xxii. 13); Judah for Benjamin (Gen. xlv. 33); the Levites for the first-born (Numb. iii. 12); David for Absalom (2 Sam. xviii. 33); and Paul for Onesimus (Philem. v. 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

¹ “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).

² Bruce, *ut supra*, p. 307.

³ T. R. Birks, *Difficulties of Belief*, pp. 176, 179.

other is incapable of doing. This is the meaning of the ransom (Lev. xxv. 47-49), and is illustrated by the payment made for Richard Cœur 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.¹

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. iii. 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.² 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.³

(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."⁴

(c) The full meaning of Christian Experience.—There can be no

¹ For a fuller treatment of these various aspects see Girdlestone, *The Faith of the Centuries*, pp. 200-202.

² By Forsyth. See his books, *passim*.

³ "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).

⁴ Dale, *Jewish Temple and Christian Church*, p. 146.

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.¹ The idea of substitution has given such unflinching comfort that it cannot be regarded as ethically wrong.² 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.³ 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."⁴ All

¹ "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).

² "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 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).

⁴ Bruce, *ut supra*, p. 316.

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.'"¹

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,² 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 critic³ 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.

¹ Forsyth, *The Cruciality of the Cross*, p. 214.

² Stuart McDowall, *Evolution of Atonement*, with Preface by Bishop H. E. Ryle, Dean of Westminster.

³ Dr. Hastings in *Expository Times*.

ment. 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.¹

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.²

(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 to-day. 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 iv. 10).

¹ 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*).

² Mabie, *Under the Redeeming Ægis, passim*.

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 xvii. 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.¹

¹ "There is little doubt that the sympathetic tendency is the more popular to-day, 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. 58).

"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.

De Decensu Christi ad Inferos.

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

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. iii. 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 prædicavit: quemadmodum testatur Petri locus*" ("For the body lay in the sepulchre until the resurrection: but His Ghost departing from Him, was with the ghosts that were in prison, or in hell, and did preach to the same: as the place of St. 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 1563.¹ 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.

¹ 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).

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 *ἐν-ἐροι*, *ἐν-ἐρα(γῆ)*, 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, *ᾠδης*. 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. xxviii. 19; Luke xvi. 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 xi. 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 (Psa. xlix. 15; xvi. 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. xv. 8; 2 Kings xxiii. 10; Jer. vii. 31). The word is easily identified by English readers of the New Testament, since it is invariably associated with fire, or judgment (Matt. v. 22; x. 28; Jas. iii. 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. ii. 4). It seems to answer to the “deep” or “abyss” (Luke viii. 31; Rev. ix. 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 xxiii. 43; 2 Cor. xii. 4; Rev. ii. 7). A corresponding word occurs three times in the Old Testament in a secular sense, meaning a “grove” or “forest” (Neh. ii. 8; Eccl. ii. 5; Song Sol. iv. 13).

II.—THE FACT OF THE DESCENT INTO HELL

Various passages of Scripture have been used in this connection.

1. Luke xxiii. 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. ii. 7). There does not seem to be any real warrant for supposing that the Jews regarded paradise as a part of Hades.¹

2. Acts ii. 27-31.—See Psalm xvi. 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. iv. 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 Psa. lxxviii. 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. iii. 18-iv. 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.²

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:—

¹ 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 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.

“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.”¹

The fact of the descent is clear from Acts ii. 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.”² 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.³

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. ii. 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?”⁴

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

¹ *The Catholic Doctrine of the Church of England*, p. 60.

² Calvin, *Inst.*, Bk. II, Ch. XVI, Section 10.

³ *On the Articles*, pp. 126-137.

⁴ Pearson, *On the Creed*.

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.”¹

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 door-keepers 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.”² 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 St. 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.

¹ Westcott, *The Historic Faith*, p. 76 f.

² Heurtley, *Harmonia Symbolica*, p. 134.

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.¹

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.²

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. iii. 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.³ 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. iii. 18—iv. 6) there seem to be two important and distinct parts of His work. He made a proclamation to the imprisoned antediluvian souls (iii. 18-21), and He liberated those spirits of the righteous, who through fear of death had all their lifetime been subject to bondage (iv. 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

¹ Moule, *Outlines of Christian Doctrine*, p. 96; Gibson, *The Thirty-nine Articles*, p. 175 f.

² Moule, *ut supra*, p. 97.

³ "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 terræ viscera, ita, anima a corpore separata, ad inferos descendisse; simulque etiam mortis suæ virtutem, atque, efficacitatem ad mortuos atque inferos adeo ipsos ita penetrasse, ut et incredulorum animæ acerbissimam iustissimamque infidelitatis suæ damnationem, ipseque inferorum princeps Satanæ, tyrannidis suæ, et tenebrarum potestatem omnem debilitatam, fractam atque ruina collapsam esse persentiret: contra vero mortui Christo dum vixerunt fidentes, redemptionis suæ opus iam peractum esse, eiusque vim atque virtutem cum suauißima certissimaque consolatione, intelligerent atque perciperent" (Nowell's *Catechism*, 1570).

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. xxv. 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. xi. 40). And then they seem to be described as "the spirits of just men made perfect" (Heb. xii. 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.¹

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

¹ 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 St. Peter's Epistle reference may be made to the present author's *The Apostle Peter* (pp. 210-222).

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.*"¹

¹ 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 St. 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*.