

ARTICLE XIII

Of Works before Justification.

Works done before the grace of Christ, and the inspiration of His Spirit, are not pleasant to God, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ; neither do they make men meet to receive grace, or, as the School-authors say, deserve grace of congruity: yea, rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin.

De Operibus ante Justificationem.

Opera quæ fiunt ante gratiam Christi, et Spiritus ejus afflatum, cum ex fide Jesu Christi non prodeant, minime Deo grata sunt; neque gratiam, ut multi vocant, de congruo merentur: immo cum non sint facta, ut Deus illa fieri voluit et præcepit, peccati rationem habere non dubitamus.

IMPORTANT EQUIVALENTS.

Inspiration	=	<i>afflatum.</i>
As the School-authors say	=	<i>ut multi vocant.</i>
Grace of congruity	=	<i>gratiam de congruo.</i>
Nature of sin	=	<i>peccati rationem.</i>

THIS is a natural corollary to the subject of the preceding Article and shows the worthlessness of works when they are put in the wrong place. The Article dates from 1553, and is probably original, for there is nothing corresponding to it elsewhere. The English "School-authors" has *Multi* as the Latin equivalent.

A good deal of discussion has been raised in connection with the title and the Article. The title speaks of "Works before Justification," while the Article refers to works done before the grace of Christ and the inspiration of His Spirit. It has been urged that there is a discrepancy between the title and the Article, but this hardly seems correct, since the subject of the Article is altogether different from such questions as are involved in the conviction of sin on the Day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 37), or the prayer of the awakened and really converted Saul (Acts ix. 11). Such workings of the Holy Spirit are never called by the term "Grace" in the New Testament. But what is still more important, the question discussed in the Article went by the name of the title at the Reformation, and especially at the Council of Trent. A contrast is made with the works referred to in the preceding Article. There, good works are mentioned as the fruit of faith; here, works prior to Justification are in question. As, therefore, this Article refers to works which are clearly independent of Christ and His Spirit, there is no real discrepancy, and any thought of the Article contradicting the title is ruled out at once. Further, there are other titles, like those of Articles IV and X, which

are not in strict harmony with the substance of the Articles themselves, and yet there is no fundamental difference involved. The earliest commentator on the Articles, Rogers, is a clear and convincing witness to what was intended by the compilers, showing that the Roman view of meritorious works as precedent to Justification are alone in view.¹

I.—THE OUTLINE OF THE ARTICLE

1. A clear definition of works before Justification.—“Before the grace of Christ and the inspiration of His Spirit.” There is, therefore, no reference whatever to the grace which moves the sinner towards Christ.

2. The Divine disapproval of works before Justification.—“Are not pleasant to God, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ.” An additional proof is afforded in this wording that the Article has reference to the thought of meritoriousness of works.

3. The spiritual powerlessness of works done before Justification.—“Neither do they make men meet to receive grace, or, as the School-authors say, deserve grace of congruity.” An allusion to mediæval doctrine which will come under consideration in the history of the subject.²

4. The true nature of works done before Justification.—“Yea, rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin.”³

II.—THE HISTORICAL SETTING OF THE ARTICLE

The teaching of the Article is a necessary consequence of Articles IX to XII, and it was intended to oppose the *De Congruo* doctrine. According to the mediæval view, the Fall was the loss of a supernatural gift, *donum supernaturale*, and as this left man with faculties and abilities belonging to him by nature, the exercise of these powers formed the natural medium of transition to the grace of God, so that a proper exercise of them merited the grace of congruity, *de congruo*. Aquinas said that when the will is set in motion man disposes himself for further action and for the reception of habitual grace, and that in this is *meritum de congruo*. Then, when he has thus acquired the habitual grace to do good he thereby

¹ Rogers, *On the Thirty-nine Articles*, p. 125 ff.

² By “School-authors” the Article intends what is known as mediæval scholasticism, the effort to blend theology with philosophy in a great system. It is usually dated from the time of Charlemagne, through the monasteries founded by him, and since learning was at that time mainly limited to ecclesiastics it was only natural that human thought should express itself almost wholly in the realm of theology. Scholasticism rose from the ninth to the eleventh centuries and reached its climax in the twelfth and thirteenth. The leading names are Albertus Magnus, died 1280; Thomas Aquinas, died 1274; Duns Scotus, died 1308. Trench points out that while the Fathers were theologically productive, the Schoolmen simply endeavoured to vindicate and confirm what was ancient, and thereby to systematise in fullest possible detail the doctrine of the Church, at the same time vindicating its reason and showing its entire congruity with supernatural revelation (Trench, *Mediæval Church History*, Lecture XIV).

³ The Latin has the same phrase, *peccati rationem*, as in Article IX.

obtains *meritum de condigno*. The Council of Trent speaks of works done before Justification as connected with *meritum de congruo*, and works after Justification as *de condigno*.¹ The merit of condignity is such that there is an absolute failure on the part of God if it is not recognised. The merit of congruity claims less, but the result is equally certain, since God must be conceived of as doing what is "congruous to His perfection to do." Although the Schoolmen allowed that neither before nor after the Fall man was capable in himself of meriting salvation, yet they maintained that in Paradise he could live free from sin, but to deserve everlasting life required grace. But, as we have seen, it was to the loss of the superadded gift and not to any depravity of his mind they ascribed the principal evil resulting from the Fall, a loss which by a proper exertion of his natural abilities they considered to be retrievable. It was from this that the objectionable doctrine of human sufficiency arose, which in the estimation of the Reformers tended to blot out the glory of the Gospel, and when applied to the conscience led to presumption. According to this idea the favour of God in this life was attainable by congruous personal merit, and His presence in the life to come by condign personal merit. But though we cannot, according to the Schoolmen, merit salvation itself without works of condignity, yet we can merit the means of attaining by works of congruity, the latter being introductory to the former. With such a view of man's powers it is not surprising that Melancthon should have charged the Scholastics with teaching a doctrine that involved the superfluity of the influence of the Holy Spirit. The doctrine against which our Article is directed is thus expressed in a Note to the Rheims Testament (on Acts x. 2):—

"Such works as are done before justification though they suffice not to salvation, yet be acceptable preparatives to the grace of justification, and such works preparative come of grace also, otherwise they could never deserve at God's hands of congruity, or any otherwise towards justification."

Now as the Ninth Article teaches that men are in a state of enmity to God, and that their propensities are such as lead into actual sin, and since from the Eleventh and Twelfth we learn that Christians are released from that enmity and are no longer under condemnation, it is abundantly clear that the Article is directed solely against those who conceived that they had the power so to dispose themselves for grace as to merit God's favour and bring about the commencement of their own salvation.² The Article

¹ The usual illustration of the distinction between these two views is that of a wealthy man with a servant, who does his work and receives wages *de condigno*, and then in old age, when unable to work he receives *de congruo*.

² As an illustration of an impossible way of interpreting the Article and of making it virtually identical with mediæval doctrine, the following extract from Forbes (*Explanation of the Thirty-nine Articles*, p. 208) may be given:

"Sufficient weight, in the consideration of this Article, has not been given to the fact that the only works excluded from merit *de congruo* by its terms are those done before the grace of Christ and the inspiration of the Spirit: consequently it does not prejudice

is thus part of the Reformation protest against any thought of man preparing the way for salvation by his own act. The Council of Trent, though avoiding the use of the terms *meritum de congruo* and *de condigno*, yet anathematises those who deny the value of works before Justification.¹

III.—THE TEACHING OF THE ARTICLE

It is essential to note the special application of the Article. It refers solely to the question of Justification by works in the light of the Reformation controversies and the Protestant position against Rome. It was directed only against those who thought they could commence their own salvation. It is tantamount to saying that there is a universal necessity of the Atonement and the Holy Spirit. There is no reference whatever to heathen morality, unless that should be used as a title for Justification, nor is there any question of goodness on the part of those outside the Gospel (John i. 4, 9; Acts x. 2; xvii. 27 f.; Rom. i. 19 f.). So also works of charity by unbelievers are entirely out of the present question unless they should be done with a view to gaining favour with God. Revelation is for those to whom it comes. The negatives of the Article are doubtless sweeping, but it is probable that at the outset, as indeed to-day, people are more startled in this way than by the more positive and clear statement of the true place of good works, seen in the preceding Article. Actions may be good in themselves, but if they proceed from unworthy motives they cannot be regarded as praiseworthy. The matter, and yet not the manner, may be acceptable to God. It is motive that makes the man, and behind the act we have to enquire as to the reason why a man performs it. An action may be noble and yet out of proportion, just as characters entirely irreligious have not their true centre in God, and therefore are really a perversion of God's will. So that, although the term "grace of congruity" seems to imply a controversy altogether antiquated, yet the Article has a very definite bearing on some of the most vital ethical questions of to-day. There is a widespread opinion that all that is required is morality, and that a man's beliefs are of little or no effect.² Thus Matthew Arnold has spoken of conduct as "three-fourths of life."

the question whether other works, those which are the fruit of faith, do or do not dispose us in some way to justification, and *de congruo* (though not *de condigno*) merit the grace of justification."

Such a statement carries its own condemnation in the light of the Article when interpreted by mediæval and Tridentine doctrine.

¹ "Si quis dixerit opera omnia quæ ante justificationem fiunt, quacumque ratione facta sint, vere esse peccata, vel odium Dei mereri, aut quanto vehementius quis nititur se disponere ad gratiam, tanto eum gravius peccare: anathema sit."—Canon VII.

"Whosoever shall say that all the works which are done before justification, on whatsoever account they may be done, are truly sins, and deserve the hatred of God, or that the more vehemently a man tries to dispose himself for grace, the more grievously he sins, let him be anathema."

² This is seen in Pope's lines:

"For creeds and forms let senseless bigots fight,
His can't be wrong whose life is in the right."

But this entirely begs the question of the other one-fourth, which is obviously concerned with the foundation and motive-power. We might as well say that a building is three-fourths and the foundation only one-fourth of the entire structure; and yet obviously the former rests upon the latter. In spite, therefore, of any modern resentment against the assertion that actions done by irreligious men are "not pleasant in the sight of God," or are "after the nature of sin," it is essential to emphasise the absolute supremacy of motive. We must get beneath and behind actions and seek to discover the principle that dominates them. There is no thought of the confusion of virtue with vice, and there is no forgetfulness of degrees of sin and responsibility, but there must be a very strong insistence upon the essential difference in the Article between "works done before Justification" (Article XIII) and good works which "follow after Justification" (Article XII).¹

¹ See Boulton, *The Theology of the Church of England*, p. 122 f.; Macbride, *Lectures on the Articles*, p. 293 f.

ARTICLE XIV

Of Works of Supererogation.

Voluntary works besides, over and above, God's Commandments, which they call *Works of Supererogation*, cannot be taught without arrogance and impiety; for by them men do declare, that they do not only render unto God as much as they are bound to do, but that they do more for His sake than of bounden duty is required; whereas Christ saith plainly, When ye have done all that are commanded to you, say, We are unprofitable servants.

De Operibus Supererogationis.

Opera, quæ *Supererogationis* appellant, non possunt sine arrogantia et impietate prædicari; nam illis declarant homines, non tantum se Deo reddere quæ tenentur; sed plus in ejus gratiam facere quam deberent: cum aperte Christus dicat, Cum feceritis omnia quæcunque præcepta sunt vobis, dicite, Servi inutiles sumus.

IMPORTANT EQUIVALENTS.

Voluntary, besides, over and above God's commandments	= [No corresponding Latin.]
To be taught	= <i>prædicari.</i>
Than of bounden duty is required	= <i>quam deberent.</i>
Plainly	= <i>aperte.</i>

ARTICLES IX and X have a direct relation to the problems of Sin. Articles XI to XIII deal with various aspects of Justification. Articles XIV to XVI are concerned with aspects of Sanctification or Holiness. These last may be distinguished as follows:—

Article XIV teaches that no Christian can exceed God's requirements.

Article XV teaches that no Christian can attain to God's requirements.

Article XVI teaches that no Christian need despair of restoration after falling.

Article XIV dates from 1553, the only subsequent change being the word "impiety" for "iniquity." The phrase, "Voluntary . . . besides, over and above God's commandments" has no equivalent in the Latin.

I.—THE TEACHING OF THE ARTICLE

I. The technical term, Works of Supererogation.—The Latin, *rogare*, meant "to propose a law," answering to the modern phrase "to bring in a Bill." Then *erogare* meant to propose a law, or bring in a Bill, dealing with money matters, things concerned with the Treasury. From this came *supererogare*, meaning, "to pay out more than was necessary." And thus came the word *supererogatio*, which in eccle-

siastical matters meant doing more than God required. The vulgate of St. Luke x. 35 is *quodcumque supererogaveris*. Then arose the mediæval idea of "an excess of merit."

2. The precise meaning of Works of Supererogation.—In the light of what has been said of the term the Article in the English defines them as works that are "voluntary, besides, over and above God's commandments."

3. The spiritual impossibility of Works of Supererogation.—"Cannot be taught without arrogance and impiety; for by them men do declare that they do not only render unto God as much as they are bound to do, but that they do more for His sake, than of bounden duty is required." This statement suffices to show the entire impracticability of the conception.

4. The demonstrated error of Works of Supererogation.—"Whereas Christ saith plainly, When ye have done all that are commanded to you, say, We are unprofitable servants." Thus, again, the appeal is made to Scripture against erroneous doctrine.

II.—THE HISTORY OF THE DOCTRINE

In order to trace this peculiar idea to its source and follow its progress it is necessary to go back to the Decian Persecution of the third century, when there were not only splendid examples of martyrdom, but also cases of serious declension and apostasy. Under stress of persecution Christians lapsed, and when the Church had to face the question of their return to communion it was felt essential to insist upon discipline as a test. But in certain cases the lapsed endeavoured to obtain the help of prospective martyrs to intercede for them with a view to re-admission, and some of these confessors did not realise the danger of such appeals, for not being content with simple intercession they actually claimed the right to restore the lapsed to the Church by granting "Letters of Peace," or means of admission to Church fellowship without penitential discipline.¹ From this it is generally understood that the first form of "Indulgence" came, a remission of ecclesiastical penance. There was nothing essentially wrong thus far, but the experience became a kind of precedent, or was regarded as such by the mediæval Church, in reference to the subsequent system of Church Indulgences.

Side by side with this there sprang up in the Church a profound regard for virginity, based, as it was supposed, on the teaching of St. Paul in 1 Cor. vii. 25; "Concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord, but I give my advice." From this arose a distinction between "commandments" and "judgments," between that which is necessary and that which is advisable. Together with this the story of the rich young ruler was employed (Mark x. 22) for the purpose of obtaining a similar distinction between precepts of obedience and counsels of per-

¹ See Article, "Libelli," *Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*.

fection, between the ordinary and extraordinary, between the necessary and the voluntary (though desirable). It was not difficult to take the further step of teaching that by following the latter, the "counsels," a Christian could do more than was really demanded by God, and from this arose the thought of a special value or "merit" attaching to particular aspects of life. Eventually the idea of works of supererogation developed, being applied to works done in compliance with counsels. It must be admitted, however, that this is one of the most extraordinary conceptions that ever entered into the mind of man, though the system of Indulgences, properly so-called, seems to date from the time of the Crusades at the end of the twelfth century. But it soon became modified and embellished in the next century, first by Alexander of Hales, and then by Albertus Magnus, under the title of *thesaurus perfectorum supererogationis*. It was taught that by virtue of the possession of the "keys" the Pope could discharge the temporal penalties of sin here and the purgatorial penalties hereafter. Aquinas completed the idea by saying that Indulgences availed for the residuum of punishment after absolution, the reason being that in the unity of the mystical Body of Christ many have supererogated beyond the measure of their debt, and as there is an abundance of these merits which exceed the punishment due, and as, moreover, the saints wrought them not for any particular individual, they belong to the whole Church and can be distributed by him who presides over it.

It will easily be seen that these ideas led to serious and grave abuses. As long as Indulgence was limited to the remission of ecclesiastical discipline there was not very much moral harm, but the moment the conception of eternal penalties was introduced the danger became obvious, and the door was opened to the gravest abuses. It is known that the sale of Indulgences was the first step that led to the opposition of Luther and the revolt in the sixteenth century. The Council of Trent only touched upon the subject briefly and hurriedly, and did not pass any direct decree upon it, but the Council acknowledges the power of granting Indulgences and calls them *cœlestes ecclesiæ thesauros*. The Rheims New Testament speaks quite plainly:—

"Holy saints may, in measure of other men's necessities and deservings, as well allot unto them the supererogation of their spiritual works, as those that abound in worldly goods may give alms of their superfluities to them that are in necessity."

Pope Leo X speaks of the power to grant Indulgences from the superabundant merit of Christ and the saints for the living and the dead. Cardinal Bellarmine says that there is an infinite treasure purchased by the Blood of Christ which has not yet been applied to all. To this "heap" Pope Clement VI said the merits of the Mother of God and the saints add support. Thus, it will be seen that the highest authorities of the Church of Rome teach this doctrine.¹

¹ Boulton, *The Theology of the Church of England*, p. 126.

III.—THE QUESTION STATED

That man can do more than his duty and even transfer superfluous merits to those who have fallen short of fulfilling required services is so astounding a view that on hearing it for the first time it seems incredible that it can be maintained, and yet, as we have seen, it is not only held by individuals, but is the avowed belief of the Roman Catholic Church, from which our Communion separated in the sixteenth century. It carries its own condemnation as introducing the principle of finance between God and man.¹

The error is fundamentally due to the erroneous ideas prevalent in connection with the subjects of Articles IX to XII, and the proofs of those Articles are consequently the proofs of this. If we are justified by works we cannot be more than justified by them, and if our Christian life is so imperfect as to be only accepted through Christ it is obvious that we have no merit at our disposal. Further, since all men are sinners they would need more than all their merit for themselves. The whole question of human meritoriousness is set aside by our Articles, following the New Testament, for "if Christ's merits are infinite, how can finite additions increase them? Infinity plus worlds is still only infinity."² The Christian idea of our relation to God is that of reconciliation involving sonship, not slavery, and any thought of supererogation can only be due to a spirit of legalism which teaches that our duty to God can somehow be formulative. But if this were the case our duty would be always the same, since law is for all without reference to character and position, and it would follow that the duty could be discharged, for if it could be expressed we should be able to see whether we had discharged it or not. But inasmuch as no two of us are alike, duty necessarily varies, because it is relative and according to capacity. The case of the young ruler, which is so often used in this connection, shows that not every follower of Jesus Christ was required to sell all, and we know that the communism of the early Apostolic Church was voluntary. And yet to the young man our Lord's words came as a command and a duty. The duty towards God is love, and love grows with love, never asking, What must I do, but what may I, or what can I do? Love cannot be restrained by law and always soars above it.

The truth is that the Roman Catholic idea of "counsels of perfection" has no warrant in Scripture, and, as taught in that Church, these counsels are nothing but distinctions of men. It is deplorable to think that Rome claims to discount venial sins and to have a substantial balance to the good. Scripture, on the other hand, says that the act is the expression of the

¹ "Tum et illorum arrogantia comprimenda est, et autoritate legum domanda, qui supererogationis opera quedam importaverunt, quibus existimant non solum cumulate Dei legibus, et explete satisfieri, sed aliquid etiam in illis amplius superesse quam Dei mandata postulent, unde et sibi mereri et aliis merita applicari possint" (*Reformatio Legum, De Hæresibus*, c. 8).

² Boulton, *ut supra*, p. 127.

moral disposition and never can go higher than duty. What are called "counsels of perfection" are really nothing more than the will of God for individual men. This is manifest in the very passages which are adduced in support of the distinction between precepts and counsels (Matt. xix. 16 ff.; 1 Cor. vii. 7), since in each case the reference is to that which was required of each as ordinary duty.¹ The distinctions between men greater and less, extraordinary and ordinary, are due solely to the gift of God, and have no human merit in them. Certain men did more because more had been given to them. Under these circumstances the Article rightly speaks of works of supererogation as involving "arrogancy and impiety": "arrogancy," because out of harmony with Christian humility; "impiety" because so clearly against Holy Scripture, as is proved by the reference to St. Luke xvii. 10. God's standard is so high that man cannot attain to it, much less go beyond it. Not only do we never go beyond, but we never satisfy God's requirements. He calls for love with all the heart (Mark xii. 30), for holiness like His own (1 Pet. i. 15), and for a life in thought, word, and deed at the very highest point (Jas. iii. 2; 1 John i. 8). No wonder, then, that faced with God's requirement the soul, even in New times with all the rich provision of grace, can only say, in Old Testament language, "If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?" (Psa. cxxx. 3). From first to last, in everything connected with our thinking, speaking, and doing, we need the infinite merit of our Lord and Saviour to meet and cover our own utter demerit. And as we are bought with a price, it is plain that such people have no services to give away, nor is it possible that anyone should do more good works than are commanded, when nothing is a good work, but what is commanded, and only good because commanded. There would be no particular fault with the distinction between precepts of obedience and counsels of perfection if only they were kept free from anything like human merit, because there is no doubt that some men are called to states and conditions of life to which other men are not called. But the danger lies in the precise way in which these two aspects are distinguished, for, of course, everyone is bound to refrain from what is sinful, and also to do to the utmost of his power everything for which he has opportunity, since the whole of his life and all his faculties belong to God. It is, therefore, clear that every so-called "counsel" respecting moral duty must of necessity be a command to the man to whom it refers, and we know that "to him who knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

Then, too, even supposing it were possible for us to go beyond our plain duty, there would still be the question how we could transfer our superabundant work or merit to another. The possibility of such works

¹ Again Forbes fails to do justice to the Reformed position, and treats of "counsels of perfection," "of which the main branches are poverty, chastity, and obedience" in a way virtually identical with that of the Church of Rome. On this view it is difficult to understand what the Article can possibly mean.

being made available for other people is obviously unthinkable, because it would destroy the very essence of the Gospel and introduce the element of human merit, when Christ alone is meritorious for salvation. It is also impossible to avoid noticing, as Boulton remarks, that the very people who scoff at the imputation of Christ's righteousness as unreal accept something infinitely more unreal, namely, "the merits of one sinner applied to the redemption of another sinner, neither being in the least cognisant of the transaction."¹

Merely to mention all these things is to show how far removed the Roman Catholic Church is on this subject from an understanding of the simplest principles of the Gospel of Christ. On the other hand, it is impossible to be too profoundly thankful for the clear insight into the fundamental realities of Christianity evinced by the teaching of the Article.

¹ Boulton, *ut supra*, p. 127.

III. THE LIFE OF FAITH—*continued*

PERSONAL RELIGION

B. ITS COURSE (ARTICLES XV–XVIII). DOCTRINES CONNECTED WITH SANCTIFICATION.

15. OF CHRIST ALONE WITHOUT SIN.

16. SIN AFTER BAPTISM.

17. PREDESTINATION AND ELECTION.

18. OBTAINING ETERNAL SALVATION ONLY BY THE
NAME OF CHRIST.

ARTICLE XV

Of Christ alone without Sin.

Christ in the truth of our nature was made like unto us in all things, sin only except, from which He was clearly void, both in His flesh and in His spirit. He came to be the Lamb without spot, who, by sacrifice of Himself once made, should take away the sins of the world; and sin, as Saint *John* saith, was not in Him. But all we the rest, although baptized and born again in Christ, yet offend in many things; and if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

De Christo, qui solus est sine peccato.

Christus, in nostræ naturæ veritate, per omnia similis factus est nobis, excepto peccato, a quo prorsus erat immunis, tum in carne, tum in spiritu. Venit ut agnus absque macula, qui mundi peccata per immolationem sui semel factam tolleret; et peccatum, ut inquit *Johannes*, in eo non erat. Sed nos reliqui, etiam baptizati et in Christo regenerati, in multis tamen offendimus omnes; et si dixerimus, quia peccatum non habemus, nos ipsos seducimus, et veritas in nobis non est.

IMPORTANT EQUIVALENTS.

Alone without sin	=	<i>qui solus est sine peccato.</i>
Clearly void	=	<i>prorsus immunis.</i>
He came to be the Lamb	=	<i>venit ut agnus.</i>
Sacrifice	=	<i>immolationem.</i>
Born again	=	<i>regenerati</i> (See Article IX).
We deceive ourselves	=	<i>nos ipsos seducimus.</i>

IN contrast with Article XIV this teaches that a Christian, far from going beyond the Divine requirements, cannot even attain to absolute sinlessness. In 1553 the title of this Article was *Nemo præter Christum est sine peccato* ("No one is without sin but Christ alone"). Other changes were merely slight verbal differences. The most important equivalent is *prorsus immunis*, for "clearly void," that is, "entirely without sin."

I.—THE TEACHING OF THE ARTICLE

It will be useful to analyse the Article as it stands and notice carefully its teaching.

1. The true Humanity of Christ.—"Christ in the truth of our nature was made like unto us in all things." This is another statement of belief in the humanity of Christ in addition to what is seen in Article II.

2. The Sinlessness of Christ.—"Sin only except, from which He was clearly void, both in His flesh and in His spirit." This special point is derived directly from the New Testament.

3. The Sacrifice of Christ.—"He came to be the Lamb without spot, who, by sacrifice of Himself once made, should take away the sins of the world, and sin, as Saint *John* saith, was not in Him." The purpose of the coming of Christ is once again said to be human redemption.

4. The Sinfulness of all besides.—“But all we the rest, although baptized, and born again in Christ, yet offend in many things; and if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” This is a similar statement to that found in Article IX, referring to the condition of man as one of imperfection and proneness to evil, so that no one should anticipate the judgment day.

II.—THE PURPOSE OF THE ARTICLE

1. From the title of the Article, especially in the light of the title in 1553, and also from the position of the Article in relation to the preceding, it is clear that the statement concerning Christ is secondary, and yet it should be carefully noted as one of four references in the Articles to the doctrine of the Atonement (Articles II, XV, XXVIII, XXXI). Sinlessness is shown to be needed for Atonement, though, of course, this does not mean that any sinless being could atone. There must be unity between God and man in order to a proper Atonement. This is the teaching of the Epistle to the Hebrews, where, in chap. i unity with God, and in chap. ii unity with man, are both emphasised. But assuming the Deity of our Lord, human sinlessness was essential for His work of redemption, and He was typified as the Lamb without blemish (Heb. vii. 26-28; 1 Pet. i. 19). Yet the sinlessness of Deity required for atonement does not detract from His real humanity. Although sinless, our Lord possessed all our human limitations, and so He could be tempted (Heb. iv. 15). He had human desires, but it was not the desires themselves, only the gratification of them, that would have been sinful. It is sometimes thought that sinlessness does not leave our Lord a genuinely human being, but although there is a mystery in the union of the Divine and human in Jesus Christ, it is essential to hold firmly to both aspects even though we may not see how they can reconcile. The Person of Christ is unique, and, as such, has an absolute value for man. The old problem concerning the sinlessness of Jesus Christ, whether *non posse peccare*, or *posse non peccare* be true, should certainly be answered by saying that *non posse peccare* is the correct view, since no Christian can possibly tolerate the thought that Jesus Christ might have sinned. And yet perhaps the solution of the problem may be found in the suggestion of a modern writer, that it may have been one of the elements of our Lord's human limitation that He was not aware of His immunity, and was therefore compelled to face all the reality and struggle of temptation.¹ When we read that “He suffered, being tempted,” we know that the suffering was real. But the fact of His being unable to sin does not rob His example of reality, because though He was Divine, He was also complete as a man, and like us in all essential particulars. Further, the thought of human nature does not necessarily include sin, for the true ideal is a humanity triumphant over sin, and by the grace of God morally incapable of wrong. As it has been

¹ Forsyth, *The Person and Place of Jesus Christ*, p. 301.

often pointed out, Jesus would have been less than the Ideal Man if He had sinned, and also perhaps He would have been less than the Ideal Man if He had not possessed an incapacity, a *non posse*, which was at the same time a *posse non*. Further, there is nothing more striking in the Epistle to the Hebrews than the fact that our Lord's sympathy with us is associated with His sinlessness, that is to say, His oneness with us is based upon His unlikeness to us, and this is in exact accord with human experience. Men of conspicuous character influence and help their fellows, not by the various points of likeness, but by some special element of unlikeness as the secret of their power. In the same way Jesus Christ helps us, not because He is like us in regard to sinfulness, but because He is absolutely "separate from sinners," and therefore "able to save to the uttermost."¹

2. There seems to be an indirect but clear reference to the Mother of our Lord, though authorities differ on this point. Gibson is strongly of opinion that the Article does not refer to this subject.² On the other hand, Hardwick and Harold Browne take the contrary view.³ It is, at least, noteworthy that the earliest commentator on the Articles, Rogers, refers to the subject.⁴ The topic was first definitely discussed by the Schoolmen, and in 1300 by Duns Scotus. Against him Aquinas and the Dominicans opposed it. At the Reformation the Church of Rome was equally divided, and there was a collision at Trent on the subject. The matter was referred to the Pope, who suggested a middle course, adding that original sin did not comprise the Virgin Mary, and that the Constitutions of Pope Sixtus IV were to be observed. These were neutral.⁵

¹ "The best doctor is the man whose knowledge, not whose experience of bodily ills, is the greatest. So a juror is the most capable of judging and knowing guilt if free himself from evil habits and qualified by excellence to administer justice. Not the smart juror who is guilty of crimes himself. Vice can never know itself and virtue, but virtue will in time acquire knowledge of itself and vice" (Plato, *Republic*, Bk. III).

"It is not necessary that He should have Himself succumbed . . . in order that He should know. . . . One knows the sin and the death which one has perfectly met and has perfectly overcome, better than if one had in the least been overcome by them" (Du Bose, *High Priesthood and Sacrifice*, p. 150).

"The problem was therefore to secure sympathy and yet to preserve sinlessness. The solution is found in temptation of the severest kind met by perfect resistance. And the keenest agony of temptation can be known only by one who remains sinless. Others are tried till they yield, and those who yield soonest suffer least. . . All our temptations He knew, feeling them not with our coarse and blunted perceptions, but with exquisite and fine-strung sensitiveness. . . . And sinlessness alone can truly estimate sin, for the very act of sinning disturbs the balance of the moral judgment" (Peake, *Century Bible*, on Hebrews iv. 14, 15).

"Sympathy does not depend on the experience of sin but on the experience of the strength of temptation to sin which only the sinless can know in its full intensity. He who falls yields before the last strain" (Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, ii. 17, 18).

For further study on the temptation of Christ see Knight, *The Temptation of our Lord*; Forsyth, *ut supra*; Bruce, *The Humiliation of Christ*; Liddon, *The Divinity of our Lord*, Appendix).

² Gibson, *The Thirty-nine Articles*, p. 440.

³ Hardwick, *History of the Articles of Religion*, pp. 101, 381; Harold Browne, *Explanation of the Thirty-nine Articles*, pp. 346-348.

⁴ Rogers, *On the Articles*, p. 134.

⁵ Boulton, *The Theology of the Church of England*, p. 130 t.

Since the Reformation the doctrine has grown and developed, and was finally promulgated in 1854, though it is to be remembered that the Vatican Council of that date only authorised what had been believed for centuries. Although the subject was only first definitely considered in the fourteenth century, yet there were many ideas in regard to it floating about long before then. But St. Augustine refused to discuss it. The doctrine has had the usual Roman Catholic history, first speculation, then pious opinion, and at length defined dogma.¹ Our Church, while honouring the Mother of our Lord, has always kept true to the simplicity and sobriety of New Testament teaching. There are two Red Letter Festivals in connection with the Virgin Mary: the Purification on February 2, and the Annunciation on March 25. But it is interesting to notice that the first title of the former is "The Presentation of Christ in the Temple," the latter and more familiar usage being described as "commonly called."² Further, it is impossible to avoid noticing that both Collects are entirely without reference to the Mother of our Lord. In the Calendar there are three Black Letter Days in which the name of the Virgin Mary occurs: July 2, September 8, December 8, while in the Collect for Christmas Day our Lord's birth is spoken of as from "a pure virgin," and in the Proper Preface for the Day a reference is made to our Lord being "very Man of the substance of the Virgin Mary His mother." From all this it will be seen that our Church is content with following the New Testament in regard to the Mother of our Lord, and there there is no suggestion that she was a woman into whose life sin had never entered. She is represented as a woman full of grace, tender of heart, and loyal to God, but marked by the ordinary limitation of spiritual understanding which comes from a sinful nature. Of course, the question is raised how if she were sinful her Son could be sinless, but the mystery of His Being is perfectly clear in the words of the angel referring to the Holy Spirit (Luke i. 35). Besides, if she were sinless, her parents would have been sinless, and so on before them. The fact that she spoke of God as her "Saviour" shows that, like the rest of the pious Israelites, she was looking for redemption in Israel, and when her Son's redemptive work was accomplished she was with the other disciples in the Upper Room to receive the fulness of the Spirit as the accomplished work of Jesus Christ.

¹ Again it is necessary to refer to the treatment of this subject by Bishop Forbes and the Rev. T. I. Ball. The former discusses the Mother of our Lord in a way almost identical with that of the Church of Rome (*Explanation of the Thirty-nine Articles*, pp. 224-226), while the latter says that "Catholic piety has loved to think that she who was full of grace when she conceived her God had also the privilege of an immaculate birth and an immaculate life" (*The Orthodox Doctrine of the Church of England*, p. 83). It need hardly be said that these views are in entire disharmony with the plain teaching of the Prayer Book and Articles.

² "Commonly called" seems to imply "erroneously called." Thus, in the Prayer Book of 1549, the Holy Communion Office had as sub-title, "commonly called the Mass." So in Article XXV, the "five commonly called Sacraments," and the Nativity is "commonly called" Christmas Day.

3. There is no doubt that the primary and immediate application of the Article is to Christians. The title of the Article of 1553 seems to support this view, "*No one but Christ without Sin.*" The Anabaptists of the sixteenth century went into serious excesses on this point in their insistence upon what they believed to be a perfect visible Church. The sinfulness of human nature, as derived from the Fall, is too clearly seen in Scripture to be denied. But as it has been said that Baptism has placed us in a new state and that the declarations that "there is none that doeth good," and that "all are under sin," must not be applied to the regenerate, the view has arisen that the believer is not only justified, but fully sanctified, and that original sin has been obliterated. In Article IX the reference seems to be to sinfulness as the root, while the present Article appears to refer to acts of sin as the fruit, and it is important for several reasons to insist upon the permanence of the sinful nature in the regenerate and the possibility of that sinfulness bursting out into overt acts of sin at any time unless the proper conditions are fulfilled. This view of the sinfulness of all except the Lord Jesus Christ is based upon several grounds, each calling for careful attention.

(1) We have already observed the Scriptural distinction between sin and sins, between the principle and the practice. There is no doubt that this distinction is clearly made not only by St. Paul in Romans, but also by St. John in his Epistle (1 John i. 8, 10).

(2) The Epistles are addressed to Christians, and a spiritual conflict is implied throughout. Not only so, but the very people who are addressed as "saints" or "consecrated ones" are shown in the Epistles to possess an evil nature, which is liable at any time to commit sin. It is a serious spiritual mistake to make our consciousness the measure of our sinfulness.

(3) In the Old Testament there was a provision for sins of ignorance, and it seems natural to assume that there must be something corresponding to this in the Atoning Sacrifice of Christ. The language of the law is "though he wist it not, yet is he guilty" (Lev. v. 17), and for the same reason the sinner to-day needs Divine mercy and grace even though he sins ignorantly and in unbelief. The plea of "mistaken judgment" is also insufficient. Law is law, whether we are conscious of it or not, and there must be a provision in the sacrifice of our Lord for sins unwittingly committed.

(4) Then, too, if the evil nature is entirely removed a natural question arises, what further need there can be for Atonement. The sacrifice of Christ deals with sin and sin only, and if there is no longer any sin there is no longer need of Atonement.

(5) The reference of St. Paul in Romans vii is a testimony in the same direction, for just as in chap. iii he had shown the inability of self to justify self, so in chap. vii he is equally clear on the inability of self to sanctify self. This is owing to the presence and power of the evil principle within.

(6) What the Apostle calls the "flesh" is never removed in this life. The flesh is in us, though we are not to be in the flesh. This means that while the evil power is there, there is no need for it to exercise its force, if only we are living in the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom. viii. 5-9).

(7) It is a great mistake to think that the absence of sin is everything. Far too much attention is given to what is called "sinless perfection" or "sinlessness." Yet this is only negative, and a positive Divine standard is required, that of loving with all the heart. This is particularly evident when we speak of the "sinlessness of Christ," for the idea is wholly inadequate since He was not merely without sin, but His entire life was filled with the definite will and purpose of God.¹ So in regard to the believer's life, the English word "perfect" has nothing whatever to do with sinlessness, but always means spiritual ripeness, moral maturity (Matt. v. 48, R.V. ; Phil. iii. 12). It is also to be remembered that the word "sanctify" means to consecrate, separate, dedicate, and not to purify from sin (1 Thess. v. 23). The teaching of Scripture is quite clear in its distinction between sanctification and purification (John xvii. 17, 19 ; Eph. v. 26, Greek).

(8) It is in the light of these considerations that the words of the Baptismal Service are to be understood, when we pray that the one baptised may "utterly abolish the whole body of sin." The reference is to the great passage in Rom. vi. 6, and must be interpreted accordingly. Both in St. Paul and in the Prayer Book there is no question of the destruction or annihilation of the evil principle, but only of its powerlessness by virtue of the greater power of the Atoning Sacrifice of Christ applied by the Holy Spirit.

In view of these considerations the Article emphasises one of the most vital truths of Christian living, and whether we consider the subject from the standpoint of Scripture, or of Christian experience, it is only too true that "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

¹ Forrest, *The Authority of Christ*, p. 12. See also the same author's *The Christ of History and Experience*, Lecture I.

ARTICLE XVI

Of Sin after Baptism.

Not every deadly sin willingly committed after Baptism is sin against the Holy Ghost, and unpardonable. Wherefore the grant of repentance is not to be denied to such as fall into sin after Baptism. After we have received the Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin; and by the grace of God we may arise again, and amend our lives. And therefore they are to be condemned which say, they can no more sin as long as they live here, or deny the place of forgiveness to such as truly repent.

De Peccato post Baptismum.

Non omne peccatum mortale post Baptismum voluntarie perpetratum est peccatum in Spiritum Sanctum, et irremissibile. Proinde lapsis a Baptismo in peccata locus pœnitentiæ non est negandus. Post acceptum Spiritum Sanctum possumus a gratia data recedere, atque peccare; denuoque per gratiam Dei resurgere, ac resipiscere. Ideoque illi damnandi sunt, qui se, quamdiu hic vivant, amplius non posse peccare affirmant, aut vere resipiscentibus veniæ locum denegant.

IMPORTANT EQUIVALENTS.

Deadly sin	=	<i>peccatum mortale.</i>
After baptism	=	<i>post baptismum.</i>
After baptism	=	<i>a baptismo.</i>
Grant of repentance	=	<i>locus pœnitentiæ.</i>
Amend our lives	=	<i>resipiscere.</i>
To such as truly repent	=	<i>resipiscentibus.</i>

As in Article XV, the question of human sinlessness was faced and denied, so here, the opposite view of hopeless sinfulness is considered and rejected. Thus the negative and positive extremes are denied by the Articles. It was an important matter to consider in the light of their early history and also of certain circumstances of the sixteenth century. If Christ alone was sinless, what about those who sinned after Baptism? In reply to this, as it has been suggestively said: Article XV denies the possibility of a heaven on earth, while Article XVI denies the possibility of a hell on earth.

There were two errors rife at the Reformation: (a) the revival of the old third century idea that great sins after Baptism could not be forgiven; (b) on the other hand, some taught that it was absolutely impossible for the regenerate to sin. The Article deals with both errors. The prevalence of these errors may be seen from two sixteenth-century statements. In the *Reformatio Legum* we read:—

“Etiam illi de justificatis perverse sentiunt, qui credunt illos, postquam justi semel facti sunt, in peccatum non posse incidere, aut si forte quicquam eorum faciunt, quæ Dei legibus prohibentur, ea Deum pro peccatis non accipere. Quibus opinione contrarii, sed impietate pares sunt, qui quodcumque peccatum

mortale, quod post baptismum a nobis susceptum voluntate nostra committitur, illud omne contra Spiritum Sanctum affirmant gestum esse et remitti non posse.”¹

In the Augsburg Confession we read :—

“ Damnant Anabaptistas, qui negant semel justificatos posse amittere Spiritum Sanctum. . . . Damnantur et Novatiani qui nolebant absolvere lapsos post baptismum redeuntes ad pœnitentiam.”²

This Article was the Fifteenth of 1553, but was followed at that time with the Sixteenth, which had for its title, *De Peccato in Spiritum Sanctum* (“Of sin against the Holy Ghost”). This was omitted in 1563, probably because of a desire to avoid a precise definition of the sin against the Holy Ghost.³ In 1563 the title of the present Article was *De Lapsis post Baptismum*. The present title dates from 1571.

I.—THE PROBLEMS OF SIN AND PARDON

The Article teaches that wilful sin is not necessarily unpardonable. “Not every deadly sin willingly committed after Baptism is sin against the Holy Ghost, and unpardonable.” We have seen under Article XV that every Christian sins, but the question arises whether there are not certain sins of so grievous a character as to put men beyond the reach of forgiveness. This raises the enquiry as to the meaning of the epithet “deadly.” The phrase “deadly sin” both here and in the Litany means a sin distinct from ordinary wrongdoing, wilful rather than ignorant, serious rather than light. There is no allusion whatever to the Roman Catholic distinction between mortal and venial sins, since “venial” is never referred to in our formularies.⁴ The Roman Catholic idea of mortal sin is a sin that tends to withdraw the soul from God and to kill it. Such is the sin of unbelief. By venial sin is understood that which is committed in the inferior path of discipline during temptation, though the heart is really right. But the essence of sin is in the spiritual condition of the sinner. All sin is deadly in that it tends towards death, but there are sins which because they are deliberately committed against light are

¹ *De Hæresibus* c. 9.

² Article XII, 3.

³ “It was, probably, a wise exercise of discretion in Elizabeth’s divines to strike out this Article, and to abstain from an attempt to define authoritatively the sin against the Holy Ghost. At the same time we may note that the Anabaptist extravagances occupy much less space in the Thirty-nine than they did in the Forty-two Articles. Those sects had declined in the intervening ten years, or it had become manifest that their adherents were of less consequence than had been supposed” (Boulton, *The Theology of the Church of England*, p. 136).

⁴ “While retaining the phrase ‘deadly sin’ in our Litany and in Article XVI, the Reformers by no means intended to retain the false and dangerous system of which the distinction between Mortal and Venial sins formed a part. The absence of any mention of *venial sins* must be considered conclusive. But they did not deny that some sins were more heinous than others, or that such sins in certain cases demanded exceptional treatment” (Drury, *Confession and Absolution*, p. 210).

obviously more injurious to the soul. Any classification by acts is therefore radically wrong, and the usual distinction between "mortal" and "venial" is impossible, because life is not lived by rule. The law of the land rightly distinguishes between murder and other crimes, but sin cannot be reduced to law, because law can take no cognisance of conditions and opportunities. Any distinction, therefore, must be in character and degree, not in kind, of sin. The only question, therefore, that remains is whether a man after becoming a Christian may so deliberately commit sin as necessarily to involve himself in anything unpardonable. This the Article plainly denies.

II.—THE PROBLEMS OF FALLING AND RESTORATION

The Article goes on to teach that although the regenerate may fall into sin they can be restored. "Wherefore the grant of repentance is not to be denied to such as fall into sin after Baptism." A curious misconception arose in the early Church in regard to Baptism, as though that involved a state of Christian perfection. On this account it was often delayed lest the baptised should fall from the presumed state of spiritual perfection and be eternally lost. It was unfortunate that the Scriptural idea of Baptism as the beginning of life, not the end, was forgotten or set aside. Baptism invariably means the introduction of the soul into a new sphere, and under the figure of "birth" implies the commencement, not the culmination, of the Christian life. But with this wrong view the early Church exacted long discipline for sins after Baptism, and outside the Church the Montanists¹ and Novatians² insisted upon still harsher measures, refusing to admit the lapsed to Holy Communion. These views were revived at the Reformation by the Anabaptists, as the Augsburg Confession, Calvin, and Hooper, clearly show. But in opposition to this severe line the Article teaches that "the grant of repentance is not to be denied to such as fall into sin after Baptism." The phrase "grant of repentance" in the Latin is *locus pœnitentiæ*, and in the English of the Fifteenth Article of 1553 the phrase was "the place for penitents." The allusion is to the passage referring to Esau (Heb. xii. 16, 17). But it is important to notice the exact wording of the original and the Revised Version. When it said, "He found no place of repentance," it does not mean that he was unable to repent, but that he was unable to reverse his father's decision; he could not get his father to change his mind. The verse should read thus: "For ye know that afterwards, when he wished to inherit the blessing he was rejected (for he found no place of repentance), although he sought it (the blessing) earnestly with tears."

¹ Montanus, a native of Phrygia, 170, the founder of a schism which spread with great rapidity, and captured Tertullian. The main ideas were some special views of the Holy Spirit and the Second Coming of our Lord.

² Novatian, a schismatic Bishop, 250, a man of great ability and genuine character. He considered the discipline of the Church too lax, and founded a party which lasted for centuries.

III.—THE PROBLEMS OF SINLESSNESS AND REPENTANCE

There are two errors coming from different points dealt with in the Article. One is the possibility of sin after receiving the Holy Spirit, and the other is the possibility of restoration after sinning. "After we have received the Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin, and by the grace of God we may arise again, and amend our lives." The result is a twofold condemnation: (a) first, of those who say that Christians "can no more sin as long as they live here"; and (b) then of those who "deny the place of forgiveness to such as truly repent."

(1) The former of these errors was rife in the sixteenth century and is not unknown to-day. When, however, an appeal is made to Scripture, there is no great doubt on the subject. St. Paul addresses Christians as "saints," and "elect," and "baptised," and yet he assumed their liability to heinous sin, and at the same time the possibility of their repentance and restoration. His treatment of the serious offender at Corinth (1 Cor. v. 1) is a proof of this, for while in the first Epistle St. Paul is very severe on the sin and the sinner and insists upon discipline, in the second Epistle, repentance having been shown, there is an equal concern for the man's restoration to fellowship. Later theology tended to claim sinlessness for the regenerate, or else if there was the presence of sinfulness it was a proof that regeneration was not real. The result was much the same as in the old error of sin after Baptism. The main passage which is used in this connection is 1 John iii. 9, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin." But it will be seen that the reference is to those who are born of God, including everyone without distinction. Further, it refers to conduct, "doth not commit sin." The reference is not to nature, whether good or bad, but to the actual practice of sin, and when the passage is looked at in the light of its context and in relation to the rest of the Epistle and its teaching on sin and sins, there can be no doubt that the meaning is that one who is born of God will not habitually practise sin. The reason for this statement is the abiding possession of the Divine seed. The believer has the two natures within him; the old nature, the evil principle referred to in Article IX, and the new nature, the gift of God in the new birth. In proportion, therefore, as he allows the higher nature to have sway he does not and cannot sin, but if for any reason he does not abide there, but allows the old nature to be predominant, he practises sin and thereby shows that so far he is not exercising his new life from God.

(2) The other error tends to hopelessness and despair, and for this reason alone needs to be rejected. Whatever may be the state of the believer we must insist that by the grace of God he may arise and amend his life. There are no passages in Scripture that really contradict this position. Reference is sometimes made to Hebrews vi. 4-6, but a careful consideration will show that it refers to wilful and final persistence in sin and not to mere backsliding. The use of the present tenses implies a

constant and deliberate continuance in sinning, and as long as this remains it is, of course, impossible to renew such an one to repentance. But quite apart from this view the verses following show that the condition implied is purely problematical, and has no reference to ordinary backsliding and repentance (Heb. vi. 9). Another passage adduced is Heb. x. 26-29, but again it will be seen that the whole thought is that of scornful apostasy, not ordinary wandering and backsliding. The three places in Hebrews are closely united in connection with the danger of apostasy to which the Hebrew Christians were liable. Thus in chap. ii they are warned against drifting; in chap. vi they are warned against sinning; in chap. x they are warned against scornful rejection. One other text is sometimes used, referring to "sin unto death" (1 John v. 16). Whatever this may mean there is no reference to any particular form of wrongdoing. It is not "a" sin, but "sin," and is evidently something which refers to Christian fellowship, for it refers to a brother committing the error. It is more than likely that death here is purely physical, and that the wrongdoing is analogous to those physical and temporal punishments to which the Corinthian Christians were subject through their sins (1 Cor. xi. 30). But whatever be the interpretation of the passage it does not in the least contradict the statement of the Article that we may fall into sin and by the grace of God arise and amend our lives.

There are three main views of the relation of the believer to inborn sinfulness: (a) some hold that the evil principle is met by Suppression, by keeping it down, and striving for victory over it. But this seems to exaggerate the human side and tends to make the believer despair of victory. (b) At the other extreme is the view known as Eradication, which teaches that the evil principle is entirely removed. This is as wrong in the direction of exaggeration as the former is in the direction of inadequacy, and the Articles are quite clear in their opposition to it. (c) The true view which meets all the conditions of the case is best described as Counteraction. This means that the presence and power of evil within are counteracted by the presence and greater power of the Holy Spirit. So that evil though mighty is subjugated by the mightier force of the Spirit of God. It is thus that we are to understand the entire teaching of St. John's Epistle, especially those passages which on the one hand show clearly that sin remains in the believer, and those on the other which teach the possibility and reveal the secret of victory. Thus, when the Apostle says, "My little children, I write unto you that ye sin not, and if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father" (1 John ii. 1), we see at once that while there is perfect provision against sinning, no allowance is, or can be made for it. It is this combination of truths that best explains the relation of the believer to sinfulness and sinning. There must be no allowance whatever for sin, and any thought of the inevitableness of sinful actions is to be regarded as absolutely intolerable. On the other hand, the fact that the evil principle remains within necessitates the Divine provision being made against its possible expression, and thus the

two sides of the truth are balanced and safeguarded. There is no need for us to sin, especially as we pray in the *Te Deum*: "Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this day without sin"; and in the Collect: "Grant that this day we fall into no sin, neither run into any kind of danger." But if by any possibility we should sin we can be restored and amend our lives, because of the Divine provision of the "Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." As it has been well put, "the equipment of a ship with life-belts is not a proof that it is intended the vessel shall be wrecked. The captain is not to wreck his ship, he seeks to avoid that; but should disaster overtake him the provision is at hand." Once again, let it be thoroughly understood in the light of all the Articles, that there is no allowance for sinning, but the most perfect provision in case of it.¹

THE SIN AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST

Although the Article on this subject, which was contained in the Forty-two of 1553, was struck out in 1563, it may be worth while considering the Article and its subject in view of the fact that our present Article refers to "sin against the Holy Ghost," which is regarded as "unpardonable." The following is the exact wording of the omitted Article:—

Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost

Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is when a man of malice and stubbornness of mind, doth rail upon the truth of God's Word manifestly perceived, and being enemy thereunto persecuteth the same. And because such be guilty of God's curse, they entangle themselves with a most grievous, and heinous crime, whereupon this kind of sin is called and affirmed of the Lord, unpardonable.

Blasphemia in Spiritum Sanctum

Blasphemia in Spiritum Sanctum, est cum quis Verborum Dei manifeste perceptam veritatem, ex malitia et obfirmatione animi, convitiis insectatur, et hostiliter insequitur. Atque hujusmodi, quia maledicto, sunt obnoxii, gravissimo sese astringunt sceleri. Unde peccati hoc genus irremissible a Domino appellatur, et affirmatur.

The circumstances of our Lord's words were due to the cavil of the Pharisees that He was performing His miracles by the power of the devil, and the fact that the incident is in all three Evangelists seems to imply that the words made a deep impression. Our Lord clearly distinguishes between sin against Himself as the Son of Man, and sin against the Holy Ghost. The former would seem to apply to sins against His humanity, while the latter were sins against Deity itself. It will be remembered that the sin of open opposition and scorn in Hebrews is described as in relation

¹ One of the best helps to a true understanding of this important subject is a little work, *Tenses and Senses of Sin and Sinlessness as seen in the First Epistle of John*, by Graham (Pickering & Inglis, Glasgow).

to "the Son of God" (Heb. x. 29). It is clear from the context that the sin of which the Pharisees were in danger of being guilty (not that they had of necessity actually committed it) was the wilful shutting of their eyes against the light of truth, so that there is no reference to any particular kind or class of sin, but the attitude of the soul against knowledge, the determination not to see what the soul knows to be true. St. Augustine probably describes with correctness this sin as *perseverantia in nequitia et in malignitate cum desperatione indulgentiæ Dei*. This attitude would seem to accord with the "reprobate mind" mentioned by St. Paul (Rom. i. 28), that which does evil as evil, and because it is evil. If this is the true interpretation of the sin, then it is evident that wherever there is any desire to know whether the sin has been committed the desire itself is positive proof that the sin has not taken place. When we remember the words of the Lord's Prayer about forgiveness, the story of Simon Magus and the Apostle Peter's relation to him, and the restoration of St. Peter himself after his denial, we can see fresh illustrations of the truth of the Article concerning the restoring mercy and grace of God.¹

N.B.—By some writers² the subject of final perseverance is considered in connection with this Article, but it is very doubtful whether this should be done. It should come under Article XVII, especially as our Reformers undoubtedly held the doctrine. There is some confusion as to the meaning of the phrase "indefectibility of grace," for in the sense of sinlessness or the absence of backsliding, no Calvinistic writer holds it. The belief in grace being indefectible is quite consistent with the view held by Calvinists that there may be sinning in the Christian life.

"The most extreme Calvinists would admit that the truly regenerate may and do fall into sin—but (they would add) not finally."³

The Puritans came later than the last revision of the Article, and therefore the controversy with them has no real bearing on the Article itself. It is also noteworthy that there is nothing of this subject in the earliest Commentary on the Articles, by Rogers, or the later and representative treatments by Burnet and Beveridge. The subject will therefore receive attention under the next Article.

¹ "Whereupon we do not without a just cause detest and abhor the damnable opinion of them which do most wickedly go about to persuade the simple and ignorant people, that, if we chance, after we be once come to God, and grafted in His Son Jesus Christ, to fall into some horrible sin, repentance shall be unprofitable to us, there is no more hope of reconciliation, or to be received again into the favour and mercy of God" (Homily of Repentance).

² Harold Browne and Kidd.

³ Boulton, *The Theology of the Church of England*, p. 135.

By His counsel, secret to us	= <i>suo consilio, nobis quidem occulto.</i>
Endued	= <i>donati.</i>
In due season	= <i>opportuno tempore.</i>
They be made sons of God by adoption	= <i>adoptantur in filios Dei.</i>
Religiously	= <i>sancte.</i>
Working of the spirit	= <i>vim Spiritus.</i>
Their earthly members	= <i>membra quæ adhuc sunt super terram.</i>
Drawing up	= <i>rapientem.</i>
Their faith	= <i>fidem nostram.</i>
It doth establish	= <i>stabilit.</i>
Their love	= <i>amorem nostrum.</i>
Most dangerous downfall	= <i>perniciosissimum precipitium.</i>
Wretchedness ¹	= <i>securitatem.</i>
We must receive God's promises	= <i>promissiones divinas amplecti oportet.</i>
Expressly declared	= <i>diserte revelatam.</i>

AT this point we reach the goal of which Articles IX to XI may be regarded as the starting-point. Looking back over these Articles it is possible to review the process step by step from Predestination to Glorification. This Article is concerned with the completed salvation, of which the various aspects and details have been brought before us in previous Articles. The predestinating love of God is thus the original ground of salvation, and the meaning and dangers of the doctrine are here noted.

The Article dates from 1553, and the fact that only slight verbal changes were made in 1563 and 1571 shows the essential unanimity among the Reformers on this important subject. This is all the more remarkable when it is remembered that the two aspects of the Continental Reformation Movement, Lutheran and Calvinistic, were in turn influential on English thought.

I.—THE TEACHING OF THE ARTICLE

This is by far the longest of the Articles, and in view of its importance at each point it is essential to look with the greatest care at what is actually taught before considering the subject in general.

A.—The Nature of Predestination.—What it is

1. The Fact.—The title uses two words, "Predestination" and "Election," and the former is also mentioned in the Article, together with the phrase implying the latter. There are three New Testament words, together with their various cognates, which call for special study: "Purpose," "Predestination," "Election." It is impossible to discuss them in full in these pages, but it seems essential to refer to the first, dealing with the Divine purpose, leaving the others to be considered in the light of the best exegetical commentaries available.²

¹ The English of the XLII has "recklessness," *i.e.* recklessness.

² "The terms 'predestination,' 'election,' 'saints,' 'effectual calling,' represent the same fact under different aspects. Predestination (*πρόθεσις*) signifies the general intention of God to provide a plan of salvation, and has no direct reference to the

The following words of Dr. Denney fitly form the starting-point of study :—

“ *Πρόθεσις* in this theological sense is a specially Pauline word. The purpose it describes is universal in its bearings, for it is the purpose of One who works all things according to the counsel of His will, Eph. i. 11 ; it is eternal, a *πρόθεσις τῶν αἰώνων*, Eph. iii. 11 ; it is God’s *ἰδία πρόθεσις*, 2 Tim. i. 9, a purpose, the meaning, contents, and end of which find their explanation in God alone ; it is a purpose *κατ’ ἐκλογὴν*, i.e. the carrying of it out involves choice and discrimination between man and man, and between race and race ; and in spite of the side of mystery which belongs to such a conception, it is a perfectly intelligible purpose, for it is described as *πρόθεσις ἣν ἐποίησεν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ*, and what God means by Christ Jesus no one can doubt. God’s eternal purpose, the purpose carried out *κατ’ ἐκλογὴν*, yet embracing the universe, is clearly revealed in His Son.”¹

Arising out of this purpose is the Divine Predestination and Election, the latter of the words expressing the action taken by God consequent upon the purpose.²

2. The Limit. “ Predestination to Life.”—The Article strictly and significantly limits the reference to the predestination of the believer to life, and there is no reference to anything else. It is, of course, open to the charge of being illogical since it may be fairly said that “ predestination to life ” involves what is known as preterition, or leaving those who are not predestinated to themselves. But the Reformers evidently saw that mere logic was faulty in dealing with the Divine purpose, and for this reason they tended to keep themselves to the thought of God’s attitude to the believer. This seems to be in strict agreement with the important distinction found in Scripture between the origination of good and evil. Thus, in speaking of “ vessels of wrath ” and “ vessels of mercy ” (Rom. ix. 22, 23), St. Paul makes a marked difference. Of the former he simply uses the passive participle, “ fitted to destruction,” while of the latter he uses the active voice of the verb, and the preparation is distinctly attributed to God as the originator, “ which He had afore prepared unto glory.” To the same effect is the distinction made by our Lord Himself between the sentence to be passed on those on His right hand and that on those on His left. To the former the words are : “ Come, ye blessed of My Father ” ; to the latter, it is simply, “ Depart from Me, ye cursed,” the omission to the latter being a mere indication that the curse was solely of themselves. Nor is it possible to overlook the departure from strict

individuals comprised in the plan. It is otherwise with foreknowledge (*πρόγνωσις*) and predetermination (*προορισμός*), the former of which implies distinct recognition of the individuals who should believe ; the latter, the providential arrangements leading to that result. These expressions relate to the Divine acts before time” (Litton, *Introduction to Dogmatic Theology* (Second Edition), p. 348).

¹ *The Expositor’s Greek Testament*, Romans, p. 661.

² See Vaughan ; Sanday and Headlam ; and Denney, on Rom. viii. 29 ; ix. 11. Also Ellicott ; Armitage Robinson ; and Westcott, on Eph. i. 4, 5.

parallelism in other words of that passage. "The kingdom prepared for you" is contrasted with "everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Thus, the Article in limiting attention to predestination to life seems clearly to follow Scripture in ascribing to God the work of grace for the believer, and associating evil and the doom of evil with men themselves. The election of believers is invariably referred to "the good pleasure of God's will," but nothing else is mentioned in this connection (Eph. i. 5, 9; Phil. ii. 13; 2 Thess. i. 11). So that whatever may be urged on purely logical grounds it is in every way truest, safest, and best to keep Divine predestination where Scripture places it.¹

3. The Foundation.—This predestination is associated with "the everlasting purpose of God." This is the Divine side, and shows that redemption is in pursuance of God's eternal purpose.²

4. The Object.—"Whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) He hath constantly decreed by His counsel secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom He hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour." This statement of the Article shows what is to be understood by predestination to life. The word "constantly" means in the old English, and according to the Latin, "firmly," and the Divine decree based on the Divine counsel is to deliver from sin, to redeem out of mankind, and to bring such to everlasting salvation. Nothing could be clearer than this statement of the Divine purpose in salvation, and it is almost wholly expressed in the actual words of Scripture (Eph. i. 4, 5, 11; Rom. viii. 28, 29; ix. 11; 2 Thess. ii. 13; 2 Tim. i. 9; 1 Pet. i. 2-5; Rom. ix. 21).

B.—The Proof of Predestination.—What it Involves

1. The Description.—It is clear that the reference is to something involving genuine spiritual life and experience. "They which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God." Nothing short of such a spiritual idea will satisfy the statements made.

2. The Stages.—A sevenfold process is mentioned as the means whereby the Divine purpose is accomplished. "Called according to God's purpose by His Spirit working in due season, they through grace obey the calling: they be justified freely: they be made sons of God by adoption: they be made like the image of His only-begotten Son Jesus

¹ "We stand, in fact, in presence of one of those antinomies which we not unfrequently meet with in Scripture, and which appear insoluble to human reason. Pushed to its logical conclusion, the necessity, from the condition of fallen man, of a grace superior to common, or preparatory, grace, leads, in conjunction with the doctrine of predestination, to reprobation, at least in its milder form of 'preterition'; pushed to its logical conclusion, the Arminian doctrine, which acknowledges no grace, but what is common, leads to Pelagianism. We await a fuller measure of revelation for an adjustment of the two lines of thought" (Litton, *Introduction to Dogmatic Theology* (Second Edition, p. 254).

² Denney, on Romans viii. 28.

Christ: they walk religiously in good works, and at length, by God's mercy, they attain to everlasting felicity." It is particularly noteworthy that these statements reproduce almost exactly the language of St. Paul, for the various phrases can be matched from his Epistles. Only one point seems to demand attention, the meaning of the word "called." It is now generally understood that "calling" in St. Paul's writings never means mere "invitation"; it is always "effectual calling,"¹ that is to say, the "called" are those who are invited and who also accept the invitation. In the Gospels the "called" seem to be limited to those who are invited.

3. The Two Sides.—In strict and careful agreement with Scripture the Article emphasises both aspects, the Divine and the human, in salvation. Not only is there the calling, the working of the Spirit, the free justification, the adoption to sonship, and the attainment of everlasting felicity, but also on the other hand the obedience to the calling, the conformity to the image of Christ, and the religious walk in good works. Here, again, we see the remarkable agreement with St. Paul's language in Rom. viii. 28-30.²

C.—The Effect of Predestination.—What It Brings

1. For the godly this thought of predestination and election in Christ is "full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons, and such as feel in themselves the working of the Spirit of Christ, mortifying the works of the flesh, and their earthly members, and drawing up their mind to high and heavenly things." This emphasis on "sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort" is important and significant in relation to the true New Testament idea of assurance, and the reason for the comfort is said to be two-fold. It confirms faith and kindles love. "As well because it doth greatly establish and confirm their faith of eternal salvation to be enjoyed through Christ, as because it doth fervently kindle their love towards God." Thus, again, we see that the Article is concerned with the realities of spiritual experience.

2. For the ungodly the opposite is said to be the result. They are described as "curious (that is, inquisitive) and carnal persons, lacking the Spirit of Christ," and for such people "to have continually before their eyes the sentence of God's predestination" is rightly said to be "a most

¹ Denney on Rom. viii. 28.

² "The eternal foreordination appears in time as 'calling,' of course as effectual calling: where salvation is contemplated as the work of God alone (as here) there can be no breakdown in its processes. The next stages are summarily indicated: *ἐδικαίωσεν* God in Jesus Christ forgave our sins, and accepted us as righteous in His sight; ungodly as we had been, He put us right with Himself. In that, everything else is included. The whole argument of Chs. VI-VIII has been that justification and the new life of holiness in the Spirit are inseparable experiences. Hence Paul can take one step to the end, write *οὐς δὲ ἐδικαίωσεν, τούτους καὶ ἐδόξασε*. Yet the tense in the last word is amazing. It is the most daring anticipation of faith that even the New Testament contains: the life is not to be taken out of it by the philosophical consideration that with God there is neither before nor after" (Denney, *ut supra*, p. 652).

dangerous downfall," the spiritual peril being two-fold; either it will lead to spiritual desperation, or else to recklessness¹ of unclean living.

D.—The Safeguard of Predestination.—What it Demands

After stating in frank terms the two-fold effect of predestination the Article appropriately closes by indicating the proper precautions to be taken in the study of the subject.

1. The Divine promises are to be received, "as they be generally set forth to us in Holy Scripture." By "generally" is probably to be understood the thought of the promises being applied to the whole *genus* of mankind, including both good and bad. It is opposed to *singulus* or *specialis*,² or it may be regarded as referring to the entire *genus* of the Divine promises. The use of the terms "General Confession"; "General Thanksgiving"; and the phrase "generally necessary to salvation" seems to illustrate the true idea of the passage, that we are to regard God's promises in their universal aspect and offer as seen in Holy Scripture.

2. Obedience to God's will is to be according to what is "expressly declared unto us in the Word of God." So that in both ways the promises and the will of God are not intended to obscure the fullest offer of salvation or lessen the obligation to obedience. It is another way of saying that "the secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law" (Deut. xxix. 29).³

II.—THE HISTORY OF THE SUBJECT

Predestination is part of the great problem of Divine and human personality, of determinism and liberty. It is, therefore, not peculiar to Christianity, for the Stoics were fatalists, and so to some extent were the Pharisees, while it is known that Mohammedans are strongly of this view. It was impossible for the Fathers to avoid referring to the subject, though its first systematic treatment is found in St. Augustine. To him predestination meant the Divine act, not because we were going to be holy, but in order that we might be holy. Further, reprobation was not to be understood as a Divine decree, but a simple leaving of the wicked to the consequences of their sin, for which the technical word is "preterition." This view of predestination is the endeavour to interpret St. Paul's words,

¹ The older spelling of wretchedness was *rechelessness*, meaning "carelessness." The Latin equivalent is *securitas*.

² This interpretation may be illustrated from the following words of the *Reformatio Legum*:

"Quapropter omnes nobis admonendi sunt, ut in actionibus suscipiendis ad decreta prædestinationis se non referant, sed universam vitæ suæ rationem ad Dei leges accommodent; cum et promissiones bonis et minas malis, in sacris Scripturis generaliter propositas contemplantur" (*De Hæresibus*, c. 22).

³ See Boulton, *The Theology of the Church of England*, p. 140.

which are concerned with the salvation of man from the Divine standpoint.¹

In the Middle Ages Thomas Aquinas followed Augustine, while Duns Scotus followed Pelagius. The Church of Rome was much divided at the Council of Trent, but negated reprobation. The Jesuits were the strongest force in that Council, and their view was virtually Pelagian.²

It must never be forgotten that the Reformers taught predestination long before the time of Calvin.³ The doctrine was the theological implication of the very heart of the Reformation; indeed, that movement was in a sense the product of the doctrine rather than the doctrine of it. Zwingli taught it even more clearly than Calvin, and Luther was as dogmatic as Calvin himself. It was Melancthon, not Calvin, who first gave predestination a formal place in the Protestant system.⁴ Bucer taught the doctrine to Calvin, so that it was not Calvin who ingrafted it into the Reformation theology. No doubt his logic and austerity gave clearness and force to the teaching, but its origin was much earlier, and this is a point never to be forgotten. St. Augustine was the true founder of the Reformation on its doctrinal side, and it was he who placed this doctrine in the heart of the Reformation consciousness.

It is important to understand why predestination should have been made so prominent at the Reformation. It was not because of any thought of the "elect" as distinct from other people, but because of the sovereignty, supremacy, and primacy of Divine grace in relation to human needs. The whole Reformation movement was subjective, spiritual, and practical, and did not concern itself with mere speculation, and it was on this account that the doctrine of predestination was realised as of vital and supreme importance.⁵

¹ "Thus regarded—whatever speculative difficulties may attend it—it is simply the expression of an experience which lies at the root of all genuine Christian consciousness, viz. that in this matter of personal salvation, the last word is always grace, not nature; that it is not *our* willing and running which has brought us into the kingdom of God but *His* mercy; that it is He who first enkindled in us the desire after Himself, who drew us to Himself, who bore with us in our waywardness and resistance of His Spirit, who step by step overcame that resistance, and brought us finally into the number of His children; and that all this was no *afterthought* to God, but an eternal counsel of His love which has now effectuated itself in our salvation. This is the *religious* interest in the doctrine of predestination which gives it its abiding value" (Orr, *The Progress of Dogma*, p. 152).

² Boulton, *ut supra*, p. 151 f.

³ "It is a striking fact that the Protestant theology of the sixteenth century both began and ended in strict theories of Predestination" (Wace, *Principles of the Reformation*, p. 129).

⁴ "The most has been made of supposed differences between Luther and Melancthon on the one hand, and Calvin on the other, in respect of this doctrine. But the Reformers of all countries were strong Augustinians, and, with some modifications, held the same general cast of doctrine on election" (Boulton, *ut supra*, p. 144).

"The severe doctrine of Calvin on the subject of predestination is notorious; but it should be remembered that the teaching of Melancthon in the first edition of his work was not less severe" (Wace, *ut supra*, p. 129).

⁵ "It is important to observe that the purpose with which the idea of predestination is introduced is to afford some explanation of the helplessness of man's will, and of the hopelessness of his condition by nature. It is introduced, that is, for a practical

Under these circumstances it is not surprising that the English Reformers were all what is understood as "Calvinists"; and, indeed, until the time of Archbishop Laud no other doctrine was known in the Anglican Church.¹ During the early years of Queen Elizabeth, and following the Revision of 1571, the Protestants who had returned from exile under Mary had imbibed the more severely logical Calvinism of Geneva, and were therefore dissatisfied with our Articles as inadequate. It was this that led to the proposal to add the Lambeth Articles to the Thirty-nine, a movement which has been rightly described as "the ill-omened attempt to lay the yoke of ultra-Calvinism on the Church of England."² This effort was prevented, though the controversy raged furiously during the whole reign of Queen Elizabeth.³ At the Hampton Court Conference the Puritans naturally desired the addition of the Lambeth Articles, but again their efforts were frustrated. But in 1619 at the Calvinistic Synod of Dort the English Church was represented for a time by some dis-

purpose, and arises out of the contemplation of our moral and religious weakness" (Wace, *ut supra*, p. 136; see also pp. 132, 134).

"In opposing the dead works of the Church's belief in those days, the seductive arts of indulgences and the arbitrariness of the hierarchy, they found support in the doctrine of the absolute religious helplessness of the natural man, in order that henceforward he may live solely by God's grace, inasmuch as they thought that man could never be too much humbled and that too much honour could never be ascribed to the Lord. In arguing thus, they had the courage like St. Augustine to deduce the consequence as well, viz. unqualified predestination" (Von Hase, *Handbook to the Controversy with Rome*, Vol. II, p. 19).

"The supreme issue was soteriological. How is fallen man forgiven, justified, saved? How is the salvation purchased by the Redeemer appropriated and made effectual in the experience of the individual soul? All other doctrine was ancillary, whether it concerned the elective decree that must have preceded the sending of the Son and the Spirit, or the Scriptures that disclosed the way, or the Sacraments that sealed and sustained the gift, or the Church that cherished all the means and fostered the experience" (W. A. Curtis, *History of Creeds and Confessions of Faith*, p. 409).

"It was a necessary and wholesome reaction against the papal doctrine of human merit. It was considered as the backbone of the doctrines of free grace, and was death to all pride and self-righteousness. It furnished an immovable basis in eternity for the salvation in time, and the most solid comfort to the believer in seasons of despondency and temptation. Hence we find it among all the Reformers. Luther in his tract on *The Slavery of the Human Will*, which he never recalled, but regarded as one of his best books, goes even further in this direction than Calvin ever did" (Edgar, *The Genius of Protestantism*, p. 45; see also Ch. V).

"It must give a powerful support to the religious life when the mind combines the doctrine of justification with a doctrine of election, and, believing that God has elected particular objects of His mercy from the foundation of the world, draws the inference that He apprehends them by an effectual calling, enables them by His Spirit to fulfil the conditions of salvation, guarantees that they will persevere in the state of grace, and promises that no power in earth or hell will pluck them out of His hand. This train of reflection is undoubtedly Pauline, and was only amplified by Calvin" (Paterson, *The Rule of Faith*, p. 306).

¹ "No impartial person, competently acquainted with the history of the Reformation and the works of the earlier Protestant divines at home and abroad, even to the close of Elizabeth's reign, will deny that the doctrines of Calvin on redemption, and the natural state of fallen man, are in all essential points the same as those of Luther, Zwinglius, and the first Reformers collectively" (Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection*, Aphorism II, "On that which is indeed spiritual religion").

² Boulton, *ut supra*, p. 141.

³ For the Lambeth Articles, see Boulton, *ut supra*, pp. 141, 152.

tinguished men who did their utmost to mediate between the two extremes. Although Calvinism gained the victory at Dort the influence of the other side was only checked for a time, for it extended widely, especially through the English-speaking world. Nor is this surprising, since it expressed the rebound of the heart from the severe logic of the intellect, and because it met learning with feeling it gained adherents in several quarters.¹ The Arminian reaction under Laud was followed by one in the opposite direction during the Commonwealth by means of the Westminster Assembly.² Once again the opponents of Calvinism gained the day at the Restoration, 1660. In the eighteenth century the Evangelical Revival was the occasion of a fresh outbreak of the controversy. The Methodists, on the one hand, were definitely Arminian, while the Anglican Evangelicals were almost wholly Calvinistic. Simeon was, perhaps, the best representative of the time in that he accepted both sides and refused to attempt any reconciliation, only opposing the thought of reprobation.³

III.—THE PROBLEM

The subject of the Article is connected both with religion and with philosophy, and is part of the effort to relate the Finite to the Infinite. We have seen in previous Articles that man cannot save himself, that redemption is God's work, and at once the question arises whether God gives grace sufficient for salvation to all men, or whether there is special grace for a chosen few. It is quite clear from a study of the Bible that alongside of the universality of God's grace in Christ there is a particularism which has to be considered and taken into account, and the Article constitutes an endeavour to state this Scriptural particularism, to show its bearing on the universal purpose of Christ's redemption and the offer of opportunity to all men.

It is important to notice again the careful adherence of the Article to the very words of Scripture; indeed, its summary is almost in the terms of Scripture, and on this account it is to be interpreted in the light of the New Testament. Whatever difficulties exist are difficulties, not of the Article, but of Scripture. Then, too, it is important to note the clear and careful definition of predestination as "to life." There is no reference to Reprobation or Preterition, neither of which is a part of the Church of England doctrine.

Predestination is assuredly a principle of Scripture. There is an unequal gift of privileges bestowed on men, and the story of Abraham shows the use of one to bless the many. It is this element of selection which is at the foundation of all the work of redemption, so that there is

¹ W. A. Curtis, *ut supra*, Index, s.v. Dort; Boulton, *ut supra*, p. 153.

² W. A. Curtis, *ut supra*, Index s.v. Westminster Assembly, and Westminster Confession.

³ For a brief sketch of the history, see Moule, *Outlines of Christian Doctrine*, pp. 36-56.

no question as to the fact of predestination and election, only as to the character of it. As the Old Testament proceeds the election broadens out into the choice of Israel for the purpose of blessing the world, and then everything becomes deepened and spiritualised in the New Testament. It is, therefore, important to endeavour to discover what predestination really means, and there are three general interpretations of the doctrine in relation to Christianity.

A.—Ecclesiastical

By this is understood election to privilege, to the means of grace, to opportunities of present salvation without necessarily involving eternal salvation as well. Now there is undoubted truth in this position, because some men are placed within the sphere of Christian influences while others are in very different surroundings. The fact that our country and Africa differ in regard to Christianity cannot be explained solely on historical grounds; there must be something behind it in the way of Divine decision and choice. But while all this is undoubtedly true, it is clear that Scripture goes far beyond it (Rom. viii. 28-30). The Article speaks of "everlasting salvation," which is something much more than ecclesiastical, so that all theories which contemplate a mere election must be set aside as inadequate.¹ It is in accordance with this view that recent endeavours have been made to show that election refers to race or Church to bear God's Name in the world.² But again, this is entirely inadequate to the full teaching of St. Paul (Rom. ix. 18; 22-24).

"It appears, then, that the theory of ecclesiastical election, though perfectly Scriptural, does not cover the *whole* teaching of Scripture on the subject; and that we must recognise that there is a further truth, if not definitely revealed, at least implied, in the passages just referred to."³

Whether we like it or not, whether we understand it or not, St. Paul certainly teaches a profound doctrine of predestination and election.

B.—Arminian

This view is so called from the Dutch theologian, Harmen, latinised Arminius, who died 1609. But, of course, the view was substantially held ages before, and in some respects may be identified with the Pelagian position. It is also the general view of the Methodist Church to-day. According to this interpretation God foresees who will accept Christ, and thereupon He predestinates them. He determines salvation for those whom He sees will persevere. God has an antecedent will to save all, but

¹ Harold Browne (*Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles*) is quite impossible on this point, p. 414 ff.

² Bishop Gore, on Rom. ix.-xi.

³ Gibson, *The Thirty-nine Articles*, p. 469. See also Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, pp. 266, 347.

only a consequent will to save believers. Again, we see the undoubted truth in this position in its emphasis on human responsibility. But on the other hand, if it be logically pressed it makes Divine salvation depend ultimately on human action. The view only becomes possible by an undue pressing of the term "foreknow," but a careful examination of the passages where this occurs shows that it never means simple foresight, but foresight with approval. Further, the Bible is perfectly clear in regard to God's election of Israel, that it was wholly independent of anything foreseen in Israel's life and conduct. Thus, the Arminian view strictly is inconsistent with any true and full conception of Divine grace. Salvation cannot be a mere contingency, for if no one accepted it, then Christ would have died in vain. Then, too, the Article speaks of God's counsel "secret to us," and this implies action prior to and independent of our life. Election contingent on foresight is really not election at all, since the choice in such a case would be solely man's, and would leave no room for distinction due to a Divine foreordination. As men are constituted, God must take the initiative in bringing about salvation, and yet it is universal experience that many resist all reformatory influences. At this point arises the problem of the inter-relations of Divine and human agencies. One thing is absolutely certain; the sinner cannot renew himself and needs the regenerating grace of God. He has liberty to sin, but not to save himself. It is curious that some writers, as for example, Aristotle, Rothe, and Martensen, deny God's foreknowledge of things that depend on human volition. But how can God be limited by time and space? Yet knowledge does not mean compulsion. Because He is God He knows, but we do not know, and thus there is no loss of responsibility and no compulsion. There can be no doubt therefore that Arminianism as a *complete* explanation is scripturally inadequate and philosophically impossible.¹ Indeed, it has been rightly said that between the Calvinistic and Arminian extremes there is no essential distinction, because in both the number of the elect is absolutely fixed, foreseen, and settled.²

C.—Calvinistic

The name of Calvin is simply used for convenience, because the view was held by St. Augustine a thousand years before. Speaking generally, this teaches that God in His mercy determines to save, and that from first to last salvation is of grace apart from human merits or works, though requiring human faith for reception and full realisation. There are varieties of Calvinism, according as the view of predestination is associated with a time before or after the Fall. The former is called *supra-lapsarianism*, and the latter *sub-lapsarianism*.

The truth contained in this position is undoubted, for beyond all other

¹ Gibson, *ut supra*, pp. 472-474.

² Lightfoot, *Text-Book of the Thirty-nine Articles*, p. 142.

interpretations it magnifies the grace of God, and yet if it be logically pressed it tends to make God everything and man nothing, and to teach that God selects some and leaves the others to the consequences of their sins. But the element of logic, which is apt to be overpressed, must not blind us to the profound realities underlying this general position. It was the view, as already seen, of all the Reformers,¹ English and Continental, and is also seen to be the position of the compilers of our Prayer Book, as they teach the child to regard itself as among "the elect people of God."²

It is the fashion to criticise Calvinism, but it must be confessed that very often the criticism is only the measure of the ignorance of what Calvinism really means.³ The first commentator on the Articles, Rogers, is as severely Calvinistic as anyone could be, and speaks in the strongest terms of "the errors, and adversaries unto this truth."⁴ It is, of course, inevitable that exaggeration of one truth invariably leads to a reaction in an opposite direction, and yet no one can question the remarkable power of what is known as Calvinism in the life of individuals and communities during the last three hundred years.⁵

¹ Burnet (*On the Articles*, p. 207 f.) admits that the Article seems to favour the Calvinistic position.

² "This was the doctrine understood under the name by all the great theologians of the Church—Augustine, Anselm, Thomas Aquinas, the Reformers, English and foreign (with some modifications), Bellarmine, Calvin, Luther himself—and we find it stated in our own Article on the subject. It is the doctrine, too, of our Catechism. The child presumed at baptism to be regenerate is supposed in this formulary never to have lost the gift or fallen from it; pious instruction and example having been made instrumental to carry on the work. He is regarded as a Christian child—a child of God really, and not merely ecclesiastically; a member of Christ by vital union as well as by incorporation in a visible Church. He declares that he is actually sanctified by the Holy Ghost, and he trusts he is one of the elect as being thus sanctified. This is the 'state of salvation' for being called to which he returns thanks, and which he prays he may continue in unto his life's end. Not, surely, a mere access to the means of grace, which may never be used, or a mere possibility of being saved, which may never be realised; but an actual saving participation in Christ and His work. It would be strange if prayer were made for grace to continue in the former undetermined state" (Litton, *ut supra*, p. 345).

³ "I assert what I have before asserted, and by God's grace I will persist in the assertion to my dying day, that it is far from the truth that the Church of England is decidedly Arminian, and hostile to Calvinism. . . . If we would look for warm advocates of Church authority in general, and for able writers in defence of our own form of Church government in particular, such we shall find among those divines who were called in their day the Doctrinal Calvinists. . . . The Calvinists contradict not the avowed dogmata of the Church; nor has the Church in her dogmata explicitly condemned or contradicted them. Anyone may hold all the theological opinions of Calvin, hard and extravagant as some of them may seem, and yet be a sound member of the Church of England and Ireland" (Bishop Horsley, quoted in O'Donoghue, *On the Thirty-nine Articles*, p. 149).

⁴ Rogers, *On the Thirty-nine Articles*, pp. 145-147.

⁵ "We have only to look to our sister Church in Scotland in order to see that such a view exhibits a real side of human experience, and has worked out magnificent results" (Wace, *ut supra*, p. 150).

Simpson (*Fact and Faith*, p. 131), refers to a criticism by a High Churchman on what he had called "the still more hideous doctrine of predestination." After pointing out the unmistakable animus of the writer against the Reformation, Dr. Simpson proceeds as follows:

"As to predestination, Mr. Dearmer would doubtless call it hideous to declare that 'just as predestination is a part of Providence in respect to those who are ordained

D.—*Summary*

Reviewing these three attempts to solve the problem, it is easy to see the element of truth and also the element of error in each. The Ecclesiastical view is an attempt to escape the mystery of Divine choice, though the problem is just as real with nations and Churches as with individuals. It is impossible to avoid associating St. Paul's teaching with some Divine foreordination (Rom. ix). The Arminian interpretation is an attempt to square the doctrine with reason and freedom, but the problem still remains how to account for the fact that some natures are more wilful than others. It is impossible to remove the difficulty by basing predestination on foreknowledge, for in reality the problem remains as acute as before.

“The truth is, as has often been demonstrated, the difficulty returns here in as acute a form as ever. For the question immediately recurs, how a free act can ever be foreknown. A free act, in the sense of the objector, is one which springs solely from the will of the creature; it has no cause beyond that will; it rests with the agent alone to say what it shall be. This raises the difficulty of supposing it to be foreknown what an action shall be before the creature who alone is to determine what it shall be has so much as been brought into existence.”¹

The Calvinistic view is an attempt to fit everything into a logical system, but the problem remains, why, if God can regenerate every sinner, He does not do it? One thing may be regarded as certain, that there is nothing arbitrary in the Divine action. We may not be able to understand the reasons, but notwithstanding this we may be sure that they are based upon wisdom, truth, and love. The three references to the Divine will are significant in this connection: first, we have “the good pleasure

to eternal life, so is reprobation a part of Providence in respect of those who fall from this end.’ But these are the words of Thomas Aquinas, and Calvin says no more. If Aquinas says that this is without prejudice to free will, so, if we will only consent to study Calvin in his own *Institutes*, we shall find that he does also. I admit that, in spite of certain passages in Romans, the logic of which it is difficult to avoid, I prefer the silence of the Church of England with regard to reprobation. But it is not fair to saddle the Genevan Reformers with all the predestinarian extravagances, which, as those who recollect the conversation of the Lady of Lochleven with Dryfesdale in Scott's *Abbot* will know, are as shocking to them as to the most faithful sons of ‘our mother.’ Presbyterians are all Calvinistic, and their record, if not in social service, at any rate in the kindred work of missions, is second to none. The fact is that justification by faith and predestination are leading principles of the New Testament, and it is for us, not to disparage them, but to tone up our Social Gospel to the level of them” (p. 132).

“No one who is acquainted with the history of the Augustinian or Calvinistic theology, and knows how great an influence for good it has had upon the Church of Christ, will speak of the doctrine which has just been given merely in the language of disparagement. Calvinism has had one great and most praiseworthy object, to exalt God. It has aimed to bring men to the realisation of their utter dependence upon God for all things here and hereafter. Believers owe their faith not to themselves or anything in them, but to God alone, working through Christ and the Holy Spirit” (Stearns, *Present Day Theology*, p. 430).

¹ Orr, *ut supra*, p. 165.

of His will " which, however, does not imply anything arbitrary (Eph. i. 5); then comes " the mystery of His will," a fact of which we are perfectly aware (Eph. i. 9); but last of all we read of " the counsel of His own will " (Eph. i. 11), and we are sure that God does nothing without due consideration, and, as it were, taking counsel with Himself.¹ The Calvinistic view is doubtless open to the serious objection that it tends to make God's righteousness conflict with His love, by asserting the Divine sovereignty in too unqualified a way. But, as it has been pointed out, there is no need of this conflict if we recall the fact that election in Scripture is intended, not for exclusion, but for wider blessing to others. God's choice of Abraham and other similar men in Old Testament times was for the purpose of making them spiritual blessings to others, and when this is realised in connection both with Israel and Christ we see that election does not mean exclusion, but inclusion as the means of world-wide blessing.²

It is not at all surprising that the idea of a Divine election should have been regarded as inconsistent with Divine justice in view of the fact that all men are alike guilty before God. This has been met by saying that as " there would have been no injustice in the punishment of all guilty beings, there can be none in the punishment of some guilty beings out of the number."³ But this reference to justice alone has never seemed satisfactory, since it may be urged that God is able to deal with all in the same way in which He deals with the few. As a consequence of this difficulty the suggestion has been made that the doctrine of election only involves the remainder of mankind " in a temporary lack of privilege and of spiritual attainment," and it is certainly curious that Calvinism has that in it which makes credible " the theory of a universal restoration."⁴ On this account it is urged in some quarters that future progress in theology will be found in " the enlistment of the idea of Divine sovereignty in the service of the idea of infinite love," and one writer goes so far as to say that " the word of eternal hope seems the latest message of the Reformed Theology."⁵ On this view that the restoration of all fallen creatures is the ultimate issue of redemption " it is obvious that election can only mean their earlier or later entrance into the Kingdom of God."⁶ This is the general view taken by Dr. Forsyth, who insists strongly upon the fact and importance of a preferential element in the grace of God.

" No doubt there is *preference*. That is in the Divine order of the world. God is responsible for it. That is His election, His predetermining choice. And it is impossible for us to reach the Divine reasons for the order of its action. Predestination of some kind is an absolute necessity for religion. But while relative predestination is a tolerable mystery absolute predestination is intolerable. And

¹ Orr, *ut supra*, p. 163.

² Paterson, *ut supra*, p. 311.

³ Hastie, quoted in Paterson, *ut supra*, p. 313.

⁴ Litton, *ut supra*, p. 353.

⁵ Orr, *ut supra*, p. 167.

⁶ Paterson, *ut supra*, p. 312.

the relief is that it is a case of priority, it is not monopoly. The chosen are but preferred, not excluded. The left are but postponed, not lost. . . . Love has a necessity of its own. It is preferential in its nature, but not exclusive. If love be the surest thing in the world, the ruling thing, no less sure and dominant, is the principle of election, as the mode of action of God's holy love."¹

In opposition to this is the view set forth by Dr. Warfield, who thinks that such writers fail to realise with sufficient keenness what sin and its consequences mean, and reason as though salvation were merely a question of the power of God. It is, therefore, urged that the obstacle of justice is not realised, and that there is no reason whatever why we should fall back upon a doctrine of universal salvation.

"The difficulty is, however, purely artificial, and is wholly due to the practical elimination of the element of justice from the conception of the Divine character. It is not difficult to understand why a just God does not save all sinners; the difficulty is to understand how a just God saves any sinners. It is precisely this difficulty which Christianity meets, and if neither the difficulty is felt nor the manner in which Christianity meets it appreciated—then Christianity is not understood, and we have substituted for it in our thought of it something which is essentially different."²

In conclusion, we must, as Dr. Orr says, dismiss entirely all thought of arbitrariness and keep the Divine purpose in the closest possible connection with the history by means of which it is realised. The fundamental fact is that there is such a thing as Divine choice.

"The appearance of great men at particular junctures of history is not to be attributed to chance. The question is not simply how, a man of Abraham's or Moses' gifts and qualifications being given, God should use him as He did; but rather, how a man of this mould came at that precise juncture to be there at all—broke out at that precise point in the genealogical tree."³

The only possible solution is that a Divine purpose has been at work, preparing the means for the accomplishment of its own ends. While, therefore, we endeavour to perceive and retain the essential truth which is contained in each of the views now set forth we must be content to emphasise the primary and fundamental reality of the Divine action in redemption, and wait until further light enables us to see more clearly the solution of the relation between the Divine and the human.⁴

IV.—THE TEACHING OF SCRIPTURE

As we review the history of this doctrine in the light of the New Testament it is clear that there is a predestination which is more than

¹ Forsyth, *The Principle of Authority*, p. 406 f. See the entire chapter and also Ch. XI

² Warfield, *Princeton Theological Review*, Vol. XI, p. 702.

³ Orr, *ut supra*, p. 169.

⁴ See Orr, *ut supra*, p. 170.

ecclesiastical and temporal (Rom. viii. 28-30). Divine grace is seen to be the source, support, and crown of salvation. And yet Scripture is equally clear and emphatic on human freedom and responsibility. Both sides are to be emphasised without any attempt at reconciliation. We must not isolate either the Divine or the human side and consider one apart from the other. The various scriptural associations of predestination help us to appreciate its place and power.

(a) It is associated with God's foreknowledge (Rom. viii. 28; 1 Pet. i. 2). Foreknowledge is something between foresight and foreordination, knowledge with favour.

(b) It is associated with God's cheer and encouragement for believers in their trials (Rom. viii. 32-39).

(c) It is associated with God's purposes of service (Eph. ii. 10). God's chosen are choice men.

(d) It is associated with God's demands for holiness (Rom. viii. 29; Eph. i. 5; 2 Thess. ii. 13; 1 Pet. i. 2).

(e) It is associated with God's preservation and glorification of believers (Rom. viii. 30; Eph. i. 3-6).

These are invariably the fundamental ideas in theology, in Augustine, and at the Reformation.¹ Thus, the question in Scripture is invariably practical and never speculative. The two aspects are like parallel lines, and both must be held. As St. Bernard says in a well-known passage: "Take away free will and there will be nothing to save; take away grace and there will be nothing to save with."² So that we may say: (a) God elects to save; (b) God elects to save in one way (in Christ); (c) God elects to save one class (believers). The difficulty will not as a rule be felt in the practical life of the Christian, but only when the matter is viewed from the standpoint of philosophy and speculation. It is significant that the doctrinal position of Rom. iii comes before that of Rom. viii, and the spiritual apprehension and experience of the one is the best, indeed the only, preparation for the other.³

The action of God is mysterious in human affairs, and yet it is a fact in providence and history. Why was Seth chosen instead of Cain; Jacob instead of Esau; Ephraim instead of Manasseh; Isaac instead of Ishmael; Joseph instead of Reuben? How are we to account for the differences, say, between Britain and Turkey? It is, therefore, quite in keeping if a similar difficulty is found in religion. The problem would be far more acute apart from Christianity. So that

¹ "In proportion to the depth of men's moral and spiritual struggle, in proportion to the intensity with which they apprehend the height of the Divine righteousness and the Divine ideal, must there arise in them a sense of the utter feebleness of their own powers, of the weakness and servitude of their wills, and of their absolute dependence on Divine grace and the Divine will" (Wace, *ut supra*, p. 145).

² "Tolle liberum arbitrium et non erit quod salvetur; tolle Gratiam, non erit unde salvetur" (St. Bernard, *De Gratia et libero Arbitrio*).

³ A pious negro was once asked by his godless master whether he thought that he (the master) was one of the elect, to which the old slave replied: "I have never heard of an election without a candidate."

metaphysically the Divine and human are opposed, and yet practically they are united.

The one thing to remember is that there is no favouritism with God and no injustice, nor is there any interference with the freedom of man or the universality of the offer of the Gospel to human faith. The certainty that things will happen so does not imply necessarily that they must happen. Predestination magnifies grace, free will honours responsibility. The two are complementary, like the two poles of a magnet. They are not antagonistic, but two sides of the one truth often found in the same book and in the same sentence; *e.g.* John vi. 44 f.; x. 27 f.; Acts ii. 23 f.; xiii. 46, 48; Phil. ii. 12, 13; 2 Tim. ii. 19; 2 Pet. i. 10, 11. Thus these aspects are like two threads of colour so closely woven as not to be detachable, and it is probable that we shall never get nearer than the words of the poet:—

“ Our wills are ours, we know not how,
Our wills are ours, to make them Thine.”¹

The reference in the Article to the spiritual value of the doctrine of predestination to “godly persons” is borne out by all that is known of genuine Christianity in those who hold this truth. The consciousness of God’s electing love has inspired men with courage amid danger, confidence in perplexity, and the absolute conviction that nothing can hinder the purpose of God, but that “all things work together for good.” There is no doubt of the spiritual power of those who magnified the grace of God and realised that God was all in their life.²

¹ “Are not these truths hopelessly incompatible with each other? So it may seem at first sight; and if we escape the danger of denying the one in the supposed interests of the other, if we shrink from sacrificing God’s sovereignty to man’s free will, with Arminius, and from sacrificing man’s freedom to God’s sovereignty with Calvin, we can only express a wise ignorance by saying that to us they seem like parallel lines, which must meet at a point in eternity, far beyond our present range of view. We do know, however, that being both true, they cannot really contradict each other, and that in some manner which we cannot formulate, the Divine sovereignty must not merely be compatible with, but must even imply the freedom of created wills” (Liddon, *Some Elements of Religion*, p. 191).

See also Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, p. 348.

“It is a growing conviction of students of Scripture and of philosophy that, on the subject before us, there is more than one hemisphere of truth. That which both the Calvinist and Arminian chiefly prized was truth, not error. What each contended against was the supposed implications of a proposition which was valued by his opponent from its relation to a set of implications of a very different sort. Each connected with his antagonist’s thesis inferences which that antagonist repudiated” (Professor Fisher, *North American Review*, Vol. CXXXVIII, p. 303).

² “The practical effect of this doctrine has been to make strong Christians. The men who had come to believe that they were nothing and God everything, and yet that God was working in them and through them, could do their work in the world, since God gave it to them to do, without fear of men or the devil. The Protestants of Geneva, the Huguenots of France, the Covenanters of Scotland, the Puritans of the English Civil War, and our own Pilgrim Fathers, got the iron in their blood from their Calvinism” (Stearns, *ut supra*, p. 341).

“When Calvinistic thought has been in the ascendant it has been associated with an unusual manifestation of moral vision, enthusiasm, and strenuousness. On the other

The opposite of election is not reprobation, but non-election, and no human being has any evidence that he is not elected. The opposite of reprobation is probation, and we are reprobate just as long as we will not accept Christ. Election rests on God's good pleasure, but reprobation rests on His holiness, which leads Him to antagonise and loathe that which is unholy (Rom. i. 26-29; 2 Cor. xiii. 5-7; 2 Tim. iii. 8; Tit. i. 16). It is because man's dispositions are odious that they are disapproved, and thus reprobation is founded not on the Divine sovereignty, but on Divine justice.¹

We must, therefore, distinguish between the efficient and permissive decree of God. He does not stand in the same relation to good and to evil. Of good He is the source, but evil He hates and opposes, and therefore has no share in it.²

In view of all that has been said the term "final preservation" is better and more accurate than "final perseverance," for if it is asked whether men can fall away finally it is best to modify the enquiry and ask whether they will. If sin is viewed in the abstract it may be regarded as going on unchecked, but it is impossible to overlook the provision made by God: "Ye are not under law, but under grace" (Rom. vi. 14). So that while from the standpoint of strict logic men can fall away, from the standpoint of spiritual religion we believe that they will not, and it is for this reason that each child is taught in the Catechism to regard itself as "elect," and yet to use means. When we start from Divine sovereignty we cannot help believing in preservation, and it is only when we start from human freedom that we contemplate the possibility of falling from grace. In the former case salvation is God's purpose from first to last; in the latter it depends upon man's will. If, therefore, we believe in the sovereignty of God and in the primacy of grace it is difficult to believe that a true follower of Christ, who has been laid hold of by the grace of God, can ever be lost. But this does not mean that he is exempt from sinning. On the contrary, there must be constant and careful dis-

hand, the ethical results have not been most deeply impressive in those epochs which have magnified the autonomy and self-sufficiency of man as over against God, and which have mainly relied on the appeal to man to rally his moral powers and accomplish his own destiny" (Paterson, *ut supra*, p. 310).

"His system, passing like iron into the blood of the nations which received it, raised up in the French Huguenots, the English Puritans, the Scotch, the Dutch, the New Englanders, brave, free, God-fearing peoples. Abasing man before God, but exalting him again in the consciousness of a new-born liberty in Christ, teaching him his slavery through sin, yet restoring to him his freedom through grace, leading him to regard all things in the light of eternity, it contributed to form a grave, but very noble and elevated type of character, reared a race not afraid to lift up the head before kings" (Orr, *ut supra*, p. 291).

"In this lay the real strength of the Calvinistic creed, and of the Puritan character which it trained and developed. On the other hand, in systems where there is little or no sense of God's power carrying out His purposes with resistless force through His chosen instruments, there the character trained under them is likely to be deficient in fibre and tenacity of purpose. So Dean Milman has, in a striking passage, pointed out the weakness of Pelagianism: 'No Pelagian ever has, or ever will, work a religious revolution'" (Gibson, *ut supra*, p. 483).

¹ Forbes, *Analytical Commentary on Romans*, p. 431. ² Stearns, *ut supra*, p. 434 f.

inction between falling from grace and backsliding. A believer by reason of the power of inborn sinfulness is only too apt to backslide, but by the gracious faithfulness of God he will not fall entirely from grace.¹ Since no one can read his own name in the Lamb's Book of Life the only thing required is to be sure that a spiritual change has taken place, and then to receive the Divine assurance in the heart and to walk humbly with God.

It must, therefore, never be forgotten that the difficulty of the relation between the Divine foreknowledge and human freewill is one that is really independent of Christianity and is part of the very constitution of creation. Election in religion is only a part of the wider truth of Providence (control) in the world. It is, therefore, not surprising that with our present limitations of knowledge, it is impossible to solve it. And yet, as in many other practical matters, we act on what we know to be true and leave the theoretical reconciliation entirely on one side. We know that no one will be saved without faith in our Lord Jesus, and that no one will be condemned who does thus believe. We are also sure that everyone is invited to believe in Christ, and we are equally aware, from personal experience, that individuals in their freedom either accept or reject God's offer. Not only so, but the believer, in reviewing his past, recognises quite clearly that God was leading him step by step, and yet at the same time leaving him perfectly free.

If it be said that God knows about us, the answer is that if He did not, He would not be God, but a being of limited knowledge. But it must be said with equal definiteness that God's knowledge of us does not affect our decision, since we are invited to accept, and it is our duty to respond to this invitation. The illustration has been used that if a man were on a sinking vessel and were invited to enter a lifeboat, he would not decline on the ground that God knew whether he was going to be saved or drowned, and that, therefore, there was no use doing anything. Such an one would use the available means and entrust himself to God, while acting in accordance with the opportunity for securing safety.

It is, of course, true that God never created men to send them to hell,

¹ "A moment's consideration will show that election, in the sense in which it was understood by most of the great theologians of former times, Romanist as well as Protestant, viz. election to eternal life, involves the doctrine of perseverance. For the elect in this sense are not merely those who have been favoured with external privileges, and who *may* be saved if they do their duty, but those who shall finally be saved; and none such can or will perish. To say then that the elect may not persevere to the end is to say that they are not elect, except in a lower sense of the word. The elect are those who do persevere, and those who do not are not of the elect. Further, it is to be observed that the question is not about perseverance merely, but about *final* perseverance, or perseverance up to the moment when, at death, we lose sight of the persons concerned. It is possible, and generally admitted, that persons may persevere, or seem to do so, for a time, and then draw back; but it is endurance to the end, until the individual passes into the unseen world, that is intended in the Calvinistic controversy. . . . That our Church leans to this latter view seems implied in Article XVII: 'They be made sons of God by adoption, they walk religiously in good works, and at length, by God's mercy, they attain to everlasting life.' No intimation is given that they may possibly come short of this destination" (Litton, *ut supra*, pp. 337, 338).

but that they might glorify Him in their lives and enjoy the fellowship which He offers and makes possible in Christ. But, if men refuse to accept God's purpose and oppose His will for them, it is not God's doing, but their own that they thereby lose eternal fellowship with all that is good and pure and true. Thus, it cannot be rightly said that God condemns anyone in the sense of inflicting any arbitrary punishment; everyone who is lost condemns himself by his attitude to Christ and his salvation.

Thus, there will always be an element of mystery in the relation of two wills in the universe, Divine and human. Christian people undoubtedly revolt against any view implying that the majority of the human race are everlastingly lost and only a few saved. Nor will any refuge be found by those who know and follow Scripture in the thought of purgatorial or purifying fires, which cannot be found in the Bible. Yet again, no careful and honest reader of Scripture can believe for an instant that all human beings will be saved, for, if the Bible teaches anything distinctly, it clearly shows that there are those who, through their own deliberate choice, remain outside the circle of the saved.

But a careful study of Scripture will reveal certain truths which may help to place the doctrine of election in a truer light. There is no doubt that all men *may* be saved, if only they are willing to accept Him who died for all without exception. Further, He will most assuredly save all, except those who, having heard, persistently and finally refuse to accept Him. These, having exercised their freewill, must suffer the inevitable result of such choice. Thus Christ is not only the possible, but the real Saviour of sinners, subject only and always to the power of any sinner to exercise his freewill in rejecting salvation. There is no other way of salvation, and no other merit than the sacrificial death of Christ on Calvary.

But while all this is true, it should be carefully noted that the Bible does not separate men merely into two classes, the saved and the lost, for it seems to reveal not only one class of saved ones, but several classes or grades of the saved, and it is along this line that at least some relief to our intellectual perplexity may be found.

The highest salvation is clearly associated with what the New Testament describes as "the Body of Christ," or "the Lamb's wife," and the various references to the "elect" are to this community of "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ," who are said to have been "chosen before the foundation of the world." Yet the Bible clearly indicates that these are not the only ones saved. On the contrary, there are plain statements that, in addition to the body of Christians called "the Bride," there are other communities of human beings who are saved from everlasting destruction, and yet do not, and will never, form part of the "Body of Christ." This salvation is outside of and altogether secondary to the salvation of those chosen persons who collectively make up His spiritual Church. The following passages seem to indicate these grades:

1. There are peoples of the world over whom, according to Scripture, the members of the Church of God are to reign with Christ as kings and priests (1 Cor. vi. 2 ; Rev. xx. 4-6). It is surely impossible that these people over whom the saints are to reign are the lost.

2. Reference is made to "the nations" at Christ's coming to judgment, and as the Church or "Bride" will have been previously caught up to meet Him in the air, it is clear that those who are set on the right hand of the King and are described as blessed and invited to inherit the kingdom cannot possibly be either the "brethren" of Christ or the Church (Matt. xxv. 31-46).

3. Then we read of people raised at the last Resurrection, judged according to the deeds done in the body, and out of this number those whose names are found written in the Lamb's Book of Life (Rev. xx. 12-15 ; xxi. 27). Seeing that the members of the Church have long before been raised and glorified in the first Resurrection (Rev. xx. 4-6), who are these mentioned as in the Lamb's Book of Life long after the first Resurrection ?

4. In Heb. xii. 23 we read of "the spirits of just men made perfect" as a distinct class from "the general assembly and Church of the first-born." If there be a "Church of the first-born" who inherit the full blessing, is it not a fair inference that there are second-born ones who inherit a lesser blessing ?

5. When St. Paul writes that "all Israel shall be saved," we are again apparently concerned with a number of persons who are altogether outside the "Body of Christ."

6. The Heavenly City, the Bride, the Lamb's wife (Rev. xxi) is generally accepted as representing the glorified Church, and if this is so, who are "the nations" who walk in the light of the City, and who are "the kings of the earth" who bring their glory and honour into the City ? There must be some distinction between these and the members of the glorified Church.

A careful consideration of these passages seems to show that, while God made a selection of men to form His Church, yet the members of this collective body are not the only ones who are in some sense saved. And although the truth of Election belongs to the mysteries of God and will never be finally solved in the present life, the consciousness of these various grades of the saved will help us to realise that Scripture seems to imply that it is incorrect to think of the majority of the human race as lost and only the few saved.

The practical power of this truth of "predestination to life" is clearly emphasised in the Article, for it is, indeed, "full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons." The comfort is not merely selfish enjoyment, for even when conscious of temporal blessings which others do not possess there is no thought of selfishness, but a deeper consciousness of the love that provides them. In the same way the realisation that we are predestinated and elected to life is one of the mightiest in-

centives to true Christian living. It humbles pride by putting God first; it encourages faith by making God's grace real; it rebukes unbelief by reminding us of God's foresight and provision; it elicits earnestness by the consciousness of God's wonderful thought and love; and it emphasises holiness by the remembrance of what manner of persons we ought to be who are the subjects of this Divine and glorious purpose.¹

¹ "Dr. Hey, certainly no Calvinist, asks, Is not the doctrine of Predestination hurtful to virtue? and thus answers it: No; virtue is in our Article presupposed, before men are allowed to meddle with predestination: those who are to hope that God's purpose will prove favourable to them, must 'walk *religiously in good works*'; those who may meditate on the Christian dispensation as having been planned in the Divine counsels, must not be *carnal but godly persons*. And even these, according to our notions, ought only to dwell upon the decrees of God as far as will promote and strengthen their virtue. Besides, these texts which mention predestination are also so linked (Eph. i. 4; ii. 10) with the mention of virtue and holiness, that no ingenious man will take the former and leave the latter. He sums up with this remark, One would do a great deal to suit weak brethren; but there is no sufficient reason why those who are *not* weak should lose such sublime devotion; especially as those who are perplexed by meditating on the benign purposes and plans of the Supreme Being, are under no sort of obligation to dwell upon them" (Macbride, *Lectures on the Articles*, p. 339).

See also Stearns, *ut supra*, p. 439.

The doctrine of this Article may be studied in the following works: Moule, *Outlines of Christian Doctrine*, pp. 36-56; Paterson, *The Rule of Faith*, pp. 302-314; Litton, *Introduction to Dogmatic Theology* (Second Edition), p. 247 ff.; 337 ff.; Stearns, *Present Day Theology*, Ch. XXIII; Martensen, *Christian Dogmatics*, pp. 362-382; Orr, *The Progress of Dogma*, Index, s.v. Predestination; Adam, *Cardinal Elements of the Christian Faith*, Index, s.v. Predestinarianism.

ARTICLE XVIII

Of obtaining eternal Salvation only by the Name of Christ.

De speranda æterna Salute tantum in Nomine Christi.

They also are to be had accursed that presume to say, That every man shall be saved by the law or sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law and the light of nature. For Holy Scripture doth set out unto us only the name of Jesus Christ, whereby men must be saved.

Sunt et illi anathematizandi, qui dicere audent unumquemque in lege aut secta, quam profitetur, esse servandum, modo juxta illam et lumen naturæ accurate vixerit: cum sacræ literæ tantum Jesu Christi nomen prædicent, in quo salvos fieri homines oporteat.

IMPORTANT EQUIVALENTS.

Of obtaining ¹	= <i>De speranda.</i>
By the name	= <i>in nomine.</i>
To be had accursed	= <i>anathematizandi.</i>
By the law	= <i>in lege.</i>
Be diligent to frame his life	= <i>accurate vixerit.</i>
Set out	= <i>prædicent.</i>
For Holy Scripture	= <i>cum sacræ literæ.</i>
Be saved	= <i>salvos fieri.</i>

It is significant that a group of Articles dealing with individual salvation should close with an anathema against the latitudinarian spirit which holds that it does not matter what a man believes so long as his life is consistent and earnest. But if salvation is due to the Lord Jesus Christ, according to Article XVII, then it is obviously impossible to be indifferent to Him. The language is reminiscent of the *Reformatio Legum*:

“Horribilis est et immanis illorum audacia, qui contendunt in omni religione vel secta, quam homines professi fuerint, salutem illis esse sperandam, si tantum ad innocentiam et integritatem vitæ pro viribus enitantur juxta lumen quod illis præluceat a natura infusum. Autoritate vero sacrarum literarum confixæ sunt hujusmodi pestes. Solum enim et unicum ibi Jesu Christi nomen nobis commendatum est, ut omnis ex eo salus ad nos perveniat.”²

There were evidently unbelievers at the time of the Reformation, against whom the teaching of this Article was directed.

A careful comparison of the English and Latin equivalents helps towards a true understanding of the real meaning of the Article. Thus, the title of the Latin is *De speranda æterna Salute*, concerning the hope of

¹ The English title of the XLII had “We must trust to obtain,” the Latin “*Tantum in nomine Christi speranda est æterna salus* (We must hope to obtain eternal salvation only by the name of Christ).”

² *De Hæresibus*, c. 11.

eternal salvation, thereby suggesting the real purpose and destination of the Article. The word "accursed," Latin, *anathematizandi*, is interesting, because it is the only place in the Articles where such an anathema is pronounced. It refers to severance from Church privileges.

I.—THE ERROR CONDEMNED

The title of the Article both in Latin and in English shows that there is no reference whatever to the heathen, but only to those who are acquainted with the Christian religion. Luther is known to have held charitable views on the subject of the heathen, and our Reformers never seem to have stated positively their position. The "Name" of Christ has the same meaning as that which is found in the New Testament, referring to the revelation, or revealed character, so that again it is evident that the reference can only be to those who have heard of Him.¹ In regard to the heathen, the principles of Holy Scripture are clear (Acts x. 34 f.; Rom. ii. 14).

There is some difficulty in regard to the bearing of the word "also" in "They also are to be had accursed." Some think that it connects the teaching with that of Article XVI, where there is an expression of condemnation. Others, however, connect it closely with Article XVII, as teaching that salvation is only through Jesus Christ. Whatever may be the true interpretation the reference is clearly to something that was definite and not vague and general, an error which the Reformers had to face.

II.—THE TRUTH EMPHASISED

In opposition to the error condemned by the Article, the teaching of Holy Scripture is inculcated, that "only the Name of Jesus Christ" is set out unto us "whereby men must be saved." This truth is clearly the fundamental reality of the New Testament, and the Article evidently refers to the well-known statement of St. Peter: "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts iv. 12). Even Cornelius, with all his moral advantages, needed Jesus Christ and His salvation (Acts x. 2-5), and in various other connections the same truth is taught. Indeed, it is only another way of saying that "Christianity is Christ," for it is only by means of the redemption provided by God in the Person of His Son that human salvation becomes possible (Mark xvi. 16; John iii. 36; I Cor. iii. 11; I Cor. xv. 1, 2; Gal. i. 8, 9).

To hold the view anathematised would be to despair of absolute truth. In human life two things are needed: (a) objective truth; (b) subjective

¹ "I hold it to be a most certain rule of interpreting Scripture that it never speaks of persons when there is a physical impossibility of its speaking to them. . . . So the heathen, who died before the word was spoken, and in whose land it was never preached, are dead to the word; it concerns them not at all; but, the moment it can reach them, it is theirs, and for them" (Dr. Arnold's *Life and Correspondence*, Letter L.XV).

sincerity in response to it. As we have already seen, conduct does depend on creed, and thought is the basis of action. In this sense, therefore, the Article may be regarded as the corollary of Article XVII. In the light of the New Testament emphasis on the Lord Jesus Christ it is absolutely impossible to say that a man may be indifferent to what he believes so long as he holds it sincerely. Such latitudinarianism implies that the Person and work of Jesus Christ do not matter. It is, however, essential to remember that the Article does not refer to errors innocently committed, but to those who evidently consider all doctrines of unimportance, and "presume to say, That every man shall be saved by the Law or Sect which he professeth," so long as he is sincere. Nothing is said about being saved "in the Law or Sect," and therefore the view condemned and the opposite view inculcated cannot refer to any but those who deliberately and wilfully set aside the manifest Christian teaching concerning our Lord Jesus Christ. Christianity is not to be regarded as a matter of indifference, and the strong language of the Article, "They also are to be had accursed," is thoroughly justifiable in the light of what Scripture teaches concerning the Person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ. Men may be saved *in* their own religion, though not *by* it, and it is the latter opinion alone which the Article condemns, because it would destroy vital Christianity. We hold that whoever is saved, Christ is the Saviour, since it is His sacrifice which makes redemption possible. But when a man knows what Christianity is, and faces its solemn and pressing claim for allegiance to Jesus Christ, and in the face of it rejects its message, the case is altogether different, and such an one may rightly be anathematised for presuming to set aside "the Name of Jesus Christ, whereby men must be saved."

REVIEW OF ARTICLES IX TO XVIII

Before proceeding to the Articles dealing with corporate religion it may be well to look back over the Ten Articles which concern the personal relation of the soul to God. It will be seen that they cover very fairly the main aspects of individual religion.

I.—SIN

Article IX.—Man's lost condition through sin.

Article X.—Man's inability to save himself.

II.—JUSTIFICATION

Article XI.—The Method.—Justification is in Christ by faith, not by works.

Article XII.—The Proof.—Good Works as the evidence of justification through faith in Christ.

Article XIII.—The Impossibility.—Man is unable to justify himself.

III.—SANCTIFICATION

Article XIV.—The impossibility of exceeding God's requirements in regard to daily life.

Article XV.—The impossibility of reaching God's requirements.

Article XVI.—The impossibility of despair after failure.

IV.—COMPLETE SALVATION

Article XVII.—The Ground.—God's predestinating and electing love and grace.

Article XVIII.—The Source.—The Lord Jesus Christ as the Divine Redeemer.

IV. THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH

ARTICLES XIX-XXXIX

CORPORATE RELIGION

A. THE CHURCH (ARTICLES XIX-XXII).

19. THE CHURCH.

20. THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH.

21. THE AUTHORITY OF GENERAL COUNCILS.

22. PURGATORY.

ARTICLE XIX

Of the Church.

De Ecclesia.

The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.

As the Church of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch, have erred; so also the Church of Rome hath erred, not only in their living and manner of Ceremonies, but also in matters of Faith.

Ecclesia Christi visibilis est cœtus fidelium, in quo verbum Dei purum prædicatur, et Sacramenta, quoad ea quæ necessario exigantur, juxta Christi institutum recte administrantur.

Sicut erravit Ecclesia Hierosolymitana, Alexandrina, et Antiochena; ita et erravit Ecclesia Romana, non solum quoad agenda et cæremoniarum ritus, verum in his etiam quæ credenda sunt.

IMPORTANT EQUIVALENTS.

Of the Church	= <i>De Ecclesia.</i>
A congregation of faithful men	= <i>cœtus fidelium.</i>
Duly	= <i>recte.</i>
Are requisite to the same	= <i>exigantur.</i>
In their living	= <i>quoad agenda.</i>
In matters of faith	= <i>in his quæ credenda sunt.</i>

It was essential to define the doctrine of the Church as against Roman Catholicism, from which the English Church separated in the sixteenth century. And it is significant that amid all the controversies of the Reformation period this Article underwent no change. It was suggested by the Seventh Article of the Confession of Augsburg, as these words indicate :—

“Est autem ecclesia congregatio sanctorum, in qua evangelium recte docetur, et recte administrantur sacramenta.”

It is identical with the Twentieth Article of 1553. Comparison must also be made with the *Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum*, for the connection of thought and word is obvious. In the same way the Anglican doctrine of the Church can be seen in opposition to Romanism.¹ It is,

¹ “Etiam illorum insania legum vinculis est constringenda, qui Romanam Ecclesiam in hujusmodi petra fundatam esse existimant, ut nec erraverit, nec errare possit; cum et multi possint ejus errores ex superiore majorum memoria repeti, et etiam ex hac nostra proferri, partim in his quibus vita nostra debet informari, partim etiam in his quibus fides debet institui. Quapropter illorum etiam intolerabilis est error, qui totius Christiani orbis universam ecclesiam solius episcopi Romani principatu contineri volunt. Nos enim eam quæ cerni potest ecclesiam sic definimus ut omnium cœtus sit fidelium hominum, in quo Sacra Scriptura sincere docetur, et sacramenta (saltem his eorum partibus quæ necessariae sunt) juxta Christi præscriptum administrantur” (*De Hæresibus*, c. 21, “De Romana Ecclesia, et potestate Romani pontificis”).

moreover, noteworthy that the Homily for Whitsunday, dated 1563, and attributed to Bishop Jewel, takes a similar anti-Roman view. It was evidently essential on the part of the English Reformers to vindicate their action by showing what they believed to be the true doctrine of the Church in opposition to that of the Church of Rome.¹

When Jesus Christ saves an individual and unites that one to Himself, a new relation is thereby constituted between that individual person and others similarly joined to the Lord. To this community the New Testament gives several titles, the word "Church" being the most important. The English word "Church" comes from *κυριακή*, "that which belongs to the Lord." In northern nations we find corresponding terms, as in Scotland, "Kirk"; in Germany, "Kirche"; and in Sweden, "Kyrkan," instead of the Greek "Ecclesia," which is found in the French "Église," and other Latin derivatives. There does not seem to be any certain explanation of this, though it may be that the use of the term "Church" instead of "Ecclesia" indicates an independence of Rome in these nations, their Christianity being, perhaps, derived from Greek or Asiatic sources. The word "Ecclesia," rendered "Church," is found in the New Testament 114 times, and means an "Assembly," people "called." Hort says that we cannot press the *ἐκ* to imply "called out" of a larger body.² He defines the "Ecclesia" in Greece as a free community gathered in council, citizens of a Greek city deliberating and deciding on their affairs. They were the free men only, not the slaves. This secular Greek use can be seen in Acts xix. 32, 39, 41. In Acts vii. 38 the word is associated with the Old Testament congregation, "the Church in the wilderness." In the LXX "Ecclesia" is the equivalent of the Hebrew for assembly (*קָהָל*).³ In St. Matthew xviii. 17 we have the Jewish idea (cf. 1 Cor. v. 3-5), and in St. Matthew xvi. 18 the prospect and promise of the Christian Church. The word is found in all St. Paul's Epistles, except Titus and 2 Timothy, and also in Acts, James (ch. v. 14; cf. ii. 2, "synagogue"); Hebrews (ch. ii. 12; xii. 23); 3 John, and Revelation. But outside the Gospels the word Church stands for a decidedly Pauline idea, and has two standpoints: (a) actual, the Church here on earth at the present time; (b) ideal, the Church regarded as spiritual and heavenly (Eph. i. 22; iii. 10; Col. i. 18).

It should also be noted that the Church and the Kingdom are not identical. The Church is an institution, intended solely for the present, the Kingdom stretches to the future. We have only to substitute the word "Church" for "Kingdom" in the Lord's Prayer, "Thy Church come," to see the impossibility of identifying the two terms. While the relations overlap, we may speak of the Kingdom as the ultimate end, and the Church as one of the means towards its realisation.

¹ "The second part of the Sermon for Whitsunday."—The Homilies.

² Hort, *The Christian Ecclesia*, p. 5.

³ Hort, *The Christian Ecclesia*, p. 3 f.; Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament*, p. 3 f.

I.—THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH

1. When did the Church begin?—Strictly speaking, the Christian Church commenced when the two disciples of the Baptist left their old master for the new One (John i. 37), though for all practical purposes the Day of Pentecost may be regarded as the birthday of the Church, since it was on that day that the Church was spiritually created by the presence of the Holy Spirit. There was, of course, a Jewish Church or community of believers before, so that the idea was by no means novel.

2. How did the Church begin?—In Acts i. 15 and ii. 4 we observe preaching on the part of Christ's witnesses. Then came the acceptance of the Apostolic word, followed by baptism, but between these two ministerial acts of preaching and baptism came the contact of the soul with God, by faith on the human side, and through the Holy Spirit on the Divine side. The order was (1) the preaching of Christ; (2) the acceptance of Christ; and then (3) Christ adding penitent believers to the Church. So that it is Christ who adds men to the Church, not the Church that adds them to Christ. The passage referring to the Day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 37-47) is the germ of all that is found elsewhere. Members of the Church are often *media* in relation to the knowledge and acceptance of Jesus Christ, but the proper order is: Christ; the individual; the Church: not Christ; the Church; the individual.

II.—THE PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH

1. Perhaps the primary idea of the Church was fellowship. It was the corporate and social outcome of individual relation to Christ. Christianity is social as well as personal. The very nature of Christ's salvation was to create a community. Paganism might show the beauty of the old humanity, but Christianity created a new. The Church is a society of sinners saved by Christ.

2. But fellowship will necessarily express itself in service. The possession of Christ will lead to witness and work, for the Church will inevitably endeavour to extend itself, while at the same time it builds up its own members. At this point is seen the importance of the Church to the individual. It is not without point that the Creed first expresses belief in the "Holy Catholic Church," and then follows immediately with a phrase in explanation and amplification of it, "the Communion of Saints." Individualistic Christianity is a contradiction in terms. While a man is justified solitarily and alone, he is sanctified in connection with others. Christian character needs the community for development, for it is only possible in fellowship with members of the Christian Church (Eph. iii. 18; vi. 18). There is no future for any Christianity that does not express itself through a community. Mysticism by itself is too vague and individualistic. While Christianity is mystical, it is much more. Mere individualism is equally impossible, for "unattached" Christians find no place in the Christianity of the New Testament. It is a great

mistake to associate individualism with what is sometimes regarded as "ultra" spirituality, which is often opposed to organised Christianity.

III.—THE PROGRESS OF THE CHURCH

1. There is a threefold use of the term "Church" in the New Testament. (a) Local: Christians in one place, *e.g.* Jerusalem; (b) General: the aggregate of Christians in various places at one time (1 Cor. x. 32; xii. 28); (c) Universal: all real Christians, past, present, and future (Eph. i. 22; iii. 10; Col. i. 18). This last should dominate all our thinking and all other views of the Church.¹ Fellowship in the Gospel means membership in the Church, though the Church does not consist of Churches, but of individuals. Membership in the Church is not mediated through membership in one local body, but comes by relation to Christ. The Christian does not experience a process like naturalisation if he moves to another place, for he is a member everywhere. Locality or nationality is a mere accident. There is no isolation, since all believers are one in Christ.

2. It is noteworthy that these three uses are found in the Prayer Book. (a) The local Church of England: Preface to the Confirmation Office. (b) The Church of one time: Article XX. (c) The Church Universal: Collects for St. Simon's and St. Jude's Day, and All Saints' Day.

IV.—THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH

It is important to distinguish the Church from its officials. The Church is "the blessed company of all faithful people," and Ordination is to the ministry, not to the Church. Nor does the Church exist as an abstract personality apart from the individuals who compose it. The Church is, therefore, first an organism and only secondarily an organisation. There is no hint given in Scripture of any precise form of organisation in which the organism must necessarily express itself. The organism gradually developed an organisation as needed. A spiritual body would naturally express its life in outward forms, but in the New Testament there is nothing elaborate or fixed, but only a few principles indicating liberty and responsibility. Serious error has invariably been caused by the idea that Christ was a Law-giver and the Gospel a new Law. There is nothing in the New Testament to compare with the detailed instructions in Leviticus.

There are two aspects of the Church: visible and invisible. In regard to the Church visible, the Article is clear about the fact, but the question of the meaning of the fact at once arises. What are we to understand by a "visible" Church? The adjective cannot possibly be regarded as otiose, and yet we are not to understand two disconnected Churches, visible and invisible; but rather, one Church viewed from

¹ Moule, Eph. i. 22. *Cambridge Bible for Schools.*

different standpoints, the one having regard to its spiritual nature, the other to its ecclesiastical organisation; either in reference to its Divine Head or to its earthly members; either from within (*ἔσωθεν*), or from without (*ἔξωθεν*). The Church as "invisible" means all Christians now, with all those who have formed the true Church and will hereafter make up the complete Church. This is, of course, known only to God. It does not mean in the literal sense a Church that is "invisible," but that what constitutes membership of the Church is invisible. Nowell's Catechism says, "The Church is the universal society of all the faithful whom God has predestinated from eternity to everlasting life."

These two aspects are necessarily connected, but they do not cover the same ground. There may be membership in the visible and not in the invisible Church, because visible Churches are only partial manifestations of the Body of Christ. But membership in the invisible Church will naturally express itself in membership in the visible Church. So that we can distinguish in thought between the visible and the invisible, while we cannot separate them, for since Christianity is at once spiritual and social, we need both aspects. In the Creed the essence of the Church is associated with faith, not with sight, and St. Paul teaches that the Church is inseparable in idea from Christ the Head (1 Cor. xii. 12), and yet their oneness is not nominal adhesion, but vital cohesion. Every member possesses Christ's life.¹ The term "Body" is never to be identified solely with the aggregate of Churches throughout the world. It always implies vital union with Christ and refers to all those who are spiritually one with Him.

The distinction, therefore, between the Church as visible and invisible is rather between the formal and the real. The latter is not to be confounded with any visible community or aggregate of such communities which may and do contain persons who are not joined to Christ by a living faith. As Christ's Redemption is Divine, spiritual, eternal, universal, so the idea of the Church naturally follows. The Church is much more than any actual community of Christians, and on this account faith is needed to perceive it as the Creed teaches. This distinction between visible and invisible is clearly made by Hooker in a well-known passage which calls for special attention:—

"That Church of Christ, which we properly term His body mystical, can be but one; neither can that one be sensibly discerned by any man, inasmuch as the parts thereof are some in heaven already with Christ, and the rest that are on earth (albeit, their natural persons be visible) we do not discern under this property whereby they are truly and infallibly of that body. . . . For lack of diligent observing the difference between the Church of God mystical and visible, the oversights are neither few nor light that have been committed."²

¹ Litton, *The Church of Christ* (First Edition), p. 149; Bartlet, *Evangelical Principles*, pp. 31-33; Maclear, *Introduction to the Creed*, p. 222.

² *Ecl. Pol.*, Bk. III, pp. 2, 9.

No one questions the fact of visibility. The only question is as to any precise form of visibility being of the *esse*. To use a phrase like "the historical Church founded by our Lord"¹ is really to beg the entire question, for everything turns upon the sense in which we may regard any Church as "historical," and as in connection with "our Lord." All attempts to identify the visible with the invisible will only lead to confusion and trouble, as in the past. Archbishop Benson has rightly spoken of "the noble, and alas, too fruitful error of arraying the visible Church in the attributes of the Church invisible."²

What, then, is the relation of the two? It may be seen in the purpose of visible Churches to make Christ real in human lives. In Eph. i. 3-14 individuals, and in Eph. i. 15-23 the community, are treated by St. Paul. Behind the outward life is Divine grace, and only as grace is realised can the visible be realised and expressed in the invisible and spiritual. The Christian on earth is to correspond with the purpose of the Church in God's sight. The true Church, or Body of Christ, is thus invisible by reason of the vital union of its individual members with Christ, which is of necessity invisible. Of this God alone can tell. As such, the Church in its essence is an object of faith until the manifestation of the sons of God (Rom. viii. 19). Until then it is in its organic unity and corporate capacity invisible, although, of course, real, with the certainty of perfect visible expression hereafter. But so far as the present is concerned the existence of the Church as the Body of Christ becomes known and visible under the forms of congregations or Churches, which are one by virtue of their presumed, and, if true, their actual union with the one Body of Christ. If a man fulfils the conditions of this Article he is a member of the visible Church. If he is spiritually united to Christ he is also a member of the invisible Church. In the true Christian both aspects are joined, but in the mere professing Christian they are not, so that the Body of Christ is neither separate from nor identical with the sum total of visible Churches.

The difference of visibility and invisibility turns on the relative importance in which these two aspects are regarded. If, following the Church of Rome, visibility is made the primary antecedent, one result will follow. If, in harmony with the New Testament, visibility is made the consequent of the spiritual life within,³ another and very different consequence will ensue. Rome makes this visibility to be of the essence of the Church, while Anglicanism, following the New Testament, makes invisible or spiritual union with Christ the vital and fundamental requirement. Even allowing that the terms "visible" and "invisible" represent controversial conditions of the sixteenth century, the truth expressed by them is valid, because the distinction is between a real and an apparent Church, between spiritual reality and outward manifestations. The

¹ Gibson, *The Thirty-nine Articles*, p. 500.

² "Cyprian," Preface.

³ Litton, *Introduction to Dogmatic Theology*, p. 70.

point of the term "visible" is that the reality is not identical with, or simply expressed by, the outward manifestations. The New Testament idea of the Church is never indifferent to visibility or order, but it nevertheless puts the main stress on spiritual gift and grace and not on institutions and organisations.

V.—THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CHURCH

In technical language this point is usually discussed as the "Notes" of the Church. The fundamental question is, "*What* is a true Church?" This comes before, and is distinct from, "*Which* is the true Church?" We must get our definition before we can apply it.

1. The Church as Visible.—The Article describes rather than defines the visible Church, referring to signs, not to essence; to what the Church does rather than to what the Church is. "The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same." (a) The visible Church is a community. It is a congregation, not an aggregation, because it has a principle of unity and union with Christ as the centre. (b) The Church has a life. It is a congregation of "faithful men," that is, men of faith, believers in Jesus Christ. (c) The Church has a standard. "In the which the pure Word of God is preached." This allusion to "pure" had an evident reference to the Roman Catholic additions made to the Word of God in preaching and teaching. (d) The Church has an observance. In which "the Sacraments are duly ministered." It is not said what "duly" implies, since the New Testament gives no clear indication of the precise ministers required for the Sacraments. But it is more than likely that "duly" has a reference to the denial of the cup to the laity.

It is interesting to notice that the definition of the Church given by certain Roman Catholic divines is not essentially different from the above except in one point, which, however, to them is fundamental and dominates the whole position. It insists upon the Church being united to the Roman See.¹

One other point of importance calls for attention. In the Homily for Whitsunday, which is attributed to Bishop Jewel, an additional "Note" or "mark" of the Church is given, "the right use of ecclesiastical discipline."² This characteristic is also added in the "Short Catechism" of

¹ "Nostra sententia est ecclesiam unam tantum esse, non duas, et illam unam et veram esse cœtum hominum ejusdem Christianæ fidei professione et eorundem sacramentorum communione colligatum, sub regimine legitimorum pastorum, ac præcipue unius Christi in terris Vicarii Romani pontificis" (*Controvers. General.*, Tom. II, p. 108, Lib. III; *De Ecclesia*, c. 2).

² "The true Church is an universal congregation or fellowship of God's faithful and elect people, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the head corner-stone. And it hath always three notes or marks whereby it is known: pure and sound doctrine, the sacraments ministered according to Christ's holy in-

1553, and is interpreted to mean all necessary discipline, even to the extent of excommunication of the wilfully disobedient.¹ But it may be questioned whether this is really an additional "note," and it is generally regarded as implied in the word "duly" in regard to the administration of the Sacraments. Yet it is particularly interesting to observe that there is no definition of what is to be understood by "duly," the assumption being that all the New Testament requirements are to be fulfilled.²

It is impossible to overlook the general terms of this statement of the Article. This was intentional. It comes from the Confession of Augsburg and remained unaltered throughout all the Reformation controversies. It is in entire harmony with corresponding Prayer Book terms. Thus in the prayer for "All Sorts and Conditions of Men" there is a petition for "all those who profess and call themselves Christians"; in the prayer for the Church Militant, "all they that do confess Thy Holy Name"; in the Litany, "Thy Holy Church Universal"; in the Bidding Prayer (Canon of 1604), "the whole congregation of Christ's people dispersed throughout the whole world." This last point recalls the Canon prescribing the Prayer and including the Church of Scotland, which was then Presbyterian, since Episcopacy proper did not exist there until 1610.

2. The Church as Visible is not Infallible.

Error is stated in the Article to be both possible and actual. "As the Church of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch, have erred; so also the Church of Rome hath erred, not only in their living and manner of Ceremonies, but also in matters of Faith." Three Eastern Churches are first mentioned: Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch. It is sometimes wondered why Constantinople was not included; perhaps this is due to the fact that Alexandria and Antioch, two of the three Patriarchates

stitution, and the right use of ecclesiastical discipline. This description of the Church is agreeable both to the Scriptures of God and also to the doctrine of the ancient Fathers, so that none may justly find fault therewith" (The Second Part of the Sermon for Whitsunday.—The Homilies).

¹ *Liturgies of King Edward VI* (Parker Society, p. 513). Nowell's *Catechism*, 1570, teaches the same truth: "In the same Church if it be well ordered, there shall be seen to be observed a certain order and manner of government, and such a form of ecclesiastical discipline."

² The Latin of the word "duly" is *recte*, as also in Article XXVII. This must be carefully distinguished from *rite*, which is often rendered by the same English word (Articles XXV, XXVIII, XXXIV, XXXVI). The latter word *rite* means "with due outward order" (our English word "rite"). The former, *recte*, seems clearly to include inward dispositions as well. Bishop Gibson considers that the difference between the two words "is not very great," though "*rite*" includes a "wider reference to due ecclesiastical order" than "*recte*" does. On the other hand, Bishop Drury (*Confession and Absolution*, p. 269 f.), says that careful use is made of the words by the compilers of our Articles. "*Rite* has a limited reference and denotes the due attention to external rite and order. . . . *Recte* is a word of wider and fuller meaning, and embraces moral qualification as well. . . . Thus *recte* stands alone in the two places where it is used, while *rite* is, if need be, strengthened by such words as *digne* or *cum fide*." On this view, according to Bishop Drury, proper discipline is included in *recte* which "includes both moral and ceremonial essentials." He adds that "In the other place where *recte* occurs the use is exactly parallel."

recognised by the Council of Nicæa, were given precedence after Jerusalem, though the Patriarchate of Constantinople was not recognised until the Second General Council.¹ These three, moreover, were supposed to have been founded by Apostles, a point that gives special force to the statement about their error. This was also the tradition connected with the Church of Rome. Very early a tendency showed itself to rest far too easily as a test of intellectual orthodoxy on conformity with Apostolic Sees.

The precise errors are not stated, probably because it was sufficient to express the fact, but Church history records several features and periods of error in Churches of the East.² Further, a description of the Eastern Church, and a reference to the "Orthodox Confession of the Catholic and Apostolic Eastern Church" will show that in several not unimportant particulars the Eastern Church holds doctrines contrary to the teaching of the Church of England. In the present day exception has been taken to the statement of our Article because it offers a hindrance to reunion with the Eastern Churches, but while the opinion here expressed may have been due to the situation of the sixteenth century it remains as part of our Articles, and as long as it remains it must necessarily be a factor in connection with any proposals for intercommunion.

There is no doubt, however, that the special point of the Article is the statement that the Church of Rome has erred, for this was obviously the important issue when the Article was drawn up. The errors of the Church of Rome can easily be seen from the statements of the Articles themselves. Thus, in its "living" can be proved by the celibacy of the clergy (Article XXXII); in its "manner of Ceremonies," the error of speaking to the congregation in an unknown tongue (Article XXIV) and the denial of the cup to the laity may be adduced (Article XXX); in regard to "matters of Faith," the errors are almost too numerous to mention, including the use of tradition (Article VI), the works of supererogation (Article XIV), purgatory (Article XXII), the seven Sacraments (Article XXV), Transubstantiation (Article XXVIII), and several more.³

But in the face of the plain statement of the Article it is necessary to meet the claim of the Church of Rome to be an infallible visible Church. What are the grounds of our opposition ?

¹ Boulton, *The Theology of the Church of England*, p. 167.

² Gibson, *ut supra*, p. 307.

³ According to the Homily for Whitsunday, Rome is not to be regarded as a Church, but the Article and representative writers, like Hooker, clearly take the opposite view. It is a Church, and yet one marked by grievous and fundamental errors. Hooker says:

"Even as the Apostle doth say of Israel that they are in one respect enemies, but in another beloved of God, in like sort with Rome we dare not communicate concerning sundry her gross and grievous abominations, yet touching those main parts of Christian truth wherein they constantly still persist, we gladly acknowledge them to be of the family of Jesus Christ" (*Ecl. Pol.*, Bk. III, Ch. I, p. 10). See Harold Browne, *ut supra*, pp. 455, 457; Gibson, *ut supra*, pp. 308, 310.

(1) There is nothing in Scripture to support this contention. The great Petrine passage (Matt. xvi. 13-19) refers to St. Peter personally without any proof or even hint of transmission. It is the confession of Christ as Messiah, Saviour, and Lord, and of Him appropriated by faith as the basis of the Church.¹ St. Peter's part was stewardship, as in Luke xii. 42. The Apostles were not given power as such, but only as representatives of the whole Church.² They were spiritual founders, but possessed no other official authority. Still more, there is no hint given of any power of delegation by, or from them.³ They were uniquely blessed in things spiritual in relation to Christ, but with "no official grace." It is essential to distinguish between their authority for the Gospel and for organisation, a distinction overlooked by many writers.⁴ It is the same with the other Apostles in the Acts, and also with St. Paul; Apostolic authority was spiritual and in relation to the Gospel and its terms. The passage in the First Gospel is best interpreted by Eph. ii. 20 and 1 Peter ii. 4-6. The Roman Catholic view would need three things to substantiate it: (a) that Peter was the head shepherd; (b) that he had power to transmit his office and authority; (c) that in Rome these true successors of Peter are to be found. It is also noteworthy that the keys given to Peter were of the Kingdom, which, as we have seen, is not identical with the Church.

(2) There is no analogy to this claim in nature and humanity. God does not provide infallibility for human life through any of His gifts of nature and providence.

(3) There is nothing in Christianity in favour of it and much against it. No Pope presided at a General Council, and it was only after a long period and under circumstances well known in history that the Roman authority was claimed and recognised.

(4) All the fruits, intellectual, social, civil, religious, and moral are against it. A comparison of the countries where the Roman Catholic Church has been in supreme authority is one of the strongest disproofs of the Roman claims.

One argument of Rome calls for special consideration, the theory of Development, associated with Cardinal Newman. It is urged that Roman Catholicism is the legitimate development of what is found in germ in the New Testament. But is this capable of proof? What are we to say about the ages before the full development was reached? Germs do not produce full-grown trees at once. Then, too, is Roman Catholicism a true development from within or an accretion from without? Are the distinctive Roman Catholic doctrines legitimate developments of the New Testament? When we consider such subjects as the place of the Mother of our Lord, or the sacerdotal character of the Christian ministry, or the doctrine of Transubstantiation, we naturally ask if these are found in

¹ Lindsay, *The Church and Ministry in the Early Centuries*.

² Hort, *The Christian Ecclesia*, p. 33.

³ Hort, *ut supra*, p. 230 f. ⁴ Bartlet, *Evangelical Principles*, p. 8 and Note.

germ in the New Testament, and no historical student or properly-equipped exegete would for a moment allow this to be the case. Development must always be according to type.¹ It is, therefore, impossible to beg the question by saying that we need infallibility, and therefore God will give it. This represents our own thought alone, and is no part of the true Christian position.²

But if the Roman Catholic view is impossible, can we accept the current view which is essentially that of Rome, apart from the Papacy? This assumes that Christ delegated His authority to all His Apostles, and not to St. Peter alone. At once the question has to be raised whether this authority was vested in the Apostles as individuals, or as a College? Was each capable of founding a Church, or could they only act together? This point is, as a rule, not faced by modern writers, though it is obviously vital to the issue. If each Apostle had distinct power, then there was the possibility of twelve Apostolic Churches. On the other hand, if the power was corporate the evidence for its existence has to be produced. Proofs have been asked in vain that the Apostles appointed the first Bishops in twelve Churches, and that when one Bishop died his successor was dependent on the remaining eleven, and not on his own body of presbyters.³ The theory is, therefore, weakest where it ought to be strongest, namely, at the point when the Apostles provided for their immediate successors. This is a vital flaw and cannot be overcome by hypothesis. So gigantic a claim requires absolute evidence. The Roman Catholic view avoids these difficulties, and has the merit of clearness by concentrating authority in St. Peter. But the view now considered has no foundation in Scripture, or history, or logic. It must never be forgotten that the logical outcome of Cyprian's view of episcopacy, which is held by many in the present day, is the Papacy as the topstone, since episcopacy apart from the Papacy is only a form of government for the diocese and not for the whole Church, which thereby has no visible head.⁴

3. The Church as Invisible.—It is important to enquire as to the true marks of the Body of Christ. We must derive them from the thing itself. It is imperative to know what is essential. The way to proceed is to study with care the New Testament, especially the Epistle to the Ephesians, which contains the fullest teaching. Or else we can study the Lord Jesus Christ and our relation to Him. The four marks are, "I believe One Holy Catholic Apostolic Church," but we must take care not to use these to define any one Church. We must see what they mean before applying them to the Church, since they are only strictly applicable to the Body of Christ. Three of them, Unity, Sanctity, and Catholicity can easily be attributed, if necessary, to other societies.

¹ Further discussion of this point may be found in the author's *The Holy Spirit of God*.

² For all questions connected with the claims of Rome the student will give special attention to Salmon's *The Infallibility of the Church*.

³ Goode, *The Divine Rule of Faith and Practice*, Vol. II, p. 252.

⁴ Litton, *The Church of Christ* (First Edition), pp. 469-474.

(a) What is the meaning of Unity? (1) Not unanimity of opinion. This is clear from the New Testament itself. There was essential unity in the midst of much difference of opinion. (2) Not uniformity of usages. This was not part of the early Church, as the four families of Liturgies clearly show. (3) Not a unit of organisation. This has not existed since the first congregation in Jerusalem. There is no such unit in the East to-day, where there is a federation of several independent and self-governing Churches. There is no such unit in the Anglican Communion, the highest point being that of the province with each Bishop the equal of the rest. Even the Archbishop of Canterbury is only *primus inter pares*, and it is by courtesy alone that he has his position as leader. It is only in the Church of Rome that a unit of organisation, with the Papacy as the head, is found, and this is only possible by the exclusion of all Christians who are unwilling to submit to the Papacy. (4) True unity is that of spiritual life in Christ by the Holy Spirit. St. Paul taught two unities; one "of the Spirit," which is present (Eph. iv. 3), and one "of faith and knowledge," which can only be fully realised hereafter (Eph. iv. 13). The former we are to endeavour to keep; the other we are to attain to and reach in the future. To the same effect Christ distinguishes between the unity of the fold and the unity of the flock (John x. 16). An organised Church is not the flock, but only one fold, so that no one community can be the Church. The truth, therefore, is not that the Church is one, but that there is one Church. Unity in New Testament times and in the sub-Apostolic age was maintained by very simple methods: (1) by hospitality between the Churches; (2) by visits of the prophets; (3) by letters. There was no formal confederation.

Unity of spiritual life is possible amid great variety of visible organisations. St. Paul teaches the Scriptural idea of unity when he says, "We, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another" (Rom. xii. 5). This is a present fact, not a prospect. So also in Ephesians the Apostle teaches the truth in the same way as a fact, that the Church is the Body of Christ, without division, absolutely one in the Divine purpose, a fact which no divisions can alter. It is, therefore, impossible for any one Church so to excommunicate another as to sever that one, or any member of it from Christ. No part of the Church can exclude from the whole Church or from God. Men like Savonarola and Luther were excluded from a part, but not from the entire Church. Such an one is just as really a member of the Body of Christ as though no excommunication had been pronounced.¹

(b) What is the meaning of Sanctity? The word "holy" means

¹ The unity of the Church is dealt with at considerable length by Westcott in *The Gospel of the Resurrection*. It is clear that he did not believe any external visible unity was essential for the vital unity of the Church. "The conception of unity based on historic and Divine succession in the religious centre of the world was proved to be no part of the true idea of the Church" (p. 217). "No external organization can supersede the original relation in which the society stands to its Founder" (p. 221). See pp. 216-230.

“consecrated,” “that which belongs to God.” Only as this is real can it be predicated of the visible Church, and hence it is strictly only attributable to the true Church. It is probably no part of the New Testament idea of holiness to include the modern conception of purity from evil (see John xvii. 19; Eph. v. 26, Greek). But if by any possibility “purity” is to be considered an essential mark of a Church, then some of the oldest Churches have it least.

(c) What is the meaning of Catholicity? The original idea was that of universality, not particularity; a Church embracing all times, all places, all Christians, all truth. To speak of one locality as the Catholic Church is a contradiction in terms. Catholicity is not merely universality in age, race, etc., which would be a consequence not a cause, but is due to the universal Christian life based on spiritual truth. It must include all who are united to Christ.¹

(d) What is the meaning of Apostolicity? There are only two tests: (1) continuous succession; (2) primitive truth. The first is impossible, since there are gaps which cannot be covered by any knowledge we possess. Besides, by itself it would be no guarantee of genuine adherence to Apostolic truth and life. The second is verifiable, since we have the New Testament, which represents the Apostolic teaching. This is why we are able to speak of the Church as “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets.”²

It will be seen from the foregoing that these four “notes” are strictly not visible but invisible, referring only to the true Church. The “notes” of the visible Church are virtually independent of spiritual condition, referring, as we have seen, to preaching of the Word and administration of the Sacraments. Yet as far as these four are true of visible Churches they are, of course, “notes” of them also.

The true idea is that “Where Christ is, there is the Church.” If it be asked, Where is Christ? The answer is, Where the Holy Spirit is. And if it be further asked, Where is the Holy Spirit? The answer is, Where the fruit of the Spirit is found. Anglicanism, following the New Testament, does not attempt to say *who* are members of the Church, but only *where* the true visible Church is, and *what* are the requirements of true visible membership. The Church of Rome endeavours to specify members because it identifies the visible and the true Church. Anglican theology proper (apart from the Creed) as represented by this Article, does not really assign “notes” to the one true Church, but only to visible Churches, namely, the Word and Sacraments, because where these are there will be a part of Christ’s Body, and yet it is only a part of the true Church so far as its members possess vital union with Christ. Hence the members of the Body of Christ are rightly to be sought for in the visible Churches, for the true Church at present can only manifest itself in the form of visible communities. If, therefore, the question is asked,

¹ See the author’s *The Catholic Faith*, p. 340 ff.

² Collect for St. Simon and St. Jude’s Day. Eph. ii. 20.

Which is the Body of Christ? it cannot be answered. But if enquiry is made, *Where* is the Body of Christ? it can be confidently said to exist wherever vital union with Christ is found.

Many problems are solved the moment the word "Church" is correctly defined, and the New Testament idea is that of an "Assembly," called a "Body," people who believe in Jesus as the Messiah (1 John v. 1), and confess Him as the Son of God (1 John iv. 15). Several metaphors are found descriptive of the Church as that body of people which is vitally one with Christ. (1) It is a Vine (John xv. 5); (2) a Flock (John x. 16); (3) a Temple (1 Pet. ii. 4); (4) a Bride (Eph. v. 27); (5) a Family (Rom. viii. 29); (6) a Body (Eph. i. 22); (7) a Spirit (1 Cor. vi. 17). Thus the one fact which constitutes membership in the Church is spiritual union with Christ. It is clear that only of the true Church, the Body of Christ, can the four "notes," so often attributed to visible Churches, be properly predicated.

The Church is One because it is united to Christ, and it is so, notwithstanding the impossibility of outward unity of earthly government. The Church is Holy because it is possessed by the Spirit of God. The Church is Catholic because Christ is proclaimed everywhere and its life is independent of place or time. The Church is Apostolic because it is true to the New Testament Apostolic teaching. Thus every "note" is associated with Christ, and the One Holy Catholic Apostolic Church is neither a mere aggregate of visible Churches nor a simple invisible community of individuals. It is none the less real because its life is in Christ and its character is spiritual. The Church of the New Testament is that Body of Christ which consists of all the faithful in Him, and every separate community of such people is a true visible Church.

There are in reality only two views of the Church; that represented by the New Testament, and that seen in Roman Catholicism. There is no other essential difference, except that there are views of the Church which stop short of that of Rome and are thereby less logical. In the New Testament conception Christianity determines the Church; in the Roman Catholic, the Church determines Christianity. It is either through Christ to the Church, or through the Church to Christ. In Rome the Church makes the Christian, in the New Testament, the Christian the Church. This does not set aside the place and work of the visible organised Churches, or of the individual Christian in making Christ known and giving people the opportunity of knowing and receiving Him. But all this is the work of the individual Christian or of the Church, as a medium, not a mediator. It is like an introduction at Court which, after its work is done, leaves the person face to face with the King. These are the only two possible views, and there is no common ground. If one is right the other is wrong, for there is no *via media*. It is no use disproving Papal supremacy if we leave untouched the roots from which it sprang, and which would produce something essentially like it if the Roman form were abolished.

Our study of this important subject shows the absolute necessity of avoiding all exaggeration of "the Church." In particular, care must be taken in regard to any personification of the Church as "Holy Mother," or, in the words of Augustine, that "He shall not have God for his Father who will not have the Church for his Mother."¹ "High" views of the Church often mean low views of Christ, for there is an undoubted danger of placing the Church between the soul and Christ. The true Churchman is one who believes in the view of the Church taught by St. Paul in the Epistle to the Ephesians. This is the highest doctrine, and has the virtue of being absolutely Scriptural.²

On the other hand, we must be equally careful not to depreciate the Church, for this extreme is almost equally serious. Its life must be fostered. The truest Catholicity is limited only by New Testament principles, excluding none who love the Lord in sincerity. We shall never arrive at New Testament doctrine by the extreme of a low doctrine of the Church. There is nothing higher than the New Testament view taught by our Lord and His Apostles, and what is often called "High" Churchmanship is really a low view of the New Testament conception of the Church by reason of its essential narrowness, and in reality is due to a "high," but erroneous doctrine not of the Church, but of the ministry.

If we exalt Christ the Church finds her right place, but Church history more than once shows that together with what are called "High" views of the Church visible have usually been found low views of the Church spiritual and of Christ the Head of the Church. Where the Church tends to precede, there Christ tends to recede. If we bring forward the Church as the depository of grace, we tend to push back Christ as the Source of grace. But if we exalt Christ in the Godhead of His Person, the completeness of His sacrifice, the power of His resurrection, the perfection of His righteousness, the uniqueness of His priesthood; if we exalt the Holy Ghost as the direct Revealer of Christ to the soul, as the immediate and not mediated Source of grace to all believers, as the Divine

¹ "Such language is so natural, that we imperceptibly adopt it; but the accurate thinker will take care not to suffer himself to become the dupe of his imagination. Even divines of our own communion, not content with the simple term our Mother the Church, have incautiously followed out the notion, describing her, and sometimes without thinking of its consequences, as a tender parent devising ceremonies and composing religious services for the benefit of her children, who in return are expected to show her filial reverence and affectionate obedience, till the hearer is led unconsciously into a refined idolatry, which transfers in a degree to an abstraction of the mind the homage due alone to the Redeemer and the Sanctifier. Such may well be called the magic effect of a word; translate *ecclesia* not *church*, but *congregation*, and the spell is broken; and *bear the Church*, assumes quite a new meaning" (Macbride, *Lectures on the Articles*, p. 358).

² "If we ask what is the Church, the Canon will reply, 'The whole congregation of Christian people dispersed throughout the whole world.' This simple definition at once demolishes a fanciful, unscriptural, and pernicious theory. I may well call it pernicious, for it substitutes for personal union with a personal Saviour, union with this abstraction; derives spiritual life not immediately from the vine, but from its branches" (Macbride, *ut supra*, p. 358).

Illuminator of the Word to each disciple—then we shall obtain, and retain in its true position, the primitive and positive truth of the Church as that body of which Christ is the Head; in which the Spirit dwells as the present, continuous, and permanent life; to which all the promises of God are made; outside which no one can ever be saved; from which no believer can ever be excommunicated; against which the gates of Hades shall never prevail; in which God's power will be specially manifested; and through which His grace and glory will be shown to the spiritually wise throughout the ages of eternity.

ARTICLE XX

Of the Authority of the Church.

De Ecclesia Auctoritate.

The Church hath power to decree Rites or Ceremonies, and authority in Controversies of Faith; and yet it is not lawful for the Church to ordain any thing that is contrary to God's word written, neither may it so expound one place of Scripture that it be repugnant to another. Wherefore, although the Church be a witness and a keeper of Holy Writ, yet as it ought not to decree any thing against the same, so besides the same ought it not to enforce any thing to be believed for necessity of Salvation.

Habet Ecclesia Ritus sive Cæremonias statuendi jus, et in fidei controversiis auctoritatem; quamvis Ecclesiæ non licet quicquam instituere, quod verbo Dei scripto adversetur, nec unum Scripturæ locum sic exponere potest, ut alteri contradicat. Quare, licet Ecclesia sit divinorum librorum testis et conservatrix, attamen ut adversus eos nihil decernere, ita præter illos nihil credendum de necessitate salutis debet obtrudere.

IMPORTANT EQUIVALENTS.

Power	= <i>jus.</i>
Authority	= <i>auctoritas.</i>
To ordain	= <i>instituere.</i>
May it	= <i>potest.</i>
That it be repugnant to another	= <i>ut alteri contradicat.</i>
Witness and keeper	= <i>testis et conservatrix.</i>
Of Holy Writ	= <i>divinorum librorum.</i>
To decree	= <i>decernere.</i>
To enforce	= <i>obtrudere.</i>

AFTER the Nature of the Church (Article XIX) it is fitting to consider something of its work, and so Articles XX to XXII take up several aspects of Church Authority: (1) XX, the Fact and Limitations of Authority; (2) XXI, the Expression of Church Authority in General Councils; (3) XXII, Certain Doctrines set forth by Church Authority, but not Scriptural.

HISTORY

The wording of the Article, except the first clause, clearly suggests as its source the *Reformatio Legum*, but there is nothing corresponding to it in the Confession of Augsburg.¹

The first clause has a special history of its own. It was not found in Parker's draft, 1562, or in the Articles as then accepted by Convocation,

¹ *De Summa Trinitate et Fide Catholica*, C. XI: "Quamobrem non licet ecclesiæ quicquam constituere, quod verbo Dei scripto adversetur, neque potest sic unum locum exponere ut alteri contradicat. Quanquam ergo divinorum librorum testis sit et custos et conservatrix Ecclesia, hæc tamen prerogativa ei minime concedi debet, ut contra hos libros vel quicquam decernat, vel absque horum librorum testimonio ullos fidei articulos condat, eosque populo Christiano credendos obtrudat" (Cardwell's Edition, p. 5).

but it was included when the authorised publication appeared in 1563, and its insertion was almost certainly due to the Queen.¹ Then it was accepted by Convocation in 1571. As it came from, or was suggested by the Confession of Wurtemberg, we may perhaps regard it as indicating a desire to include Lutherans, though it is also urged that it is an instance of the Queen's attempt to exercise her prerogatives as the Supreme Governor of the Church.² The following are the main points of the discussion for and against the clause.³

AGAINST

1. Not in Parker's copy, 1562.
2. Not in the first English Version, 1563.
3. Not in the manuscript signed by the Bishops, 1571.

FOR

1. In the first Latin Version, 1563, as authorised by the Queen.
2. In the English Version, 1571.
3. In six English Versions, 1581-1628, and all later copies.
4. In a copy made for Archbishop Laud, 1631, by a notary, from the manuscript signed by the Queen, 1562.

It is suggested that Laud finding it in that edition had it inserted in authoritative copies and enforced it.⁴ The question is now simply one of historical interest, since the authority of the clause is clear from 1571 onwards. It is probable that Parker and the Bishops thought the teaching on Rites and Ceremonies was found essentially in Article XXXIV, and that the reference to "Controversies of Faith" is substantially identical with the latter part of the Article.⁵ The agreement of the language with that of the Confession of Wurtemberg can be seen from the following article *De Ecclesia* :—

"Credimus et confitemur . . . quod hæc Ecclesia habeat jus judicandi de omnibus doctrinis . . . quod hæc Ecclesia habeat jus interpretandæ Scripturæ. . . . Quare et Ecclesia sic habet auctoritatem judicandi de doctrinis, ut tamen

¹ "It is evident from several other instances of the exercise of this power, and more especially from a letter of remonstrance addressed to her by Archbishop Grindal at a subsequent period, that she looked upon her supremacy as totally independent, not only of temporal but also spiritual control" (Cardwell, *Synodalia*, p. 39).

² Lamb, *Historical Account of the Thirty-nine Articles*, p. 33 ff.

³ The details as to the rival editions can be seen in Cardwell, *Synodalia*, p. 40 f.

⁴ Lamb, *ut supra*, p. 35 f.

⁵ "Of this clause one part is contained expressly in Article XXXIV, and the other by implication in the sequel of Article XX; and perhaps, the method, in which the latter and more important part was elsewhere stated, being indirect but yet conclusive, may explain the different conduct of the two parties as to the adoption or the omission of the clause. The Confession of Wurtemberg, from which the additions made by Archbishop Parker were generally taken, would certainly have suggested to him the introduction of such a clause, had he not been satisfied that there was in other passages a sufficient acknowledgment made respecting the authority of the Church" (Cardwell, *ut supra*, p. 41).

rontineat se intra metas Sacræ Scripturæ, quæ est vox sponsi sui, a qua voce nulli, ne angelo quidem, fas est recedere."

I.—THE NATURE OF CHURCH AUTHORITY

Every Society, whether involuntary or voluntary, natural or created, has its rightful sphere of authority, and authority in general is threefold: (1) legislative, making laws; (2) judicial, declaring laws; (3) executive, enforcing laws. The Church can exercise all three functions subject to the proper limitations, as stated in the Article.

It is to be noted that the Article is an anticipation of Article XXXIV, where our Church, as a national body, claims for itself what it teaches here concerning the entire Church.

1. As to Ceremonial, the Church has full legal right, *jus*. "The Church hath power to decree Rites and Ceremonies." It is now impossible to distinguish between Rites and Ceremonies, though it is often suggested that "Rite" is associated with the word and "Ceremony" with the accompanying action.¹

The Church, like every other Society, has, and must have, the right to enact laws of ceremonial observance. The New Testament is for the most part a book of principles rather than rules (1 Cor. xiv. 26, 40), but even there we occasionally find rules as well (1 Cor. xi. 14-16; xiv. 34). And during the centuries the Church, as a Christian Society, has exercised this legal right of "ordaining," or "changing," or "abolishing" Ceremonies (Article XXXIV). The decision of Nicæa in regard to Easter, the retention of the sign of the Cross in Baptism, the abolition of mediæval Ceremonies connected with Baptism and Ordination, and the definite and remarkable modification of our Confirmation Office are cases in point.

2. As to Faith, the Church has moral authority (*auctoritatis*). "The Church hath . . . authority in Controversies of Faith." The change of wording from power (*jus*) to authority (*auctoritatis*) is highly significant, and affords a striking instance of the balanced judgment of those responsible for the phrase. There is a great difference between Discipline and Doctrine; as to the first, the Church has full legal power; as to the second, only moral authority. This is curiously exemplified by the use of these words in Roman law, where the people had *jus*, while the Senate had *auctoritatis*. The Senate was a Council, the concentrated wisdom of the people, and what was done was by the initiative of the Senate, but in case of emergency nothing was done except by the will of the people. The Senate initiated, the people consummated. The distinction in things ecclesiastical and religious is important and vital. A Society can prevent a man from speaking or acting, but not from thinking. And so in regard to matters of belief, the Church does not possess absolute

¹ The etymology of *Ritus* is unknown, though it may be connected with *ῥήτρα*, "words." *Cærus* is an obsolete word equivalent to *Sanctus*.

power (*ius*), but only authority (*auctoritatis*). "The first gives power which cannot be innocently resisted, the second only weight or influence."¹ The influence of the Society of the Church on our thinking is truly weighty. The Creeds and Articles show this demand for assent to doctrine. But even here it is not concerned with all questions of Faith, but only with matters of difference, for the reference is to "*Controversies of Faith*." Private judgment is not given up, but the individual is expected to weigh fully the mind of the Church in all matters of difference. We can see this from St. Paul's counsel and warning at Miletus (Acts xx. 30, 31), by his exhortation to the Thessalonian Christians to "prove all things" (1 Thess. v. 21), and by his emphasis on "sound" doctrine in the Pastoral Epistles. But while the witness of the Church to doctrine is valuable and weighty (Matt. xvi. 17 ff.; 1 Tim. iii. 15) not even an Apostle could force belief. "Not that we have dominion over your faith" (2 Cor. i. 24). It should be noticed that authority in Controversies of Faith is associated with the Church and not with the ministry. Our Prayer Book was formed by the whole body of Christians; the clergy in Convocation, and the laity in Parliament, and the Articles rest on exactly the same foundation.

The first clause is plainly directed against those Puritans, as they came to be called, who held that nothing was of force in Church life unless it could be proved from Scripture. Against so narrow and impossible a view of the function of Scripture, Hooker wrote his great work.² The second clause is directed with equal force against Rome, which tended to make the Church of supreme authority.³

II.—THE LIMITATIONS OF CHURCH AUTHORITY

I. As to Ceremonial, nothing is to be ordained contrary to Scripture. "It is not lawful for the Church to ordain anything that is contrary to God's Word written." The reference to "God's Word written" indicates a clear determination to rule out the view of the Church of Rome which supplements Scripture by tradition.⁴ No Ritual or Ceremony can be allowed that is contrary to the Word of God. Thus if a

¹ Macbride, *Lectures on the Articles*, p. 360.

² *Ecc. Pol.*, especially Bk. I.

³ Hardwick, *History of the Articles of Religion*, p. 103.

⁴ With the wording of this Article the Creed of Pope Pius IV should be compared: "Apostolic and ecclesiastical traditions, and the remaining observances and constitutions of the same Church I most firmly admit and embrace. I also admit Holy Scripture according to that sense which Holy Mother Church has held and does hold, to whom it belongs to judge of the true sense and interpretation of Holy Scripture; neither will I ever receive and interpret them otherwise than according to the unanimous consent of the Fathers."

The very wording of these statements is significant of the place Scripture holds in the Church of Rome, ecclesiastical traditions being mentioned first, and the words, "most firmly" being associated with the former and not the latter.

Church refused the cup to the laity, or forbade the celebration of the Holy Communion in the evening it would be distinctly *ultra vires* in view of the plain teaching of Holy Scripture.¹

2. As to Faith, the Church must not teach anything that is contradictory of Scripture. "Neither may it so expound one place of Scripture, that it be repugnant to another." Christianity has a historic basis in the revelation of Christ, and it is the duty of the Church to testify to this and to decline membership to any who do not accept it. At the same time it is essential for the Church to guard against requiring more than this primitive revelation as a condition of Church membership. The principle that the Divine Word must not be added to (Deut. iv. 2; Rev. xxii. 18, 19) has a direct application to all questions of belief, for it would be fatal to the purity and fulness of Christian truth for the Church to teach or insist upon anything that could be proved to be contradictory of Scripture.² As an example at once of Church authority and its limitation, it has been suggested that while the Church would be perfectly within its right in instituting a Harvest Festival, it would not be justified in including in that Service an adoration of angels, because that would be clearly contradictory of Scripture.³

III.—THE RELATION OF THE CHURCH TO SCRIPTURE

At this point there is a special application of Article VI.

1. The position of the Church in relation to Scripture. "Although the Church be a witness and a keeper of Holy Writ." It is a witness (*testis*), bearing testimony to what is actually Holy Scripture. It is also a keeper (*conservatrix*), preserving Scripture as it is. It is important to notice the term used here; the Church is a keeper (*conservatrix*), not a keeper-back (*reservatrix*). It is also important to observe that the Church is not the maker or the judge of Scripture. Its work in regard to Scripture is that of bearing witness to what Christian people have received and are preserving. And even if the Church should forget the circumstances of the origin of Scripture it is still possible to accept the fact. But it is important to beware of the fallacy lurking in the phrase, "The Church

¹ The above principle is considered solely in the light of the New Testament idea of the Church without any reference to Establishment. But in England the Church, as established, has inherited much of the old Canon Law, and has adopted it so far as it does not interfere with Statute Law. And as to judicial and executive functions, it has expressly laid down that the supreme authority is vested in the Crown over all causes as the judicial head, and over all persons as the executive head. But this is not so because of the person of the Sovereign, or the royal prerogative, but because the Sovereign is regarded as the representative of the Church as a whole, and especially of the lay element. See further in regard to the position and power of the Crown in Article XXXVII.

² It has been well pointed out how the Middle Ages failed here, as the Jewish Church had done before, in covering Scripture with Church traditions, thereby causing Scripture to be "merged in a miscellaneous mass of authorities" (Gore, *The Body of Christ*).

³ Goulburn, quoted in Gibson, *ut supra*, p. 515; see also pp. 517-519.

gave us the Bible," for this is to confuse between the source and the medium.¹ The real truth is:—

“The Church from her dear Master
Received the gift Divine.”

And since that day the Church has testified to and kept the Bible for the use of Christian people.²

2. The subordination of the Church to Scripture.

(a) No legislative decree is to be made against Scripture. “It ought not to decree anything against the same.”

(b) No doctrinal requirement is to be demanded in addition to Scripture. “Besides the same ought it not to enforce anything to be believed for necessity of salvation.”

This relation of subordination of the Church to Scripture was a special feature of the work of the Reformation. It is sometimes said that the movement was the result of a rediscovery of the Bible, and although the Bible was in existence and regarded as authoritative during the Middle Ages there is a sense in which the Reformation was associated with a new view of Holy Scripture. The Reformers approached it in a new spirit and introduced a fresh method of using it. It has often been pointed out that mediæval writers regarded the Bible as a kind of Divine Law Book, containing truths for human life, and as these truths were too difficult for ordinary men to discover, the authority of the Church was considered to be essential to any true apprehension of the teaching of Scripture. As a practical result this interposition of the Church really closed Holy Scripture to ordinary people, and it was in connection with this that the deepest work of the Reformation was done. All the Reformers believed that in Scripture God was still speaking to them and revealing Himself to their individual experience. So that the Bible was at once a doctrinal and a personal revelation of God, and, as such, it was something entirely different from what it had been in the Middle Ages. God was regarded as still speaking to men through the pages of His Word, and it was for this reason that the Reformers placed the Bible in the hands of ordinary people, and urged its use by everyone as the supreme

¹ It has been well and pointedly said that it would be just as true to say, “The baker’s boy gave us the bread,” or “the postman gave us the letter.”

² “The books of the Bible were given *to* the Church, more than *by* it, and they descended on it rather than rose from it. The canon of the Bible rose from the Church, but not its contents. Bible and Church were collateral products of the Gospel” (Forsyth, *The Person and Place of Jesus Christ*, p. 140). See also pp. 152, 171.

“In the mere sense that the Church was in existence before the New Testament was written, this is, of course, a mere truism. But in any other than this mere chronological sense, the statement is not true. The men who wrote the New Testament were the men who made the Church; and the authors of the New Testament, representing the teaching of the New Testament, were thus anterior to the Church, and superior to it. The Old Testament existed before the birth of the Christian Church; and the New Testament existed in living form, in the persons of its authors, contemporaneously with the birth of the Church” (Wace, *Principles of the Reformation*, p. 248).

way of hearing the voice of God, and learning the way of salvation through Christ. It was this change of view that led people to regard the Reformation as the time when Scripture was virtually rediscovered, because the saving faith in God through His Word led to such personal and definite fellowship between the believer and his Saviour as involved an entirely new conception of Christianity as the religion of personal fellowship with God through Christ in His Word. The consciousness of this fact and force of Holy Scripture led the Reformers to subordinate the Church to Scripture, and to put the Word of God high above all else as the dominating authority for religion, whether individual or corporate.¹

The Article, of course, implies the work of the Church as the expounder of Scripture, and while on the one hand it is important to keep this in mind and give it all the weight it deserves,² on the other it is essential to define with the greatest care what the Church is, and to distinguish between the actual exposition of the Church and the opinions of individual Christians, however great, good, and representative they may be. The Church, as a Church, has expounded exceedingly little, and has wisely left most to the individual judgment and conscience of Christian people.

A modern phrase of frequent use is "The Church to teach, the Bible to prove."³ But this needs the greatest possible care. It is true, but it is not the whole truth, and the sharp antithesis is liable to be misleading. It would be equally true to say, "The Bible to teach, the Church to prove," and also "The Bible to teach, the Church to learn." The meaning of the New Testament word, "disciple," is a "learner," and in order to be perfectly true and accurate the phrase must of necessity imply that the Church receives and teaches only what is found in the Bible. Even an Apostle had his teaching examined and tested according to Scripture (Acts xvii. 11). All this shows the importance and absolute necessity of defining the three words, "Church," "teach," "prove."

(a) What is the Church that teaches? Certainly it is not the ministry only, for teaching cannot be thus confined, though this seems to be implied as a rule when the phrase is used.

(b) How does the Church teach? The phrase, *ecclesia docens*, needs to be properly understood and explained. Scripture shows that the Church, "the blessed company of all faithful people," is itself taught by Christ, and being taught it believes and obeys the truth. The words "hear the Church" (Matt. xviii. 17) refer to discipline, not to doctrine, and when we speak of *ecclesia docens*, we really mean testimony rather than instruction. The Church as a whole has exercised its functions in

¹ All this Reformation doctrine is ably stated in Lindsay, *The History of the Reformation*, Vol. I, pp. 453-467.

² Maclear and Williams, *Articles*, p. 99, *Re Ecclesia Docens*. See Hooker, *Ecc. Pol.*, Bk. III, Ch. VIII, Section 14, both quoted under Article VI.

³ Said by Dr. Salmon to be due to Dr. Hawkins of Oriel College, Oxford.

regard to faith by means of (1) Creeds; (2) Liturgies; (3) Councils; (4) ordinary ministerial and other teaching; (5) ordinary individual testimony. It is striking how little the Church has done in the way of the interpretation of Creeds. In all Councils there was some judgment of the laity, and although the clergy no doubt had a large amount of power, it is a question whether it was given to them by reason of their position as such, or because they were leaders or experts. Certainly at the Council of Nicæa the moving spirits were not Bishops, but Arius and Athanasius, a priest and a deacon.

(c) What is meant by "to prove"? To test by a standard, and therefore the teaching of the Church ought to be proved by the Bible because it is the Word of God.

It is at this point that the danger of the phrase may be seen. The Church may so teach as to usurp the office of proving, for the Church must not go to Scripture to support its preconceived ideas. Then, the Bible may be so used to prove as to exclude it from its office of teaching, and thereby the Church may virtually supersede the Bible, as is done in the Church of Rome, by requiring the interpretation of the Church, and by teaching what is not found in Scripture. The fact that we learn our first lessons from Christians, not from the Bible, is often used to imply the superiority of the Church. But we readily accept the fact while refusing to draw the inference. First in order does not necessarily mean first in importance. Human teaching is valuable and essential, but to be anterior is not necessarily to be superior to Scripture. As already seen under Article VI, priority is not the same as superiority. The mind of the Church of England may be seen from one of the Homilies, where the following statements occur:—

"In Holy Scripture is fully contained what we ought to do and what to eschew, what to believe, what to love, and what to look for at God's hands at length. . . . The humble man may search any truth boldly in the Scripture without any danger of error. And if he be ignorant he ought the more to read and to search Holy Scripture to bring him out of ignorance. . . . If we read once, twice, or thrice and understand not, let us not cease so, but still continue reading, praying, asking of others, and so by still knocking at last the door shall be opened. . . . And those things in the Scriptures that be plain to understand and necessary for salvation every man's duty is to learn them, to print them in memory and effectually to exercise them. And as for the dark mysteries, to be contented to be ignorant in them until such time as it shall please God to open those things unto him."

It is surely not without importance that the Homily does not give the slightest suggestion that the consent of the Fathers or the interpretation of the Church is required for a true understanding of Holy Scripture.

The peril of the phrase, "The Church to teach, the Bible to prove," lies in refusing to the Bible any teaching place and limiting it to the work of proving. This would relegate it to the position of a mere

reference book with little practical influence.¹ The Bible is not to be kept back in this way, but ever placed in the most prominent position as our pure, perpetual, and perfect source of Divine truth.²

The two sides of the truth must therefore be emphasised, for the office of the Bible is to teach as well as to prove, and the office of the Church is to be taught first from the Bible before it can either teach or prove. The true idea is not "Hear what the Church saith to her children," but "Hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches."³

As we consider the teaching of the Article, especially when associated with the well-known attitude of the Reformation, we see that our ultimate authority is Holy Scripture (Articles VI, VIII, XX), and it is therefore impossible to accept the principle that we are to interpret the Prayer Book and Articles in the light of what is sometimes called "Catholic" teaching and tradition. The Church of England nowhere implies, still less teaches this, but refers us direct to Scripture for our warrant.⁴ The position of the New Testament in the Church to-day is exactly analogous to that of the Old Testament in the Jewish Church. To them and to us have been committed the oracles of God (Rom. iii. 2), and it is impossible for the individual or the Church to go beyond the Word of the Lord (Numb. xxiv. 13; Isa. viii. 20).

IV.—THE RELATION OF THE CHURCH TO THE INDIVIDUAL

At this point arises the question of private judgment, and although the

¹ "The Bible is not to be kept in the background, as a document to be referred to for the proof of doctrines, as a witness is called into court for the purpose of some special piece of evidence. It must, on the contrary, be our constant teacher, the one perpetual source of our knowledge of Divine things, under the guidance of the Spirit who inspired it, and who is ever at hand to illuminate the hearts and minds of those who seek His aid in prayer, and who look up to Him as the guide of every Christian into all the truth" (Wace, *ut supra*, p. 250). See also Salmon, *The Infallibility of the Church*, Chs. VII-X (especially p. 125); Bernard, *The Word and the Sacraments*, Ch. VI.

² Even Dr. Hall, *Dogmatic Theology* (p. 68), says that the phrase would be more adequate if expanded into "The Church to define and teach, the Scripture to confirm and illustrate." But it would be equally true to say, "The Scripture to define and teach, the Church to confirm and illustrate." The fact is that these antitheses cannot stand without due safeguarding.

³ The well-known words of Chillingworth: "The Bible, and the Bible only, is the religion of the Protestants," is described by Bishop Gibson (*ut supra*, p. 528) as a "rather foolish saying," because it is said to contradict the incident of the Ethiopian eunuch who needed Philip to explain the Scripture to him. But is there not some confusion here? Did not Chillingworth refer to source and not to medium when he spoke of "the Bible only"? His reference was to the Bible rather than to the Church or tradition, and not to the Bible as opposed to the ministry. And would not a layman in such a case equally represent, if necessary, the *Ecclesia docens*? This criticism is a striking illustration of how easy it is to use the word 'Church' when what is meant is the limited term 'ministry.' It would therefore seem that Chillingworth's phrase was justifiable.

⁴ "Is it not then entirely inconsistent with this principle of our Church to say, as is constantly said by many among us, that the Prayer Book and Articles were to be read and interpreted in the light of the belief and practice of the Catholic Church? Her principle demands, on the contrary, that our formularies, and more particularly our Articles, should be interpreted in the light of Holy Scripture, rather than in that of mediæval theology" (Wace, *ut supra*, p. 248).

problem is only implied in the Article, it is of the utmost importance to consider what is the precise relation of the Church to the individual, and what attitude the individual Christian should adopt towards the Church in regard to any of its teaching. It is often asked whether the Church has ever gone beyond the limits set forth in this Article. If it has, how is the individual to know it, and what is to happen if this has been the case? Now it is quite impossible to say that the Church has been infallible at any time, and *Athanasius contra mundum* may quite easily occur again.¹ It is also impossible to say that the individual must accept every judgment of the Church. Indeed, the very wording of the Article implies this, for the Church is only concerned with "Controversies of Faith," matters of difference of belief, and not with all questions that may come up for consideration. So that the last resort must always be to the enlightened private judgment of the individual. And this is equally true of the man who surrenders his judgment to an infallible Church as well as of the man who maintains his position as individually responsible to God for his faith. The former asserts his judgment on choosing the authority, even though it be only to yield it afterwards to that authority, while the latter retains the exercise of his judgment as the essential and vital principle of true Christian character and conduct. Nor is it accurate to describe this enlightened private judgment as solitary, thereby involving an undue individualism and a dangerous self-assertion. On the contrary, the individual judgment will naturally and rightly be checked by the consensus of the Church so far as he is able to discover it, and then be exercised with all the light available.² This position is in thorough harmony with the example of our Lord, it agrees entirely with our responsible individuality, and the relation to God which is given to every man, while it has been productive of the noblest characters in history. Let it be added that very seldom will there be any practical difficulty, since on the one hand the Church, as such, has pronounced so few decisions that may be regarded as binding on the entire community, and on the other hand the presence of the Spirit of God in the believer will enable him first to consider every possible avenue of information, and then to arrive at a judgment which will involve the devoted surrender of mind, heart, conscience, and will, to what is believed to be the truth of God. The true follower of Jesus Christ will always be ready and glad to give the utmost weight to the universal testimony of the Church in so far as this can be obtained, for no individual will lightly set aside such a united belief, but the last and final authority must be the Word of God illuminating and influencing the human life through the presence of the Holy Spirit.

¹ Gibson, *ut supra*, p. 525.

² The difference between a true and untrue use of Church tradition as a help to the formation of individual opinion is discussed in the author's *The Holy Spirit of God*.

ARTICLE XXI

Of the Authority of General Councils.

General Councils may not be gathered together without the commandment and will of Princes. And when they be gathered together—forasmuch as they be an assembly of men, whereof all be not governed with the Spirit and Word of God—they may err, and sometimes have erred, even in things pertaining unto God. Wherefore things ordained by them, as necessary to salvation, have neither strength nor authority, unless it may be declared that they be taken out of Holy Scripture.

De Auctoritate Conciliorum Generalium.

Generalia Concilia sine jussu et voluntate Principum congregari non possunt: et ubi convenerint—quia ex hominibus constant qui non omnes Spiritu et Verbo Dei reguntur—et errare possunt, et interdum errarunt, etiam in his quæ ad Deum pertinent. Ideoque quæ ab illis constituuntur, ut ad salutem necessaria, neque robur habent neque auctoritatem, nisi ostendi possint e sacris literis esse desumpta.

IMPORTANT EQUIVALENTS.

Be gathered together	= <i>congregari.</i>
When they be gathered together	= <i>ubi convenerint.</i>
Be an assembly of men	= <i>ex hominibus constant.</i>
Things ordained by them	= <i>quæ ab illis constituuntur.</i>
To salvation	= <i>ad salutem.</i>
Strength	= <i>robur.</i>
Unless it may be declared that they be taken out of Holy Scripture	= <i>nisi ostendi possint e sacris literis esse desumpta.</i>

THIS Article dates from 1553, with certain small verbal alterations. It is placed here because General Councils were one important way of expressing Church Authority, and thus the Article is one application of the principles laid down in Article XX. Since the Church has authority, we ask how it has been sought and its decisions declared, and we naturally turn to those General Councils where it has been expressed and exercised. The subject is also pretty certainly found here because the question was proposed at the Reformation in order to settle differences, and in 1545 Pope Paul VII summoned a Council, to which, however, the Reformers were not invited.

I.—THE FACT OF GENERAL COUNCILS

By "General" is meant "universal," or "ecumenical" (*οἰκουμένη*), in which the whole Church is represented. These General Councils are to be distinguished from National, Provincial, and Diocesan gatherings, the National consisting of the representatives of one nation only, the Provincial of one ecclesiastical province, the Diocesan of one diocese.

These are really Synods, of which there were several before the First General Council of Nicæa.¹

Councils for consultation among those who belong to the same community are natural and reasonable. The Jews had theirs, and the first Christian Council in Acts xv. was an inevitable and obvious method of discussing an important question. But this first gathering has no real bearing on the present Article beyond the fact of a Council and the warrant for subsequent gatherings. After the Council at Jerusalem there does not seem to have been any similar meeting until the third century, when some local Councils met.

The number of General or Ecumenical Councils varies with different Churches. According to the Church of Rome there are eighteen, but most of these are purely Western and apply to Rome only without being in any strict sense "ecumenical." According to the Greek Church there are seven, while in the English Church special reference is made to the first six. Thus the Homily against peril of idolatry speaks of "these six Councils which were allowed and received of all men." But notwithstanding this the first four Councils have always been regarded as permanent in view of their importance on doctrinal grounds.

The following are the only General or Ecumenical Councils which can be said to have been acknowledged by the whole Church.

1. Nicæa, 325.—This was summoned by the Emperor Constantine and met to deal with the Arian heresy. It was composed wholly of Bishops of the Roman Empire who acknowledged Constantine as their Emperor. The Pope sent two Legates, but Hosius the Spanish Bishop presided.

2. Constantinople I, 381.—This was summoned by the Emperor Theodosius I to deal with the heretical views of Macedonius. It completed the doctrine of the Holy Trinity by its full declaration in regard to the Holy Spirit.

3. Ephesus, 431.—This was called by the Emperor Theodosius II to deal with the heresy of Nestorius. Cyril of Alexandria, the haughty opponent of Nestorius, presided, and the behaviour of the gathering was so deplorable that the Emperor dismissed it with a rebuke. But its decision on the double nature of our Lord has always been accepted by the universal Church.

4. Chalcedon, 451.—This was summoned by the Emperor Marcianus at the suggestion and request of Pope Leo the Great. It condemned the error of Eutyches, and completed the orthodox expression of the Trinitarian doctrine.

5. Constantinople II, 553.—This was summoned by the Emperor Justinian, and confirmed the decrees of Ephesus and Chalcedon, though otherwise it was not of great doctrinal importance. It is noteworthy

¹ "Synod" is derived from *σύνδοδος*, from *σύν*, *together*, and *ὁδός*, "a path," "a journey." It means literally a "coming together."

that Pope Vigilius refused his assent to its decrees, although he was present, and he was banished until he acquiesced in them.

6. Constantinople III, 680.—This was summoned by the Emperor Constantine Pogonatus, and condemned the heresy known as Monothelism. At this Council Pope Marcellus was condemned as a Monothelite.

While these six are the only Councils which have been universally acknowledged it is correct to distinguish between the first four and the last two. Of the former Gregory the Great was accustomed to say that "he revered them as he did the four Evangelists."¹

7. Nicæa II, 787.—This was summoned by the Empress Irene, but was opposed at the time by the Germans, French, and British. It authorised the worship of images and of the Cross, and denounced punishment against those who maintained that God was the only object of adoration.

An eighth is sometimes referred to as "General," that of Constantinople, 869, under Photius, but it is not accepted either by East or West.

Later Councils which were held in the West, and convened by Popes, can only be regarded as Councils of the Roman Church or Patriarchate. Four of them met in the Lateran Palace, 1123, 1139, 1170, 1215, and the last of them was the largest ever assembled, consisting of over 12,000 persons. It broke up in less than a month, having accepted the documents presented to it by Pope Innocent III, confirming Transubstantiation and Auricular Confession. Among them is the Canon compelling secular powers to extirpate heretics under the penalty of excommunication. The three Councils that followed, at Lyons, 1245 and 1274, and at Vienne, 1311, were mainly of a political character. Then followed a new and very different series. The first at Pisa in 1409 dealt mainly with papal rivalry. The Council of Constance, 1416, is notorious for its condemnation and burning, in spite of the Emperor's pledge of safe conduct, of John Huss and Jerome of Prague. It was this Council that ordered the remains of Wycliffe to be disinterred and thrown into the stream at Lutterworth. The Council of Basle followed, 1431, but was excommunicated by the Pope, who called a rival assembly at Florence, which effected a union of the Greek and Roman Churches for a very short time. A fifth Lateran Council, 1512, was only of temporary importance, and, indeed, all the preceding ones were eclipsed by the Council of Trent, which completes the number, and settled the official doctrine of the Roman Church.

II.—THE SUMMONING OF GENERAL COUNCILS

The English "may not" is illustrated by the Latin "cannot" (*non possunt*), referring to lawful assembly.²

¹ Quoted in Maclear and Williams, *Introduction to the Articles of the Church of England* p. 257.

² *Nec potest*, Article XX; and *possunt*, Article XXXVII.

The statement that General Councils cannot be gathered together "without the commandment and will of Princes," has led to the enquiry why this feature was thought to be necessary. It has been said by some that as the secular law did not allow Bishops to leave their own country and to go into other Dominions without the permission of their own Princes, the result was that without such permission no General Councils were possible. But this is not the true explanation. There seems to be no doubt that the requirement is due to the necessity of guaranteeing universality and a full representation, especially of the lay power. Not only so, but it is clearly directed against any summoning of Councils by the Pope. The Western Councils were invariably called by the Pope alone, and the Council of Trent consisted only of Bishops in union with Rome.¹

The requirement is also doubtless made because, as a matter of historical fact, this was the method adopted in the earliest General Councils. They originated with Constantine, and Emperors alone summoned them. The Popes had no power over the Councils in early ages, and even later they petitioned Emperors to gather them together. Nor did the Popes preside at any of the earliest. The letter of Pope Leo read at the Council of Chalcedon had deserved weight, but in no sense did it settle the doctrine. The Pope's power rested on false Decretals of the ninth century, which were not denied because the forgery was not discovered until the fifteenth century during the Revival of Learning. There were other Decretals forged in the same way, and they were all included in Gratian's Decretum. In the thirteenth century a catena was presented to Pope Urban IV, and was accepted by Thomas Aquinas.

III.—THE FALLIBILITY OF GENERAL COUNCILS

1. This is first stated as a possibility: "They may err." This is doubtless due to the truth that no visible Church can be regarded as inerrant.

2. Then the fallibility is stated as actual. The history of Councils is clear, and the stories are often saddening, even though, as in the case of Ephesus, the results have been universally accepted.² The words of Gregory Nazianzen are often quoted. They were included in a document of 1536, signed by Archbishop Cranmer and others in the name of Convocation:—

"If I must write the truth, I am disposed to avoid every assembly of bishops; for of no synod have I seen a profitable end; rather an addition to; than a diminution of, evils; for the love of strife and the thirst for superiority are beyond the power of words to express."³

¹ Collier, *Ecl. Hist.*, VI, p. 332, represents Queen Elizabeth as replying to solicitations to send representatives to Trent: "It was not the Pope's, but the Emperor's privilege to call a Council."

² Salmon, *The Infallibility of the Church*, p. 274 ff.

³ See Harold Browne, *Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles*, p. 488; Boulton, *The Theology of the Church of England*, p. 181.

3. The explanation of the fallibility is said to be because these assemblies consist of men "whereof all be not governed with the Spirit and Word of God." This frank statement of the unchristian character of General Councils is peculiarly significant, and is all the more striking because the *Reformatio Legum*, about the same time, bore strong testimony to the honour paid to the first four General Councils.¹

IV.—THE SANCTION OF GENERAL COUNCILS

1. Holy Scripture is regarded as the supreme test of anything decreed by such Councils. This is in exact accord with the principle already laid down in Articles VI, VIII, and XX. It is also illustrated by actual fact in connection with the early Councils. Thus the Council of Carthage speaks of being "mindful of the Divine precepts and of the magisterial authority of the Divine Scriptures."² And at Chalcedon the Gospels were placed upon a throne in the midst of the assembly as a testimony to the Divine authority of God's Word.

2. Further, the Conciliar decrees must be capable of proof from Scripture. "Things ordained . . . Holy Scripture." Again the English phrase, "may be declared" is to be compared with the Latin *ostendi possint*. This shows that there must be no doubt whatever as to the power of proving the truth of the decisions of the Councils from the Word of God.³

In view of all these considerations when regarded in the light of the history of the past centuries and the circumstances to-day, it would seem as though there were scarcely any room for the superior, restraining power of a General Council, especially after the principles set forth in regard to National Churches in Articles XX and XXXIV. Then, too, no General Council has ever been representative, and its decisions have only been accepted because they were endorsed universally by the Church afterwards. This is the sole test of a General Council. No Council can be regarded as infallible at the time of its meeting. The test of its

¹ *Magna cum reverentia amplectimur et suscipimus*. Yet even these are to be accepted only because based on Scripture.

"Quibus tamen non aliter fidem nostram obligandam esse censemus, nisi quatenus ex Scripturis sanctis confirmari possint. . . . Itaque legantur concilia quidem cum honore atque Christiana reverentia, sed interim ad Scripturarum piam certam rectamque regulam examinentur" *De Summa Trinitate Et Fide Catholica*, c. 14 (Cardwell, *Reformatio Legum*, p. 6).

² Quoted in Forbes, *Explanation of the Thirty-nine Articles*, p. 296.

³ "As to the strict notion of a General Council, there is great reason to believe that there was never any assembly to which it will be found to agree. And for the four General Councils, which this Church declares that she receives, they are received only because we are persuaded from the Scriptures that their decisions were made according to them. . . . These truths we find in the Scriptures, and, therefore, we believe them. We reverence those Councils for the sake of their doctrine; but do not believe the doctrine for the authority of the Councils. There appeared too much of human frailty in some of their other proceedings, to give us such an implicit submission to them, as to believe things only because they so decided them" (Burnet, *Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England*, p. 254 f.).

truth is to be seen in the subsequent reception of its decisions by the entire Church. When such decisions are universally accepted we believe that the Council has been faithful to the mind of the Church and of Holy Scripture.¹ In the light of all these circumstances there can be very little doubt that a real General Council is entirely impossible.² And, indeed, it is not at all necessary, since the Church was able to live and make progress long before the time of Nicæa. As then, so now, it is not impossible, indeed, it is not very difficult to arrive at the true mind of the Church on all fundamental and essential questions.³

The relation of the Church of England to the earliest General Councils is a matter of historical interest, though perhaps not of any definite and binding importance. Our Church accepts indirectly the validity of some of the General Councils, and, as we have seen, the Reformers spoke reverently of the first four, which are virtually recognised in the Act of Queen Elizabeth,⁴ though even this had a reference to the ultimate authority of Scripture. It was a proviso against the undue use of the royal prerogative, and refers only to doctrine and not to discipline.⁵ But it is almost certain that this is not now in force. The High Commission was a Judicial Court, or Committee, appointed by the Queen in 1559 to investigate ecclesiastical cases, members being nominated by the Crown. There were disputes in the times of James I between the High Commission and the Common Law Courts as to the powers of the Commission. In 1611 Chief Justice Coke decided that it had no right to fine or imprison except for heresy or schism. Laud used the High Commission very freely, but it was abolished by the Long Parliament in 1640.

¹ "The ultimate decision as to the universally binding force of Conciliar Decrees and thus as to the ecumenical character of the Council whose they are, rests with the educated instinct of the Church; it is a matter for the *consensus post* of Christendom; what is permanent and adequate *persists*, what is transitory and inadequate *passes away*" (Maclear and Williams, *ut supra*, p. 260 f.).

² "The ideal, no doubt, of the Christian Church is that the whole congregation of Christian people, dispersed throughout the whole world, should be so united in Christian charity, as to be able to bring their united wisdom and spiritual experience together in council, and thus to guide, under the influence of the Spirit of God, the belief and the practice of the various local Churches. But no such authority has existed since the time of the primitive authority already mentioned. No General Council can possibly be appealed to; and in the absence of such general authority, each Church must exercise its own authority, on its own responsibility" (Wace, *ut supra*, p. 245).

³ "And after all, what is the true description of those Councils, which are so confidently called General? Look at the extent of Christ's universal Church, embracing as it does within its wide circuit the Christians of the whole world, and then tell us what we are to say of the greatest and fullest Council ever assembled in Christendom? Verily it is nothing better than a private meeting of Bishops, it is a mere provincial Synod. What though there be the assembling of Italy, and France, and Spain, and England, and Germany, and Denmark, and Scotland. Is it a General Council? Are its decrees to be registered as the consenting voice of the Church Catholic? Then where are Asia and Greece? Why are their Churches to be forgotten? But indeed the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ does not depend on Councils, or, as St. Paul writes, on man's judgment. Without Councils and against Councils, God is able to advance His kingdom" (Jewel's *Apology*).

⁴ See 1 Eliz., c. 1; Hardwick, *History of the Articles of Religion*, p. 388.

⁵ Boulbee, *ut supra*, p. 180.

A new Court was established by James II in 1686, but was abolished by the Bill of Rights, 1689.

But, it may be asked, do we not believe in the presence of Christ in His Church? Assuredly we do, and we believe that the Church as a whole shall be "kept." God's providence works in similar ways, over-ruling, while evil is permitted and good is in abeyance. But this does not prevent us from believing that God reigns supreme, and so while the Church as a whole will be preserved from fundamental apostasy we are not to expect that it will ever be wholly free from error. Infallible authority is much easier and simpler for those who do not wish to have the trouble of personal responsibility. But the question is not what is easy, but what is true. It is part of our moral probation here to face questions of difficulty, and individuals as well as Churches are assured of the adequate guidance of God. "The meek will He guide in judgment; and the meek will He teach His way" (Psa. xxv. 9).

At this point it may be well to combine the teaching of Articles XX and XXI by noticing the principles laid down.

1. The Church has full legal right in regard to Ceremonial.
2. The Church has moral authority in all questions of difference of belief.
3. This two-fold authority is always subject to the Word of God.
4. General Councils must have lay and full representation.
5. They may err, and have erred, thereby showing that they are not infallible.
6. Holy Scripture is the supreme authority in settling essential questions.
7. Conciliar decisions must be proved to be in harmony with Holy Scripture.