

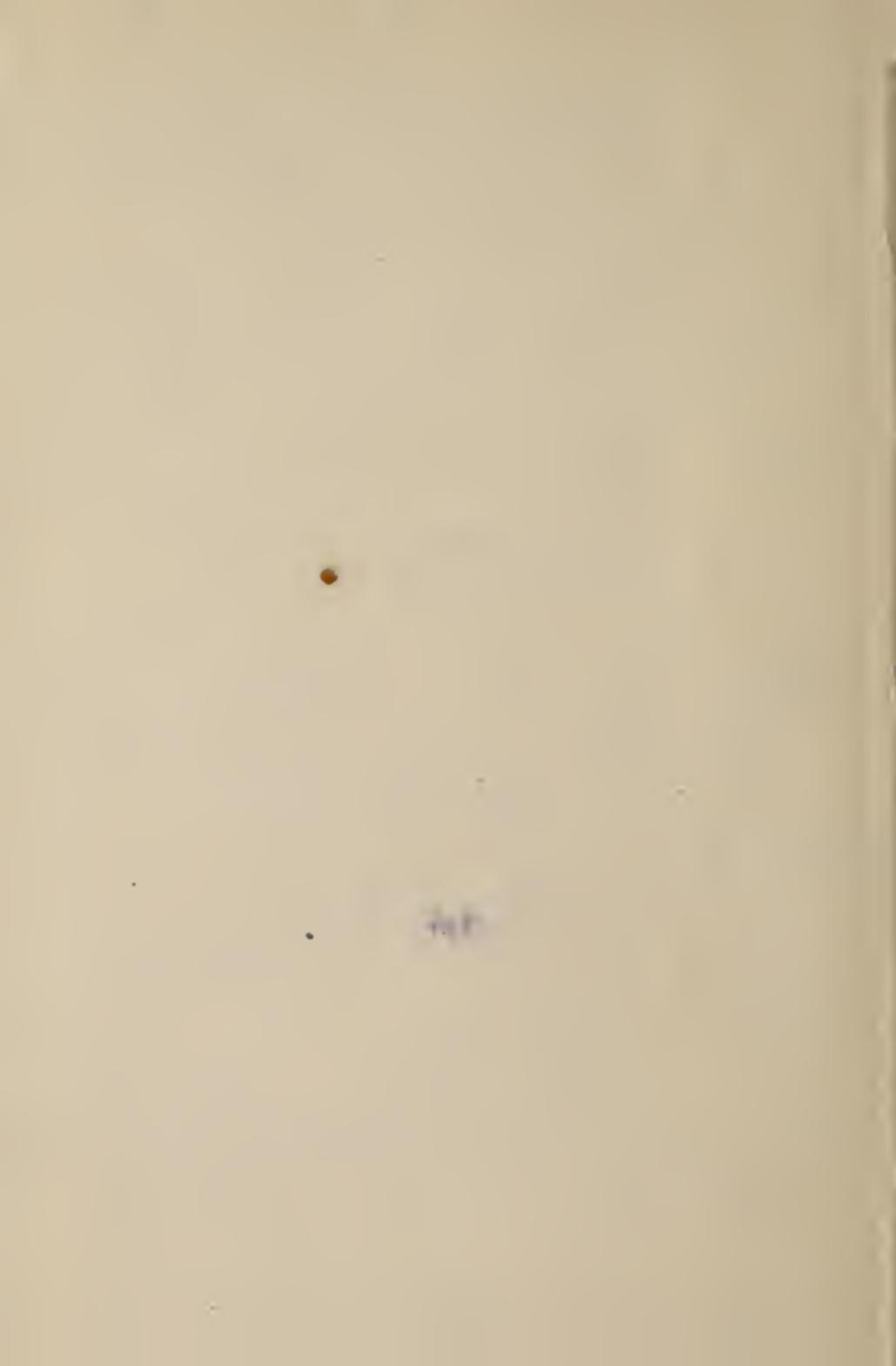
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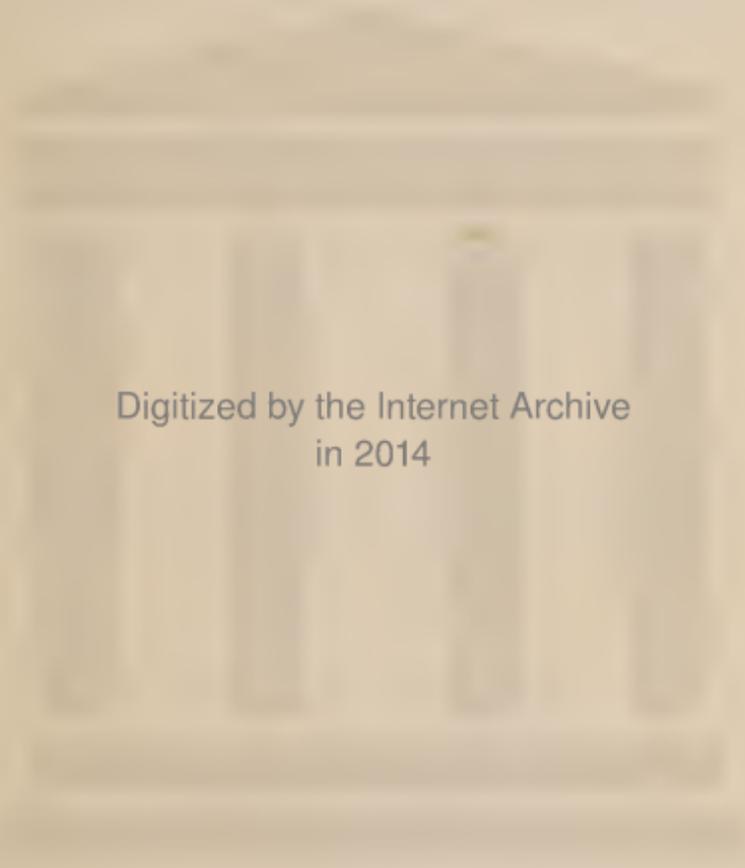
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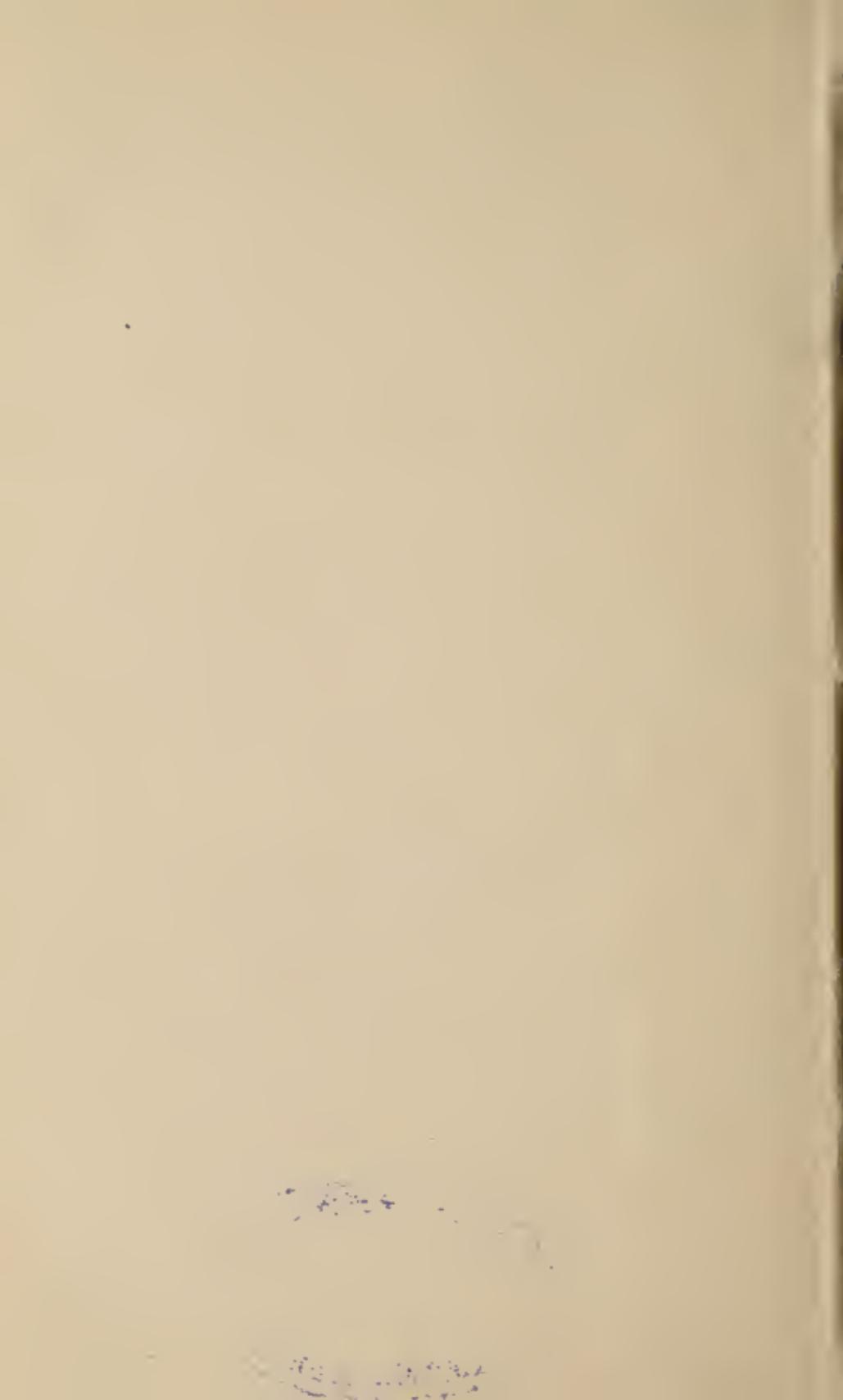
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# NOTES

ON THE

## TWENTY-FIVE ARTICLES OF RELIGION

AS RECEIVED AND TAUGHT BY

METHODISTS IN THE UNITED STATES;

IN WHICH

THE DOCTRINES ARE CAREFULLY\* CONSIDERED, AND  
SUPPORTED BY THE TESTIMONY OF THE  
HOLY SCRIPTURES.

✓  
BY REV. A. A. JIMESON, M. D.

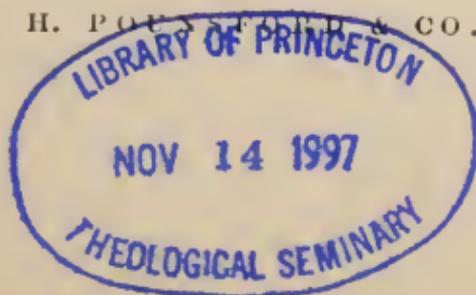
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"For I give you good doctrine."—SOLOMON

"Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines."—ST. PAUL.

"That which the holy Scriptures hath not said, how can we receive it?"  
ST. CYRIL.

~~~~~  
CINCINNATI.

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To

REV. D. B. DORSEY, M. D.

MY MEDICAL PRECEPTOR,

AND TO

REV. JAMES G. SANSOM AND CHAS. B. CUMMINS, ESQ.,

MY FAITHFUL FRIENDS,

This Book is

Very Respectfully Dedicated,

AS A

TESTIMONIAL OF HIGHEST REGARDS FOR THEIR MANY VIRTUES,

BY

THE AUTHOR.



## P R E F A C E.

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In a little over one hundred years the "*Methodist Society*," organized by Mr. Wesley, in London, in 1739, has increased to the astonishing number of two million ninety-three thousand nine hundred and thirty. This number includes the present ministry and membership of Methodism, in its several grand divisions, both in Europe and America, and in the Provinces, as well as her ministry and membership in her several foreign mission stations.

In the United States this great Christian community is divided as follows:—Methodist Episcopal Church seven hundred and twenty-three thousand six hundred and sixty-four; Methodist Protestant Church, sixty-five thousand and fifty-three; Methodist Episcopal Church South, five hundred and sixteen thousand six hundred and one; making in all an aggregate Membership of thirteen hundred and five thousand, three hundred and eighteen. With these facts before us, we may say with the Psalmist, "God has prepared room for this vine, and caused it to take deep root. The hills are covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof are like the goodly cedars. She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river." These words aptly express the wonderful effects which have followed the meeting of the "eight or ten persons," with Mr. Wesley, in London. If we inquire for the visible bond of union in this immense "*Society*," which has long since resolved itself into a distinct and independent church organization, it will not be found in her *ecclesiastical polity*, but in her *doctrines*. Every branch of this rapidly increasing community subscribes to, and believes in the doctrines of the *Twenty Five Articles of Religion*. These articles were extracted, by Mr. Wesley, from the *Thirty-nine Articles*

*of the Church of England.* These Articles were first drawn up and adopted, as symbols of a Protestant faith, during the reign of Edward VI, in 1552. Queen Mary, in the succeeding reign, had them repealed, in order to give place to the restoration of the Papacy in England. Mary was succeeded by Elizabeth, whose reign was distinguished by zealous efforts to restore Protestantism. In the beginning of her reign the present Articles of the Anglican Church were again adopted, being reduced from the original *forty-two* of Edward VI, to the present *thirty-nine*. They were printed for the first time, in 1663. This embraces an outline history of all the Articles of Religion, as received by Methodists, except the twenty-third article. This article was drawn up in 1784, for the benefit of Methodists in the United States, and was inserted among the other Articles of Religion, in 1786. These Articles as they come to us, in their abridged and amended form, mark out the Scriptural landmarks of doctrine and duty, and show very conclusively the position of the church with regard to the claims of the Bible, and the extirpation of heresy. And although these articles were arranged in opposition to errors that existed when they were adopted, they are still as relevant and important as they were then, because the same errors still exist, though some of them have assumed different forms and different names. This is a strong reason why every member of the church, next to the Holy Scriptures, should make himself thoroughly acquainted with the Articles of Religion, of the church to which he belongs, and be able at all times to defend them against the encroachments of error.

The doctrines of these Articles are from God, and while we must feel greatly humbled by the repeated contentions about *polity* and *usages*, and the continued unwillingness, upon the part of some, to meet the claims of "times and men's manners," we rejoice that no strife has arisen in our church about doctrines. These are immutable because they are clearly taught in the Scriptures, and because they are a just exposition of the method of Redemption. True, these doctrines have their enemies because of their supposed peculiarity, both in the

scoffs of infidelity and the sweeping charges of some professed Christians. But whatever may be the designs of these enemies, and whatever may be the means they are fond of employing to accomplish these designs, certain it is that in every fair contest they are compelled to yield.

It may be admitted, however, that the style in which these Articles of Religion are written, is somewhat obscure, and the manner in which the doctrines are presented in some of them, may be considered objectionable, especially in this age of so great beauty in theological language, and so much consecutiveness in doctrinal statements; but against the doctrines they contain, objections have never been successful.

The success with which the preaching of these doctrines has ever been attended in the up-building of Christ's kingdom in all countries, proves that the Holy Spirit sanctions them, and that the seal of God is upon them. Other Articles might have been added, so as to make a more complete theological system, and which might include other important doctrines of the Scriptures, which are in opposition to some modern corruptions of Bible doctrines, as the denial of future and eternal punishment, and the divine obligations of the Sabbath. For these omissions we have but a word of explanation. The doctrine of future and eternal punishment is contained by necessary implication in many of the Articles, and is embraced in the system of which each Article is a part. Again, the denial of the doctrine of future and eternal punishment, and the divine obligation of the Sabbath, was not in existence as a distinct error in England, at the time the Thirty Nine Articles were drawn up; nor indeed were these errors scarcely known in America at the time the Twenty-Five Articles were adopted, as the symbols of the Methodistic faith. All the framers of these Articles contemplated was, to raise up a standard of Scripture truth, and to send forth a protest against the fatal errors and corruptions of Romanism.

And it is believed that the power of the truth does not consist in the number of its symbols, but in the abstract truth itself. And if we consider the fact that these Articles were not drawn up by a select council of divines,

assembled for that specific purpose, but were drawn up at different times, in opposition to the destroying encroachments of heresy, we may find a substantial reason for the manner of composition, and the order of arrangement. We may likewise find the reason here for the omission of what might otherwise be supposed to be important Articles of faith. But "brief" and "informal" as the Arminian creed may seem to be, it is, nevertheless, the embodiment of the sublime doctrines of human salvation.

That these doctrines might be more fully understood by the great body of the church, the author of the following notes has long desired to see what is now presented in the form of an exposition of these Articles. How far he has succeeded in this humble effort to disseminate the truth, and to build up the faith of the mass, for whose special benefit the work has been prepared, is left for them to determine.

Nothing is more desirable for the permanency of the church, and the spread of religion, than a clear understanding of the doctrines of Christianity. To be familiar with the doctrines of the church, and to be able to support them in some good degree by pertinent quotations from the Bible, is surely the duty of every church member, and more especially of every young minister.

When the author entered the ministry, in 1840, he knew but little about these doctrines, and felt constantly embarrassed with the fact that no book could be found bearing directly upon this subject. In vain did he look for help, in these hours of trial, either from an exposition of these Articles, or from the members of the church to whom he was then attempting to minister in word and doctrine. After four years of faithful reading in Watson's Institutes of Theology, and such other Theological works as time would permit him to study, still he felt that something was needed for the people. For them these notes have been prepared, and whatever of defect they may find in them, may be overlooked when they remember that the duties of a pastor, and the weekly preparations for the pulpit, were not neglected during the whole time this work was in course of preparation. But if it be said; "A man of more mature age, should have written

such a work," the only reply is, why did not such a man do this long since? If it is clearly shown that such a work is not needed, then the author is mistaken in his experience and observation, and has a good reason for not being able to find a commentary on the Articles of Religion. But he thinks he is not mistaken in discovering the wants of his own church, and especially when these wants are discovered by a sister church. A paragraph from the sermon of REV. E. P. HUMPHREY, D.D., delivered before the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, in Charleston, S. C., May 25, 1852, may show that that church sees the necessity of some such work as is now presented to the public. The Doctor says: "It is to be remembered, also, that the Arminian scheme has yet to be reduced to a systematic and logical form. Where are its written formularies, pushing boldly forth to their final and inevitable conclusions; all its doctrines touching predestination, free will and efficacious grace? We have its brief and informal creed in some five and twenty articles; but where is its complete confession of faith, in thirty or forty chapters? Nay, where is even its shorter catechism? Where is its whole body of divinity, from under the hand of a master, sharply defining its terms, accurately stating its belief, laying down the conclusions logically involved therein, trying these conclusions, no less than their premises, by the Word of God, refuting objections, and adjusting all its parts into a consistent and systematical whole? It has furnished us, indeed, with some detached negations and philosophical theories. We have, for example, its flat denial of our doctrines of predestination; but has it, to this day, met, for itself, the problem of foreknowledge infinite, by a more plausible solution than the celebrated sophism, that although God has the capacity of foreknowing all things, he chooses to foreknow only some things? We have, also, its notion of the 'freedom of the will,' wherein there was supposed to be the germ of a systematic Arminianism; but this budding promise was long since nipped by the untimely frost of Jonathan Edward's logic. It is clear that an exposition of this theology which shall satisfy the logical consciousness is indispensable to its perpetuity, otherwise it

cannot take possession of educated and disciplined minds, educated by the Word and Spirit of God, and disciplined to exact analysis and argument; otherwise again, although it may exert a temporary influence, it will retire before advancing spiritual and intellectual culture. It is also clear, that the first century of its existence has not produced that exposition. Another century may clearly demonstrate that such a production is clearly impossible, by showing that the logical and Scriptural element is not in the Arminian system; that the law of affinity and crystallization is wanting to its disjointed principles; that this theology, combining many precious truths and capital errors, resembles a mingled mass of diamonds and fragments of broken glass and broken pottery, which no plastic skill of man or power of fire can mould into one transparent, unclouded, many sided, equal sided crystal, its angles all shining, and its points all burning with light—a Kohinoor indeed.”

Not to make a single remark upon the unmasked absurdities of this paragraph, nor to say a word about the Doctor's real or assumed ignorance of Arminian theology; nor to assume that the following exposition of Arminianism “shall satisfy the logical consciousness” of the author of the sermon; nor to believe with this gentleman that “the logical and scriptural element is not in the Arminian system;” nor that the next hundred years will blot out the whole system, however desirable this might be to the enemies of the system; yet we admire the Doctor's discovery of the necessity of such a book as we now present, and quote this part of his sermon as a reason for its speedy issue. And it may be that the logic of these Articles and notes, supported by the Scriptures as they are, when narrowly examined, may be more than a match for the Doctor's system of unconditional election and reprobation. Arminianism always has been sustained, even in the hands of the uneducated, and we are not apprised, that for the last hundred years it has been shorn of any of its strength, not even “by the untimely frost of Jonathan Edward's logic.” True, during that time it passed through the crucible, but the fire only made it shine the brighter, and now it stands up

as a mighty shaft of moral demonstrations, whose sides flash with the fires of lofty and invincible truth, and whose base is established upon the well known fact, that "Jesus Christ, by the grace of God tasted death for every man." But to leave this digression. Whatever may be the fate of these notes, the author shall ever feel their influence on himself, in his improved habits of study and close application, and in the proper management of his hours of leisure. These, by the help of God, shall never be "*unemployed,*" nor "*triflingly employed.*"

But other items of the history of these notes may be given under appropriate heads, as

1. *The Name.*—When this work was commenced in its present form, nothing more was intended but an expository remark on each member and doctrine of the Article, with as many proofs from the Scriptures as might seem to be necessary. But when it was fairly under way, one remark and quotation suggested another, until it was swelled beyond the original design. The name was still retained, and because it is short it is now adopted as the permanent outside index to the matter and design of the book.

2. *The Style.*—An attempt has been made to avoid, on the one hand, the dry argumentative style, and on the other, the loose and diffuse, and to adopt such a medium between these two extremes as may interest the careful as well as the rapid reader. How far the effort has been successful, remains to be determined by the intelligent reader.

3. *The Character.*—It has been the author's most ardent desire to be conclusive in all his arguments, and to exhibit the doctrines in their simplest form. In this he thinks he has been successful, especially in those sections where the free use of the Scriptures has been indulged. The sections on the Trinity, the Humanity of Christ, the Union of the two natures, the Resurrection of Christ, the Sacraments, the right of infants to church membership, and the errors of Romanism, are somewhat lengthy, though condensed as much as possible. But it is believed they are clear and conclusive; and so of most, if not all the others.

It may be said that too much has been said on Romanism; but we think not when we consider the fact, that Christianity struggled with Paganism, until, by the blood of her martyrs, her divine truths found their way to the throne of the Roman Empire, and that there she unfortunately assumed the form of the Papacy, and welcomed to her arms Pagan Europe; and that now, instead of a pure faith, among Romanists, she has become an inflexible creed of error, and a gorgeous ceremonial. Paganism, but half divorced from its main errors, has been received into the Romish system, and the unnatural embrace of error into what little of truth there is in the Romish Church, has left its corroding blotches deeply impressed even upon the present age, in ceremonies, and pompous demonstrations, which have their origin far into remote heathenism.

Romanism is as relentless in its animosities now, as it was when it stamped with ignomy and death, all who desired to wash it from the corruptions of Pagan error. These, with the fact that many of the Articles directly oppose Romish superstitions have been deemed sufficient to justify all that has been said upon this dark subject.

4. *Divisions.*—Each Article might have been analyzed and discussed in a single chapter, but for the sake of clearness, ease in writing and reading, it was thought best to divide it into sections with respective and appropriate headings, each section including remarks on a single doctrine. The textual examination of the Article has been adhered to as closely as was possible, in view of the nature of the Article itself. Long chapters, such as are common to Burnett on the Thirty-Nine Articles, should never be pressed upon that class of mind unaccustomed to close thought, and careful reading; and especially should they not be pressed upon the young. These are reasons sufficiently impressive for the division of our book into so many sections, and for the division of the sections themselves into paragraphs.

5. *The materials of which it is composed.*—It is impossible to tell at this time where they come from. The author read all he could find, having any bearing on the doctrines brought to view, and after reading, and carefully digesting the particular and general scope of the Article,

then he wrote without the use of any book but the Bible and Cruden's Concordance. But when a sentence or paragraph was drawn directly from any book, the regular acknowledgment has always been made, definitions excepted of course. The work is indebted chiefly to Bickersteth for the quotations from the Fathers; and to the Catechism of the Council of Trent, the Rheimish Testament, Edgar's Variations of Popery, and Ranke's History of the Pope's, for what is said upon the absurd dogmas of Romanism. Some sacred poetry is quoted to illustrate doctrine and duty, and to break the monotony of the closely written page. These were chiefly taken from the standard hymn book. Originality of matter has not been attempted, but rather originality in the arrangement and presentation of the matter.

6. *Object of the Notes.*—While the author looks upon the progress of Methodism with delight, and while he regards it as the most efficient system for the propagation of the truth among all people; and while many very distinguished scholars have graced her pathway and adorned her literary departments in elaborate treatises on various theological and scientific subjects, he regrets that so little has been written for the special edification of candidates for full membership in the church. This is a very interesting department of the work of the church; and these are like infants, depending upon proper management in the nursery for whatever of future usefulness or greatness may adorn and beautify their lives. The six months usually designated as their probationary state, should be employed in studying the doctrines and polity of the church, so that they may come into the church with a clear and full understanding of what the church is. And during this trial state, the pastor should have, at least, two meetings every month with them, for instruction and prayer, to prepare them for an intelligent and satisfactory examination before the church. A course of this kind is contemplated in the organic law of the church, and tends not only to intelligence in religious doctrines, but to firmness and stability in the Christian life. The author has tried this plan and proved it in every respect to be just what should be in operation

in all our churches. He pursued this course in two of his congregations, including in both over one hundred persons on trial, some of whom promised but little to the church, as is often the case; but thorough instruction in doctrine laid the foundation of permanency of Christian character and usefulness in the church; and he rejoices to know that all of these, except a very few, are prominent and useful members of the church.

A course of training of this kind cannot fail to create a habit of reading and thought, as well as a love for the Bible, which will be felt in the periodical offices and book depositories of the church, in the family, the community, the world.

This is said to be an age of remarkable progress, and so it is; civilization is extending and approaching its highest summit. Literature is marching onward, offering its blessings to all, and the church is causing the wilderness and the solitary places to be glad, and is offering the blessings of the gospel of reconciliation to all nations. These things remind us of our duty to the young, that we should by all possible means give permanency and intelligence to the rising membership of the church, and qualify them, as fully as we can, for piety and usefulness.

While the good is spreading and diffusing its blessings every-where, the evil is in close pursuit, sometimes in advance. Romanism and infidelity, with their multitude of shades and modifications, are using every effort to uproot the gospel, and the church, and to supply their places with the dreams of reason, and the superstitious phantoms and idolatry of the dark ages. Even some professed Christians are loosely attached to the old foundation of true Protestantism, for which the Fathers of the Reformation periled their lives, and upon which the church has stood for ages. The Bible as it is, "homely and unchaste" as its verbal garb may be, is quite sufficient to sustain all useful Christian doctrines, and to support all orthodox churches, if their ambition is to do good rather than to sustain the dogmas of a sinking sect. These tendencies to evil should stimulate the church to a thorough knowledge of the Bible, and of whatever par-

ticular doctrines of the Scriptures may be set forth in her Articles of Religion.

That the following notes will fully accomplish this, is not the vain hope of the author, but that they will greatly assist, he has no doubt. They will show at least how fully the Articles are sustained by the Bible, and how applicable they are to a pure morality, and to the claims of the experience and true practice of our holy religion. Whatever will cast light upon these subjects cannot fail to be useful when properly applied, and should deeply engage the attention and prayers of every Christian.

When Bunyan entered upon a religious life, his fund of knowledge was very limited, but by close and prayerful application to the Bible and other books, his mind expanded, and the shadows of the Almighty nourished and enlarged his soul, so that his *Pilgrim's Progress* issued upon the world, the prince of allegory, with a literary polish, and a light but little inferior to those of the Bible itself. Such an instance of successful self-culture and pure devotion and usefulness, stands out in the living poetry of holy consecration, as a balmy incentive to all Christians to "go and do likewise." The nursery, the sabbath school, the Bible class, should all be so many consecrated tributaries to the great stream of human intelligence and spiritual dedication to God.

The author believes that time might be profitably spent in preparing a small volume on the Articles of Religion, for the use of the sabbath school. A book of this kind would indoctrinate our children in the leading principles of Christianity, and if properly and perseveringly applied to the youthful mind and heart, in connection with the Bible, would undoubtedly tell most favorably on the future interests of the church. He has the plan of such a book in his mind, but knows not whether he shall ever commit it to paper. But if the suggestion is favorably received, he hopes some one will undertake the pleasant task.

With no other desire than to be useful to the church and its hosts of ransomed ones, the following *Notes on the Twenty-Five Articles of Religion*, are commended

to the three great divisions of American Methodism; the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Protestant Church, and the Methodist Episcopal Church South: and may the blessings of our kind Benefactor accompany the heart of the reader, and the writer, to "the house that is not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

MARSVILLE, *Nov. 25, 1852.*

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# NOTES

ON THE

## ARTICLES OF RELIGION.



### ARTICLE I.

#### OF FAITH IN THE HOLY TRINITY.

“There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body or parts, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, the maker and preserver of all things, visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead, there are three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.”

#### SECTION FIRST.

*There is but one God.*

1. The opening terms of this Article, according to their Scripture import, are terms of opposition to atheism, polytheism, the false gods of the heathen, and dualism, or the doctrine of two eternal and ultimate principles inherent in matter, the one good and the other evil. The existence of God is clearly taught in this Article; but atheism says, “there is no God.” This Article teaches the doctrine of but one God; but polytheism says there are many gods. This Article teaches the doctrine of a “living and true God;” but the heathen oppose to this their hosts of dumb idols. This Article teaches that “God is a spirit;” but pantheism makes no such distinction, it teaches that God and matter are one. This Article teaches that God is the “maker” of all

material substances, and, consequently independent of matter; but dualism teaches that God is necessarily inherent in matter, as its principle of good in opposition to its principle of evil, and that matter is therefore essential to his existence. All the terms of this Article will be fully noticed hereafter.

2. "*There is one God.*"—This is the most sublime conception of the human mind. It is not only sublime, but exceedingly awful. The idea of an infinite, eternal first cause of all things is too great for the grasp of the human mind; and yet it is an idea that is every way suited to our intellectual and moral wants. It infinitely more than fills the mind, and at the same time it produces a feeling of reverence, which is felt to be a right emotion. If there is no God, as "the fool hath said," then there is nothing within the whole compass of truth, that can compare in solemn grandeur with the illusion that there is a God. But it cannot be that the noblest of all human conceptions should be false. The fact that man has such a sublime conception, is some proof, at least, that such a being as God does exist. The philosophical proof of this great fact depends upon the validity of the axiom that every effect must have a cause. No process of reasoning is necessary to prove this, for the axiom itself is an intuitive truth. We see changes going on all about us, and we feel them within us, and we know that they do not take place without a cause. So fully admitted is this fact, that it has become an acknowledged principle in science, to which no exception has ever been known.

Apply this truth to the question, Is there a cause of the existance of the universe, with all its vast works and sublime movements? And the universal answer is,—There is a first cause.

Belief in this truth is so universal among nations and men, that it must ever be regarded as the great central truth of both *natural* and *revealed religion*. Hence we have, in what is known as the *Apostles' Creed*, this general confession: "I believe in God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth." This is the avowed confession of every Christian nation, as it is the faith of every single believer. It lies at the foundation of true religion, and gives order and dignity to every form and act of religious worship. But if "there is no God," there can be no such a thing as religion, and men have nothing to hope for, or to fear. They can propose to themselves no higher motives than the enjoyment of the present moment; and the passing events of time are propelled either by chance, or the stern dictates of inflexible necessity. But so clear are the evidences of a God, that it were difficult to entertain the notion of such a prodigy of unreasonableness as an atheist. To say with certainty "there is no God," a man must assume Omnipresence and Omniscience; he must have searched the highest heavens and investigated the lowest depths of the earth, without seeing any evidence of his existence. As this is clearly impossible, atheism must be false, and the Bible must be true, when it says, "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God." The most one can say is, that there is nothing he has seen in nature or revelation sufficient to indicate to his mind the generally received notion of a God. In saying this he assumes a stand-point very much below the ordinary standard of human reason, and voluntarily applies to himself the Scripture epithet which distinguishes him from the rest of mankind.

3. But belief in one God cannot exist without knowledge imparted in some way, of the existence and cha-

racter of its object. It must be created and sustained by rational and clear disclosures of who and what God is, or it cannot exist as the basis and life power of a pure religious service. *Nature* teaches most conclusively that a Being existed somewhere anterior to the existence of the world, by whose power and wisdom it was brought into being, and who still lives to sustain it in that being. The argument involved here was clear to the mind of St. Paul, in *Rom. i, 20*, "For the *invisible* things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, *being understood by the things that are made*, even his eternal power and Godhead." This may be regarded, in common with tradition, as the basis of the historic fact that all those nations of the earth, who have no other revelation, believe there is a Supreme Being somewhere, and that he ought to be worshipped. But it is nowhere assumed that these indications of nature are sufficient to authorize an intelligent religious service, though they might be expanded to the utmost extent by the most enlightened philosophy. History, science, reason, all condemn such a notion. It cannot be thought of as a correct theory, if we consult the history of heathen worship, and the claims of the purer and more instructive philosophy of the Bible. Hence the necessity of the revelation of the Scriptures to confirm and unfold the universal testimony of nature, and to properly distinguish the relations that the creature sustains to the Creator.

4. This book is in the hands of the church, in trust for the benefit of the world; and without dilating upon the possibility and reasonableness of such a revelation, to say nothing about its utility, it were enough to say that we have it with all the necessary *internal* and *external* evidences of a revelation from God. It clearly

establishes the doctrine of but one God in the outset, by establishing the question of creation as the work of God. It *assumes* the primary and essential fact that God is; and it *teaches* the fact that, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." The proof of but one God is abundant, both in the Old and New Testament. In the Old Testament, the proof, in part, is as follows: *Deut.* vi, 4, "The Lord our God is *one* Lord." Chap. xxxii, 39, "I am he, and there is no God with me." *2 Sam.* vii, 22, "Neither is there any God beside thee." *Neh.* ix, 6, "Thou, even thou, art Lord alone." *Is.* xlv, 5, "I am the Lord, and there is *none else*, there is no God besides me." These passages prove two things,—there is a God,—there is but *one* God, and they establish the reason why both Jews and Christians contend so earnestly for the worship of but one God.

This doctrine was the first article in the organic law of the Hebrews, and the Christian system has incorporated the same great truth into the basis of its structure; Christians cheerfully subscribe to the original enactment as continued into the "better dispensation." In the New Testament, therefore, St. John says, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the *only true God*, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." *John*, xvii, 3. St. Paul dignifies his epistles with the same doctrine. He says, in *1 Cor.* viii, 6, "To us there is *but one God*, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him." St. James says, "Thou believest there is *one God*: thou doest well." *James*, ii, 19. These are a few of those passages that directly prove the unity of God.

5. How far the doctrine may be sustained by observations on the unity of design in the works of creation is

very uncertain. Arguments drawn from this source have ever impressed the minds of thinking men with much force. If we were able to comprehend the universe, and to understand its vast parts in the peculiar manner of their government, it is not improbable that the proof would be complete. But, limited as our knowledge is, amid the universal complication which surrounds us, and the immense variety of the creations and wonders of earth which bewilder the thought, still we are able to perceive but one set of laws in accordance with which all things are governed. The same effects are produced uniformly, in all places and periods, by the same causes. Man has but one origin, but one form, but one life, but one system of distinguishing faculties, and but one termination. And so of the inferior animals, and vegetables. Thus it is that all things, so far as we can see and understand them, present a single design. Hence the unity of design, so far as we can perceive it, is a proof of the unity of God; and the unity of movement in the great machinery of the universe is proof that but one God executed the entire work.

6. The doctrine of the existence and unity of God stands in direct opposition to polytheism; and it is worthy of remark that wherever the Bible has gone, with its foundation doctrine of but one God, pantheons have been shut up, or dedicated to a better service, polytheism has been banished, and reason has been restored to its proper office. But this doctrine is alike opposed to dualism, or the doctrine of two eternal principles represented by light and darkness, or good and evil. This was the philosophy of the Persians from the earliest period; though Zoroaster a distinguished reformer of their theology, taught that a superior being existed, from whom both the principle of good and evil were

derived. It is probable he obtained this hint of reformation from the captive Jews. That the Jews themselves might not be penetrated with this Persian and atheistical principle, God by the mouth of Isaiah, addressed Cyrus the king of Persia in these words: *Is. xlv, 5, 7*, "I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me; I guided thee, though thou hast not known me, that they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none besides me; I am the Lord, and there is none else. *I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace and create evil, I the Lord do all these things.*" This single passage overturns at once, the error of two eternal principles, inherent in matter, and directly opposed to each other; and it brings the unity of God into the clearest possible light. It joins its testimony to other passages of like import, in the final settlement of the great question that separates the heathen and the Christian world.

7. But to whom are we indebted for this clear apprehension of the existence and unity of God? Certainly not to the philosophers of Greece and Rome, for these were but little else than atheists; nor yet to the great body of the Jews, for these had but imperfect conceptions of this doctrine, as is evident from the history of their frequent revolts from the worship of the true God, to some of the most gross forms of idolatry. So imperfect were their apprehensions of the true God, that Moses was compelled to ask God for the name by which he would be made known to them, *Ex. iii, 14*, "And God said unto Moses, "I AM THAT I AM." But the subsequent history of the Jews proves them to have been the most firm advocates of the unity of God. They did not obtain this doctrine from their own observations, but from their *inspired* men; and when we consider the fact

that they taught this doctrine at a time when all the nations of the earth were sunken in polytheism, we must not only regard them with great veneration, but rejoice in the extensive and permanent triumph of this single truth. It settles religion upon a firm foundation, and the worshiper experiences nothing of the uncertainty and anxiety which must fill the mind of a heathen worshiper, who, amid the increasing perplexities of polytheism, is not able to determine which of his gods to propitiate. But the Christian, knowing "there is but one living and true God," can assure himself of his presence and protection in all places, and at all times. Whatever may transpire in the operation of Providence, the agency of but one God is seen in it. If it is good it can be traced to his mercy and goodness; and if it is evil the sufferer may turn to the one God whom he knows to be the true and living God, and implore his favor.

"Ye curious minds, who roam abroad,  
And trace creation's wonders o'er,  
Confess the footsteps of your God;  
Bow down before him and adore."

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#### SECTION SECOND.

##### *But one living God.*

1. The doctrine of but one *living God* is eminently a doctrine of the Scriptures. \* Beyond these the speculations of philosophy have been confused and of atheistical tendency. Spinoza and others, looked upon the existence and motion of material bodies through such an imperfect medium, that they confounded the living God with matter, and declared that the universe itself is God. They indeed speak of God, and of life; but they will

not admit that God is personally distinguished from matter. They maintain that matter has two principle attributes, infinite extension, and infinite intelligence. Such false conceptions of matter cannot be expected to evolve any clear notions of a God, either as to his unity, life or spirituality. These views are supposed to have been derived from ancient Greek philosophers, and were thoroughly arranged into a system by Spinoza, and published as the only correct idea of the true relation of God to the universe. This system, however ridiculous it may be, has been received with much favor by many philosophers of modern times. In Italy, France and Germany, *pantheism*, which is the popular and true name of this system, is regarded by many as the most rational conception of God and the universe. In this country vigorous efforts are made, by emigrant infidels, to propagate this evil; and hence it is the duty of the friends of truth to be equally and more zealous in spreading the Bible.

2. The Bible presents the Supreme Being as the living God, independent of matter, either as a part of himself, or as contributing, in any way, to his life or moral and independent freedom. The term "living" is applied to God, because he has life distinct from all that exists around him. But it is more particularly applied to him, as fact in opposition to the lifeless and dumb gods of the heathen. The life of any being is its chief excellency, and nothing can be more absurd than for a living intelligent being to worship a thing without life, and consequently, of less excellency than himself. Our earliest, as well as our more mature notions of worship, uniformly imply the natural idea, that the greater should be worshiped by the lesser. This natural idea of worship is expanded by the doctrine of a living God, and ever

guarded against the degrading tendency of worshipping a being less than God.

When God is called the living God, the term imports that his life is not derived from another being, as is the life of a creature; but is an independent, underived life, and reaches *from everlasting to everlasting*. It is to be understood, therefore, that he infinitely excels all other beings, and that the life of every living being is derived from him. This is the obvious meaning of the term in the Article; and it is the obvious meaning of all those passages of Scripture in which the Supreme Being is termed the living God. Thus life is set forth as the eternal essence and root of all the perfections of the Divine Nature, and the living God is presented as the only being who is worthy of the homage and worship of rational beings.

3. The doctrine of a living God is confirmed by the clearest Scripture testimony. Reason, natural theology, and the Bible all unite upon this question; one confirms the other, and the testimony of the sacred writings gives scope and power to all other witnesses. The following is the testimony of the Bible: *Deut. xxxii, 40*, "I lift my hand to heaven, and say, *I live forever.*" These are the words of God himself, and we dare not impeach Divine veracity so far as to call them in question; and, especially, if we consider that they were delivered for man's present and future well being. *Jer. x, 10*. "The Lord is the true God, he is the *living God*, and an everlasting king." *John, v, 26*, "As the *Father hath life in himself*, so also hath he given to the Son to have life in himself." These, with many other passages of a similar import, have but one *use*, and but one *object*. Their use is to draw a clear and wide distinction between the one living God, and the dumb and lifeless gods of

the heathen. Their object is to present God to the mind and affections in such a high and very enobling aspect as to sever the bonds of inordinate love for perishable objects, and to place the affections of the heart upon the one living Author of the universe. His right to this grows out of his nature, and the relation he sustains to all rational beings. To superinduce a compliance with this right, he promises the greatest possible blessings to all who may serve him. And when he would give his people the highest assurance of anything he promises to do for them, his form of obligation is to swear by himself, "As I live." He swears by himself,—by his own life,—because there is nothing greater than this, and because it involves his essential nature in solemn pledges to his people. Men should carefully consider that while God is a living spirit, they are dead in sins; and that it is their privilege,—their duty to arise from their spiritual death-sleep, and receive into their hearts the transforming life-power, and spirit of God.

4. But enough has been said here to establish the right that the framers of this Article had to the use of the term "living," when speaking of God. With the Bible in their hands, the claims of the world pressing upon them, polytheism, and pantheism abounding in many portions of the earth, and the distinction that should always exist between Christian and heathen nations clearly drawn before their minds by the pure Word of Inspiration, they solemnly record in the first Article of our faith, the foundation doctrine of *but one God*,—of *but one living God*. But this doctrine is not a part, merely, of an abstract theological theory, it is strictly available to every believer. It is to him the highest source of enjoyment; he lives a spiritual life because he serves the living God, and because the life of

God is in his heart. He rejoices in this life because it makes him happy, and because it will have no termination. And he rejoices in this union of his own renewed life with the higher life of God, and because his renewed life is approximating the period and point of complete conformity to the life and holiness of him who has said, "As I *live*, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." *Rom. xiv, 11.*

" Let joy and worship spend  
The remnant of my days ;  
And to my God my soul ascend,  
In sweet perfumes of praise."

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### SECTION THIRD.

#### *But one true God*

1. The words of this member of our Article have been happily chosen. They are words of enlarged meaning; the term "*one*" contains the doctrine of Divine unity; the term "*living*" distinguishes this one God from the objects of pagan worship; and the term "*true*" keeps up this distinction while it presents the Supreme Being in direct opposition to all false gods, and to all false systems of religion. All of these terms compose a comprehensive and Scriptural definition of who and what God is. He is said here to be the "*true God.*" Life is the principle and source of action, as well as the chief excellency of any being; and by this the God of the Christian is distinguished from all others. St. Paul lays down both the terms of opposition when he speaks of those who had "turned from *idols* to serve the *living and true God.*" *1 Thess. i, 9.* Their former

gods were *dead* and *false*; but they had turned from these and were serving the *living* and *true God*.

2. But why are the words *living* and *true* applied to God so often in the Holy Scriptures? To answer this question properly, we must notice the historic fact that God's people were surrounded with idolatrous nations. These nations, rude as they were, found much sympathy for their idolatry among the Israelites, as is evident from the sacred record of their frequent departures from the true worship. The tendency, therefore, of the people of God to join in the worship of false gods, together with the influence that heathen nations exercised over them, made it necessary to repeat the doctrine of the true God often, and that, too, in connection with the grandest manifestations of the Divine glory. These served to impress the great truth upon the heart; and to exhibit the well known fact that every system of idolatry is false and degrading. To farther establish this fact, and to more constantly educate the Israelitish mind in the truth upon this subject, seems to have been the chief business of many of the inspired writers. Hence Jeremiah says, "The Lord is the *true God*." *Jer.* x, 10. Christ says, in speaking of eternal life, that it consists in the knowledge of the true God. "And this is life eternal that they might know thee, the only *true God*." *John* xvii, 3. The same fact is stated in nearly the same words in *1 John*, v, 20. "This is the true God and eternal life." These, with many other passages of equal point and clearness, establish the doctrine of the one living and true God, as stated in this Article; and they show the propriety of making this foundation truth the highest starting point in every summary of religious belief. It is, indeed, the great centre whence radiates all the other doctrines of the Christian system.

3. With proper conceptions of the Divine nature, which every reflecting reader of the Bible may have, there may be pure worship and true religion. The soul may be elevated to the highest possible point of moral purity and consequent enjoyment.

“ Spirit of light, explore,  
And chase our gloom away,—  
With lustre shining more and more,  
Unto the perfect day.”

But we cannot overlook the fact, made so prominent in all our theological investigations, that the doctrine as stated in this Article, shows most clearly the necessity of a revelation from God. It is folly, as the history of infidelity universally proves, to say that the instructions of nature are competent to all the claims of religion. “The heavens,” it is true, “declare the glory of God,” but these unassisted by more definite revelations, have ever failed to make mankind better, or to elevate the mind to themes of thought worthy the contemplation of intelligent beings.

But for the influence of the Scriptures, the knowledge of but one living and true God would long since have been lost to the world, and mankind would have been universal idolaters. This statement is made in full view of the facts in the history of nations in past time, and in full view of the facts growing out of a comparison of heathen and Christian nations at present. The knowledge of God, as revealed in the Scriptures, is the most important of all knowledge, and the most indispensable to the well being of man. But however essential the Scriptures are to the existence and propagation of pure religion, and the consequent well being of men and nations, they are strongly opposed by Romanism on the one hand and infidelity on the other. These seem determined to strike out of being the only efficient safe-guard to the doc-

trine and knowledge of one living and true God; and the only means whereby men and nations may be saved. Romanism, with its more than half idolatry, unchecked by the spread of the unalloyed Word of God, and the efforts of Protestant Christians, would soon lay aside the Bible, and sink the world into a state of degradation equal to the idolatrous follies of Rome in her more pagan ages. Infidelity, with all its claims to intelligence, has overlooked the fact in the history of nations, that the Bible is ever the fountain of civilization; and that where it is not, there is still the barbarous state.

4. Much more might be said in this place, upon the power of the doctrine of "but one living and true God," as well as upon the influence of the Scriptures in perpetuating this doctrine, but we deem it unnecessary and will close here with two reflections:

*First.*—The doctrine of but one living and true God, as taught in the Bible, diffuses light and order over the whole system of creation. It explains the phenomena of nature, by informing us who, and where the Power is by which it was called into being. It discloses the source of the beauty which so much charms us, as well as the source of the happiness which is enjoyed through all the ranks of animated beings. But the infatuated atheist can account for nothing, all is chance with him; vice and virtue are terms without meaning, and he looks for no reward beyond the circumstances of the present moment. He is deeply embarrassed in complicated difficulties all his life. Verily, "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God." *Ps. xiv, 1.*

*Second.*—The idea of one Supreme Being holds out an assemblage of perfections which command our reverence. It teaches us that there must be certain relations between him and men; and that there must be duties arising

from those relations which we are bound to perform; and from which we may expect increased enjoyment. It teaches us the sublime lessons of gratitude and trust, amid the blessings of life, and the decays and failures of our bodily constitution. It bids us look to that state of being where we shall be free from all doubt and decay, and "where we shall see as we have been seen, and know as we have been known."

"Thy Word is everlasting truth;  
 How pure is every page!  
 That holy Book shall guide our youth,  
 And will support our age."

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#### SECTION FOURTH.

##### *Attributes of God—Eternity.*

1. The eternity of God is taught in this Article, by the word "*everlasting*," and signifies that duration of being which *was* in all the past, and which *will be* in all the future. The eternity of God is expressed by David, in these words, "even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God." *Ps. xc, 2.*

The attributes of God are the particular and distinct qualities which are predicable of the Divine nature. They do not differ materially from the Divine nature itself, inasmuch as the nature of God is the sum of all his perfections. The difference, therefore, between the nature and attributes of the Supreme Being is not *objective*—that is, it does not appertain to God himself; but the difference is *subjective*, and belongs more particularly, to technical theology. The attributes of God, considered in the popular form of expression, are merely our notions of the peculiar distinctions which, taken together, enter into the Biblical representation of the

Divine nature. These attributes have been divided by philosophers, for the sake of convenience in systematic divinity, into two classes; and are technically called *natural* and *moral* attributes. By the former we are to understand those qualities which belong to God in the sense of infinitude, and which can belong to no other being, as *eternity*, *omnipresence* and *omnipotence*. By the latter we are to understand those qualities which belong to God, and for which we find some analogy in ourselves, —as *justice*, *wisdom*, *benevolence*. The eternity of God belongs to the first named classification.

2. The word eternity is used in two senses,—the *figurative* and the *literal*. In the former sense it denotes an existence which may have had a beginning, but which will have no end, as angels and men. In the latter sense it denotes an existence which has neither beginning nor end, and is applicable to no being but God. He is “*from everlasting*.” “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” *Gen. i, 1*. He was therefore, *before* the beginning of creation, and, of course, before the beginning of time; for that which we call time is but the succession of duration, taking its rise in a certain event which is called the “beginning.” That duration of being, therefore, which was before the beginning must have been from eternity, unless we suppose the measurement of time before time began, which is a clear contradiction. But two terms are used in the Scriptures, designating what was before the beginning of creation, what is now, and what will be after the universe is dissolved; and what is the measure of earthly duration. These terms are *eternity* and *time*. Now if God fixed that beginning to time, which is the measure of the duration of all created beings, then it is evident that he was before time, and consequently, from everlasting.

But, as the idea of the eternity of God, is so wholly beyond the capacity of our comprehension, and so little analogous to anything with which we are familiar, it seems to admit of no definite determination by reason. It is, therefore, best to confine ourselves to the plain statements of the Scriptures, which uniformly represent God as existing without beginning or end, and as coeval with all time, past, present, and to come.

3. The Scripture statement of this doctrine may be condensed into a few words: God is the first cause of all things, therefore, he is *from* everlasting. He is the ultimate end of all things, therefore, he is *to* everlasting. This condensed statement of the eternity of God, is sustained by the clear testimony of the Bible. *Deut.* xxxiii, 27, "The *eternal* God is thy refuge." *Ps.* xc, 2, "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even *from everlasting to everlasting*, thou art God." *Is.* xlv, 6, "Thus saith the Lord the king of Israel, and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts; I am the *first*, and I am the *last*, and besides me there is no God." *Hab.* i, 12. "Art thou not *from* everlasting, O Lord my God, mine Holy One?" *1 Tim.* i, 17, "Unto thee the *King eternal*, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory for ever and ever." The same doctrine that is so clearly stated in the foregoing passages is described by St. John, *Rev.* i, 8. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."

While the above passages prove most clearly the eternity of God, both in the past and the future, or *from* eternity *to* eternity, they at the same time evolve another truth which is essential, not only to the correct idea, but to the fact of the eternity of God. His eternity

of being is not interrupted by any distinctions of time succeeding one another, as moments, minutes, hours, days, &c. If the duration of God were successive, or proceeded by days, months, and years, then there must have been a first day,—a first month,—a first year, when he began to exist; and, by consequence, a succession of time. This is not only incompatible with the idea of eternity, but contrary to the express teaching of the Scriptures. *2 Pet. iii, 8*, “But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” “That is: All time is as nothing before him, because in the presence as in the nature of God all is eternity; therefore, nothing is *long*, nothing is *short* before him.” *Clarke’s note on the above.*

“ A thousand ages, in their flight,  
With thee are as a fleeting day ;  
Past, present, future, to thy sight  
At once their various scenes display.”

4. The eternity of God thus clearly presented by his Word, and stated in this article, suggests two reflections—*First*, Upon the punishment of the wicked. If this consists only, in the eternal absence of all good, and in the eternal presence of all evil, it must be punishment without any mitigation. But add to this the eternal infliction of actual conscious torment, which is the true idea of eternal death, and the soul shudders while it reflects, and hurriedly utters the prayer; Have mercy, O Lord.

*Second*, Upon the happiness of the saints. This is the eternal absence of all evil, and the eternal presence of all good. Add to this the actual and eternal possession and enjoyment of all that good, and we may see what it is to have eternal life. In view, then, of this highest

possible attainment, and consolation, all men, and more especially Christian men, should delight in the pure spiritual worship of Him who is "without beginning of days or end of time."

Raised on devotion's lofty wings,  
Do thou, my soul, his glories sing;  
And let his praise employ my tongue,  
Till list'ning worlds shall join the song."

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SECTION FIFTH.

*Attributes of God—Spirituality.*

1. This doctrine is negatively expressed in the Article, in these words: "*without body or parts.*" This statement is agreeable to reason and the Scriptures; reason tells us at once, that if there be a God he cannot have a body or parts composed of material substances, for this would exclude him from all places occupied by other material bodies. Reason tells us that the presence of God is essential to the support and motion of all material bodies; but if he is a material being he cannot be present with other material bodies, for it is evident that two material bodies cannot occupy the same place at the same time. Reason tells us, again, that God must be without body or parts, for a body cannot be present in more than one place at the same time; yet God is everywhere present at one and the same time, and fills both heaven and earth. Material bodies may be seen and felt, but God is invisible. *John*, i, 18, "No man hath seen God at any time." *1 Tim.* vi, 16, "Whom no man hath seen, nor can see."

But it may be objected that the Article contradicts many of the descriptions of God in the Bible. It is admitted that it does contradict those passages where God is de-

scribed as having a seat on a throne; as walking, as speaking, and as having a face, eyes, hands, etc. but this seeming contradiction must vanish when we consider the fact that these descriptions of God are employed in condescension to our feeble and imperfect conceptions of what God is, as a pure Spiritual Being.

2. The statement in the Article is agreeable to the Scriptures, for, therein, God is always spoken of as a Spirit. In *Numb.* xxiii, 19, Balaam says, "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the Son of Man, that he should repent." In this, and other passages of a similar import, there are two parts, the *negative* and the *positive*. The negative part excludes from our notions of God everything material, and the positive part comprises all the known properties of spirit,—as *simplicity*,—*invisibility*—*immortality*—and, likewise the power of *thought*, *will*, *action*. None of these attributes can be predicated of matter; but they are clearly predicable of spirit. By *simplicity* we understand a pure uncompound substance or essence, apart from, and independent of, any of the known properties of matter. By *invisibility* we are to understand that which cannot be seen by our own eyes. Hence, St. Paul speaks in *Col.* i, 15, of the "*invisible God*," and St. John says, "no man hath seen God at any time," *John*, i, 18. But *immortality* is another attribute of spirit. In this it differs from matter in the fact that matter is divisible, and, therefore, destructible. It may be brought into the highest possible state of simplicity and refinement, but still, it is matter and may be destroyed. But not so with the spirit; and hence it is, that when God is called a Spirit, it involves the doctrine of his eternity. St. Paul, in *1 Tim.* i, 17, covers the whole question by calling him the, "King *eternal, immortal, invisible*, the only wise God."

3. The surrounding works of nature give evidence of *thought, will, action*, anterior to their own existence. None of these qualities have ever been found in matter apart from any ulterior agency; therefore, the manifest contrivance in the creation of things is evidence of thought. The fact that material things do exist is evidence of *will* that they should exist, and of *action* by which they were brought into existence. Material bodies have motion, but this is no evidence of thought, will, or the power of motion in themselves. Matter is essentially inactive, and if it moves at all its motion is produced by some power exterior to itself. Motion is, therefore, evidence of thought and will, and as these cannot be produced by matter, either in its aggregate of compound parts, or in its most simple form, we must conclude that there is some power beyond these, that does possess thought and will, or we must adopt the absurdity that matter can move and adjust itself of its own accord.

But we have shown in another section that God is the living God. This great truth finds its basis in the fact that God is a spirit. Life is a distinguishing attribute of spirit, and is evidence that the Author of life must be a living Being. Nothing is more absurd than to suppose the production of living and intelligent beings, by an inactive, unintelligent substance. Now the fact that there is life in the universe, which contains various orders of animated beings, is evidence that a living Being created and diffused this life. And, as there cannot be more life in the universe, as an effect, than there is in the cause, it follows by clear inference, that the life of God is greater than the aggregate of life in the universe. Hence, as life is the peculiar property of spirit, God is not only a spirit, but the greatest of spirits. *The infinite Spirit.*

4. But the negative expression of the Article, and the Spirituality of God are sustained by two direct passages of the Bible. The first is, *Luke xxiv, 39*, "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see; for a *spirit hath not flesh and bones*, as ye see me have." The second is *John iv. 24*, "*God is a Spirit.*"

Two conclusions very clearly follow the statement and proof of the spirituality of the Divine existence:

*First.*—God is the object of mental contemplation, and of spiritual service. We cannot see him, for he is a spirit, wrapped up in the mysteries of his own eternal nature. But from the midst of the "clouds and darkness that are round about his throne," he furnishes mediums of reflection upon himself, by his works and his Word. These, it is true, address the senses, and thereby communicate to the mind some conception of his spiritual nature, and his Divine character. After learning all we can of God, in the use of the best means for enlarging our conceptions of his nature, still he is an unfathomable mystery, and none in the heavens can be compared to him, nor can the highest created understanding comprehend his glory. Any attempt, therefore, to represent him by material substances, as an image, a painting, must always lead to gross conceptions of his nature. This is not a mere inference from the Scripture statement of the doctrine; but an explicit prohibition, *Ex. xx, 4, 5*. "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in the heavens above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them." This not only prohibits the representation of God by images, but it prohibits all forms of idolatry. The Christian system reiterates the

prohibition with the same force of obligation. *Acts*, xvii, 29, "We ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device."

*Second.*—This doctrine, moreover, teaches us that any external or bodily service will not be acceptable, in the worship of God. Christ has settled this question beyond all controversy, in *John* iv, 24, by stating that "God is a spirit." With this fact he further states the nature of pure worship; "and they that worship him, must worship him in *spirit* and in truth."

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#### SECTION SIXTH.

##### *Attributes of God—Omnipotence.*

1. The "*Infinite Power*" of God is that attribute of his nature by which he can bring to pass everything which is possible. It is classed with his *natural* attributes, because its object is rather *physical* than *moral* good. But for the Omnipotence of God his other perfections would not have been known; not a single world would have been created; not a single man or angel would have been brought into being to contemplate his glory; not a single being would have existed but himself. But worlds do exist, not indeed as mere ideas, but as facts, having all the properties of matter, as visibility, form. It is a fact, too, that men and angels exist as distinct intelligent beings. These did not create themselves, nor are they the result of progressive development, having their origin in some inferior organism independent of the direct creative acts of a Superior Being. They have a Creator, and the very fact of their being implies his power. This is one of man's earliest and

strongest conceptions; he sees the clear manifestations of power all about him, but it is seen only in what may be called secondary causes. But secondary causes of power are not independent; at most, they are but sequences of a power that is anterior to themselves, and may be traced back to a point of observation at which every man is compelled to admit a *First Cause of Power*. All the evidences of power that we see in things around us are but effects of this anterior power; and, as it is a truth admitted by all philosophy, that the effect cannot be greater than the cause; therefore, we infer the "infinite power" of God from the demonstration of power that we see all about us.

Now if we remove from this philosophical idea of power, every circumstance which indicates imperfection, and conceive it to be capable of producing every possible effect, and of accomplishing every possible purpose, then we have the most complete idea of the Omnipotence of God that we can form.

2. The *ground* of this attribute of God lies in the supreme perfection of his nature; and since he is infinite in all his other perfections his power must be infinite. God's power is limited by nothing that is consistent with the purity of his nature, and the infinitude of his other perfections. This will appear more clearly when we consider the character of God's *moral attributes*, and the perfect harmony there is between these and his *natural attributes*. God has power to do all things that are possible; but he cannot do that which is a contradiction to his *truth* and *rectitude*. Hence it is impossible for God to lie, or contradict himself. This is not a *physical* but a *moral* impossibility; "God is truth," and when his power is exercised it is always in conformity with truth.

But God cannot work contradictions; he cannot make

a thing to be and not to be at the same time; he cannot make a part of a thing greater than the whole; nor can he make a lie the truth. The reason that God cannot do these things, is not a deficiency of power, but that the things in themselves are clearly impossible, and inconsistent with the moral rectitude of the Divine nature. We are to understand, then, that when we speak of "infinite power," in the light of reason and the Scriptures, we speak of that by which God can do everything which he *wills*; and that he wills to do nothing which is inconsistent with the other perfections of his holy nature.

3. But we may farther prove the unlimited power of God by the greatness of his works. The doctrine of the Bible is, that God created the world, and all it contains out of nothing. Now it matters not whether the thing created was first produced in small particles, or whether the whole was brought into being at once, for the same act of power that could produce an atom, out of nothing, could produce a universe. This is so totally different from the effect which human power can produce, that it brings out clear evidence that "infinite power" belongs only to God.

But infinite power did not cease with the work of creation; it still continues to "uphold all things." The existence of the universe is *dependent*, and is prolonged from moment to moment, and from age to age, by the same power that brought it into being. God upholds "all things by the word of his power, *Heb. i, 3.*

4. But the "infinite power" of God may be considered in its *moral* aspect. Here, the evidence may not be so striking, because it does not address the senses, and because it relates to the invisible influences exerted upon the thoughts and volitions of intelligent beings. But still the evidence is sufficiently strong to convince us

of the power of God, blended with love and mercy, in the whole work of *moral government*. Wicked spirits whose gigantic powers burn with malignant hate against all that is good, are controlled and restrained by Divine power, else man would be destroyed. Man, too, has great moral power which is likewise influenced by wickedness; and, but for the restraining *moral* power of God's government, he would soon destroy the entire human race. How great, then, is the power by which the malignant power of devils is checked! and how great is the power by which the enemies are made "the sons of God!"

5. But the doctrine of the "infinite power" of God is clearly sustained by the Scriptures. *Gen.* xvii, 1, "The Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the *Almighty God*; walk before me, and be thou perfect." *Job* xxvi, 14, "Lo; these are parts of his ways, but how little a portion is heard of him! but the *thunder of his power* who can understand?" *Ps.* cxv, 3, "But our God is in the heaven; *he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.*" *Jer.* xxxii, 17, "Thou hast *made the heaven and the earth, by thy great power*, and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee." These passages prove most distinctly the unlimited power of God, and very clearly justify the Article in the use of those terms which teach the doctrine that God is Almighty.

This doctrine very naturally suggests two reflections:

*First.*—The doctrine of the Omnipotence of God forms a very essential part of that system of revelation upon which every good man's faith is founded. But for this the system would be incomplete, and totally inefficient, and the true believer could have no security amid the antagonisms of life. But God is Almighty, and in his

power the Christian may confidently trust. *Ps.* cxlvi, 5, 6, "Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God; who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that therein is; who keepeth truth forever."

We can readily see in this doctrine the *security* of God's children; for if God be for them, who can be against them? *Ps.* cxxi, 5, 6, "The Lord is thy keeper; the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand. The Sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night." *Ps.* cxxv, 2, "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people from henceforth even forever."

*Second.*—But while we see so clearly, the power of God in keeping his people, we may see also, the utter inability of the sinner, to endure the power of God's anger. What will he do when he is found at the last day without a wedding garment? He will be speechless, he will be driven away in his wickedness, and his punishment for sin will be to him an eternal testimony that God is the Almighty.

"Now, only now, against that hour  
We may a place provide;  
Beyond the grave, beyond the power  
Of hell our spirits hide."

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#### SECTION SEVENTH.

##### *Attributes of God—Wisdom.*

1. The *Wisdom* of God is said to be a compound attribute. To see the truth of this we have but to consider the close connection of Wisdom with Omnipresence and Omniscience. It is a doctrine of the Scriptures that God

is present in all places at the same time. He sees all things just as they are, and, therefore, perfectly understands the nature of things, and their several relations as *means* and *ends*. This knowledge is called Wisdom; hence Daniel says, "Blessed be the name of God, forever and ever; for *wisdom* and might are his." *Dan.* ii, 20. And St. Paul says, *Rom.* xi, 33, "O! the depth of the riches both of the *wisdom* and knowledge of God!"

The Wisdom of God implies two things; the choice of the *best ends*, and the choice of the *best means* by which those ends may be secured. Now, if we inquire what the general and particular ends are, which God proposes to himself in the creation and preservation of the world, we have this general answer, that he might impart to all his creatures that degree of perfection and happiness, of which they are severally susceptible. This is surely the best end, and this is surely what is intended when it is said God created all things for his own glory. If God proposes to himself, and to his creatures the best ends, it is not only evidence of *wisdom*, but of *benevolence*; and it is the foundation of a settled confidence in God, that he does, and will, employ the best means by which to bring about those benevolent ends. As an all-wise Being, he knows what are the best means; and as an Omnipotent Being, he is able to employ them.

2. But proofs of the wisdom of God are seen in all his works. These have always been referred to by the wisest men as sure signs of Infinite Wisdom; hence, David says. *Ps.* civ, 24. "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in *wisdom* hast thou made them all; the earth is full of thy riches." David does not refer to any *one* part of the creation as teaching the wisdom of God, but to *all* its parts. These are innumerable, but we may

be instructed by some of them, as the heavens and the earth. In the heavens we see the Sun, the great central luminary; the Moon, and other visible bodies, all revolving in the most perfect harmony. The Sun, by his attractive power, keeps within their respective orbits all the planets of the vast system; and hence, while the whole mighty machine is incessantly working, there is neither confusion, nor the slightest variation in the movements of any of its parts. Look at how the earth is adapted to all the ends for which it was made; then look at the countless beings that inhabit the earth,—the seas,—the atmosphere,—all of them perfectly adapted to their several places, and in complete unison with the whole machinery of government and circumstances with which they stand connected. Now all this cannot fail to convince us of the Scripture fact, that the whole is the work of an intelligent, and *wise* Being, rich in all the best expedients by which to secure the best ends.

3. The Wisdom of God may be seen in the *mode* of bringing about his purposes. The means employed often seem inadequate, but the result always shows that “the foolishness of God is wiser than men.” Very often the greatest results are produced by what would seem to us inappropriate means; and sometimes, too, the purposes of God are accomplished by a train of circumstances the least likely, in the estimation of human beings, to accomplish any good. Joseph was sold into servitude, but it was that he might rise to the honors of a kingdom, and be the instrument of protection to his father, and to his brothers. A babe was born in Bethlehem, but the shedding of his blood was to be the means of “a great salvation” for all nations. The greatest revolution that ever took place both in the political and moral world, grew out of the sacrifice of this one life for the life of the peo-

ple. This revolution was carried on by men who had no claim to extraordinary talent, learning, wealth, or worldly honor; but they preached Christ as God in his wisdom directed them, though their preaching was not with "enticing words of men's wisdom;" and, as the direct effect of this, the Christian religion is established and thousands rejoice because of its power. The wisdom of God presides over and conducts the entire scheme.

4. But the Wisdom of God is *infinite*. Proof of this is found in his works, and in his word. In his works there are essential *modes* of being, and *modes* of action, which human wisdom cannot comprehend. Hence, in *Prov.* xxi, 30, Solomon says, "There is no *wisdom*, nor understanding, nor council against the Lord." When the wisdom of the angels is compared with the wisdom of God, they are "charged with folly." No marvel then if man in his most enlightened and highly cultivated state, cannot comprehend the *modes* of either vegetable or animal being. No marvel too, if the most enlightened philosopher cannot comprehend the *modes of action* in the motions and revolutions of the heavenly bodies. Nor is it incompatible with the doctrine of God's benevolence if we find great facts and principles in Christianity which we cannot understand. This proves that there is greater wisdom in the Author of Christianity than there is in its subjects; and, that it is therefore the more worthy of careful thought, and an unqualified reception. But enough has been said upon the doctrine of the Divine Wisdom in this place, and it now remains to learn one or two practical lessons.

*First.*—This doctrine is eminently calculated to inspire our hearts with pious feelings towards God. He is too wise to err in any of his benevolent plans for the elevation and safety of the human race. We may, therefore,

confide in whatever he has promised as the result of obedience to his commandments. Hence it is that the doctrine of Infinite Wisdom affords us an unfailing source of consolation and peace, amid the conflicts and sufferings of the present life.

*Second.*—We are taught by this doctrine to be modest in our remarks, and careful in our conclusions upon the mysteries of infinite wisdom in the works of God; and upon, what to us, are the complications of Divine Providence. We should never forget, that “in wisdom hast thou made them all.” Since we cannot understand them it were but egotism and gross presumption to condemn them; whereas, humility and wisdom would dictate, that a scheme comprehending the destiny of men and things, for time and eternity, is not to be fully understood by finite beings, but belongs to God who is infinite in all his perfections. With this great principle established in the soul, we may see that,

“ In all our Maker’s grand designs,  
Omnipotence with *wisdom* shines ;  
His works, through all this wondrous frame  
Declare the glory of his name.”

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#### SECTION EIGHTH.

##### *Attributes of God—Goodness.*

1. The goodness of God properly belongs to the second classification of the Divine Attributes, called *moral*. This attribute is ascribed to God in a sense in which it can be ascribed to no other being; God is infinitely good. This attribute belongs to God because it forms an essential part of that nature which we must ascribe to him as the most perfect of all beings. David says, *Ps.* exix, 68, “Thou *art good* and *doest good.*” This passage

teaches *first*, that God is good in himself, and has, therefore, a *disposition* to bestow upon all his creatures the good of which they are severally capable; and *second*, that he *does* bestow this good upon his creatures. God is good in himself because there is no motive or object equal or superior to himself to be anything else. There is nothing in the nature of things, either spiritual or material, that can supply a single inducement for God to be anything else than good. Men may see some quality of goodness in their equals that they may desire to possess or imitate. This may induce them to use, it may be, unlawful means to attain that good; but it is evident that considerations like these cannot apply to God, for all good is actually in his possession, and there is therefore nothing left for him to possess or desire.

2. But goodness of *nature* and goodness of *conduct* are more desirable than the opposite. Now as this proposition is admitted by men, it is certain that an all-wise God can see it in an infinitely superior sense; and that, for his own happiness, and the welfare of his creatures, he will make choice of it as the essential perfection of his own perfect nature. This attribute is necessary in connection with his other perfections to complete the idea of an all-perfect Being; and to constitute the ground of trust, love, and hope. Hence men may look upon God as their Father, and feel the emotions of gratitude rising in harmony with sentiments of deep veneration and love. But while goodness is more desirable than malevolence, and while it is a disposition to communicate happiness, it is, at the same time, regulated by *wisdom* and *justice*. *Wisdom* in the choice of intelligent beings as the subject of spiritual good; and *justice* in the bestowment of the greatest good upon the most virtuous and holy. Thus the goodness of God is made

a reason for the proper cultivation of the heart, and for the most vigorous efforts to attain to all the goodness of character and happiness of life, of which the human being is capable.

3. The works of God declare his goodness. This is his own testimony, for when he finished the work of creation, in its several parts, he pronounced them "good," "very good." The Bible justifies the belief that all things were created for the purpose of being good and happy; and that all the sensitive beings had as much of God's goodness in them, as they were severally able to contain. Hence David says, *Ps.* xxxiii, 5, "The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord." This passage fully proves the common great truth, that *God's works prove his goodness.*

But there is a language that is more easily understood, upon the doctrine of infinite goodness, than the works of creation. It is the language of the Bible. This book, like creation, is an *effect* of power, wisdom, and goodness, and like its *cause* it is good. It so unfolds the nature of God, the nature of his works, and the mysteries of his providence, as to make them all harmonize in the one great truth—God is infinitely good, and does good to all his creatures.

4. It is true there are evils in the world; but it is also true that there is more good than evil; therefore there is no evidence in this that God is not good. The fact that there are remedies for the various evils extant, clearly shows that in the midst of the evils of life God is unfolding the great truth that he is good. But sin is in the world. This is true but God did not produce it; he did not make such a mistake as to incorporate evil into the nature and frame-work of his moral intelligences; nor did he create angels or men in connection with such cir-

cumstances as to compel either of them to transgress. They voluntarily did the act, and sin followed. Such is the nature of the Divine moral government, that any opposition to it is sin; man did violate an express law and thereby involved himself and his posterity in ruin. This is shown very clearly by St. James. *James* i, 13, 15, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, *neither tempteth he any man*. But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death." This passage clearly shows by whom, and how sin was brought into the world. The evil is charged upon man.

5. But God might have prevented sin. It cannot be shown that God was under any obligation to his own goodness to do this. He placed man in a state of *trial*, as a *free moral agent*, which was the highest good he could confer upon him, and trial always supposes, at least a liability to err. Now if man abused the freedom of his will, and was "drawn away of his own lusts," God cannot by any possibility of fair argument be charged with the introduction of moral evil. St. Paul says, "By one man sin entered into the world," *Rom.* v, 12. Though man is chargeable with all this evil, God is still good, and not even liable to a shadow of impeachment. That the world might understand, and feel the force of this doctrine more fully, God immediately instituted a remedial system by which man might be restored to his favor. And, as if to exhibit all his goodness, he sent his Son to die in man's behalf, that this remedial system might have full efficacy and power to bring man back to himself, to behold the glory of his goodness. *Psa.* cvii, 1,

“O, give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endureth forever.”

6. As a farther evidence of the Divine goodness, man is still in a state of trial, and is called upon to seek that which is good. Now it is a dictate of reason and the Bible, that if a man is virtuous he is happy, and if he is vicious he is miserable. This is likewise true in experience. This doctrine of reward and punishment is so interwoven with our nature that we naturally look for happiness as the reward of piety, and misery as the punishment of sin. What does this argue? The goodness of God, as well as his justice. The fact that virtue is rewarded with happiness, argues that God prefers that goodness of character which is the most like himself. Put God punishes the wicked. This is true, and clearly proves his goodness, if we consider the fact that he is the moral governor of a universe of responsible beings, and that his government is founded in righteousness. God is infinitely good and is always doing good. Gratitude is therefore the just return that the intelligent objects of his goodness should make. It is a reason why men should love and serve him in all faithfulness; and it is the reason why sinners are so inexcusable when they charge his dispensations with severity, partiality, cruelty or injustice. God's goodness is the reason why good men are so happy in his service, in this life, and why they expect an eternal reward of felicity in heaven.

‘ Before my faith's enlighten'd eyes,  
Make all thy gracious goodness pass ;  
Thy goodness is the sight I prize ·  
O might I see thy smiling ;  
Thy nature in my soul proclaim,  
Reveal thy love, thy glorious name ·

## SECTION NINTH.

*God the Maker of all things.*

1. The power and wisdom of God are essential to the existence of everything exterior to himself. These, like all the other attributes of God, are invisible; but we know they are properties of his nature by what we see of his works, and by what we are taught in the Bible. With these attributes, essential to the production of every thing beyond himself, God is presented to us, in this Article, as the "Creator of all things *visible* and *invisible*." In this it has the authority and testimony of the Bible. It may be regarded as a fact, therefore, that the Scriptures and this Article array themselves against the infidel philosophy that teaches the eternity of matter, and the fortuitous union of the several parts of the universe into a complete system.

2. The Scriptures constantly describe God as the *maker*, not only of the *form* in which the universe now stands, but of the *materials* of which the form is composed. With this fundamental truth, the Bible opens. *Gen.* i, 1, "In the beginning God *created* the heavens and the earth." The same fact is taught throughout the entire Book as one of the principle characteristics of the true God. *Col.* i, 16, "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in the earth, *visible* and *invisible*, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities or powers, all things were created for him, and by him." These two passages may be regarded as a full and clear confirmation of the general belief, that the eternity of matter, and the merely accidental formation of the universe is nowhere sustained by the Bible, nor by any system of sound philosophy.

3. By the term heavens, in the first of Genesis, we are to understand as the Jews did, all that is above the earth's

surface—as the atmosphere, the place occupied by the stars and other planets, and the heaven of heavens, called by St. Paul in *2 Cor. xii, 2*, “the third heavens.” This latter place was evidently created before the two former, but how long, or when, we do not know. When the Bible speaks of the fowls of heaven, the dews of heaven, &c. they refer to the atmosphere, or the space immediately above the earth. This may be called the *first* heaven. The atmosphere, it is true, is invisible, but we know it does exist, and the more we know of its properties and uses, by scientific research, the more we know of the power and wisdom of God. It is a medium of life to vegetables, and to breathing animals; it is the medium of light, of sound, of heat and cold, of dew and rain; and it is one of the theatres upon which is displayed many of the wonders and exhibitions of the power of God.

4. But in the *second* heaven we may see still greater displays of the power and wisdom of God. Here is the Sun, the noblest emblem of the Creator; the Moon, reflecting the light of the Sun by night, in softer rays, and beautifully emblematic of Christ; the Stars in their endless number and variety, harmoniously moving around the greater planets, fitly representing the saints of God. Here again, though we may have the aid of science, we are bewildered in the works and wonders of the Divine power and wisdom. But if we ascend into the *third* heavens we are amid the splendors and glories of the Godhead itself. Science has made no discoveries here but the Holy Ghost has; and whatever we may know of this place we must learn from the Bible. God is the maker of all these heavens, and though human wisdom may not be competent to the full understanding of even the least of his works, yet we dare not ascribe them to any other being.

5. But the *earth* is included in the work of creation. Moses informs us that when its materials were brought into being they were "without form." In the process of bringing the earth out into a distinctive form, and into its appropriate place, God is represented as pursuing a plan of consecutive development. He separated the light from the darkness; he constructed the firmament; he separated the land from the waters; he created herbs and trees; he created the lights of heaven; the fish of the seas, and the fowls of heaven; and he created the beasts of the field. Every thing being finished and assigned to its appropriate place and office, one more step and the work is finished; last of all, man is made in the "image of God." Here is a being with all the marks of superior dignity and beauty; a being mortal and immortal, fitted for the present and the future, with an irresistible and innate consciousness that he did not come into being by chance, and that he did not produce himself.

These remarks are based upon the two common ideas of creation, *production* and *formation*. By the *first* we are to understand the production of something out of nothing; and by the *second*, the formation of things as they now appear, out of pre-existing matter, or that which was brought into being by the first act of creation. *Acts* xvii, 24, "God made the world and all things therein."

6. But the Article speaks of *invisible* things. It may here refer to angels, to the human soul, or to systems of worlds in some immensely distant regions of space. Whatever may be intended certain it is that God is the Creator, for he is infinite, and fills all space. He has created what we see, and there is nothing inconsistent with reason to suppose that his power and wisdom have been, and are even now employed in producing other worlds, and other beings, that we can know nothing of.

But if the Article forbids speculation, and limits the mind to the study of known facts, then the Bible must be our guide. It speaks of angels as real beings. These communicate between the heavens and the earth, yet we cannot see them; and but for their employment as ministers of God's judgments, and as ministering spirits to the saints, we might never have heard of them. These constitute a part of the invisible creation of God. If the Article includes the human soul, as it surely does, and as something invisible, we can *feel* its truth, for we know this is our rational life power. From these, as well as from some other known facts of invisible existences, we may see the propriety and strict truthfulness of our Article when it teaches us that God is the "Maker of all things *visible* and *invisible*." It directs our minds to the fact that the Mosaic theory of the creation is strictly rational. It places God at the *head* of all that exists; and it regards him as giving direction to all the laws by which the various parts of his works are governed. And by giving consistency and direction to these laws in all their operations, *he* is the only reason why things do still exist. We pity, therefore, that philosophy, or that man, who will limit and degrade the Divine power and wisdom to the creation of the clam, the sponge, the polypus, as the primary producing agent of all animal and rational beings. And we pity, too, that man whose philosophy gives him no higher origin than the clam, and whose channel of development has been through the inferior animals.

7. But the work of creation is ascribed to the three persons of the Godhead,—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. We must not suppose, however, that in the creation the Father was the principle agent, and that the Son and Holy Spirit were subordinate agents, or mere instruments of power. In all the works of God, the

three persons in the one essential Godhead concur, as one great Creator and preserver of things both *visible* and *invisible*.

“ High is thy power above all hight,  
 What e'er thy will decrees is done ;  
 Thy wisdom, equal to thy might,  
 Only to thee, O God, is known !”

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SECTION TENTH.

*God the Preserver of all Things.*

1. This part of our Article states the doctrine of the *Divine Providence*. It teaches that God is not only the maker of all things, but the “*preserver of all things visible and invisible.*” The framers of this Article intended, no doubt, to express the whole doctrine of Providence, though they use but the single term *Preserver*. With this view of the Article, we may inquire what Providence means. The term, as used in Christian theology, is designed to express the conduct of God towards his works, which he upholds by his power and regulates by his wisdom. It, therefore, signifies the constant care which God exercises in the preservation and government of the universe.

Though the doctrine of Divine Providence is denied by many, yet a single careful reflection might convince them that it is founded in the necessary connection there is between the Creator and the created. If there be a Maker of all things there must necessarily be a Preserver of all things; for it is just as absurd to suppose that the world is preserved and governed by chance, or that it has the elements and power of government in itself, as to suppose that it was brought into existence by chance. Hence it is that belief in God necessarily infers a Providence.

God is infinite in *power* and is therefore able to govern all things, and to preserve them in being. He is infinite in *wisdom* and therefore knows how to preserve and govern all things. That he is *willing* to govern and preserve all things follows from his goodness; and from the fact that things do still exist and move in such perfect harmony. "He careth for us," and this care ranges alike from the least to the greatest of all the things that he has made.

2. But let us reflect upon the obvious fact that the works of creation are no more able to sustain themselves in being than they were at first to contribute to their existence. Matter was brought into being by the power of God, and moulded into such shapes, placed in such positions, and adapted to such uses as Infinite Wisdom directed. Now we argue that whatever power was necessary to bring matter into being, and to adjust its several forms and parts into a complete universe is equally necessary to preserve that universe in being. And hence it is that we derive proof of the Divine Providence from the dependent state of the creation. It is necessarily contingent, and exists only by the power and permission of the Creator. Not a moment of its duration is without the presence of God's power, and the moment this is withdrawn its vast parts must separate and reel in the wildest confusion.

3. But the Bible sets forth the doctrine of Providence in much clearer terms than can be exhibited by reason. Here the notion of Providence is taught as involving two things, *preservation* and *government*. God is expressly called the preserver. *Job* vii, 20, "What shall I do unto thee, O thou *Preserver* of men?" *Neh.* ix, 6, "And thou *preservest* them all." *Ps.* xxxvi, 6, "O Lord, thou *preservest* man and beast." *Heb.* i 3, "*Upholding* all things by the word of his power."

From these and other similar passages we learn the great truth that the purpose of God to create all things was not confined to the mere act of creating them, but comprised their whole future existence. But it may be said that all things are preserved and governed by fixed laws. This is true, but these emanate from God, and are, at most, but the particular modes in which God exerts his power. These are called natural laws, but God presides over their general and particular administration; hence we have what are called general and special providence.

4. The Divine providence is *universal*. This naturally follows from the Scripture idea of creation. If the smallest being or particle of matter was worth a beginning it was designed to answer some end in the creation, and is therefore preserved. We may give some Scripture evidence of this doctrine. *First.—In inanimate nature.* *Ps.* cxix, 90, 91, “Thou hast established the Earth and it abideth. They continue this day according to their ordinances, for all are thy servants.” And, again, *Ps.* civ, 14. “He causeth grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man; that he may bring forth food out of the earth.” *Second.—Animate creation.* Speaking of “both small and great beasts,” David says, *Ps.* civ, 27. “These wait upon thee; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season.” *Third.—The affairs of nations are under the control and care of God.* *Job.* xii, 23, “He increaseth the nations, and destroyeth them; he enlargeth the nations, and straiteneth them again.” *Fourth.—The Divine Providence may also be recognized in families,* *Ps.* lxxviii, 6, “God setteth the solitary in families.” *Ps.* cvii, 41. “Yet setteth he the poor on high from affliction, and maketh him families like a flock.” *Fifth.—The fowls*

of heaven. *Matt. x, 29*, "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father." *Sixth.*—*Matt. x, 30*. "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered." Time would fail us in giving specimens of the extent and minuteness of Providence; but from what has already been said, we can readily see how true our Article is when it recognizes God as the "preserver of all things."

5. But we are reminded that there are "invisible" things to which the providence of God is extended. If by this *angels* and *spirits* are intended, these are included in the "all things," and are just as much the objects of Divine care as material and visible bodies are. And if the Article refers to other worlds, and systems of worlds that may be so distant from ours that they are invisible; still the providence of God is as essential to their existence and well being as it is to the visible universe. God is the Creator of all things visible and invisible, and he is the governor and preserver of them all.

I have looked over this delightful subject hastily, but with sufficient precision, I trust, to make the doctrine somewhat clear and impressive, and will close with two remarks.

*First.*—The doctrine of providence leads to very exalted ideas of God and his attributes. He is the only underived being in existence, and is, therefore, the only independent being. He is *wise* and knows how to preserve and govern. He is *infinite* in *power* and is able to preserve. He is *infinite* in *goodness* and governs and sustains all things in such a way as to secure to his intelligent creatures the greatest amount of enjoyment.

*Second.*—The doctrine of a constant and universal providence should remind us of the various duties of

religious and social life. In religious life to be constant in the discharge of every Christian duty. God is always upholding and enriching us with his blessings; he is constantly preserving us from the thousand snares of the world, the flesh, and satan, and we should always trust in him for protection and look to him for his blessing.

In social life we are reminded of our duty to the poor, the humble, the sad in heart. Our conduct should never cause them a sigh, or a tear. We should comfort, assist, and encourage them; and never should we forget that, though Lazarus was poor he is now in Abraham's bosom, while the rich man is in hell. God sustains us that we may sustain others; he gives us friends that we may be friends to the stranger; and he smiles upon us that we may smile upon our fellow beings.

“In every stream his bounty flows,  
Diffusing joy and wealth;  
In every breeze his spirit blows  
The breath of life and health.”

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#### SECTION ELEVENTH.

##### *The Trinity.*

1. This doctrine is stated in the Article in these words, *And in unity of this Godhead, there are three persons of one substance, power, and eternity; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.* The Bible is very clear in the doctrine of but one God, as has been shown in Section first; but as soon as we open it again, and in other places, another doctrine is presented which seems to conflict with this first statement. This is technically called the doctrine of the Trinity, and teaches the union of *three distinct Persons* in one Godhead. In conformity

with the Scripture teaching on this doctrine, our Article makes the statement that there is but one substance or essence of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and that these three Persons in one essence partake of the same nature and perfections of Supreme Divinity. No one doubts the existence of one God who has carefully studied the light of nature, and the Bible; but there are persons who, not only doubt but deny the doctrine of three Persons in this one God. To sustain themselves they necessarily deny the Divine nature of Jesus Christ, as well as that of the Holy Spirit. These doctrines are necessarily involved in the doctrine of the Trinity; but as they more properly belong to the Notes on Art. II, and IV, nothing will be said upon them here.

2. Let us now try to ascertain whether the doctrine of the Trinity is a doctrine of the Bible. If it is not it should be discarded; and if it is, it is proper that it should be an Article of faith in every summary of Christian belief. But before we proceed to the proof of this doctrine we must define the terms in which it is stated. *First.*—The term *Trinity*. This term is not found in the Bible, it is true, but it is a very appropriate term to express this great doctrine. It signifies *three in one*, and is expressive of three distinct Persons in one undivided Godhead. *Second.*—The term *Godhead* signifies the Divine nature. The term is found in *Rom. 1, 20*, “Even his eternal power and *Godhead* ;” and in *Col. ii. 9*, “For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the *Godhead* bodily.” This term more properly denotes that infinite, eternal and unchangeable nature which is common to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and which cannot be said to be peculiar to either. *Third.*—The distinction in the Godhead is known by the term *Person*. This term is intended to express, only, the distinction of Persons in

the Godhead without effecting their unity in one essence. *Fourth.*—The term *essence* or *substance* means that which has a real being. As it is applied to the doctrine before us, it means the reality of the Divine nature of God and of the two other Persons that compose the Trinity.

3. In the farther statement of this doctrine we may notice what is said of it in the Old Testament. It is generally believed that this doctrine is purely of New Testament revelation. This is true to some extent; but at the same time all will agree that the Hebrews had some idea, at least, of a plurality of persons in the Godhead, if not exactly a Trinity. What else could they understand by *Gen. i, 26*, “And God said let *us* make man in *our* image after *our* likeness?” Now it is not a question that God is the creator, and that man was made in his image; but that other Persons are in the Godhead, and *were* associated with the Father in the creation of man. Again, it is said in *Chap. xi, 7*, “Let *us* go down and there confound their language.” These are certainly remarkable forms of expression, when taken in connection with the uniform doctrine of the Scripture that there is no other God but one; and when we consider the fact that angels were never associated with God in any of his acts in creation. These plural pronouns were undoubtedly intended to indicate a plurality of Persons of equal power and eternity with the Father.

But this plurality of Persons seems to be reduced to the number *three*, in the blessing of Aaron, in *Numb. vi, 24, 26*, “The Lord bless thee, and keep thee; the Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.” The proof of the Trinity is found in this passage in the repetition of the name of God three times, and because of its similarity to the Chris-

tian benediction, in 2 *Cor.* xiii, 14, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all." This taken in connection with that class of passages in which express mention is made of the Son and Holy Spirit forms very clear evidence of a Trinity taught in the Old Testament. The first is in *Ps.* ii, 7, "Thou art my Son." This was uniformly understood by the Jews to refer to the Messiah; and New Testament writers determine this to be the true interpretation. The second is, *Is.* xlvi, 16, "And now the Lord God and his Spirit hath sent me," and *Chap.* lxi, 1, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me." Here while one Divine Person is speaking, he speaks of another Divine Person whom he styles the Spirit; and of another Divine Person whom he calls the Lord God. Compare this with *Ps.* xxxiii, 6, "By the *word* of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the hosts of them by the *breath* of his mouth." In both of these passages three Persons are distinctly named; in the latter express mention is made of the Father, the *Word*, or Son of the Father; and the *breath of his mouth* which can be no other than the Holy Spirit.

From these and similar passages the Jewish commentators agreed in saying: "There are three *degrees* in the mystery of Elohim; and these degrees are called *Persons*. They are *all one*, and cannot be separated." Add to this the historic fact that the Hindoos, the Persians, the Egyptians, the Greeks and Romans held a triad in the Divine nature, and we must trace the origin of this traditionary belief, chiefly, if not altogether to the Jewish Scriptures. But while the above passages cannot be regarded as positive proof of this doctrine of the Trinity, yet when they are taken together, and in

connection with others of a similar import, they certainly teach a *plurality* of Persons in the Godhead, and strongly intimate that this plurality consists of but three Persons.

4. As nothing positive, on this doctrine, can be drawn from the Hebrew Scriptures, our fuller and final proof must be found in the Christian Scriptures. Even here, the doctrine of the Trinity, in all its extent and modifications is taught in no single passage. There are many passages, it is true, that prove the existence of three distinct Persons; but these, apart from all others, by no means prove that these Persons are necessarily Divine, or that they belong to one essence. Hence the importance of those passages which prove the doctrine of Christ's proper Divinity; and of those, too, which prove the Divinity of the Holy Spirit. If these two doctrines cannot be made out, the doctrine of the Trinity cannot be sustained by any possibility of argument or Scripture testimony. But the Bible is very clear upon these subjects, as we shall hereafter see, and we therefore proceed with the greater confidence to examine the doctrine of the Trinity as it is taught in the New Testament.

*First.*—The baptism of Jesus as narrated in *Matt.* iii, 16, 17. Now if it is admitted that Jesus is a Divine Person; and that the Holy Spirit is a Divine Person, then the doctrine of the Trinity is clearly proved by this transaction. The *Father*, by an audible voice from heaven, bears testimony to his incarnate Son; the Son, in his humanity is baptized by John; and the *Holy Spirit*, "like a dove," descends upon him.

*Second.*—The baptism of Christians is another clear proof of the Trinity. The form of words appointed to be used in this ordinance is as follows: *Matt.* xxviii, 19, "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the

Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Now it is well known that this is a religious ordinance, in which the *subject* is dedicated to the *Object* of religious service. It cannot, therefore, be reconciled to the uniform teaching of the Bible to suppose that God, who has said, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God," should demand, in the solemn service of Christian baptism, that worship and service should be rendered to a being less than himself, or less than Divine. This initiatory rite of Christianity is evidently intended to teach us, that, while there is one God, there are two other Persons of equal authority with himself, who are severally engaged as one God in the work of human salvation. If the Father, in whose name we are baptized, be a Person, so must also the Son and Holy Ghost be Persons, for men are baptized in the name of these as well as in the name of the Father.

*Third.*—The Apostolic benediction furnishes another proof of the Trinity of Divine Persons. This is evidently a prayer for such blessings as none but Divine Persons can communicate. But if this, or any other form of prayer be addressed to any being less than God it were impiety and idolatry; yet three Persons are distinctly recognized and addressed, as possessing Divine perfections, and as able to bestow upon Christians, love, grace, and holy communion. There is one other text, though the genuincness of it is doubted, which I will record in this place. 1 *John*, v, 7, "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one."

5. The three Persons in the Trinity are distinguished from each other by their *personal properties*. It is the personal property of the Father to beget the Son. *Ps.*

ii, 7, "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." It is the personal property of the Son to be eternally begotten of the Father. *John* i, 14, "And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father." It is the personal property of the Holy Ghost to *proceed eternally* from the Father and the Son. *John* xv, 26, "But when the Comforter is come, *whom I will send* unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which *proceedeth* from the Father, he shall testify of me." These are called personal properties to distinguish them from the essential perfections of the Divine nature. Essential perfections are common to the three Persons in the Godhead; but a personal property is something peculiar to each, and which may be affirmed of one but not of the other two. *Paternity* is peculiar to the Father, *filiation* to the Son, and *procession* to the Holy Spirit. "Plainly, therefore, says St. Augustine, "and without doubt it is to be believed that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are one Almighty God, eternal, unchangeable; and every one of these is God, and all of them but one God." Now *how* it is that three Persons of equal power and eternity are *one* essence we know nothing about. The Bible reveals no more upon this subject than it does upon the particular mode of the existence of God. The Scriptures reveal the fact of a Trinity, and we are to believe it without speculating beyond what is written. Christ requires that all his followers should believe this doctrine; and by this requirement he places it among the first and most essential doctrines of our holy religion. It is such in reality because it is the doctrine that fronts the world; and because it is intimately interwoven with the whole exhibition of Christian truth. "It is fit, therefore, that we should acknowledge and confess one God, made known as the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, acknowledg-

ing the several subsistences of one Deity, but as God understanding the communion of those subsistences in the same essence." *Justin Martyr, Expos. Fidei*

“ Now let the Father, and the Son  
And Spirit be adored  
Where there are works to make him known,  
Or saints to love the Lord.”

## ARTICLE II.

### OF THE WORD, OR SON OF GOD, WHO WAS MADE VERY MAN.

“The Son, who is the Word of the Father, the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father, took man’s nature in the womb of the blessed virgin; so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and manhood, were joined together in one person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God and very man, who truly suffered, was crucified, dead and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for actual sins of men.”

#### SECTION FIRST.

##### *Divinity of Christ.*

1. It is stated in this Article that the person called the Son of the Father, is “*the very and eternal God.*” If this can be shown to be the doctrine of the Bible, then we shall have proved that the *second* Person in the Trinity is a Divine Person, and so far as the proof may go in this particular case, it will greatly assist our faith in the doctrine of Three Persons of equal power and divinity, in the one Godhead. The Scriptures constantly prove that Jesus Christ is “the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father.”

*First.*—Christ is God. *John* i, 1, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, *and the Word was God.*” This justly celebrated passage proves that Christ is God in a form of testimony that cannot be mistaken. “*The Word was God.*” If the Word was God, “in the beginning,” he is still God, for it is impossible for God to cease to exist. St. Paul confirms the doctrine of this passage by *Rom.* ix, 5, “Of whom, as

concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, *God blessed*, forever. Amen." It is clearly impossible to avoid the force of this passage by any form of augmentation, and hence the confidence with which it is asserted in this Article that Christ is God.

*Second.*—Christ is the true God. 1 *John*, v, 20, "This is the *true God*, and eternal life." But who is the eternal life? The passage itself answers the question. And the question is answered by Christ himself, in *John* xiv, 6, "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth *and the life*." In this short passage, interpreted by one who well knew its true import, and application, Christ is called the "*true God*."

*Third.*—Christ is equal with God. *John* x, 30, "I and my Father are one;" and *verse* 38, "The Father is in me and I in him." Again, *Chap.* xiv, 11, "I am in the Father, and the Father in me." Now if these few passages prove anything, they prove that Christ is in all respects equal with God the Father.

2. In farther confirmation of this doctrine, the Bible ascribes such attributes to Christ as can only be ascribed to God.

↗ *First.*—*Eternity*. This attribute can belong to no being but God; but if it can be shown that Christ is from eternity, then Christ is the very and eternal God." He declares that he is "the first and the last," and is styled "the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity." In *Is.* ix, 6, Christ is called the "Everlasting Father." That the prophet means Christ, is evident from the first part of the verse: "For unto us a child is born;" and that he means eternity proper is clear from the word "Father," for none but God is "the Everlasting Father." *Prov.* viii, 22, 23, "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting,

from the beginning, or ever the earth was." The person referred to in this passage is called "Wisdom," in *verse* 12 and St. Paul applies this name to Christ in *1 Cor. i, 24*, "The Wisdom of God." John says, "He was before me," and yet John was born six months before the human nature of Christ. John certainly refers to the divine nature of Christ, which is eternal. *John viii. 58*, "Before Abraham was, I am." Christ here calls himself the Eternal one. St. Paul says, "Neither let us tempt Christ as they also tempted," but this temptation of which the Apostle speaks, was fourteen hundred years before Christ came, and must be taken as proof of his eternity.

*Second.—Immutability* is an attribute of God, and it is an attribute of Christ, therefore Christ is God. *Heb. i, 12*, "But thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail;" *Chap. xiii, 8*, "But thou art the same," evidently refers to the immutability of Christ. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday and to-day, and forever." These words cover all time past, and to come, and are but explanations of the word eternity. Now in all these years and days, past and to come, Christ is "the same;" therefore these passages prove that Jesus Christ is immutable, and consequently they prove that he is "the very and eternal God."

*Third.—Omnipresence* is an attribute predicated of Christ in *Matt. xviii, 20*, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." *Matt. xxviii, 20*, "And lo! I am with you always, even to the end of the world." These two passages unquestionably teach that Christ is omnipresent, and as this attribute can be predicated of none but God, therefore Christ is God.

*Fourth.—Omniscience* is an attribute of Christ, *John xxi. 17*, "Lord thou knowest all things." To know all things

supposes the presence of Christ with all things, *Col. ii, 3*, "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

→ *Fifth.*—*Omnipotence* is an attribute of Christ. *Matt. xxviii, 18*. "And Jesus came and spake unto them saying, All *power* is given unto me in heaven and in earth." In *Rev. i, 8*, Jesus Christ is expressly called "the *Almighty*." Hence the attribute called omnipotence belongs to him, and therefore he is God.

From this brief sketch of testimony from the Scriptures, it is evident that eternity, immutability, omnipresence, and omniscience are attributes of Christ. These are the highest perfections that the Bible ascribes to God; but we have seen that these are ascribed to Christ as clearly as they are ascribed to God; therefore the doctrine of the divinity of Christ is clearly established, if there were no other proofs.

3. But there are works ascribed to Christ which can be performed by none but God, as *Creation* and *Preservation*, from which also, we prove the divinity of Christ.

*First.*—*Creation.* *John i, 3*, "All things were *made* by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made." *Col. i, 16*, "For by him were all things *created*, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created by him and for him." Upon these two passages might rest this whole subject, for no testimony can be more pointed and direct. They prove that Christ is the Creator, therefore they prove that he is God; for creation is never ascribed to any being but God, in any part of the whole Scripture record.

*Second.*—The *Preservation* of all things is ascribed to Christ. *Col. i, 17*, "By him all things consist." *U<sup>2</sup>*

i, 3. "And *upholding* all things by the word of his power." In these passages, the work of upholding all things is ascribed to Christ, without any intimation that, in this work, he is exercising a power delegated to him. Preservation is the peculiar work of God; but it has been shown that Christ preserves all things, therefore Christ is God.

4. *Divine Honors are ascribed to Christ.* Every reader of the Bible knows that the worship of any other being but the "one living and true God," is idolatry; and yet the Scriptures testify that Christ *is* worshiped, and is to *be* worshiped as God. This cannot be reconciled with the fact that "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God," unless Christ is "the very and eternal God." *John* v, 23, "That all men should *honor the Son*, even as they honor the Father." *Phil.* ii, 9, 11, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should *bow*, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Now to "honor," "to bow the knee," is well known to be appropriate phraseology for worship. It is clear then that the Son is worshiped as God, and that, too, at the command of God the Father. Therefore he is God.

5. But if we hear what Christ says of himself we will see farther evidence of the divinity. "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth." Now this is no vain boast, if we witness the credentials with which he was furnished and the many direct proofs he exhibited, both of the divinity of his person, and of his mission. His divinity was attested at the baptism when the Holy Spirit, like a dove, descended and rested upon him; it was attested at his transfiguration when the glories of his eternal God-

head beamed through the veil of his humanity, and when the disciples saw Moses and Elias talking with him, said, "It is good to be here." And it was attested, when so terrible was the voice that some said "it thundered, and others that an angel spake."

But look at his works. He gave sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb, tone and vigor to the palsied limbs, the pardon of sins to the penitent; and he stilled the furious tempest with a word, and raised the dead. All these miracles speak to but two single points of his character, his *divinity*, and his *benevolence*. He pointed to his works as witnesses of the former and to his mission as an evidence of the latter. For himself he could not have felt a stronger assurance of the fact that he was God, if the hierarchies of heaven had constantly stood around him, like an amphitheatre of living glory pouring forth their songs of praise and worship to authenticate his claims to honor and worship.

"Join all the glorious names  
Of wisdom, love, and power,  
That ever mortals knew,  
Or angels ever bore;  
All are too mean to speak his worth,—  
Too mean to set the Saviour forth."

6. But if Jesus Christ were not God, the Authors of the Gospels, and the Epistles, must have adopted a very dangerous style. The Jews, with whom Christ and his Apostles constantly mingled, were strong advocates of the unity of God; and the surrounding nations were idolaters. To the Jews, Christ constantly proposed himself as the very and eternal God. And the Jews clearly understood him in this sense, and charged him with blasphemy. Wherever Christ was preached among the Gentiles, he was constantly presented as God, and that, too,

for the express purpose of destroying idolatry. The believing heathen were baptised in his name, and required to give him divine honors. Now all this is irreconcilable if Christ is not a divine Person,—the true God. And Christ himself, as well as his Apostles, must have practiced the greatest possible deception, and are therefore unworthy of a name in the history of the world. But this they did not do, as the predictions of the Old Testament prophets, and the miracles of Christ clearly testify. They propagated a fact interwoven with the very essence of the Divine nature, and of all others, the most essential to the salvation of the world.

But enough has been said in this place to show how clearly this doctrine is established by the Scriptures; and to excite in the reader a disposition to investigate the subject still further. And enough has been said to justify the framers of this Article in the use of the language which sets forth Christ as “the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father. So fully convinced of this truth was *St. Ingratious* that he says, “I glorify Jesus Christ, *even God*, who has endued you with wisdom.”

“Jehovah, Christ, I thee adore,  
 Who gav'st my soul to be;  
 Fountain of being and of power,  
 And great in majesty.”

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#### SECTION SECOND.

##### *Humanity of Christ.*

1. He “took man’s nature.” As the *first Adam*, was produced by the immediate agency of God the Father, so Jesus, who is the *second Adam*, was produced by the immediate agency of the Holy Ghost. *Luke* i, 35. “The

Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore that holy thing that shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God." Now the phrase "*come upon thee,*" and "*overshadow thee,*" means nothing more than that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was miraculously qualified, by the Holy Ghost, to conceive and produce a son, with all the rudiments of a perfect human being. The same phraseology occurs in *Acts* i, 8, "After that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." Here it means *the miraculous power* by which the Apostles should, everywhere, testify of Christ. Now as every miraculous event takes place through the influence, and agency of the Holy Ghost, we can have no difficulty in believing in the supernatural conception of Christ, and this too, in full view of all that infidels may have said to the contrary.

The *first Adam* was made a full and perfect man by one act of Almighty power, but Christ, the *second Adam*, was subject, in common with all other human beings, to all the natural laws of human progression, in all his physical and intellectual developments. Hence there was, first, the *conception*; second, the *accomplishment of full time*; and third, the *birth*. Now these are some of the physical facts in the production of any human being, and in these facts we have the evidence that Jesus Christ had a human body. But the Scripture history is farther evidence of his humanity, and that his body was subject to all the ordinary laws of physical development. Of the truth that he was born like other children, there can be no doubt, and his subsequent history attests the truth of his gradual physical and intellectual growth. *Luke* ii, 21, "And when *eight days* were accomplished, for circumcising the child, his name was called Jesus." The reason for this name is in *Matt.* i, 21, "For he shall save his people from their sins." Then "thirty-three days" after this, according to

the law of Moses, in *Lev. xii, 4*, his parents "brought him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord," *Luke ii, 22*. Here we have over forty days of Christ's early life distinctly noted, in connection with the ceremonies of the law. In *verse 40* it is said "the child *grew and waxed strong* in spirit, filled with wisdom." Now these are terms that can only be applied to the ordinary progress of human life, and the regular growth of the body.

Nothing more is said of Jesus until he is *twelve years* of age, *verse 42*. He is, at this early age, found "in the temple sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions," *verse 46*. The next period of his life is noticed in connection with his baptism, *Luke iii, 23*. Then he "began to be about *thirty years of age*." This was the age required by the law, at which the priests must arrive before they could be regularly installed in their office. Now it is evident from the foregoing circumstances, in the history of Jesus Christ, that he was a *real man*, both as to *body* and *soul*. Hence St. John says, "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth."

2. Terms are uniformly used in reference to Christ that must be understood as indicative of his humanity, as "this *man* receiveth sinners." "Never *man* spake like this *man*." "Come and see the *man* which told me all things." "A *man* that is called Jesus made clay." "If this *man* were not of God, he could do nothing." "Behold the *man* whose name is the Branch." "A *man* of sorrows." "After me cometh a *man*." "But this *man* when he had offered one sacrifice." "This *man* hath an unchangeable priesthood." "A *man* approved of God." "The *man* Christ Jesus." All these terms are used in the Scriptures as referring to the human nature of Jesus Christ; and clearly prove that he was considered a man by all who

saw, or had heard of him. And besides this they are terms used by inspired men.

As a man, *he hungered, thirsted, slept, shed tears*, and displayed *human feeling*, as *joy, sorrow, and anger*. And he exhibited, too, all the properties of a human soul, such as *knowledge and understanding*.

3. Without this human nature, Christ could not have made an atonement for sin. Man transgressed the law of God, and the penalty must fall upon man, even though that humanity might contain in itself the fullness of the Godhead. But Christ did take upon himself our sins, and did make atonement for these sins, in his own body.

"He took the dying traitor's place,  
And suffer'd in his stead;  
For sinful man—O wondrous grace!—  
For sinful man he bled."

To do this, he must be related to man, for according to the law of Moses, in *Lev. xxv, 25*, the redeemer of any forfeited estates must be a *relative* or *kinsman*. Now we know that we have all sinned in Adam, and have thereby forfeited all right to an "inheritance among the sanctified." But Jesus presents himself as our "*elder brother*," "*bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh*," for the sole purpose of "redeeming us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." And it is said of him that "*he is not ashamed to call us brethren*."

Whatever may be said about the humanity of Christ as necessary to an atonement for sin, necessarily implies the fact that he had a human soul. That he had a soul independent of his divinity, and to complete his humanity, is always assumed as an admitted truth. His whole history proves that he had extraordinary human understanding and wisdom; but like other men, his talents unfolded gradually. Hence St. Luke says, "*Jesus increased in*

*wisdom* and in stature, and in favor with God and man." But a final proof that Christ had a human soul, is his own words, *Matt.* xxvi, 38, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." Now it will not do to say that this was spoken of his divine nature, for this is not only contrary to the Scriptures, and reason, but it is clearly impossible. This could not suffer. With these facts before us, we can look upon the human nature of Christ the same as we can look upon the bodies of other men, with but two exceptions: his miraculous and unusual conception, and his sinlessness, and consequent immortality. Hence *Ignatius* says, "Christ was truly of the seed of David, according to the flesh, the Son of God, according to the will and power of God, having been truly born of a virgin." *Ep. ad Smyrna.*

4. The humanity of Christ was *immortal*. *Ps.* xvi, 10, "Neither wilt thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption." This language is applied to Christ by St. Luke, *Acts* ii, 27. Death is the consequence of sin, but Jesus was without sin, therefore he was immortal. He did not see corruption, but at the appointed time demonstrated in his own person the possibility of human resurrection. Hence it was necessary that he should possess perfect humanity, that he might be "*the first fruits of them that slept.*" He entered the tomb in his proper and perfect humanity, and in that tomb he conquered death in his own dominions, and "triumphed over the grave."

"Then first humanity triumphant  
Passed the crystal ports of light,  
And seized eternal youth."

## SECTION THIRD.

*Union of the two Natures.*

1. This doctrine is expressed in the third branch of this Article in the following strong language: "So that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and the manhood, were joined together in one person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God and very man."

The Scripture proof of this doctrine is so abundant, both in the Old and New Testament, that we shall be able to give but a few of the most prominent texts, *Is. ix, 6*, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the Government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." This passage brings before us very distinctly, the two natures of Christ; first, the *humanity—the child-born*, and second, the *Divinity—the mighty God, the everlasting Father*. Now, it is evident that both these persons could not be united in one nature. It cannot be said that the child born is the mighty God, or that the everlasting Father was born. We are compelled, therefore, to admit the two natures of Christ, in one of which he was a "*child*," and in the other, the "*mighty God*." *Heb. x, 5*, "Wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a *body* hast thou prepared me." This passage speaks of a person anterior to the body which was prepared for him. This person and the body prepared were joined together; the person for whom the body was prepared took possession of it. *Phil. ii, 5-7*, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; Who, being in the *form of God*, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation,

and took upon him the *form of a servant*, and was made in the *likeness of men.*" This passage speaks of a person "equal with God," which cannot be true of any being short of Supreme Divinity. This person took upon him another form, which form was that of a servant. Here we have the "form of God," and the "form of a servant." One equal with God, and the other in "the likeness of men." Quotations equally clear and pointed, with the above, might be given in great numbers; but with the candid reader of the Bible, and the candid confession of the truth as it is in Christ, the above are sufficient.

2. These passages prove with great clearness that the person of Jesus Christ is composed of two distinct, and widely different natures; the Divine, and the human. Both these natures are distinctly recognised, and minutely described, and yet but *one person* is referred to as the subject of Sacred History, and the ministrations of the Christian pulpit. We are bound to admit the union of these two natures in Jesus Christ if we would reconcile the Bible with itself, for it is impossible that a simple being should be "from everlasting," and yet *born in Bethlehem*; that he should *create* all things in the beginning, and *four thousand years* after be "*made of a woman*"; that he should be the *Lawgiver* of the Universe, and yet be "*made under the Law*;" and that he should *possess all things*, and yet "*have no place to lay his head.*" Now it is clear that these propositions so opposite to each other, imply a corresponding difference in the person concerning whom they are affirmed. The names, the character, the actions, and the honors of God are uniformly ascribed to Jesus Christ; the infirmities and sufferings of man are ascribed to Jesus Christ, and yet but one person is spoken of; therefore there must have been, in him, the union of the Divine and the human nature. These two

natures were *complete in themselves*; Christ was *perfect God*, and *perfect man*. As *God*, he existed prior to his human nature, and did not need humanity as a means of aid to his *eternal being*. As *man*, he was perfect, and *might* have existed, as other men, without the Divine nature; but the plan of salvation demanded the union of the two distinct natures, and therefore they "*were joined together in one person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God, and very man.*"

3. *How* these two natures are united, is quite another question, and we can no more answer it than we can answer the question, *how* the soul is joined to the body; or *how* it is, that the spirit of God dwells in believers. Certain it is, that the union was perfect; the human soul of Christ was conformed to the holiness of God; the human will of Christ was in strict subordination to the Divine will, *Mark* xiv, 36, "Not what *I will*, but what *thou wilt.*"

Father, remove this bitter cup,  
If such thy sacred will;  
If not content to drink it up,  
Thy pleasure I fulfill."

But Christ's own words may shed some light upon this question, "Believe me that I am *in* the Father, and the Father *in* me." Now just as fully as we can comprehend the meaning of these words, just so fully can we understand the nature of the union of Christ's Divine and human nature.

4. *When* this union commenced may be a question of some moment, inasmuch as some believe that it took place at the baptism of Christ. The general belief upon this subject is founded upon *John* i, 14, "And the Word was made flesh." Now as no time is specified, beyond the time of the incarnation, *when* the two natures *were* joined together, it is but just to suppose that at the time the human body

was formed and animated, at that time the Divinity was united with the humanity. Hence we infer that at the same instant he was perfect God, and perfect man.

5. *The perpetuity* of this union is settled by St. Paul, in *Heb. vii, 25*, "Seeing he *ever liveth* to make intercession for them.' Hence the Article teaches that the two natures of Christ "were joined together in *one person never to be divided.*"

6. *The reason* of this union of two natures in Jesus Christ is made very clear in the fact that he is a perfect Mediator. The union of the Divinity and the manhood was necessary to this holy office. That such an office is necessary to the *perfection* and *power* of the plan of salvation is taught throughout the Scriptures. *John xiv, 6*, "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." If this office is of so much value to the system of redemption, the *officer* must be both *God* and *man* for the following plain reasons; *First*, that he might enter into covenant with God, to mediate between him and sinners; *Second*, that he might give *virtue* and *efficacy* to his obedience and suffering.

But it was necessary that he should be man also: *First*, that he might be related in person to those for whom he was Mediator and Redeemer. *Second*, that sin might be atoned for in the same nature that sinned. *Third*, that he might be capable of suffering death, for God could not suffer, and it was necessary to die for sin, inasmuch as the law claims that without shedding of blood there can be no remission of sins. *Fourth*, He must be man that he might be a faithful high priest, and sympathize with his people in all their trials and temptations. With these qualifications, he is the *only Mediator*, and is therefore entitled to the faith of the church, and the songs of the redeemed for ever. Hence, *St. Chrysostom* says, "When thou

hearest of Christ, do not think him God only, or man only, but both together."

This union of two natures in one Christ, has ever been a mysterious doctrine, St. Paul says, 1 *Tim.* iii, 16, "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh." But while it is a great mystery, it is an indispensable part of God's plan of salvation, and final sacrifice for sin. It is *the reason* why pardon is offered to men, and *the reason* why there is "no more sacrifice for sin."

But what practical instruction may we derive from the union of the Divine and human nature in Christ? *First*, Because of this union, God and men may meet together on terms of reconciliation. But without this, God and sinners must have remained in enmity for ever. The person of Christ, as our daysman, and his relation to humanity, encourages man to approach unto God without that fear of being consumed, that so much shocked the Israelites, when the voice of God was heard in the thunders of Sinai. Men are now encouraged to come boldly to a throne of grace; to come without fear; to come with confidence.

"Behold the throne of grace;  
The promise calls us near;  
There Jesus shows a smiling face,  
And waits to answer prayer."

*Second.*—The union of the two natures in Christ was designed, in part at least, to exhibit the transcendently superior character of Christianity over every other system of religion devised by human reason. In all these systems there were known and felt defects that constantly embarrassed their votaries in all their attempts at the practice of virtue. In these systems the effect of a pure and perfect guiding example was wanting; the gods had never revealed a single rule of religious life, nor illustrated by

their own conduct a single virtue. But Christ as the founder of Christianity, and in his own person and spotless life, illustrated all its claims of duty in a meek and virtuous example. The incarnation of God in Christ, therefore, was designed to lead men to a life of both piety and morality, by a method admirably suited to this purpose, and absolutely peculiar to the Christian system. It *first* brings down the moral attributes of God to the level of human capacity; and *second*, it exhibits a perfect and exalted model of human excellence. *The Word was made flesh* to lead men to affectionate piety; and *the humanity of Christ was taken into God* that we might be influenced to aim at superhuman virtue.

*Third.*—The humanity of Christ, by which he holds an intimate, though sinless connection with sinners whom he came to redeem, is the representative of human nature in heaven. There Christ “ever liveth to make intercession for us,” and to dispense the blessings of God’s grace to his children. He is in heaven to give efficacy to the gospel on earth, and to conduct all its operations, so that the souls and bodies of the saints may be brought to where he is. But chiefly are believers encouraged when they look to the intercessory work of Christ in the Holy of Holies.

“He lives, to bless me with his love;  
 He lives, to plead for me above;  
 He lives, my hungry soul to feed;  
 He lives, to keep in time of need.”

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#### SECTION FOURTH.

##### *Sufferings of the Humanity.*

1. “Who truly suffered, was crucified, dead and buried.” But little need be said, in this place, of the sufferings of Christ, or of the proofs of his sufferings,

inasmuch as the facts are not denied. Much is said upon this painful, though glorious subject, both by the prophets of the Old Testament, and the writers of the New Testament. It may be enough to say that the sufferings of Christ's human nature were of *two* kinds,—bodily and mental. The causes of his pain and sorrow were partly visible, and partly invisible. The sufferings of his body were produced by the malice of men, in the wicked infliction of blows, scourging, and the indescribable tortures of the Roman crucifixion. The sufferings of his human soul arose from the wrath of God poured upon him, when he stood in the place of man, and bore our sins in his own body.

The whole period of the humanity of Christ on earth, was a period of suffering, either of body or soul. *Is.* liii, 3, "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." "He was despised," "He was wounded," "He was bruised," "He was oppressed," "He was cut off out of the land of the living," are terms of expression that indicate the most intense suffering. The good Bishop Pearson has said,— "If hunger and thirst; if revilings and contempt; if sorrows and agonies; if stripes and bufftings; if condemnation and crucifixion be suffering, then Jesus *suffered*. If the infirmities of our nature; if the weight of our sins; if the malice of men; if the machinations of satan; if the hand of God could make him suffer, our Saviour suffered."

2. But the Evangelists give a short but impressive history of his sufferings in Gethsemane. Here he struggled in the depths of solitude, with the weight of agony which we shall never realize nor comprehend. An unseen power pressed his soul into deepest agony, and his gushing sorrows are but hinted at in these words of highest passion,

*Mat.* xxvi, 38, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." And while he looked to the only refuge from the merciless lashes of hell, his mouth utters an earnest but submissive prayer, "O, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;" let it be poured out upon hell where it belongs,—“nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.” O what a moving, anxious entreaty! yet what a full surrender of the whole case to God! Deeply intense must have been his inward suffering that wrought so powerfully upon his body,—that could so operate upon the emotional nature of the Son of God, that “his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground.”

“Gethsemane can I forget?  
Or there thy conflict see,  
Thine agony and bloody sweat,  
And not remember thee?”

3. But he “*was crucified.*” This was the most cruel mode of punishment that enraged malice could invent. When compared with the gibbet, the gallows, the pilory, of more modern invention, it so far exceeds them in infamy, and torture, that the latter are, comparatively, easy and honorable modes of torture, while the former exceeds description. Add to this mode of Christ’s suffering, the attendant circumstances, the carrying of the cross by himself,—the sinking under its weight,—the nailing of his hands and feet to the wood,—the vinegar mingled with gall,—the hours of suffering,—the hours of collected power and darkness, that enveloped the sufferer in its awful folds,—the treading of the wine press of the wrath of God alone; the hidings of his Father’s face, and we may challenge all language,—all figures of speech, to communicate an adequate idea of the sufferings of him

who never committed sin. He suffered for us, that he might bring us to God.

—“Hell howled; and heaven that hour let fall a tear,  
Heaven wept that man might smile! Heaven bled, that man  
Aigh! never die!”

4. But Jesus was crucified “*dead*.” It was not a swoon occasioned by the intensity of his suffering, and the stupifying drink that was given him, as some infidels would teach. Christ did *die*,—he was veritably *dead*. Pilate had his doubts that “he were already dead,” and took the necessary steps to ascertain the truth of the matter; “and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead. And when he knew it of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph.” *Mark xv, 44, 45.*

But there is a circumstance in *John xix, 33, 34*, which confirms the statement of the veritable death of Christ. “But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water.” Here it is said the soldiers found Jesus “dead already,” and though unconsciously, and unintentionally, they complied with the ancient prediction, “Not a bone of him shall be broken;” but they pierced his side with a spear. It is probable that the spear passed through the pericardium, or covering of the heart, into the heart itself; and that the blood came from the wounded heart, while the water came from the heart’s covering. When the spear was withdrawn, there followed “blood and water.” Hence the body of Jesus was the more willingly given to Joseph of Arimathea, for interment.

5. He was “*buried*.” The four Evangelists agree in all the circumstances of, and in all the facts pertaining to, the burial of the crucified Christ. They all agree in detailing the kind actions of Joseph of Arimathea; and

St. John mentions Nicodemus, as also a partaker in the preparations for this last act of affection to the body of Jesus. In *Matt.* xxvii, 58-60, it is said that Joseph "went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered. And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock; and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed." The truth of the burial, and by consequence, the truth of the death of Christ, was admitted by the chief priests and pharisees, who, fearing that the disciples would remove the body, "went and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch." This is substantially the testimony of all the Evangelists, who, in their artless manner, have brought together an array of circumstances which make the *enemies*, as well as the *friends* of Jesus, testify to the fact of his burial.

But our Article is fully sustained, so far, by the clear testimony of the Scripture record, and we cannot withhold our expression of thanksgiving to God, that he has given to us, and preserved for our use, in all matters of faith and Christian practice, the Holy Bible. But for this "Book Divine," our minds must suffer the perpetual mildew of uncertain conjecture.

"Come, then, Divine Interpreter.—  
The Scriptures to our hearts apply."

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#### SECTION FIFTH.

##### *Object of the Suffering.*

1. This is stated in the Article, in these words: "To reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for actual sins of men."

*First.*—“*To reconcile his Father to us.*” To reconcile signifies to restore to favor, and necessarily supposes a previous state of hostility and enmity between the parties reconciled. That such a state of enmity existed between God and men, on account of the transgression of God’s law, is everywhere the testimony of the Scriptures. And hence it is said in *Ps. vii, 11*, “God is angry with the wicked every day.” This passage is expressive of God’s legal relation to the offender. He is angry with the wicked because they are criminals who have violated his laws, and risen up against his authority. They are, therefore, regarded and treated as enemies. That man is at enmity with God is so clear a case, that but a single passage will be quoted as proof of the fact. *Rom. viii, 7*, “The carnal mind is *enmity* against God.” Now Jesus Christ came into the world to suffer and die that this enmity between God and man might be destroyed; *Eph. ii, 16*, “And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body, by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.”

The true idea, therefore, of reconciliation is found in the scriptural fact, that Jesus Christ, by his death on the cross, satisfied the claims of the law of God, in man’s stead; “Having abolished in his flesh the enmity even the law of commandments.” Thus he became “our peace.” Here the reconciliatory act is attributed to Christ, and his death on the cross, and not to man. Christ laid down his life for sinners, that means might be instituted, in the use of which, the enmity of man’s carnal heart may be subdued, and he brought into communion and fellowship with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. To complete the reconciliation man must use the means, as they are set forth in the gospel, whereby the anger of God may be removed. The means of pardon are the sin offering of Christ, on the part of the government of God; and peni-

tence, confession, and faith in the sacrifice of Christ upon the part of man. By the faithful use of these means, the sinner may obtain the much to be desired end. *Rom.* v, 1, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Here we see, that though God is reconciled to us by the death of his Son, still there is enmity in the heart of man, until he is justified by faith. and though Christ has died for sinners, making it possible for God to be just, and the justifier of the ungodly, yet sinners cannot be saved unless they believe with a heart unto righteousness, and follow the commandments of God.

*Second.*—"And to be a sacrifice not only for original guilt, but also for actual sins of men." This branch of our article brings before us the sacrificial offering of Christ for sin. This is the great central truth of the gospel, and from this truth arises every other truth that is in any way connected with the work of redemption. *Dr. Jenkyn* defines this sacrificial offering of Christ to be the "expedient substituted in the place of the literal infliction of the threatened penalty, so as to supply to the government just and good grounds for dispensing favors to an offender." It therefore means something that may justify the exercise of clemency, mercy, and pardon, without relaxing the claims of justice. God has provided the atonement of Christ as the guard against the infliction of unconditional condemnation upon sinners; and in this atonement is found the only means, and the only reason by which the moral Government of God is supplied with just grounds for dispensing pardon to the truly penitent offender.

But to shew that Christ offered himself a sacrifice for sin; and that God has accepted of that sacrifice, we have but to examine the Scripture record. *Heb.* ix, 26, "But now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." *Rom.* viii. 3, "For

what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh." 1 *Peter*, iii, 18, "*For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the spirit.*" 1 *John*, ii, 2, "And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world."

The *first* great doctrine taught by the foregoing texts, is the *vicarious* suffering of Christ; that is, he substituted his sufferings in the place of the suffering of punishment that was due to the sinner.

But while it is true that the Scriptures lay much stress upon the sufferings of Christ, they are far from making the validity of the atonement to depend upon these; neither as to their *amount* or *intensity*. It was not the mere sufferings of the sacrifice, under the law, that made atonement for the sins of the people, but it was the *blood* that was shed. Hence the Scriptures attribute our redemption to the *blood* of Christ, as well as to his sufferings. "We are made nigh by the *blood* of Christ;" "He hath washed us from our sins in his own *blood*;" "We have redemption through his *blood*;" We are redeemed "with the precious *blood* of Christ." The redeemed do not ascribe their salvation to the sufferings of Christ, but they say, "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God *by thy blood.*"

"Jesus, thy blood, thy blood alone,  
Hath power sufficient to atone;  
Thy blood can make us white as snow,  
No Jewish types could cleanse us so."

It is evident the sufferings of Christ were not in *amount* what the law demanded as the punishment of sin, for this

would have consigned his humanity to torments for ever. On the principle, then, that Christ died for all, if the validity of the atonement depends upon the *amount* of his sufferings, all must be unconditionally saved, and there could be no such a thing as penitence, faith and pardon, inasmuch as the punishment was only changed from the guilty to the innocent. The penalty due to sin is endless torment in hell; but Christ did not suffer endless torment in hell; therefore he did not suffer in *amount* what all the impenitent, or all the world must have suffered.

The sacrifice of Christ was such as God could accept, and at the same time "be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." But this does not make the salvation of all men a *necessary* result of the atonement, but merely a possible consequence.

The *second* great doctrine is the universality of design in the sacrifice of Christ. That he died for the whole human race is a truth that is read in every line of all the passages we have just quoted; indeed, this is the doctrine of the whole Bible. But while it is true that Christ by the "grace of God tasted death for every man, it does not necessarily follow that every man will be unconditionally saved. This we dare not believe, unless it is certain that all men will *repent* and *believe* the gospel. But because some, by their own stubborn will, derive no advantage from the death of Christ, it does not follow that the atonement of Christ does not include them, or that it is not sufficient to reach their cases, if they will comply with its claims. Or, in other words, it does not follow that they *may* not, if they *will* repent, believe, and become heirs to the inheritance of eternal salvation.

But, though the atonement of Christ is as universal as the human family, and is sufficient to do away all the sins of men, yet it does not extend to fallen angels; and

hence the guarded language of our Article, in which no sin is included, but the "original guilt and actual sins of men."

A *third* doctrine taught by the sacrifice of Christ, is the fact that he atoned for *all* sin, or, in the language of the Article, "for original guilt and actual sins of men." This brings before us the perfection of the atonement for all the purposes of justification and eternal life. The primary act of apostacy in Adam was his sin, and as he is the public representative of the human race, in the estimation of moral law, his sin is transmitted to every member of his posterity, and is called "original guilt." Then there are sins that men commit as moral responsible beings; these are called actual sins, or, "the transgression of the law." Now the sacrifice of Christ reaches both these sins, opening the way into the kingdom of God for all who have never committed actual sin, and for all who have sinned, but have truly repented and believed the gospel. Hence it is said in the Bible, 1 *John*, i, 7, "The blood of Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." Hence it is that man may arrive at such a state of holiness as to be fit for the inheritance of the saints in heaven.

*Third.*—The atonement of Christ is not only perfect, including all sin, and making it possible for man to be delivered from sin in this life, and, consequently from the punishment of sin in the future life; but it is *permanent and perfectly valid*; that is, it is the *only* way to the Father, and needs no additional means of power and satisfaction; as *penance*, and human *mortifications*. Hence St. Paul says, *Heb.* vii, 27, "Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's; for this he did once, when he offered up himself." This passage teaches the completeness of the one sacrifice of Christ, and the superior nature

of this one offering, to all the offerings of the priests under the law.

We are prepared now to see the fact that the sufferings and death of Christ do effect a removal of the consequences of sin from the sinner, if he will avail himself of the benefits of that death by faith. Christ died for us is the uniform testimony of the Scriptures ; “ The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all ;” “ He shall bear their iniquities ;” “ Who himself bore our sins in his own body on the tree ;” “ Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many ;” “ It pleased the Lord to bruise him ;” are passages that cannot be misunderstood. This agrees with the fact in *Rom. viii, 3<sup>d</sup>*, “ God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all.” These passages make it impossible for us to conceive of any other way in which Christ could *bear* the sins of mankind, “ in his own body,” except by the penal, substitutionary character of his sufferings and death. In this substitution of himself, he turned away the wrath of God from us.

But all this does not prove that Christ paid the debt of *human duty*, but only the debt of *penalty*. Man must discharge the debt of *duty himself*, else he cannot possess the righteousness of faith. If he has not this, he will have no righteousness, for the duties that Christ paid to the law, as a good man, cannot be transferred to the sinner. The duties enjoined upon us must be discharged by ourselves, Christ has perfected his work ; and if we would enjoy the benefits of this work, we must discharge every debt of duty that God has enjoined upon us.

“ I will improve what I receive,  
The grace through Jesus given.”

## ARTICLE III.

### OF THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

“Christ did truly rise from the dead, and took again his body, with all things appertaining to the perfection of man’s nature, wherewith he ascended into heaven, and there sitteth until he return to judge all men at the last day.”

#### SECTION FIRST.

##### *Resurrection of Christ.*

1. There is no Article of our Religion more important than this. It is the grand central doctrine of the Christian system, upon the truth of which Christianity either stands or falls. If Christ did not rise from the grave the New Testament is no more than a fable, and the world is still without hope. If Christ did rise from the dead the New Testament is true, and the world may look to him for salvation. It is a testimony that the atonement of Christ was accepted; and it is a proof of our own resurrection. But “*Christ did truly rise again from the dead,*” this we prove by the authority of the New Testament. It has already been shown in *Sec. Fourth, Art. II*, that Christ “*was crucified, dead and buried.*” This was done by the Roman Governor, at the instigation of the Jews, and the dead body was in their hands and entirely under their control. They knew that if he would rise from the grave, as he had before stated, his cause would gain more by this fact, than by anything he might have done during his life. Hence the chief priests and scribes demanded that the sepulchre where he was laid “*might be made sure.*” Pilate gave them authority to do this, and they sealed the mouth of the sepulchre, and appointed a guard

of seventy soldiers to keep, as they said, the disciples from stealing the body of Jesus away by night.

2. But with all this precaution, upon the part of these suspicious Jews, still the body of Jesus was missing on the morning of the third day. Now there were but two ways in which it could be missing;—it was taken away either by the disciples or the Roman guard, or it was raised according to the Scriptures. It is well known that it was impossible for it to be taken by the disciples on account of the number, the care, and the superior authority of the guard; and the guard did not take it because they were the enemies of Christ, and because they would have been subject to immediate death if they had even suffered the disciples to remove the body. But still the body of Christ was missing on the morning of the third day, as was reported by some of the guard, and as was believed by the elders of Israel. The guard reported the circumstances of the resurrection,—as the descent of an angel from heaven,—the rolling away of the stone from the door of the sepulchre,—the great earthquake,—and the fact of their own fearful experience; for they “did shake and become as dead men.” Upon the report of these facts the elders and soldiers enter into a covenant of fraud and falsehood to neutralize the fact of the resurrection, and to cover up the wickedness of their own proceedings in the arrest, the trial, and the crucifixion of Christ. This whole transaction goes very far to establish the doctrine of the resurrection, by assuming what is clearly the fact, that the enemies of Christ, at this early period, believed that he had arose from the dead, as he had said he would before his crucifixion.

3. But there were other witnesses of the resurrection of Christ. These had the evidence of *sight*, for Christ appeared often to them after his resurrection, and to many

who had been personally acquainted with him before his crucifixion. *Mark* xvi, 9, "He appeared *first* to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils." *Luke*, xxiv, 36, "And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and said unto them, Peace be unto you." This was done and said to the eleven disciples, and those who were with them. *Mark*, xvi, 12, "After that, he appeared in another form unto two of them as they walked, and went into the country." *Matt.* xxviii, 9, "And as they went to tell his disciples, behold Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came, and held him by the feet, and worshiped him." *Luke*, xxiv, 40, "And when he had thus spoken, he showed them his hands and his feet." *John* xx, 37, "Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing." *Luke* xxiv, 34, "He appeared to Simon." *John* xxi, 1, He appeared "to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias." *Matt.* xxviii, 16, To the eleven disciples in a mountain in Galilee. *Acts* i, 3, "To whom also he showed himself alive after his passion, by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." *Ch.* x, 40-41. "Him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly. Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead." *1 Cor.* xv, 6, "After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep."

4. Now it is impossible that so many persons, who *saw* Jesus at so many different times after his resurrection, and who were so familiar with him before his death, could be so deceived as to publish a falsehood. They had the evidence

of *sight*, the evidence of *conversation*, and the evidence of *handling* him ; and what more could they have, or how could they be deceived? But the truth of the whole question now turns upon the character of the witnesses. Their credibility cannot be doubted if we consider all the circumstances under which they testified. They were in danger of losing their lives if they persisted in giving the resurrection publicity. They had no possible hope of worldly gain ; but on the contrary, loss of all they had, and banishment from their country. But they were honest men,—they were familiar with the fact about which they testified, and they were disinterested. They were compelled to believe what they *saw* and *felt* by the force of circumstances they did not create ; and they published the fact to the world in view of death, stripes and imprisonment, therefore they are to be believed, and it is therefore true that Christ “did rise again from the dead.”

5. The apostles published this fact in the very place where Christ was tried and crucified as an impostor, and among his and their own enemies ; and they published it at the time it took place. So powerfully did this truth take hold of the people, that while Peter was publicly preaching it, three thousand of the Jews were converted to God, and soon after five thousand. The Jewish council were confounded, and commanded the apostles “not to speak at all, nor teach in the name of Jesus.” These are facts in this argument that infidelity cannot resist, and facts, too, that settle Christianity on an imperishable basis.

“Our Lord is risen from the dead ;  
 Our Jesus is gone up on high ;  
 The powers of hell are captive led,—  
 Dragg'd to the portals of the sky.”

6. The above shows the truth that Christ “*took again his body with all things appertaining to the perfection of*

*man's nature.*" His body did not see corruption, and when the disciples looked upon him, they saw the identical body that they had seen before the crucifixion, except the nail prints in his hands and feet, and the mark of the spear in his side. Hence St. Ignatious, in A. D. 100, says, "I know that he was in the flesh after the resurrection, and I believe that he is; and when he came to those who were with Peter, he said unto them, 'Take hold of me, feel me, and see that I am no unbodied spirit.'"

'Sing praise! the tomb is void  
Where the Redeemer lay.'

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#### SECTION SECOND.

##### *The Ascension of Christ.*

1. The same body of Christ that was crucified, laid in the grave, and that rose from the grave, is the body "*wherewith he ascended into Heaven.*" The ascension of Christ was a theme of prophecy. David says in *Psa.* lxxviii, 18, "Thou hast ascended on high." Christ foretold this event in *John* vi, 62, "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before." This doctrine, like that of the resurrection, is numbered among the fundamental truths of the Christian religion, and is one of the essential facts upon which Christianity is founded. It is as capable of clear proof as any doctrine of the Bible. Hence in *Mark* xvi, 19, we have this record, "So then after the Lord had spoken to them, he was received up into heaven." *Luke* xxiv, 51, "And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven." *Acts* i, 9, "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight."

These prove enough to fully establish two things ; first, that he left the earth ; and second, that he ascended *into* heaven.

2. But this can be proved by other credible witnesses, as well as by circumstances that could not have taken place, if he had not ascended into heaven. The first witness is Stephen in his dying hour, *Acts* vii, 56, “ And said, Behold, I see heaven opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.” St. Paul is our other witness, in *1 Cor.* xv, 8, “ And last of all, he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.” But Christ promised to send the Holy Ghost on the apostles, which he could not have done if he had not ascended into heaven. He says, in *John* xvi, 7, “ For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you ; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.” Now the ascension of Christ into heaven is made clear by the fact that this promise was fulfilled in ten days after the ascension, and in fifty days after the resurrection. *Acts* ii, 4, “ And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.” But the Holy Spirit was not confined to the apostles in his pouring out on the day of Pentecost, as a proof to them alone that Christ had ascended into heaven ; for his miraculous descent was the means of the conversion of about three thousand souls. *Verse* 41. Now the argument is this, if Christ had not ascended into heaven, the Comforter would not have come upon the apostles, and the three thousand would not have been converted. The descent of the Holy Ghost, as Christ had promised, is therefore evidence that he ascended into heaven.

3. Why the ascension of Christ was delayed for forty days after the resurrection, is not specified in the Bible. But we may very rationally suppose that it was to give repeated and clearer proofs of his resurrection. St. Luke

in *Acts* i, 3, says, "To whom also he showed himself alive after his passion, by *many infallible proofs*, being seen of them forty days." While this passage seems to sustain the above remarks, it clearly suggests another reason for the stay of forty days on earth after the resurrection. It is this, that he might instruct his disciples more fully in "the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." Now as the time was undoubtedly occupied in some great work, it is not too much to suppose that Christ was opening the Scriptures more fully to his apostles; and that he was unfolding to them the new and more spiritual developments of his kingdom, and preparing them for the management of its temporal and spiritual interests. And last of all, he renewed their commission to preach the gospel to all nations, and pledged himself to be present with them in all their labors by this encouraging promise, "And lo, I am with you." *Luke* xxiv, 50, 51, "Then he led them out as far as to Bethany, and lifted up his hands and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven." *St. Cyprian* beautifully remarks upon this splendid transaction, "After he had spent forty days with his disciples, he was taken up into heaven, a cloud being spread about him, that the human nature which he loved, which he assumed, which he protected from death, he might triumphantly carry to the Father."

4. The ascension of Christ was just as real as his resurrection, and the testimony concerning the one is just as clear and convincing as it is concerning the other. The resurrection had the testimony of circumstances and sight, and the ascension had the testimony of sight and the circumstances of the place where Christ ascended, and the subsequent descent of the Holy Ghost. While the astonished apostles stood gazing up into heaven, the angels who

had published the advent and resurrection of Christ, now joined in a loud song of triumph. *Ps.* xlvii, "God is gone up with a shout." *Ps.* xxiv, 7, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in." Thus, amid the greetings of angels, and the shoutings of the cherubim and seraphim, and the glorified spirits of the just made perfect, he reëntered the courts of the upper sanctuary, and took his seat at the right hand of God the Father. And thus, re-seated upon his throne in the heaven of heavens, he grasped his sceptre of universal control by his triple right of creation, blood and triumph from the grave, that he might establish the security of his church, and set up his throne in the hearts of millions whom he redeemed with his own blood.

"Him though the highest heaven receives,  
Still he loves the earth he leaves;  
Though returning to his throne,  
Still he calls mankind his own."

5 But the Bible assigns some very important reasons for the ascension of Christ. The ascension itself is a fact, and like all the facts in religion, it has its particular use. But to notice the reasons and uses of the ascension of Christ somewhat in detail, I remark,

*First.*—That he might receive and bestow gifts upon men. A proof of this is in *Ps.* lxviii, 18, "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord might dwell among them."

*Second.*—That he might open a new way to his kingdom and glory. *Heb.* x, 20, "A new and living way which he hath consecrated for us, through the vale."

*Third.*—That he might prepare a place for his children, and assure them of a better inheritance. *John* xiv, 3, "And

if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." This is ground of great joy to Christians in all places, and under all circumstances, as it was to the troubled hearts of the disciples.

*Fourth.*—That he might ever live to be a faithful high priest, to make intercession for his people; to take the charge of their spiritual interests, and at last to bring them up to behold his own kingdom and glory; and to unite them in one "general assembly and church of the first born in heaven." Then will he deliver up the kingdom to his Father, and reign with him and the Holy Ghost, and with angels and saints, world without end.

"High on his holy seat,  
He bears the righteous sway;  
His foes beneath his feet,  
Shall sink and die away;  
Join all on earth, rejoice and sing  
Glory ascribe to glory's King.

### SECTION THIRD.

#### *Second Coming of Christ.*

1. In *Section Second* we followed Christ to the right hand of the Father. There he will remain as our advocate and mediator, "until he return to judge all men at the last day." Every true Christian is looking forward to this event with peculiar delight; and every sinner looks with fear and sorrow. All know that the second advent is *certain*; but *when* Christ will come to judge all men, is not known. *Matt. xxiv, 36*, "Of that day knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." It is therefore but little less than presumption to attempt a calculation of how long Christ will remain in heaven

before he will come "to judge all men at the last day." It is sufficient for us to know from *Acts* i, 11, that "This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven;" and from *Chap.* xvii, 31, "Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained." This passage not only settles the certainty of the final judgment, but it establishes the uniform doctrine of the New Testament, that the world will be judged by Jesus Christ.

2. It is true, however, that God the Father will be the judge as to original authority, power and right; but according to the principles of government as it relates to the economy of redemption, the work of judging all men at the last day is transferred to the man Christ Jesus. *John* v, 22, "For the Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son. *Verse* 27, "And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man." The goodness and wisdom of God in this transfer of authority and power to the Son, is seen in the fact that Christ, as a man, knows from his own experience, the sufferings, infirmities, and temptations, to which man's nature is exposed; and can, therefore, be compassionate and merciful while he is just in his judgment. But the final judgment of this world is a part of Christ's work by an original agreement with the Father, in the covenant of redemption. The work of Christ, therefore, cannot be completed until after the secrets of all hearts have been made known, and every man judged according to the deeds done in the body; "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father." *1 Cor.* xv. 24.

3. But the second coming of Christ will be widely different from his first coming. Then he came to be a "sin

offering," meek and lowly ; but when he comes again, he will come "without sin unto salvation," arrayed in supreme glory and majesty. He will descend on his great white throne, in the clouds of heaven, accompanied with ten thousand of his saints. In the presence of that glory and splendor of Godhead, the sun shall wax dim, and all light shall be swallowed up ; the bosom of the troubled air shall be filled with clouds and storm, strangely confused, while thunder clouds of fearful wrath are prepared to explode upon an astonished world. The trump of God will thunder through all the prison houses of the dead ; death, hell, and the sea shall deliver up their dead, and those who have never died shall be changed in a moment, and invested with bodies immortal. Then the face of the whole earth will be re-peopled ; the whole family of man with the first man at their head, shall stand for the first time, all together on the earth. Then every eye shall see the Judge in the glory of his Father and of the holy angels ; then "his eyes shall be as a flame of fire, his countenance as the sun that shineth in his strength, and his voice as the sound of many waters." Then will begin the wonders and horrors of the last scene, the day of darkness and of terror. Then the vast multitude of human beings and devils will be divided into two classes, the first will have risen "to the resurrection of life," while the second will have risen "to the resurrection of damnation." The wicked shall be separated from the just, and assembled on the left hand of the Judge, as a public proof of God's wrath and indignation against them. The righteous shall be assembled on the right hand of the throne as a public proof of their innocence. Then the books shall be opened, and the dread scrutiny shall begin. Nothing shall be overlooked ; "the two mites," "the cup of cold water," the prison visit, the pious wish, shall be

taken notice of, on the one hand ; while on the other, the omitted kindness, the idle word, the unchaste look, the thought of evil, the deed of darkness, the stubborn unbelief, shall all be brought into open court. Every man will be judged according to the moral quality of whatever he may have done, according to the strictest rules of justice. Then will come the sentence ; trembling thousands hark ! it is the Lord that is about to speak, and though you would not listen to his voice on earth, now you must. To the righteous the Judge will then say, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." But, turning to the left hand, with the claims of inflexible justice, and the frowning majesty of infinite power, he will pronounce upon the wicked the awful sentence, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

4. "Then cometh the end," when the Judge will envelop the earth in universal flames of fire, when the heavens will roll together their awful folds like a "parchment scroll," and when "the heavens and the earth will flee away from the face of him that sitteth on the throne." From this scene of universal destruction and desolation, the Judge will turn away, with all his saints and angels, and will ascend up to the heaven of heavens, and forever sit down upon his throne to receive honor and glory, world without end.

"Shout, all the people of the sky,  
And all the saints of the most High ;  
Our Lord who now his right obtains,  
Forever and forever reigns."

5. The second coming of Christ, and the transactions of the last day, will forever close up the business of this life,

and the government of probationary beings. All the moral tenets of this world will be removed to a more fixed and permanent state of being. All will be established in their appropriate places; some in the place of reward, in the joys and glories of eternal fruition in heaven; and some in the sorrows and eternal agonies of the second death. The former will enter upon scenes of happiness, because they "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb;" and the latter will be lost in the untold torments of the damned, because they were "enemies of God by wicked works." "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless." 2 *Pet.* iii, 14.

" Now, only now, against that hour  
 We may a place provide ;  
 Beyond the grave, beyond the power  
 Of hell, our spirits hide.

Firm in the all-destroying shock,  
 May view the final scene ;  
 For lo ! the everlasting rock  
 Is cleft to take us in."

## ARTICLE IV. OF THE HOLY GHOST.

“The Holy Ghost proceeding from the Father and the Son, is of one substance, majesty and glory with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God.”

### SECTION FIRST.

#### *The Procession.*

1. In the fourth century, the council of Constantinople, after agreeing that the Holy Spirit is a divine person, agreed also, that he proceeds from the Father; and that he is in all respects equal with God. This was afterwards confirmed by the council of Ephesus as the true doctrine of the church. But in the ninth century, it began to be discussed among the Latins whether the Holy Ghost did not proceed from the Son as well as from the Father. It being decided that he did, this doctrine was inserted in the creed, and solemnly confirmed as a new doctrine. This was regarded by the Greeks as a direct heresy, and for this, as well as for some other reasons, the Greeks and Latins separated, the former holding that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father only, while the latter maintain that he proceeds from the Son as well as from the Father. The Article comes to us in its amended form, and affirms what is generally supposed to be the doctrine of the New Testament.

2. It is established beyond controversy that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father, but as the word procession is not used in connection with the Son, we must look

to other sources of proof that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son, than to the mere use of the term. In proof of his procession from the Father, we have Christ's words, in *John* xiv, 26, "But the comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things." Here the Holy Spirit is the subject of the Father's gift; and in *John* xv, 26, it is said that this same Spirit is the gift of the Son. "But when the comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he will testify of me." Now the only just inference is, that the Holy Spirit has the same relation to the Son that he has to the Father, for it is expressly affirmed that he proceeds from God, and that Jesus Christ sent him to be the comforter. It clearly appears, therefore, that the Holy Ghost belongs equally to the Father and the Son, and that both have sent him into the world. These joint and distinctive personal acts of the Father and the Son go very far to establish the verity of the Article where it is so clearly stated that "the Holy Ghost proceedeth from the Father and the Son."

3. But it will not do to say as the Greek Church does, that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father through, or by the Son, if we consider the fact that Christ the Son "is the very and eternal God." Nor will it do to say that the Spirit does not proceed from the Son, because we do not comprehend his mode of existence in the Son. If this be an objection at all, it bears equally against the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father, for we know no more about this than we do about the mode of the Divine existence, or the hypostatical union of the two natures in the Son of God. Not to go beyond what is written on this doctrine, we may sum up the whole argument in these words; as the Son is the second person in the Trinity by

eternal generation, so the Holy Ghost is the third person by eternal procession from the Father and the Son, as from one divine essence.

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## SECTION SECOND.

*The Personality of the Holy Ghost.*

1. This doctrine is not stated in so many words, in this Article, but it is so clearly implied that it cannot well be unnoticed. We discuss this doctrine the more willingly because very erroneous opinions are held by some with regard to the true character of the Holy Spirit. These are of those who maintain that the Holy Ghost, or that which is called by this name, is a mere *quality* or *attribute* derived from God, which, when withheld, is of no avail. This person of the Godhead is distinguished by the old Saxon word Ghost, which signifies "spirit," and he is distinguished from all other spirits by the epithet "Holy." That the Holy Ghost is a real and distinct person in the Godhead, may be shown in several ways. Personal powers of understanding and will are ascribed to him. 1 *Cor.* ii, 10, "For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God;" *Chap.* xii, 11, "But all these worketh that one and the self same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will." As a distinct person, he "searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God," and thereby distinguishes the fact of his power to search and understand. And in the distribution of his benefits, he "divides to every man severally as he *will*." He is joined to the other two divine persons, as the object of worship, and the source of spiritual blessings. *Matt.* xxviii, 19, "Baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;" 2 *Cor.* xiii, 14, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and

the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all Amen." Baptism is an act of Christian worship, and was commanded by Christ to be ascribed to the three persons in the Godhead; and the Holy Ghost is included as one of these three persons. This clearly proves his distinct personality. That he is the source of spiritual blessing, and therefore a distinct person, associated with the Father and the Son, is clearly set forth by the Apostolic benediction. But personal offices of an intercessor belong to him, *Rom. viii, 26*, "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." Now, if the Spirit intercedes with God, it clearly follows that he is a distinct person from God the Father. But as a person he may be grieved. *Eph. iv, 30*, "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed-unto the day of redemption." Join to these personal acts and qualities, the fact that he is the comforter, *John xiv, 26*, and that he witnesses with the spirits of Christians, *Rom. viii, 16*, and we have the most incontestible evidence of the personality of the Holy Spirit. If the Holy Spirit were a mere quality or attribute of God, Christians would indulge an absurd practice by professing faith in a mere quality, and that, too, associated with almighty and infinite beings.

2. It clearly follows from what has been said that the Holy Spirit is a distinct person from the Father and the Son; and that he differs from the Father in the fact that he is God's messenger for conviction, sanctification, and testimony to men; and that he is the successor of the Son in his mission to the Church, and the world.

" Eternal Spirit! God of truth,  
Our contrite hearts inspire "

Kindle a flame of heavenly love—  
The pure celestial fire.

'Tis thine to sooth the sorrowing,  
With guilt and fear oppress'd,  
'Tis thine to bid the dying live,  
And give the weary rest."

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SECTION THIRD.

*Divinity of the Holy Ghost.*

1. From the strong language of the Article, "*very and eternal God,*" we necessarily look for clear proof of this doctrine in the Bible. The same course of argument, and the same proof texts that establish the Divinity of Christ, as clearly establish the Divinity of the Holy Ghost. That he is a distinct Divine person may be farther shown by his acts. *Gen.* i, 2, "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." *Chap.* vi, 3, "My Spirit shall not always *strive* with man." *Acts* x, 19, "Then the Spirit *said* to Peter." *John* xvi, 13, "He shall *show* you things to come." *2 Thess.* ii, 13, "Through *sanctification* of the Spirit." Now to "move," to "strive," to "speak," to "show," to "sanctify," are not only personal acts, but acts that cannot be predicated of the Holy Ghost, unless he be a divine person.

But a person has a name, as God, the Son, but there is no name given to the third person, but such as are common to the Father and the Son. Both are *holy*, and both are *spirits*. God is called the Father, and because Christ is said to have been "begotten," therefore he is the Son. God is called the *Creator*, as a term of work or office; the Son is called the *Redeemer*, and this is a term of office; and the Holy Spirit is called the *Comforter*, which is the term of his office. Now the fact that the Holy Spirit has

no distinct name, as the other two persons in the Trinity have, is not a sufficient argument to overcome the other fact that he is a distinct person, nor to lessen our confidence in the doctrine of the Trinity, of the three Divine persons in the one essential Godhead.

2. But the Holy Spirit is the "*very and eternal God.*" It is evident that divine *titles*, divine *attributes*, divine *actions*, divine *worship* are ascribed to the Holy Ghost. These are ascribed, in the Scriptures, to none but God; but if it can be shown that these are ascribed, by the same Scriptures, to the Holy Ghost, then it must follow that the Holy Ghost is God. *Names of God* are applied to him. 2 *Cor.* iii, 17, "Now the Lord is that Spirit." In St. Luke's account of the conduct of Ananias and Sapphira, in *Acts* v, 1-12, is clear evidence of the Divinity of the Holy Spirit, by being directly called God. "But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie unto the Holy Ghost? Thou hast not lied unto men, but *unto God.*" But the *attributes* of God are ascribed to the Holy Ghost. These are such as can only be predicated of a divine person, and such as are uniformly ascribed to God; as *eternity*. This is proved by *Heb.* ix, 14, "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the *eternal Spirit* offered himself without spot to God." Now as this is not St. Paul's usual theory of argumentation to prove the Divine nature of Christ, we take it that he means to give us the true statement of the character of the Holy Ghost. If so, then he proves the eternity of the Holy Spirit, and therefore the Holy Spirit is a Divine person. But more; the Holy Ghost is said to be *omnipresent*. *Ps.* cxxxix, 7, "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?" In the following verses, David answers the foregoing questions, by referring to the most extreme parts of God's dominion.

If he were "in heaven," "in hell," in the "uttermost parts of the sea;" in all these places he would find the Holy Spirit. Now none but God can be present in all places. But the above, and other passages prove that the Holy Spirit is present everywhere, therefore the Holy Spirit is the "very and eternal God." The Holy Spirit is said to be *omniscient*; 1 *Cor.* ii, 10, "The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God," and, *verse* 11, "Even so the things of God knoweth no man. but the Spirit of God." These two passages prove, that as God knoweth all things, so the Spirit knoweth all things, and is, therefore, a divine person. But the *actions* of God are ascribed to the Holy Spirit. *Job* xxxiii, 4, "The Spirit of God hath made me." Now it is certain that the Scriptures speak of no other Creator but God; but *Job* says the Spirit made him; and this is nowhere contradicted, therefore we may clearly infer that the Holy Ghost is God the Creator. When the Scriptures assign the reason why "men of old" described so very minutely the events of future time, they say in 2 *Pet* i, 21, that, "Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." And *whenever*, and *wherever* the work of regeneration, and sanctification is spoken of in the Scriptures, it is uniformly ascribed to the Holy Ghost. Now, as this work can be performed by none but God, and as it is always ascribed to the Holy Spirit, we must conclude one of two things; either that the Holy Ghost is the "very and eternal God; or, that the Scriptures are without meaning.

3. But divine worship is ascribed to the Holy Spirit, in connection with the Father and the Son. His equality and dignity are described and declared by his association with the Father and the Son in the solemn services of religion. These are performed by his authority, as well as

by theirs, and believers are dedicated as expressly to his service, as to the service of the other persons in the Trinity. An example of this is found in the solemn ordinance of baptism. In this ordinance the candidate performs an act of worship instituted of God. In this act he either implies or declares his faith in the *three persons* of one Godhead, to each of whom he consecrates himself for life and eternity. But the apostolic benediction is another record of worship, being given to the Holy Ghost. Now if prayer is made according to God's Word, in this concluding ceremony of public worship, then every minister is divinely authorized to say, *2 Cor. xiii, 14*, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all, Amen." It follows, then, that we make prayer to the Holy Ghost, who is declared to be "of one substance, majesty, and glory, with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God." To this the early Christians most heartily subscribed. The following is the testimony of *Basil, of Caesarea, in Cappadocia*, in A. D., 370. "Seeing what is common to the Father and Son, is common also to the Spirit; seeing by the same things that God the Father and the Son are characterized and described in Scripture, by the same things is the Holy Ghost characterized and described; it is hence gathered that the Spirit is of the same deity with the Father." *Basil adv. Eunum. St. Augustine*, in 410, says, "For so the Father is God, and the Son God, and the Holy Ghost God, and altogether one God; and yet it is not in vain that in this Trinity none of them is called the Word of God but the Son, nor the gift of God but the Holy Ghost." *Oxford Ed. Vol. 1, p. 249.*

4. From this Divine person the Christian derives all his moral good, for he is the sum of all the spiritual blessings

introduced into this world by the mediation of Christ. He regenerates the soul ; he witnesses with the spirit of the believer that he is justified and adopted into the family of God ; he conducts the inner spiritual life in the progress of all its higher developments ; makes the Christian “ all glorious within ;” and will finally bring him, blood washed, to the Lamb of God in the midst of the throne, where he may forever.

“ Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.”

## ARTICLE V.

### THE SUFFICIENCY OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES FOR SALVATION.

“ The Holy Scriptures contain all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. In the name of the Holy Scripture, we do understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church.

#### *The Names of the Canonical Books.*

Genesis,	The First Book of Chronicles,
Exodus,	The Second Book of Chronicles
Leviticus,	The Book of Ezra,
Numbers,	The Book of Nehemiah,
Deuteronomy,	The Book of Esther
Joshua,	The Book of Job,
Judges,	The Psalms,
Ruth,	The Proverbs,
The First Book of Samuel,	Ecclesiastes, or the Preacher,
The Second Book of Samuel	Cantica, or Songs of Solomon,
The First Book of Kings,	Four Prophets the greater,
The Second Book of Kings,	Twelve Prophets the less.

All the books of the New Testament, as they are commonly received, we do receive and account canonical.”

#### SECTION FIRST.

#### *The Sufficiency of the Scriptures.*

1. This Article asserts first, that “ The Holy Scriptures contain all things necessary to salvation. It declares what these Scriptures are, a revelation from God; and that nothing that is not either found in them, or may be proved by them, is “to be required of any man” “as an article of faith.” By the term Scriptures, we are to understand all those books which are acknowledged to be of

Divine authority, and which are embraced in the list of this Article of Religion. Among the several great objects of this book is the salvation of man from sin. To accomplish this, it professes to contain all the necessary information, and articles of belief that man needs. All Protestant Christians have cordially received it as it is, and have tested its power in directing the soul into the clear knowledge of salvation in Christ Jesus. The authority upon which Protestant Christians believe that the "Scriptures contain all things necessary to salvation," shall now be produced. In the preceding four Articles the foundation of religion is laid in belief in "one living and true God;" the Divinity, Death, Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus Christ, together with the Divinity of the Holy Ghost, and the Christian Doctrine of the Trinity. The question now is, *what is the rule of that faith? The Holy Scriptures only.* In giving this answer, we do it with the full knowledge that Romanists claim something more; they claim that the Catholic and pure rule of faith is, the Bible, the Apocrypha, Oral and Written Tradition. But as this Article is purely Protestant, and was composed for the purpose of refuting this Romish error, we must find its proof in what is believed to be the pure word of God, as contained in King James's translation of the Bible.

2. That the Holy Scriptures do contain all that is necessary for the salvation of man, appears in the one prominent fact that there is no indication of any *deficiency* in them in regard to whatever mankind is to *believe* or *practice*. When we read the Old Testament we find, it is true, that something is needed and looked for; because it everywhere testifies, both by its ritual and prophets, that another dispensation was to follow. But when we read the New Testament, in its numerous references to the Old, the evidence is conclusive that the canon is complete, and

that it contains all that is necessary for faith and redemption. Moses, who is the chief representative of the Hebrew Scriptures, foretold that a prophet should rise after him, and commanded the people to hear him with all confidence in the purity and object of his mission. But when that prophet did come he gave no intimation, as Moses did, that another should follow him. God has "spoken by his Son in the last days," and his revelation completes the rule of faith, and is consequently final. All that is necessary for man to know in order to true religion, is revealed in the Holy Scriptures. *John xx, 31*, "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."

3. But to come to the question of the sufficiency of the Scriptures alone for salvation, at once, we may recite some plain texts that will settle the affirmation of the Article beyond the possibility of doubt. *Ps. xix, 7*, "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple." Now the terms "*law*" and "*testimony*" mean the same thing, the Scriptures; and it is affirmed of these that they are "*perfect*." The proof of this is seen in what they accomplish; they "*convert the soul*," they "*make wise the simple*." These effects of the perfect "*Law of the Lord*" are essential states of the soul in order to eternal life. But neither oral or written tradition are named here, or elsewhere, as helps to the word of God in the production of a converted soul. That the Scriptures are sufficient for salvation, we have the proof of Christ's own word; *John v, 39*, "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me." This passage acknowledges the Jewish belief in the sufficiency of their Scriptures for eternal life; and it contains

an unrestricted command to "Search the Scriptures," The reasons for this command are, first, eternal life is offered by them; and second, they testify of Christ who is the author of eternal life. Now what is eternal life but a release from sin and its final punishment? This is offered by the Holy Scriptures through faith in Christ, and hence their sufficiency for salvation. But St. Paul gives still clearer proof of this subject, in *2 Tim. iii, 15*, "From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, *which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*" The Apostle evidently refers to the same Scriptures that Christ did, in the above passage from John,—the Jewish Scriptures; and these it is said, are able to make wise unto salvation, because they lead to faith in Jesus Christ. And honorable mention is made of Timothy as an example of salvation in Christ through faith in these Scriptures. This is the use of the Bible, and faith in Christ through it is the reason why men are saved. The Scriptures, unencumbered with the traditions of men, testify of Christ; and belief in this testimony, and not in tradition, makes wise men unto salvation. But in *verse 16*, it is said, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is *profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.*" Here it is affirmed that the Scriptures are "profitable for doctrine," because they alone teach the principles of religion, and point directly to Christ, who is the author of eternal salvation. "For reproof;" they convince men of sin, and condemn their folly. "For correction;" they restore man to moral order by correcting his errors, and false views of himself, and of his relations to the moral government of God. "For instruction in righteousness;" they lead into right *feeling* and right *doing*; and this is the righteousness with which the Scriptures clothe every pious follower of Christ.

And thus it is, "That the man of God may be made perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." *Rom.* xv. 4, "Whatsoever things were written afore time, were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope." Is it not strange, that if tradition is so important as Romanists would have it, that it is so entirely overlooked by New Testament writers? And is it not equally strange, that if the Scriptures are not a sufficient and complete rule of faith and practice, without the additional fixture of tradition, that still men are saved by their truths, and led into the full liberty of the sons of God? The competency of the Bible alone for the salvation of man, is also taught by St. James, *James* i, 21, "And receive the ingrafted word, which is able to save your souls." Not the traditions of men, for these "make void the law," but the word of God; for it, *and it alone*, "is able to save your souls." This establishes most clearly the truth of our Article

4. But the form of phraseology changes when the gospel message is referred to. Hence it is said in *1 Cor.* xv, 2, "Ye are saved by the gospel." Now the gospel is the word of God, by or through Jesus Christ. To it is attributed the work of leading men out of their sins to a hearty reception of Christ Jesus. St. Paul proves this in *Rom.* 1, 16, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, *for it is the power of God unto salvation, unto every one that believeth.*" From all these passages two things are easily learned; *First*, All things necessary to salvation are clearly revealed in the Bible, and tradition is never appealed to either by Christ or his Apostles, as in any way useful to the support of the Holy Writing, or to their influence in converting the soul. *Second*, All that is necessary to salvation is not only clearly and fully stated,

but easy to be understood. Its language is, "Repent," "Believe," "Pray," "Rejoice," "Hope," and to each of these words it furnishes a simple definition; and these definitions furnish the light by which the truths they define are made visible.

Now, if the Scriptures which existed in the time of Christ and his Apostles were "able to make wise unto salvation," to "convert the soul," "to save," how much more are they able to accomplish this work by what has been added since? Here we are able to meet any Romanist with an argument drawn directly from the word of God, that must forever upset their vain boast and confidence in their traditions of men. Add to this the fact that there is an advantage for studying and understanding the Bible that belongs to no other book whose author is not within the range of personal access. This can never belong to tradition. The advantage is, that we may daily and hourly consult the author of the Bible as to its true meaning. We may pray to him according to the rules of prayer laid down in his Holy Word, and he will hear us, and assist us in the interpretation of difficult passages. We are authorized and encouraged to do this by St. James, in these words, "If any man *lack wisdom*, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him."

5. All that we have said in proof of the sufficiency of the Scriptures for the salvation of sinners, goes upon the hypothesis that all men who have the Bible may read it, and thereby be made "wise unto salvation." This we suppose to be the fact, inasmuch as we suppose the command, "*search the Scriptures*," brings all men under obligations to perform this duty. But Romanists oppose the private reading of the Scriptures, as a sin against the church, against the fathers, against tradition, and against the apostles. And

with an air of triumph they quote 2 *Pet.* i, 20, "No prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation." Now, although they care very little about the Bible when they talk about purgatory, the five sacraments, extreme unction, and prayer to images and saints, yet they cling with rare tenacity to passages that seem to favor their peculiar cause. But let us see how much they gain by this passage from the supposed head of the church. He says, "*no prophecy* of the Scripture is of any private interpretation," but he says not a word about the historical, the hortatory, or the didactic. He does not use the word *no* Scripture, but "*no prophecy* of the Scriptures. Now, if Romanists have all they contend for, they have but a small portion of the Bible, while Protestants have all the balance, subject to their own private interpretation.

But we are not sure that St. Peter even prohibits the private interpretation of prophecy properly understood, for he calls it the "more sure word," and "the light that shineth in a dark place," and exhorts us to "take heed" to this "more sure word of prophecy." But if St. Peter prohibits the private interpretation of prophecy, not even a Romanist has a right to exercise his private judgment, much less to apply it to the private judgment of others. Now there is no consistency in Romanists, for they attempt to interpret that very portion of God's word which says that "no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation." One thing, however, is sure, and not very private either; and that is this; many of the prophecies are very distinct as to the true nature, the corrupting tendency, and the final overthrow of Romanism, as the "man of sin," and the enemy of God and pure religion.

6. That "the Scriptures contain all things necessary to salvation" must be true, or they clearly contradict themselves. This no Protestant Christian, nor well informed

Romanist will allow. If they do not contradict themselves, and if we understand the meaning of plain texts, words, and the intention of God in the gift of the Bible, then it is clear that the Holy Scriptures contain whatever man may need, under any possible circumstance, to make him wise unto salvation. For, as *Irenæus* says, "The Scriptures are indeed complete." What is here said of the Bible, as to its completeness, and as to its sufficiency as a guide to salvation, unassisted by the tradition of the fathers, either oral or written, can be predicated of no other book in the world. The Mohammedan claims very much for the Koran; and the Brahman claims as much for the Shaster, while the Romanist is loud in his praises of the church, tradition, the regenerating power of the Sacraments; but altogether, and in their greatest power, they have not, and cannot, obtain the character that is justly ascribed to the Bible. The power and sufficiency of this Book is from God, and is attested by Christ and the Holy Ghost.

7. The Bible as it is, and its friends, have nothing to fear, though the powers of Infidelity and Romanism, with the puny attempts of some bigoted though sinking sects at a "new version," may all be its enemies. It is the Book of God, completed by himself, and committed to the Church for the benefit of the world, with this solemn charge; "Here stand," "And the gates of hell shall not prevail against thee." And while it serves the Church as her foundation and frontier fortress, it is likewise her true prophet of hope. The chorus of all its songs is of time and glory to come, and its constant address to the church is, "Arise and shine." It lies before us, an open volume, courting investigation, and furnishing the light by which the investigation may be successfully prosecuted. It commends itself to the understanding of

all men, by enlightening the conscience, by improving the heart, by regulating society, and by leading the true believer from “glory to glory,” until his soul ascends the highest mount of spiritual vision, from whose summit he may behold, “with open face,” the glory of God as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ.

“How precious is the book divine,  
By inspiration given;  
Bright as a lamp its doctrines shine,  
To guide our souls to heaven.”

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#### SECTION SECOND.

##### *The Bible,—the only Rule of Faith.*

1. If “the Holy Scriptures” contain all that is necessary to salvation, it follows that “*whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.*” This part of our Article teaches, that the Bible is to be appealed to in the final settlement of all questions of faith and practice. From this there can be no appeal to any other book, for this is the highest authority on earth, or in the Church to which men may have personal access. The Bible is, therefore, the only *Rule of Faith*. It was so regarded by the Primitive Church. *St. Cyril* says, “That which the Holy Scripture hath not said, how can we receive it, and put it into the catalogue of those things that be true.” This was said in A. D. 415, and 200 years before this, or in A. D. 215, *Tertullian of Carthage* says, “If it be not written, let him fear that woe that is appointed to those that put anything to, or take anything from the word of God.” The woe here referred to is in *Rev. xxii, 18, 19*, “For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of

the prophecy of this book. If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the prophecy of this book, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

2. But not in the least intimidated by this woe, the Romish Church affirms that the Scriptures only are not a sufficient rule of faith. Hence *Dr. Milner* says, the Roman Catholic rule of faith is "Scripture and Tradition, and these propounded and explained by the Catholic Church." But where shall we find this joint rule of faith? In *about one hundred and thirty five folio volumes*, "made up of the following works; the *Bulls* of Popes are at least eight volumes folio; the *Decretals* ten volumes folio; the *Acts of Councils* thirty-one volumes folio; the *Acts Sanctum*, or Doings of the Saints, are in fifty-one volumes folio; add to these at least thirty-five volumes folio of Greek and Latin Fathers, in which is to be found that part of the rule called the *unanimous consent*; add to these one hundred and thirty-five volumes folio of unread and unexamined materials, the unlimited mass of unwritten traditions which floated from the commencement of the Christian era to the present time, in oral communication, or, in other words, by mere hearsay transmission; all these cumberous additions made to the Holy Scriptures constitute the Roman Catholic rule." *Elliott on Rom.* In April, A. D. 1546, the Fourth Session of the Council of Trent, decreed that tradition, both written and unwritten, are of equal authority with the Bible, and that the person denying this shall be accursed. Now who does not see, that, if this is a part of the rule of faith, but few can have any faith at all, and still fewer can be saved.

It would require a life time to learn what to believe, from such an endless and complicated rule of faith as Popery presents. Surely Romanism is a hard religion in whatever light its gross absurdities may be considered.

3. The whole machinery of Romanism is artfully constructed of materials from Judaism, Paganism, and corrupted Christiality. So much so that it manages to keep the Bible from the people, and to satisfy them, somewhat, that it does not contain the whole of God's will concerning men, and is, consequently, not a sufficient rule of faith. But it is no difficult matter to see why the Apocrypha and tradition are so tenaciously and zealously maintained as a part of the rule of faith. The Bible proper condemns Romanism as an absurd machination of Satan, and as the enemy of true religion. But to make a show of truth they still retain the Bible, while at the same time they resort to the traditions of the Church for proof of their many idolatrous customs. From these sources they derive proofs of five sacraments; the invocation of saints, the worship of images, crosses, and relics, the bodily presence of Christ in the holy eucharist, purgatory, prayers for the dead, &c. But we are not much surprised at these errors, for they are the legitimate results of a long, a wicked, a studied and habitual departure from simple truth. Like a vessel on the ocean, without sail or rudder, so is that man in the world of morals who is without the unerring guide of God's Word. Cut a man off from the influence and controlling power of this, and there is no telling what will be his absurdities, and where he will end. Romanism has pursued this course for centuries, accumulating, meanwhile, one monster of absurdity after another, and what she will be before her cup of iniquity is full, no uninspired man can tell.

4. It is worthy of remark in this place, in further vindication of the doctrine of this Article, that the Apocryphal books are in no instance referred to in either the Old or New Testament, in proof of any fact, or as composing any part of the rule of faith. And when tradition is referred to, it is always in terms of condemnation, as in *Mark* vii, 13, "Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition." Now one of two things is certain, either first, that the Bible as it is, and as it was commended to the world by its divine Author, is a complete rule of faith, independent of all other writings or traditions; or second, that the whole Protestant world is deceived by the high pretensions of the Bible itself, and is, consequently, in the utmost danger of irrecoverable ruin. If we have any correct notion of vice and virtue, as comparative results of Romanism and Protestantism, as well as the claims of the Holy Scriptures, the Protestant world is correct, the Bible is a perfect rule of faith, and Romanism is in the deepest and most defiling error. The Bible is manifestly sufficient to inform us what the rule of faith is, and what the faith is of which it is the rule. It is also sufficient to teach us what is heresy, for heresy is nothing but a manifest deviation from, and opposition to, the faith "once delivered to the saints."

5. But, however much Protestants may oppose the Apocrypha and tradition, as parts of the rule of faith, yet they offer no reason why such books as cast light upon the Bible should be rejected; on the other hand, they encourage, by their right to read the Scriptures, by their untrammelled press, and their devotion to religious books, the writing, and the free circulation of such books, pamphlets, tracts, and religious newspapers, as may tend to edify the people. Meanwhile, they require no man to 'believe as an article of faith,' anything that is not read

in, nor may be proved by, the Scriptures. Nor do Protestant Christians find any reason in the Bible why they should not compose such Articles of Religion as may be clearly proved by the word of God, and subscribe to these as summaries of Christian doctrine, and as symbols of Christian faith.

But Romanism fears all these results of the free use of the Scriptures as the Christian rule of faith, and it fears the power of an educated people, as its uniform policy clearly shows. She is apt in addressing the senses with a gorgeous ritual, and the baser passions of man's nature by her indulgences; while Protestantism, with her unencumbered Bible, and her simple and pure ritual, addresses the heart, and the higher life of the people. She rejects the thousand tongued jargon of tradition, the infallibility of human judgment and human councils, and teaches the Bible as the only rule of faith, with the uniform standard principle, "that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation."

" This lamp through all the tedious night  
Of life, shall guide our way  
Till we behold the clearer light,  
Of an eternal day."

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### SECTION THIRD.

#### *Divine Authority of the Bible*

1. This last branch of our Article refers to the confidence of the Church in the *Canon* of the Old and New Testament, as well as to her confidence in their *Divine authority*. "In the name of the Holy Scripture, we do understand those Canonical books of the Old and New

Testamen', of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church." The Canon of the Old Testament was undoubtedly prepared by Ezra, after the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity. In this work he was no doubt assisted by many learned Jews. The Jews all agree that this canon is correct, and it was not objected to by Christ nor the Primitive Church. On the other hand, we have catalogues of the books of the Old Testament, from men of the highest standing in the Primitive Church, as *Eusebius*, *Origen*, *Cyril*, *Augustine*, and *Jerome*. The canon of the New Testament was prepared and arranged by *Origen*, who lived about one hundred years after the death of St. John. His enumeration includes all the books of the present canon, except the Epistles of James and Jude. These were omitted by mistake, for in other parts of *Origen's* writing, they are referred to as genuine and legitimate parts of the regular canon. *Eusebius*, who lived about one hundred years after *Origen*, enumerated every book which we now have in the canon, and no others, from which we derive the belief that the canon is complete. At the Council of *Laodicea*, in the fourth century, the canon of the Old and New Testament was received and settled just as we have it, except the book of Revelation, which was omitted. Why this was omitted is not certain.

2. The Scriptures are called *holy*, because of the doctrines which they teach ; and they are termed *canonical*, because, when their number and Divine authority were determined, their names were inserted in ecclesiastical canons, to distinguish them from other books, which, being of *no* authority, were kept out of sight, and therefore styled Apocryphal. These Scriptures are from God, as I shall now proceed to show. *2 Tim.* iii, 16, "All Scripture is given by *inspiration* of God." The term *inspiration* means the supernatural influence of God's Spirit upon the

mind of an intelligent creature, whereby he is elevated to a degree of knowledge to which he could not have attained in a natural way. Hence we have the definition of St. Peter, *2 Pet. i, 21*, "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were *moved by the Holy Ghost*." Now it is more than probable that the Spirit of God moved holy men to speak of things of which they had no distinct knowledge, though they were speaking of them. Hence they "inquired diligently," they "searched diligently," as to "what manner of time the Spirit of God which was in them did signify." But the Scriptures are of Divine authority, and have come to us without any mutilation or corruption. This we prove by adducing the fact that the Jews and Samaritans regarded each other with feelings of hatred and jealousy. When this fact is examined, it will go very far to establish the genuineness of, at least, the Old Testament. The hatred of these two classes of persons towards each other, proved to be a safeguard to the Jewish Scriptures, for both had the same, agreeing in all material points with each other, and both these parties claimed to be true people of God. The Jews watched carefully the state of the Samaritan text, and the Samaritans watched with equal care, the state of the Jewish text, so that neither one nor the other could alter or amend without being detected. But if the Jews or Samaritans would alter any part of the original text, it is but reasonable to suppose they would fix upon those parts which recorded their own sins and downfall. But this was never done, and 't goes very far to show the great fidelity with which they preserved their sacred books, and the confidence they had in their Divine origin.

3. During the time of Christ's stay on earth, he often referred to the Scriptures, and as often reproved the Jews

for their great ignorance of them ; but he never alluded to the least defect in their preservation. Now it is not possible for the great Author of these writings to acknowledge a spurious or mutilated book in the place of what he had inspired " holy men of God to write." The Old Testament was, therefore, in a state of perfect and uncorrupted preservation in the time of Christ. Since the time of Christ, the Old Testament has been in the hands of Jews and Gentiles, who are as much opposed to each other as were the Jews and Samaritans. These watch each other with great care and jealousy, so that it were impossible for either to make any change in the holy writings without being detected and exposed. Therefore we must conclude that we have the pure Old Testament Scriptures.

4. But there is just as clear evidence that we possess the New Testament in a perfect state. Ever since the beginning of the Christian era, there have been various sects of Christians, all claiming to be correct in their theory of religion, and each condemning all the others. These, like the Jews and Samaritans, have watched each other with great jealousy, lest, in the translation of any portion of the New Testament, or in the translation of the whole, one should get the advantage of the other. This we see very plainly at the present time. This fact, together with the fact that Romanists watch over every Protestant sect with rigid keenness, is clear evidence that we have the New Testament in its original perfection. Now, if we add to this the other external evidences of the truth and Divine origin of the Bible, such as the evidence of miracle and the evidence of prophecy, we have an array of proof that the infidel has never been able to resist, and that continues a witness to the truth of the Scriptures in every prophecy that is fulfilled. Hence the Church has never doubted the authority and

completeness of her sacred writings; nor is she disposed to doubt now, inasmuch as she is a daily witness to the effects that are produced among men, by the circulation and careful reading of this book. Her confidence in its power is constantly increasing.

5. But the Bible contains evidence in itself that it is the production of a mind superior to the most refined and enlarged human mind. It is true that most of its style is simple, and that much of its imagery is drawn from the simplest things of nature; but its thought, its precepts, its morality, its conception, the effects that it produces on the heart, and the hope of endless felicity that it creates in the soul, all correspond to the belief that it is from God. Hence every believer is a competent witness in himself to prove the Divine origin of the Bible. It teaches that he is a sinner against God, and the inward consciousness attests the truth. It offers pardon to him on given conditions, and when the conditions are complied with, the thing promised is obtained, and the inward testimony of peace witnesses the truth of the holy Record. Even the infidel, if he were honest with himself, must confess that, amid his efforts to get rid of the truth, a lingering doubt steals over the soul, that, after all, the Bible may be true. I have but touched a very few of the evidences of the Divine origin of the Bible; and in as popular a manner as I am capable of, so that the reason might be arrived at which induced the framers of this Article to say that, "In the name of the Holy Scripture, we do understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church."

" How precious is the book divine,  
By inspiration given;  
Bright as a lamp its doctrines shine,  
To guide our souls to heaven.

It sweetly cheers our drooping hearts,  
In this dark vale of tears ;  
And life, and light, and joy imparts,  
And banishes our fears."

How important, then, that this Book be the chief volume in all earth's families ! It contains all the necessary rules of holy living, the faithful following of which will fit the soul for the life that now is, and for that which is to come. Neither tradition nor philosophy can supply its place. And while it is so manifest that God has taken such special care of it for the benefit of the world, the world should receive it, and read it as the council of God unto eternal life.

## ARTICLE VI.

### OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

“ The Old Testament is not contrary to the New ; for both in the Old and New Testament, everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and man, being both God and man. Wherefore they are not to be heard who feign that the old fathers did look only for transitory promises. Although the law given from God by Moses, as touching ceremonies and rites, doth not bind Christians ; nor ought the civil precepts thereof of necessity be received, in any commonwealth ; yet, notwithstanding, no Christian whatsoever is free from the obedience of the commandments commonly called moral.”

#### SECTION FIRST.

##### *Unity of the Old and New Testament.*

1. “ The Old Testament is not contrary to the New.” We may readily see the truth of this if we consider the fact, that the same great principles of religion that were revealed and practiced in the several dispensations of the Old Testament Church, are the same that are laid down as rules of faith and Christian practice in the New Testament Church. The Bible is but one book ; it is the work of but one author, and has but one common object ; though different men, and at different times and in different places, were employed in its composition. These men were under the inspiration of but one God, who is perfect in his knowledge of the past, the present, and the future, and therefore cannot, in any degree, contradict himself. • It follows, then, that the unity of the Old and New Testament, finds its strongest proof in the fact that but one mind suggested and superintended the entire work of revelation. And what gives still more weight to the argu-

ment is, the fact that revelations were made at distant intervals, through the long period of sixteen hundred years; and to men of very different habits of thought, and in very different and distant places. The distant locations of these inspired men, and the different periods in which they lived, made it impossible for anything like confederacy, or collusion, in the composition of the Scriptures; and yet, the different parts of these writings, communicated to the world through these men, perfectly agree with, and fully support each other. This is pre-eminently true of the *Doctrines* of the Bible; and it is equally true that the same essential agreement and dependency obtains among the *practical* precepts of the Holy Writings.

2. But to see the unity of the Scriptures more fully, we may examine the religion of the patriarchs, and ascertain whether it did not contain the rudiments and principles of a religion, that was more fully unfolded in subsequent ages and dispensations. The period of patriarchal theology included about two thousand five hundred years, reaching from Adam to Moses. The history of this period is contained in the book of Genesis, and is the only authentic source of whatever we know of the patriarchal religion. Here we learn that the patriarchs believed in one God, that they worshiped him as the creator and preserver of all things. They believed in the eternity, the omnipotence, and the holiness of God; and that he is gracious toward them that fear him. And what are these but the doctrines of every subsequent dispensation? It is true, these and other doctrines were expanded by more minute and ample revelations in subsequent ages, but they were still one and the same set of doctrines.

With regard to the external *rites* of the patriarchal religion, none is more prominent than that of offering to God

sacrifice for sin. This practice involved most clearly an acknowledgment of sin, and a belief in the final sacrifice of Christ, as a means of pardon, and a necessary offset to the curse of the fall. It involved likewise, a belief in the future existence of the soul; and that God will reward the virtuous with everlasting life, and punish the vicious with everlasting death.

Equally clear is the patriarchal theology with regard to the *moral* duties between man and man. These are directly taught and enforced by precept and example; particularly the duty of honesty, of hospitality, of the marriage relation, and of the respective duties of parents and children. These, with many other moral duties that were then practiced, were but faintly indicated, but so far as they were made known, they were confirmed, and made more prominent in every subsequent dispensation.

3. Next is the dispensation of Moses. This was substantially the same as that given to the patriarchs. It included a period of about fifteen hundred years, beginning with Moses, and reaching down to its termination in Christ. In this, as in the former dispensation, the *unity* of God was especially taught. *Deut.* vi. 4, "The Lord our God is *one* Lord." *Chap.* xxxiii, 27, His *eternity*—"The *eternal* God is thy refuge." His *goodness*—*Ps.* cxix, 68, "Thou art *good* and doest good." His *holiness*—*1 Sam.* ii, 2, "There is none *holy* as the Lord." These and other doctrines that we have not time to name, were the basis and framework of religion then as they are now.

But this was a much more eventful dispensation than the preceding. It included the Exodus, the giving of the law, the settlement of the Israelites in Canaan, and whatever additional disclosures of the mind of God that were made to the prophets. But in all, there was nothing that in the least disagreed with what had gone

before. That dispensation was one of enforcement; Moses and the prophets continually urged the duty of obeying God in all things, of worshiping him in spirit, and of trusting in his providence.

But the expectation of a Redeemer that was cherished by the patriarchs, was kept burning on the hearts of the prophets, by their various and sublime visions of his glory, and their clear impressions of his coming. They looked into time to come, and as they looked, they saw the "Desire of all nations," "Despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief."

4. But in the *morality* of this dispensation, we may see an exhibition of perfection and beauty, in no respect inferior to its sublime doctrines and prophecies. It contains the *moral law*, which is so pure, so strictly expository of the whole duty of man, and so comprehensive as to be without a parallel in the most refined legislative enactments of any, or all the nations of the earth. This code of morality but confirms the morality of the patriarchs; bringing that into its own enforcements, and reaching into all coming time, it will constitute the life-law of the morality of all succeeding ages. But, however excellent in itself, it looked to a period when its nature would be better understood, and when its principles would be applied by the gospel to all the purposes of a better dispensation. That dispensation, with all its rites and ceremonies, and with all its superior advantages over preceding dispensations, was but temporary in its nature, and preparatory to a more full and final dispensation, which was to be made known in the gospel. This dispensation, with all its fuller glories, has been ushered into the world, and with it the New Testament Scriptures. In these Scriptures we have a harmony of doctrine, and a unity of precept with all other dispensations, which very

conclusively settles the truth of our Article. *Justin Martyr* affirms, that the "Apostles have taught us, what themselves did learn; first, the precepts of the law, and then the gospel." Then he asks, "What is the law, but the gospel foreshadowed?" *St. Chrysostom* says, "There is no difference but of names in the two Testaments, no opposition or contrariety." If, in the days of the *fathers*, such conclusive testimony should be recorded for the unity of the Old and New Testament, why doubt the agreement of the Holy Scriptures in a more enlightened age of the Christian dispensation?

5. But, finally, the unity of the Old and New Testament is proved by more than two hundred and fifty quotations, either directly or indirectly drawn from the Hebrew Scriptures, and inserted in the Christian Scriptures. The doctrines and precepts of the gospel are but the doctrines and precepts of former ages and dispensations, more fully stated and more highly finished. These are the standards of the faith and practice of the Christian Church, by solemn continuation and reënactment. In them we find such a oneness of design, and such a oneness of effect, with the design and effect they had in other dispensations, on the faith and practice of believers, that we readily, and without hesitation, believe that "The Old Testament is not contrary to the New."

Let the harmony of the Scriptures impress upon the heart, the importance of harmony among Christians, though they may differ somewhat in doctrines. But especially let those who subscribe to the same Articles of Religion, agree among themselves. Let the unity of the Scriptures ever remind us of our union with Christ and his people, and that as the Bible is one, so Christ and his people are one. And let us never forget to "Search the Scriptures."

## SECTION SECOND.

*Proof of this Unity*

1. "For both in the Old and New Testament everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and man, being both God and man."

Now, if we can show that this part of our Article is sustained by the testimony of the Bible, then it will be in further proof that the "Old Testament is not contrary to the New." That salvation is offered to mankind only by Christ, is a primary truth of Christian theology. It is the great central truth, and the great central object of the entire book of Revelation. When redemption is spoken of, it is uniformly ascribed to the Son of God, and no other. *Acts* x, 43, "to him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." And again in *Chap.* iv, 12, "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." *Is.* liii, 5, "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." *Gal.* iii, 13, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us! for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." These Scriptures fully settle the question that the redemption of the soul from sin is only through Christ. The only question that can arise here, is this; was Christ the only Saviour of sinners in the two former dispensations, as he is in the Christian dispensation? If not, then those who were saved in these former dispensations, were either saved without a Mediator and Saviour, or they were saved by obedience to the law. The former was not at all possible, and the latter would have been contrary to the genius and spirit of the law.

2. The patriarchs had no written law, it is true ; but they had very clear views of the circumstances of Mediatorial redemption. They apprehended the saving character and spiritual import of the first promise, in *Gen.* iii, 15, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed ; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." The proof of this is *Heb.* xi, 4, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous." *Verse* 5, "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death." Now what was the object of Abel's and Enoch's faith ? The entire scope of the Bible teaches this common reply ; The promised Christ, involved in the first intimation of redemption to Adam and Eve. But what was the reference in the sacrifice of Abel ? Subsequent dispensations unfold this general and only answer ; The sacrifice of Christ. The sacrifice of Abel, whether ordained at the time it was offered, or before, very clearly exemplified two primary facts ; the death which had been denounced against man, and the death of the Redeemer ; thereby connecting in one view, the two cardinal events in the history of man ; the *fall* and the *redemption*. But the efficacy of faith in the promised Redeemer is farther seen in the case of Enoch, *Gen.* v, 24, "And Enoch walked with God ; and was not, for God took him." Now to walk with God, supposes agreement with him, which St. Paul clearly establishes in *Heb.* xi, 5, "For before his translation, he had this testimony, that he pleased God." Now the point made out by the above named cases, is clearly this ; As there is salvation in no other name but the name of Christ, and as Abel and Enoch were saved, they must have been saved by faith in Christ.

"Fy faith we know thee strong to save."

The next promise of a Redeemer and Mediator was made to Abraham, in *Gen.* xxii, 18, "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." That this passage applies to Christ, we prove by *Matt.* i, 1, where Christ is called the "Son of Abraham." Then in *vers.* 17, the Evangelist gives a line of direct succession from Abraham to Christ, involved in *forty-two generations*. Another promise of equal force and clearness of application is in *Num.* xxiv, 17, "There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel." This prophecy of Balaam is applied to Christ by *Rev.* xxii, 16, "I am the root and offspring of David, and the bright and *morning Star*."

— 'O Day Star from on high!  
The sun itself is but thy shade,  
Yet cheers both earth and sky.'

To these promises of a deliverer all the prophecies referred, and taught that redemption is in no other. And to this great deliverer the writers of the New Testament constantly refer, as the subject of Old Testament promise, so that ample proof of the unity of the Old and New Testament is found in the fact that "everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and man."

3. But Christ "is the *only* Mediator between God and man," because God has appointed him and no other, and because a self appointed mediator, or one appointed by men, whether he be the Pope of Rome, or St. Peter, can never be recognized by the Divine government. A mediator is one who stands between two parties who are at variance, for the purpose of reconciling them. Hence Jesus Christ is the Mediator between God the offended, and mankind the offenders, in order to secure peace. 1 *Tim.* ii, 5, "For there is one God and one Mediator be-

tween God and men, the man Christ Jesus." This passage assumes the universally admitted fact, that a mediator was needed because of man's enmity to God; and it assumes the fact likewise, that as there is but one God, there is need of but one Mediator. Hence the whole system of Romish mediation by priests and saints is a perversion of the Scriptures, and a delusive and destructive imposture.

Jesus Christ is the only Mediator by Divine appointment, and his first act, at the opening of his public militant ministry was to read his credentials. *Is.* lxi, 1, "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." This settles the Divine authority of Christ in the work of reconciliation. He is not only the authorized, but the only qualified Mediator, "being both God and man." For farther remarks upon the Divinity, the Humanity, and the union of these two natures in Christ, the reader is referred to Art. II, Sec. 1, Sec. 2, and Sec. 3. More will not be said upon these subjects here. Now, if everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ, it evidently follows that men are not justified by the law. The proper office of the law is to bring men to Christ that they may be justified by faith in him. *Gal.* iii. 24, "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring men to Christ."

But proof of the unity of the Old and New Testament is found among the Christian *fathers*. *Ignatious* says, "There is one God of the Old Testament, and one Mediator betwixt God and man." "All the saints, therefore, were saved by him, as Christ, trusting in him and expecting of him."

## SECTION THIRD.

*What the Old Testament Saints looked for.*

1. It is assumed in this Article that without the mediation of Christ, mankind must have been lost. And it states the well known scripture fact that "everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ," and that this offer of eternal life was made to the patriarchs and prophets, through Christ, as it is now made to Christians. Then it records this general conclusion; "They are not to be heard which feign that the old fathers did look only for transitory promises."

Those who deny the Supreme Divinity of Christ, of course confine his work of redemption unto eternal life, to the gospel, and assert that, in the Old Testament, neither redemption from sin nor eternal life, were certainly or distinctly understood. Hence they interpret the promises of the Old Testament, as referring exclusively to temporal blessings. That the patriarchs and prophets believed in a certain redemption from *sin*, by the mediation of Christ, has been fully shown from the scriptures, in the preceding section of these Notes; and it remains to be shown in this section whether they expected *eternal life* through Christ, or whether they expected temporal blessings only. The mistake on this subject is probably founded in the fact, that if we take the words of many of the old covenants of God with the patriarchs and prophets, as they stand in the record, they seem to import only temporal blessings. But we must consider the additional fact, that most of these were national covenants, and could only be established in promises of public national blessings. These covenants contained promises of good to the nation collectively, if they were obedient; and if they were disobedient to the rules of their national covenants, they were

threatened with, and visited by, signal judgments. These were the usual rules of covenant stipulation.

The national history of these ancient people, proves most conclusively what is here asserted. When they strictly observed the stipulations of their covenants, they prospered ; but when they were disobedient, as a nation, or as any considerable part of a nation, they were punished by assaults from neighboring nations, or by direct judgments from God, or they were taken into captivity.

2. But at the same time, every person might, and all the good among them did, gather hope of a future state, as is clearly intimated by various expressions and circumstances, throughout the Old Testament Scriptures. We might safely admit this, even if there were no direct revelations of a future state. For we cannot suppose that the events of this life have no reference to another life. If we can entertain such a supposition, then the whole history of mankind in all ages is not only inexplicable, but contradictory. If it is true that the "old fathers" had no knowledge of a future state of joy and felicity, then we must admit the absurdity, that they came upon the great platform of time to act a part which had no meaning, and which had no definite end. But such vagaries have no place in the history of the Old Testament saints ; they looked for a "better country," though many of them fell under national calamities, and because of the rebellion of others. Such of them, however, as were not destroyed by national judgments, and who preserved their integrity in the midst of a general apostacy and ruin ; and whose virtues never yielded to prevailing iniquity, had for themselves, and gave to others, the greatest possible reason for expecting future rewards beyond what could be bestowed in this life.

But upon what grounds did they expect a future state

of being and felicity? Strong intimation was given to them in the translation of Enoch, which took place in A. M., 987, and about fifty years after the death of Adam. He "walked with God," and "God took him." Now what else could the patriarchs have learned from this sublime transaction, but that there is another state of being? God took Enoch, and the people saw him no more on earth; therefore, they must have believed that, as he was a good man, God must have taken him to some place where his virtues might be more fully rewarded. They were greatly encouraged in this belief, inasmuch as "Enoch walked with God" while on earth, and that, "before his translation, he had this testimony that he pleased God."

In the translation of Elijah, in the Jewish dispensation, the same doctrine is illustrated. Both of these translations were instances of great importance to the New Testament saints. They showed the value of personal holiness, and tended to assure mankind that the pious will surely exist in a future state of reward and felicity, and that too, in bodies changed from *mortality to immortality*.

3. But let us refer to some passages that are expressive of belief in a future state of happiness. *Gen. xlix, 18*, "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord." *Ps. xvi, 11*, "Thou wilt show me the path of life; in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there is pleasures forever more." *Ps. xvii, 15*, "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness, I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness." *Ps. xlix, 15*, "But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave, for he shall receive me." *Is. iii, 10*, "Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him; for they shall eat the fruit of their doings." *Is. xxv, 8*, "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off

all faces ;” and Job xix, 27, 26, “ For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.” And we might refer to the whole of the eleventh chapter of the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews, as conclusive evidence that the “ old fathers ” looked for more than temporal blessings. They looked for a “ better country,” “ a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” They consistently believed that a life of virtue will surely secure happiness in this state of being, and felicity at the right hand of God. This fact was well understood by the *fathers*. *St. Augustine* says, “ But the Old Testament, to them that rightly understand it, is a prophecy of the New Testament. And therefore, in that first people, the holy patriarchs and prophets, who understood what they did, or what was done by them, had then the hope of eternal salvation in the New Testament.”

From the above quotations we learn two very instructive facts ;

*First.* The “ old fathers ” constantly expected the reward of virtue and piety, in a future state of being. Their faith in this fundamental article of their religion, controlled and modified their whole earthly character. By faith they served God, and “ died in faith.”

*Second.* They looked for the resurrection of the body from the grave, as the result of the redemption and mediation of Christ. And hence it is, that “ they are not to be heard which feign that the old Fathers did look only for transitory promises.” But this very instructive subject suggests important hints to Christians. The old fathers had but the shadow of Revelation, and yet they “ died in faith.” Christians have the full and complete record of all that is necessary for faith and practice. Yet

it is to be feared that many of them have but little "respect to the recompense of reward." Let such persons deeply repent of the sin of "little faith," and let them take hold upon the "great and precious promises," that their hope may reach to "that within the veil," and constantly cherish the sublime visions of scenes that are transpiring in the "holy of holies."

"And hasten to be swallowed up  
Of everlasting life."

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#### SECTION FOURTH.

##### *Laws of Moses not binding on Christians.*

1. Of course, the heading of the section is not intended to exclude the obligations of the Moral Law. It refers only to the *Ceremonial* and *Civil* laws of the Jews.

*First.* The ceremonial law is not binding on Christians, as is very plainly taught in these words of the Article; "Although the law given from God by Moses, touching ceremonies and rites, do not bind Christian men." By the ceremonial law, we are to understand that part of the law of Moses which related to the outward circumstances of God's worship among the Jews. This law was minutely detailed, reaching into, and controlling every act of worship, and plainly directing every part of the ceremony. It was, in consequence of its complicated nature, a very burdensome law, and only designed to regulate the worship of a rude people. It was a temporary regulation, and intended to expire by its own limitations.

The Israelitish Church, with all its ceremonial observances - as preparatory to a better and more simple and perfect church; and the ceremonial law was intended only for beginners. This law, St. Paul says in *Rb.* ix, 10,

“Stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances imposed on them until the *time of reformation.*” This brings before us the fact, that most, if not all of the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic economy were typical, and received their accomplishment in the antitypes to which they referred. Now it were manifest absurdity to suppose that the type should continue in force after that which is typified is introduced. Hence the Apostle says that these ceremonies of the law were “imposed” on the Jews, “until the time of the reformation,” or until the time of the more perfect, or gospel church.

The whole institute of Moses was founded chiefly on mutable relations and circumstances, which existed in the condition and wants of the people at that time. It was, therefore, of such a nature, that it might be repealed, when it had fulfilled its purpose, without the least injury to the people, or any reflection upon the immutability or goodness of its Author. For reasons best known to God himself, the ceremonial law was introduced to preserve a marked distinction between the descendants of Abraham, in the line of Isaac and Jacob, and all other nations. The Hebrew nation, therefore, constituted the visible national church from Abraham to Christ, and was distinguished as such by the rite of circumcision. But even this rite was abolished, and the wall of partition was broken down, that, as St. Paul says, *Eph.* iii. 6, “The Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.”

“Thine heritage, the Gen'iles, take,

And cause the world to know thy name.”

2. Now that very important ends were accomplished by the rigid application of the ceremonial law, during its continuance, is very evident. It preserved the knowledge

and worship of the true God, amid the idolatrous and degrading influences of the surrounding nations. It maintained the unity and zeal of the Hebrew Church, by bringing all the male members, three times every year, to Jerusalem, to hold the three great annual festivals,—the Passover, the Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles; and it most solemnly typified the better dispensation, whose Author was so often represented in his work of mercy and redemption, in the sacrifices of the temple. To that dispensation of rites and ceremonies, Christians are indebted for the oracles of God, and for the certain promise of a Redeemer and Mediator.

But if it can be shown from the Scriptures that these ended with the death of Christ, then we shall have proved, at once, the truth of the assertion in our Article. *Gal.* iii, 13, “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.” *Eph.* ii, 15, “Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace. Now, according to these passages, Christ has freed his followers from all obligation to serve the law of Moses, contained in rites and ceremonies. And he has, consequently, saved them from the penalties of this law. The life and power of this whole argument, is the fact of the universal application of the Christian system to both Jews and Gentiles, in opposition to the Mosaic institute, which applied only to the Jews. Hence St. Paul says, in *Eph.* ii, 14, that Christ “Is our peace who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us.” *Col.* ii, 14, “Blotting out the hand writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to the cross.” These passages are full of meaning. They show the su-

rior value of the death of Christ; and how he set aside the economy of Moses, which consisted in typical sacrifices; and how he consecrated the Christian economy for the purposes of a universal salvation for both Jews and Gentiles, by the one sacrifice of himself. Hence the new covenant is dated from the time of Christ's death, and not from the time he opened his public ministry.

3. The Apostles understood that there was but "one Shepherd," and "one fold," in the new dispensation, and hence they immediately commenced preaching one Christ, and one common salvation for both Jews and Gentiles. But a question soon arose, among them, as to the rite of the Old Testament, which was circumcision. To settle this question, a council was called at Jerusalem, in A. D. 52, in which it was determined that the Gentiles should not be troubled with this "yoke," which even the fathers "were not able to bear," *Acts*, xv, 10. It was determined then, that this rite should no longer be a test of church membership, and consequently, is not binding on Christians.

But the observance of the ceremonial law in all its parts, is historically impossible. The Temple of Jerusalem is destroyed, and the Jews, to whom this law was originally given, are dispersed in groups among all nations; and the necessary ceremonial appliances and observances, are utterly impracticable; and it is worthy of remark, as a historical fact, that by the mysterious operations of Providence, the Jews, as a nation, have never celebrated the feast of the Passover since the death of Christ. Now if there are legal and historical obstructions to the observance of the ceremonial law, it is, of course, not binding upon the Jews, and much less upon the Christians. It therefore follows, as in *John* iv, 21, that "Ye shall neither in this moun-

tain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father." Verse 23, "And that now is when the true worshipper shall worship the Father in spirit, and in truth."

" Not now on Zion's height alone  
The favor'd worshipper may dwell  
Nor where, at sultry noon, thy Son  
Sat weary by the Patriarch's well.  
From every place below the skies,  
The grateful song, the fervent prayer,  
The incense of the heart, may rise  
To heaven, and find acceptance there."

4. *Second.* The civil precepts of Moses are not binding on Christians, or, in the words of the Article, "Nor the civil precepts thereof ought of necessity to be received in any commonwealth." By "civil precepts," we are to understand those rules that related to the state polity of the Jews, and which constituted them the highest example of civilization in that primitive age. These laws were suited to the peculiar circumstances of that people. But as no other people or nation is under precisely similar circumstances, therefore the civil polity of the Jews is not obligatory upon any nation, not even upon the Jews themselves, at this time. The old covenant of national promises, and its appendages of civil polity, is not only abolished, but the observance of the civil precepts of that polity is rendered impossible, by the expulsion of the Jews from Judea. Now, if that form of civil polity cannot be observed by those for whom it was originally and specifically designed, and is nowhere recommended by the New Testament authority, it follows, as clearly as one thing can follow another, that it is not binding on Christians. This subject may tend to direct the pious heart of the believer,

*First.* To the dignity, the simplicity, and the universal and particular practicability of Christian worship. "God

is a Spirit," everywhere present to hear the prayer of the penitent, and the believer's song of praise. *Matt.* xviii, 20, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

*Second.* The Christian is taught by this subject, that the rites and ceremonies of Christianity should be observed with great zeal and propriety. These are ordained of God as so many channels of his grace and mercy. And they are the standing memorials of his goodness. *1 Cor.* xiv, 40, "Let all things be done decently and in order."

" Thus will the church below  
 Resemble that above ;  
 Where streams of endless pleasures flow,  
 And every heart is love."

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#### SECTION FIFTH.

##### *The Moral Law Binding on Christians.*

1. "No Christian whatsoever is free from the obedience of the commandments which are called moral." During the whole time the Mosaic dispensation existed, it was in full force; and obedience to every part of it was a sacred, and, to the Jew, an indispensable duty. But as soon as it expired, none of its laws continued in force but the moral law. This law cannot be suspended, inasmuch as it stands on the immutable relations between God and his creatures, and between man and man. It is faithfully incorporated into the Christian system, free from all the embarrassments of the ceremonial and civil institutes of the Israelites. It now occupies higher ground, and contains greater and clearer amplitude of meaning, and is capable of a more universal application. It is now illustrated by the entire scope of the gospel, and directed more particularly to the heart. The Christian is therefore

under the influence of more light than the Jew was, and at the same time is in a more elevated range of moral obligation.

But what is t' e moral law? It is that admirable and comprehensive summary of moral duty contained in what is called the Decalogue. This was given to the world amid circumstances so sublime and peculiar, as to entitle it to more than ordinary importance in the minds of moral beings; and indeed to much more than ordinary thought, in comparison with other systems of law. To answer the above question in language more philosophical, it may be said that the Decalogue is the original law of moral beings, having antecedent foundation in the nature of moral agents. This law is therefore obligatory in its own nature, and clearly independent of legislative enactment, or any other form of positive institution. It is that peculiar kind of law which is incorporated into the very nature of moral government and moral beings, and is, by its own immutable nature, a standing law to all nations, and for all time. Independent as it now is, of all the circumstances of the ceremonial and civil institutes of Moses, and being an original part of the framework of moral beings, it is not only permanent, but adapted to all the ends of moral government, in all time, and among all nations.

2. That this law had direct and special application to the Jews, as well as direct force of application in the several distinctive forms of moral obligation, none will doubt. But the question now is—Does the moral law reach into the Christian system with the same force of obligation upon the believer that it had upon the Jew? It surely does. Mr. Wesley says: “Every part of this law must remain in full force upon all mankind, and in all ages; as not depending on time, or place, or any other circumstance liable to change, but on the nature of God, and the

nature of man, and their unchangeable relation to each other." *Ser.* xxv. This is a conclusion drawn from the nature of the moral law itself, and is fully sustained by the New Testament. Nearly, if not the whole of the moral law, is either directly transferred into the New Testament by Christ and his Apostles, or so alluded to as to form the basis of their instruction. It is made the condition of eternal life, if properly observed, as is stated in *Matt.* xix, 17, "But if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."

But to see the force of the argument in still clearer light, we remark that the substance and spirit of this law is summed up, by Christ himself, in *Matt.* xxii, 37-39, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the *first* and great commandment. And the *second* is like unto it. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Furthermore, it is said in *verse* 40, that "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." Here we see most clearly, that the moral law, in its two great divisions, is transferred by Christ into the gospel period, as a test of Christian experience, and a rule of Christian practice in all coming time. It therefore follows, that if the gospel is binding upon Christians, so is the moral law, for it is a part of the gospel.

3. But to see this fact more clearly, we may consider the law in its several and separate parts, as it is incorporated into the gospel, and acknowledged as the basis of the morality of the Christian system. And here we will see that each of the commandments condemns, not merely the extreme crime which they expressly prohibit, but every inferior offense of the same kind, and every form of conduct leading either directly or indirectly to the commission of such offense. At the same time, they enjoin conduct just the opposite.

*First.* The first commandment requires that God alone shall be acknowledged and glorified as the true God, and that atheism and all false gods shall be abandoned. In full agreement with this, is 1 *Cor.* viii, 6, "To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him." There are many other passages of like import.

*Second.* The second commandment requires that no image or likeness of anything, either in heaven or earth, shall be made as an object of worship, and that all carnal or idolatrous conceptions of God are to be discarded, while the ordinances of worship, instituted by God himself, are to be kept perfectly pure. The requirements of this law are acknowledged as valid, in *John* iv, 24, "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth."

*Third.* The third commandment requires that God's names, titles, attributes, words and works shall be used in a respectful and reverend manner. And it announces the fearful fact, that God will hold no man guiltless that takes his name in vain. While it most positively commands not to use God's name in a trilling and irreverent manner, it enjoins the observance of all outward respect for the divine authority, as well as the cultivation of inward sentiments and feelings, suited to the outward reverence. Now, it is well known that chaste and pure language is encouraged by Christ in the New Testament. *Matt.* v, 37, "But let your communication be, yea, yea; nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these, cometh of evil."

*Fourth.* The fourth commandment requires that one whole day in seven shall be observed by man, as a day of abstinence from all secular employment. It establishes the necessity of public worship, and of a stated and outward profession of the truths of religion, as well as the

cultivation of suitable feelings for the practice of religion. And it is a remarkable fact, that this commandment requires that the rest of the Sabbath shall include all servants, strangers, and beasts of burden. This proves that the benevolence and care of God extends to the lowest of mankind, and even to the beast. The gospel offers no release from the original obligations of the Sabbath, except in cases of necessity and mercy. *Matt.* xii, 1-13; *Luke* xiii, 11-17; *John* v, 8-17. These passages do not relax or modify the claims of the Sabbath—they only show the benevolent nature of the Sabbath.

*Fifth.* The fifth commandment requires that the duties that children owe to their parents shall be faithfully performed, as well as all the relative duties of inferiors to superiors, either in age, station in life, gift or piety. This whole precept is enforced in the New Testament. *Matt.* xv, 4, "God commanded, saying, Honor thy father and mother." *Eph.* vi, 1-3, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. Honor thy father and mother, (which is the first commandment with promise,) that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest live long on the earth."

*Sixth.* The sixth commandment requires that we use all possible means to preserve our own lives and the lives of others, whether natural, spiritual or eternal; and it forbids all malice, envy, murder, and all else that might injure the soul or body of a fellow being. *Matt.* v, 21, "Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment."

*Seventh.* The seventh commandment prohibits all uncleanness and adultery, in either the heart, the conversation, or the action. This part of the moral law is not only sustained by the New Testament, but is fully explained, and so clearly enforced, that its true import and

application cannot be misunderstood. *Mark* x, 19, "Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery."

*Eighth.* The eighth commandment forbids all dishonesty, theft, robbery, extortion, and every other act that might interfere with the rights of others. *Mark* x, 19, "Do not steal."

*Ninth.* The ninth commandment requires that the utmost care be taken to maintain truth. It forbids all falsehood, lying, dissimulation, flattery, or reproachful language; as well as all tale-bearing, tattling, backbiting, or other injurious forms of expression. This precept is also sustained by the gospel. *Mark* x, 19, "Do not bear false witness." *Eph.* iv, 25, "Putting away lying; speak every man truth with his neighbor."

*Tenth.* The tenth and last commandment in the Decalogue, forbids that vile root of evil in the heart—*covetousness*. "Thou shalt not covet," is the imperative claim of God's law, and is enforced by all the solemnity of the sublime scenes connected with the giving of the law. This commandment is sustained more fully, and enjoined with greater minuteness, if possible, in the New Testament, than any of the other precepts. Our Lord says, in *Luke* xii, 15, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness." *Heb.* xiii, 5, "Let your conversation be without covetousness."

4. The foregoing testimony from the gospel and the epistles, cannot fail to convince the reader that the moral law is as binding on Christians as it was on the Jews. Nor can the reader fail to see that the *morality* of the Decalogue involves the whole of true religion. It enjoins love to God with the most unceasing solicitude, comprehending all the powers, both mental and moral, with which man is endowed. And it enjoins love to our neighbor as extensively and forcibly as our circumstances will

permit; to the extent even, that we shall love them as ourselves. This law is made the basis of the gospel, and all gospel instruction. As it is here set forth, it impresses us with the deepest conviction, that God requires not the mere external observance of religion, but heartfelt piety, well regulated and sanctified desires, and uniform and active benevolence. It is clear, then, that the popular morality of the world can constitute no man an heir of eternal life. And it is also clear, that if a man loves our Lord Jesus Christ, he must keep his commandments. *Matt. v, 20*, "For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."

" That blessed law of thine,  
 Jesus, to me impart;  
 The Spirit's law of life divine,  
 O write it on my heart."

## ARTICLE VII.

### ORIGINAL, OR BIRTH SIN.

“Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam, (as the Pelagians do vainly talk), but it is the corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and of his own nature inclined to evil, and that continually.”

#### SECTION FIRST.

##### *Original Sin—In what it does not Consist*

1. “Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam, (as the Pelagians do vainly talk.)” The term *original sin*, signifies that sin which was in the beginning. It is applied to the act of transgression by our first parents. 1 *John*, iii, 4, “For sin is the transgression of the law.” It likewise signifies that natural depravity of moral nature which is common to, and inseparably connected with, every man that is of the offspring of Adam. It is that by which man’s whole nature is defiled, and by which he is “inclined to evil, and that continually.” This is called *indwelling sin*. *Rom.* vii, 17, “Now, then, it is no more I that do it, *but sin that dwelleth in me.*”

To this doctrine, exceptions have been taken in every age of the Church, and by men of distinguished abilities. In the fifth century, unscriptural views of this doctrine were developed, in what is known in church history, by the Pelagian controversy. Pelagius was the advocate of the doctrine, that if men do sin, it is by following the *example* of Adam, and not because of any inherent corruption of nature. His chief opponents in this controversy, were *Chrysostom*, *Isadore*, and *Augustine*, men

alike distinguished for their piety and learning. The Pelagian error was so clearly exposed by these men, that the whole Pelagian system was successively condemned by the Council of Carthage, in A. D. 412, and by the Council of Ephesus. Finally, in A. D. 418, the *Emperor Honorius* published an order, which caused the leaders of this error to be expelled from Rome, and their followers to be driven out of the country. These acts go very far to establish the belief that Pelagianism was a fatal error. But we must admit, meanwhile, that all we know of the sentiments of this man and his followers, is from their opponents. And it is possible they have somewhat misrepresented the true sentiments of these persons, by an honest and, perhaps, overreaching zeal of a heated controversy. Perhaps our best information on this subject is in *Mosheim's Ecc. Hist.*, by *Mordock*, Vol. i, Cent. V, p. 371. Here it is charged upon the Pelagians, that they made direct and open opposition to the Bible doctrine, concerning the innate depravity of man; they taught "that the parents of the human race sinned only for themselves, and not for their posterity; that men are born as pure and innocent as Adam was when God created him; that men, therefore, can, by their natural power, renovate themselves, and reach the highest degree of holiness." The Pelagians farther taught, as Dr. Welsh says, "that Adam is so far the author of sin, as he was the first that sinned, and by his *example* has seduced others." Now, if we have a fair statement of the doctrine objected to in this Article, we have the highest possible reasons for the objection itself. The reasons are as follows:

1. This doctrine is not true, because it places every man in the same state of innocency and purity that Adam was before the fall, and because it places every member of the human family in a sort of original probation, in-

vested with the same rights and powers of moral and physical enjoyment that the first man had, previous to his transgression.

2. This doctrine is not true, because it places Adam in an *isolated*, or independent, rather than in a federative relation to his posterity. It is therefore a fact, according to this error, that the actions of Adam could affect himself, and no other.

3. This doctrine is not true, because it contradicts experience and observation, and because it contradicts the historic facts evolved by every development of human society, whether civilized or barbarous.

4. This doctrine is not true, because it denies the necessity of any supernatural influence of grace or the Holy Spirit upon man's heart, and because it teaches that every man, by his own natural powers, can renovate himself, "and reach the highest degree of holiness."

5. This doctrine is not true, because it sets aside the whole system of atonement, and because it regards all the ordinances of God as unnecessary in the recovery of man from whatever sins he may have committed, by example or otherwise—either by thought, word or action.

6. This doctrine is not true, because it contradicts the plain and direct doctrine of human depravity, as set forth in the Holy Scriptures, and because it sets aside the testimony of God as a worthless fable, and the doctrine of regeneration by the Holy Spirit as but the phantom of a disordered imagination.

Now, if these six propositions are fairly deducible from the Scriptures, and fairly set forth the error against which this Article is directed, then it follows that *Armenians* are as far from Pelagian, or even semi-Pelagian errors, as any other set of Christians that claim to be orthodox. The Synod of Dort urged the charge of half-Pelagianism

upon the Armenians of Holland, to which they then replied in arguments of defense that have never been answered. They affirmed then, and Armenians do still affirm, that *in the first man all men have become corrupt, and that this corruption is in "the nature of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam."* They moreover affirm, that "*his condition is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith and calling upon God.*" It is evident, therefore, as Armenians have always taught, that if man does anything towards his own recovery from the effects of the fall, it is by the grace of God assisting him, and not by his own natural strength. They have always contended for the doctrines of the atonement, as they are stated in the Bible, and for the necessity of God's grace "going before," to assist man in his recovery from sin, and to sustain him in his whole Christian life. And they have *never* taught that the atonement of Christ was a *debt* that God owed to the human race. Nor have they at any time believed or taught that mankind may be saved by their good works. *T'it. iii, 5*, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." While Armenian theology is so extensively published, and is such a direct antagonism to Pelagian errors, and while the enemies of the Armenian theology profess to be so familiar with polemic divinity, it is unfair to attempt to lessen the influence of Armenians by false statements of their doctrines, or to injure their usefulness among men by falsely charging them with Pelagian error.

Let the world study the Articles of Religion, in connection with the Scriptures, and it will at once be evident that every doctrine of every Article is fully sustained and

proved. And it will be found, too, that no body of Christians takes higher grounds, or more Scriptural views of the *nature* and *extent* of human depravity than the Armenians. *Rom.* iii, 10–12, “As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.” *Chap.* v, 12, “As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”

“How sad our state by nature is;  
Our sin how deep it stains:  
And Satan binds our captive souls  
Fast in his slavish chains.”

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#### SECTION SECOND.

##### *Original Sin—In what it does Consist.*

1. “In the corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, so that the human nature of Christ might be excluded, for he is *without sin*.”

It is here stated, that every man's *nature* is corrupt and depraved. But by this we are not to understand that sin is an original element of man's nature, either morally or physically considered; nor are we to understand that it is anything infused into man's nature by satan; neither are we to understand that the depravity of man's nature consists in the taking away from the soul any of its original attributes, but that it consists in the *privation* of the soul of the image of God, which is “righteousness and true holiness.” This of itself

is enough to infect the soul with all that is evil. The depravity of man's moral nature, therefore, consists in the *loss of original righteousness*. This loss leaves the soul to an evil tendency, and in the possession of a nature which is corrupt. This corrupt state is variously described in the Scriptures. It is called the *natural state*, 1 *Cor.* ii, 14, "But the *natural man* receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God." It is called *carnal*, *Rom.* viii, 7, "Because the *carnal mind* is enmity against God." These two passages not only describe the *state*, but the *disposition* of the fallen soul." It is "*enmity against God*;" it "*rejects the things of the Spirit, esteeming them foolish.*"

This state is called *spiritual death*, *Eph.* ii, 1, "And you hath he quickened, who were *dead* in tresspasses and in sins;" and in *Acts* viii, 23, it is called "the *gall of bitterness, and the bond of iniquity.*" And whatever else may be said of man in his unrenewed state, may all be summed up in the single expression; "*He is without God.*"

2. But it is said in the Article, that "this is the *nature of every man.*" By this we are to understand that sin is *universal*. This we will find to be true if we consider the universal prevalence of death; the universal prevalence of wickedness; and the universal necessity of the atonement of Christ. *Gen.* ii, 17, "The day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die," was the original law given to Adam. The penalty of this law was death. Adam transgressed this original law, and immediately became *subject to physical death*, and in process of time did die. In the immediate transaction of the fall, he died spiritually; the image of God was taken from his moral being; he was left without God. And in this act he subjected himself, and all his posterity with him, to eternal death.

The historic fact that men have died from Adam to the present time, and which is supported by daily observation; and the fact that all men will die, is accounted for in the Scriptures. It is the constant language of the Bible that all men are sinners, and it is just as definitely said in *Rom. vi, 23*, that “*the wages of sin is death.*” There being no other reason for death, it must be admitted that sin is the cause of it; and inasmuch as all men have sinned, all men *must die*. *Gen. iii, 19*, “Dust thou art, and unto dust thou *shalt return.*” *Ps. lxxxix, 48*, “What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death?” *Heb. ix, 27*, “It is appointed unto man once to die.” And St. Paul includes all the terms which are of a general import, and which includes the whole human family in this one general fact. *Rom. v, 12*, “And so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” This includes every nation, and every individual. Now, this one fact, here stated as the penalty of sin in the individual case of Adam, and as the effect of his sin that has passed upon all men, goes very far to sustain the doctrine that original sin “is the corruption of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam.” And though the atonement of Christ proposes to restore man to spiritual life, yet it does not contemplate his release from physical death. But it may be farther stated, that the universal prevalence of wickedness proves that “the nature of every man” is corrupt. To prove this I shall not travel out of the bounds of Scripture testimony into the facts of history, and the reason of law. The Bible is sufficient for all our purposes. It abounds with proof that wickedness is universal. *Gen. vi. 12*, “God looked upon the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for *all flesh* had corrupted his way upon earth.” *Ps. xiv, 1*, “They are corrupt; they have *done* abominable

works; there is *none* that doeth good." *Rom.* iii, 23, "For *all* have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." *Gal.* iii, 22, "But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin." But this doctrine may be more fully stated, if we consider the universality of the atonement of Christ. *2 Cor.* v, 14, "If one died for all, then were all dead." That is, all were "*dead in trespasses and in sins,*" and without the atonement of Christ, all must be lost. *John* i, 29, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." *Chap.* iii, 17, "God sent not his Son into the *world*, to condemn the *world*, but that the *world* through him might be saved." *1 Tim.* ii, 6, "Who gave himself a ransom for *all*." *Heb.* ii, 9, "That he by the grace of God, should taste death for *every man*." *1 John*, ii, 2, "He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of *the whole world*." These, with other passages of a similar import, prove very clearly, that sin is universal; that it involves all men. Having already shown that original sin is universal; that it is the *corruption of the nature of every man*, and consists in *the loss* of the image of God, in the soul; I proceed to show as clearly as I can apprehend, the doctrine, that,

3. This was all occasioned by the transgression of Adam. It is the unvarying testimony of the Bible that Adam was the public and federate head of the human race. Regarded by the government of God as sustaining this public and general relation, his public acts as the representative of the human family, must affect those whom he represented. The main and most fatal transaction of his public life, was his fall. He sinned against God, in that he transgressed a positive law of God. His act was sinful, for it is said *1 John* iii, 4, that, "Sin is the transgression of the law." Hence St. Paul

*Rom. v, 12*, “By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” Now, at the time of this transaction, it is evident that none existed as acting independently, and for themselves, but Adam and his wife. But it is the clear doctrine of the Scriptures that their posterity existed *in* them, as their parents, and representative head. There was neither *sin* nor *death* in the world *before* the offense of Adam, but it is very evident, that *after* this, both existed. Now, as there is no other reason given either in the Bible, or in the history of our being, why sin and death existed after the transgression of Adam, it is but reasonable to suppose that his disobedience was the cause of both. “Death passed upon all men.”

“Earth felt the wound, and nature from her seat,  
Sighing through all her works, gave signs of woe,  
That all was lost”

Soon after the fall, Adam propagated children. And it is distinctly said in *Gen. v, 3*, that these were “in his *own likeness*, after his image.” Nothing is said of their being in the image and likeness of God, as was said of Adam when he was created. They were depraved as was their father, as their earliest history shows, which confirms the fact, that they were in the “likeness and image of Adam.” They were sinners, and the first fruits of the fact, “that all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”

But by this we are not to understand that the personal act of Adam, as the federate head, and representative of the human race, was personally and properly the sin of his posterity. We are to understand only, that because of the natural and representative union between the first man and his offspring, his sin is the cause or ground of

their corruption ; and that they suffer and are depraved, because the consequences of his sin have passed upon them.

Now, it is not only a fact of revelation, but a fact of history, that the fall of Adam changed the relation in which our race stood to God. Instead of entering into communion with man now, as he did with Adam before his departure from the law, he regards and records them as his enemies. They begin to exist *out* of God, and, consequently, they begin to exist *in* a state of moral darkness, and destitute of any natural disposition to delight in God or his service. On the other hand, they are prone to, and it is their delight to indulge in, the ways of unrighteousness. All this is proved by the Scriptures to be the effect of the transgression of "*one*." By this "many were made sinners." This seems to establish the fact still farther, that when Adam was placed in a state of trial, with the test of positive law before him, he was not on trial for himself alone, but also for his posterity. He fell, and his relation to us, as our probationary head, constituted his act, in the transaction of the fall, the reason why we are treated as sinners. We sinned *in* him, though we did not personally participate in the act, as free moral agents.

4. At this stage of our remarks, we find the reason why death reigned from Adam to Moses, a period of about twenty-five hundred years, "even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression." Now, as there was no written law from Adam to Moses, and as sin was in the world during all that time ; and is "not imputed where there is no law," it therefore follows that sin was in the world because of the sin of Adam. Sin was not perpetuated by the repeated violation of the law that Adam transgressed, for that law must have been

set aside, in order to give place to the covenant of grace. Now, as it is a well known fact that "sin is a transgression of the law," and that during the whole period from Adam to Moses, "sin was in the world," though there was no written law to transgress; therefore, St. Paul states the fact, when he says in *Rom. v, 8*, "By the offense of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation," and that all the evils, both natural and moral, with which mankind are degraded, are traceable to the federate head of our race. His sin, like a stream of moral poison, has ruined us all, and left the earth in a state of moral desolation,

"Virtue and truth have left the faithless race,  
And fraud and wrong succeeded in their place;  
And justice, last of the celestial train,  
Spurns the earth drenched in blood, and flies to heaven again."

By the same course of reasoning, we see why it is that sin, and "death by sin," reigns among the heathen nations. These are in the same condition, as it respects written law, that those were who lived from Adam to Moses. Yet no one will doubt the fact, that the same moral and physical defects exist among them, that are known to exist among those who have the written law. And no one will doubt that sin, transmitted to them in some way, is the cause of their moral defection; and likewise, of the death of their bodies. This moral and physical condition of the heathen, cannot be the effect of their own transgression, for they have no written law, and St. Paul says, *Rom. iv, 15*, "Where no law is, there is no transgression."

But it is said in *Rom. ii, 12*, "As many as have sinned without law, shall be punished without law." Now, if we admit the possibility of sinning without law, it will not affect the argument, and for this plain reason; to sin,

or to transgress, supposes not only moral accountability, but a moral and physical capacity to do wrong. Personal wrong is followed with personal punishment, and if there is personal sin without law, as the Apostle intimates, there must be personal punishment without law. But this cannot apply to a very large portion of the human family; for it is a fact that the children both of Christian and heathen parents, cannot personally transgress any law. Yet they give the most incontestible evidence of depravity, and it is a fact that they die. Now, all this is anterior to any possibility on their part, to *do* that which is wrong. They, therefore, cannot be punished for their personal actual sins. Now, if we admit these plain facts and results of sin, as taking place anterior to the physical and moral possibility to act wrong, then we will readily admit the general and well defined Scripture doctrine, that, "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." All this is implied in the doctrine of original sin, as set forth in the Bible; and the doctrine itself implies that no one is exempt from the depravity of moral nature, or the physical consequences of sin, however different may be the degrees and modifications in which it may exist. .

5. From what has been said, it is very evident that sin and death, as universal moral and physical calamities, depend upon the *derivation* of all men from one *progenitor*; and that what is called in this Article, original sin, is continued through the entire line of this family, by physical propagation, and not by merely following the example of Adam. Children derive their bodies from their parents, by a law of physical being, and with their bodies their depraved moral beings; and so from child to parent, in the unity of the human race, we may trace back to when, and by whom, sin was introduced into the world.

But to pass from the abstract consideration of this subject, to the application of it to ourselves—to our own experience, and what do we find? This one fact is very clear, we are not what God's law requires us to be; and what our own moral sense teaches us we ought to be, and must be, in order to please God. We are convinced of the depravity of our own hearts, by the preponderance of our animal and evil appetites, over our reason. We feel that we are cut loose from the righteousness and holiness of God; that truth is not in us; and that whatever of happiness we may have, is at best very imperfect. We feel that we are floating loosely upon a sea of errors, which flows directly out from the great fountain of depravity, that is opened in our own inward nature. Our minds by nature, are fixed upon no object beyond whatever may gratify our depraved appetites. And we have the inward, the outward, and the constantly abiding evidence, that we live out of God, and that the tendency of our unchecked nature is, to deeper and deeper depravity.

“ Lord, we are vile, conceived in sin,  
 And born unholy and unclean  
 Sprung from the man whose guilty fall  
 Corrupts his race, and taints us all.

Soon as we draw our infant breath,  
 The seeds of sin grow up for death  
 Thy law demands a perfect heart,  
 But we're defiled in every part.”

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### SECTION THIRD.

#### *Original Sin—Some of its Effects.*

1. These are stated in part in this Article, and more in detail in the Article that follows. In this Article, we are taught that because of original sin, “man is very far gone

from original righteousness, and of his own nature inclined to evil, and that continually." But what are we to understand by "original righteousness?" In the sense of this Article, it means the state in which Adam was created, and in which the whole human family were, as they stood in him their federate head and representative in the divine government. Adam was created in the image of God. This consisted in the natural and full enjoyment of a clear reason, a free will, an unclouded understanding, together with a right use of these and all the other intellectual and moral attributes of his nature. St. Paul defines this, in *Eph.* iv, 24, to be "righteousness and true holiness." By the transgression of the law, this was lost to Adam, and consequently to his whole posterity. For it is a clear doctrine of the Bible, that mankind had the moral as well as the physical consequences of the fall entailed upon them. And analogy leads us to suppose, that Adam propagated beings like himself. Now, man comes into being divested of the qualities of moral character that Adam had before the transgression, and is, in the language of this Article, "very far gone from original righteousness."

2. But this Article does not limit the defection of human nature from God, to any particular degree or modification of moral evil, when it says we are "very far gone from original righteousness." It teaches the abstract fact that *man is separated from God*, and that by this act of separation, he has set up in himself a nature that is wholly averse to holiness and righteousness. His moral nature is so totally depraved, that there is not only "no health" in him, but a constant tendency and inclination to deeper corruption, and still farther estrangement from God. At best he is very far gone, but he is still getting farther off, by indulging the sinful propensities of his already deeply corrupt nature.

But this Article attaches to the negative aspect of this state a positive and perpetual tendency to evil works. Man is not only very far gone from original righteousness, but “of his own nature inclined to evil, and that continually.” The first thing here stated, is the fact that man is naturally inclined to evil. This is not an acquired propensity of nature, superinduced by habits of evil, or by evil association. There is a *natural* inclination to do wrong. It is a natural bias upon his nature, by the force of which, he is carried forward to certain actions which are conceived in wrong, and which are in direct opposition to the plain precepts of the moral government of God. These actions are injurious, because they encourage the corruption of the heart, by which they were suggested, and because they tend to confirm others in their opposition to righteousness.

But the truth of this doctrine may be still farther proved, if we consider attentively the case of infants.

“Soon as we draw our infant breath,  
The seeds of sin grow up for death.”

We read the truth of their depravity of nature, not only in these lines, but in the Scriptures. And we see the humbling fact with our eyes in the illustrations of every day. *Ps.* li, 5, “Behold I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.” This passage gives the origin of the nature that is inclined to evil. This origin is in “iniquity” and “sin.” It must, therefore, be unholy. Hence mankind, as is said in *Ps.* lviii, 3, “Go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.” And Solomon says, in *Prov.* xxii, 15, “Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child.” Now, what stronger proof of the natural inclination of the heart can we ask, than the foregoing proofs from the Bible? And what stronger additional proof can we look for than the outward action?

Men go astray as soon as they are born, because the heart is naturally inclined to evil, and because, as St. John says, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh."

But if we consult that portion of the Bible that especially refers to children, we may farther see the truth of our Article. *Ex.* xx, 12, "Honor thy father and thy mother." *Lev.* xix, 3, "Ye shall fear every man his mother and his father." *Eph.* vi, 1, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right." This law was instituted for the express purpose of controlling and directing the affections of the young into proper channels, and to due regard for their parents. This is a part of the moral law, which is founded in the very nature of the relations of moral beings to each other. It existed anterior to the existence of millions of our race, and was embodied by the Supreme Law Giver of the universe, in positive legislative enactment, in view of "what was in man"—his natural depravity and sinful propensities—and in view of the fact that he would even rebel against the authority and honor of his father and mother.

3. That man is inclined to evil, may be proved by every man's *experience*. Men, it is true, may not be inclined to the same kind of evil; but it is a fact that every man experiences in himself a natural inclination to some particular sin. It may be pride, anger, covetousness, falsehood, malice, sensuality, or some other species of sin. It is not necessary that one man should commit all possible sins to prove that there is in himself a natural tendency to evil in general. The fact that he commits one sin, or indulges another, is evidence that he is both naturally and practically in sin. *Ecc.* viii, 11, "The heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." To this truth, all men must honestly submit themselves. This fact knows no relief, except in the grace of God by Christ changing

the whole current of his being. Even then he will "find a law in his members warring against the spirit." Whatever he may find in himself that opposes the truth of God, is but the continuation of the bitter stream of sin, whose fountain is deep in the heart, and whose current washes onward, deepening and widening with every wave.

But the effects of sin, productive as they are in their turn, of condemnation, injury, and deeper wickedness of heart, are not confined to this life. The poisonous stream reaches into eternity, and is engulfing millions of our race in "the lake that burns with fire and brimstone."

"Sin kills beyond the tomb."

But it is cause of thanksgiving to God, that in this life its deathly poison may be destroyed by "the blood of the Lamb." Beyond this life there is no remedy. A career of vice, short as it may be, or that merely neglects "the great salvation," will end in the beginning of ceaseless ages of anguish and untold horror. *Rom. vi, 23*, "the wages of sin is death." This final issue will not result so much from original evil, as from actual sin. No one will be damned and finally lost, simply because Adam sinned; yet no one can avoid this as the result of personal sin, without help from the Spirit of God.

———"Each must answer for himself.  
And as his own peculiar work shall be  
Done by his proper self, shall live, or die."

## ARTICLE VIII.

### OF FREE WILL.

“The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and works of faith, and calling upon God; wherefore we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will.”

#### SECTION FIRST.

##### *Effects of the Fall—Man Enfeebled.*

1. The state of mankind since the fall, involves two things—*wickedness* and *weakness*. The former of these states has been fully explained in the Notes on the last Article, as consisting in depravity of heart, and a continual inclination to do evil. The latter state consists in utter inability to recover himself from wickedness on the one hand, and weakness on the other. This Article says, “He cannot turn and prepare himself by his own strength and works of faith, and calling upon God; wherefore we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God.” Language very similar to this, and expressing the same doctrine, is contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith. *Chap. ix, Sec. iii.* “Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto.” Neither of the above Articles of Religion presupposes that any of man’s intel-

lectual faculties are lost by the fall; they are only enfeebled in common with his moral powers. They both assume the Scripture fact, that the faculties essential to man, as an intelligent and moral being have become so corrupted and enfeebled by the fall, as to render him utterly incapable of faith and right actions, without the grace of God assisting him. That man has suffered this moral deterioration, and that he cannot recognize in himself either natural or moral ability to serve God, is the unequivocal teaching of the Scriptures and this Article of Religion.

2. If this be the true condition of man since the fall, it is clear that he has no natural power to make a right choice, and, consequently, is not a free agent in the full sense of that term, without the assistance of grace going before to make him free. He may have a free will, it is true, to act in the direction of evil, to which he is naturally inclined; but he is so entirely lost to all good purposes, and so completely enfeebled in all his powers, that we are free to admit that, of himself, he cannot make choice of that which is good. The reason of this is assigned by St. Paul, *Rom.* viii, 7, 8, "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So, then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God." At this point, Armenians and Calvinists agree. Calvin denies all power to man, in his apostacy, to choose that which is good. He says, "Man being surrounded on every side with the most miserable necessity, should nevertheless be instructed to aspire to the good of which he is destitute, and to the liberty of which he is deprived." And again he says, "Man has not an equally free election of good and evil." *Calv. Controv.* Now, if we rightly apprehend these remarks, they agree with the doctrine of our Article, as

well as with the Word of God. The same doctrine was believed and taught by the early Christian Fathers. *St. Augustine* says, "As none can begin a good work without the Lord, so none can perfect it without the Lord." *Pelag. Con., Lib. 2.* *Irenæus* says, "No man who does not partake of the blessing and assistance of the Lord, can procure to himself the means of salvation." *Iren. Adv., Lib. 4, c. 13.*

3. There is this difference, however, between Armenians and Calvinists, on the proper office of the grace of God, and the proper condition of man when he receives Divine grace. Calvinists believe that when God's grace is given to the sinner, to the extent that he has power to choose that which is right, then he is regenerated. Armenians believe that grace may, and really does, restore the power to choose the good; but that this is always *before* regeneration. Hence it is, that regeneration may, or may not, necessarily follow the gift of God's grace. Now, if Calvinists are correct, all men are regenerated, for *Tit. ii. 11*, "The grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men." Thus the Scriptures speak of the unregenerate in general terms. But they likewise speak of these persons in particular. They are said to "grieve," "resist," and "quench" the Holy Spirit, which they could not do, if the Spirit was not imparted to them. It is therefore not true, that all who are moved upon by the grace of God, are regenerate.

4. With these general remarks on the condition of the human will since the fall, we are more fully prepared for the farther proof that man is by nature unable to do any good thing. "He cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and works of faith, and calling upon God." He has no natural power, nor will, to turn from Satan unto God. He is said, in the Scriptures, to be

“in darkness,” “asleep,” “dead,” “helpless,” “naked.” These are but definitions of man’s sinful character and condition; and they sum up, in one general description of moral character, the doctrine of our Article. Man is *helpless*, and *utterly unable* to render any acceptable service to God, or even to choose this service, without the grace of God going before to assist him. This is well expressed by Christ, in *John* xv, 5, “For without me, ye can do nothing.” Now, from what has already been said, it is very evident that man’s inability to serve God without his assistance, is both *natural* and *moral*. It is natural, because it belongs to his constitution; and it is moral, because it relates to the soul. Still, there is no necessity for making this distinction, for the whole man, both in his flesh and spirit, is bound in sin, and naturally inclined to evil.

This is the condition of man after the fall of Adam. What it was before this greatest of all calamities, is easily determined. It was just the converse of what it is now. He had freedom and power to do that which was in accordance with the will of his Divine Creator. He knew no restriction to this freedom of will, except the liberty to do evil. And even this liberty was checked by no physical or moral necessity. God prohibited the use of the will in the direction of evil, by setting before Adam the fearful consequence of transgression, “Thou shalt die,” and the consequence of fidelity, “Thou shalt live;” but this placed on him no inflexible necessity to do one or the other.

5. This subject, humiliating as it is, may serve to show us,

*First.* How great an evil sin is. It has prostrated and ruined the most noble powers of the soul—nay more, the whole soul itself. Man was once free, but now he is a

slave to sin. Once he had the unalloyed disposition and the power to do the whole will of God, but now he has neither. His sin has enfeebled himself; it has injured the world; it has provoked the wrath of God; it has exposed the human race to sorrow and toil in this life, and to endless anguish in the life to come.

*Second.* Whatever provisions have been made for the recovery of the enslaved human will, are provisions of free grace, mercy, and benevolence, without any claim whatever upon the part of man. These merciful provisions are fully able, in the particular and general range of their application, to restore man to the liberty of "the sons of God" in this world, and to elevate him to where his redeemed powers will be forever free and happy.

"Where bliss each heart shall fill,  
And fears of parting chill,—  
Never,—no, never."

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#### SECTION SECOND.

##### *Divine Grace—Man Strengthened.*

1. This part of the Article states with much clearness, what is the obvious Scripture doctrine of man's recovery from his state of inability to do that which is right. Whatever we are able to choose or do, in the direction of return to God, is, by "the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will." Without this we must necessarily remain without strength, and by consequence, be lost. But this Article likewise teaches that means are ordained, and now in use, for our recovery from this natural and moral inability, and consequently, from the danger of eternal loss. But what are the means whereby we may be saved? If we rightly

understand the Scriptures, and this Article, the means of redemption and moral strength are, *the free Grace of God*, and the *Mediation of Christ*. God's grace suggested, and his mercy and wisdom projected, the Mediatorial System. Through this, man may be restored to liberty of will, and spiritual enjoyment. God now gives his grace freely to every man, through the Mediation of Christ, and in the proper use of this grace, he may become reconciled to God. Hence it is, that the salvation of man in the development of the whole plan of redemption, and in the primary and ultimate effects and achievements of this plan, is by the free gift of God's grace through Christ Jesus, and not by any merit, claim, or good works upon the part of man himself.

2. But let us see what the term grace properly signifies. According to *Worcester*, it means, "The favor and love of God towards any person—Divine favor, Divine influence." This definition will very much assist in the application of the Scripture language to the doctrine of this Article. The question now is, Has God imparted the assistance of his grace and Spirit to any, or all of the human family? To this question, there is but one answer, *Tit.* ii, 11, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men." *1 Cor.* xii, 7, "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." These two passages so obviously make up a full answer to the question, that nothing more need be said. If God has given his grace to all men, then all men needed it, because of their natural incompetency to choose or do that which is right. All men are thereby constituted competent to choose and do the will of God, if they will; and therefore God has made full provision in the dispensation of his grace, for the salvation of all men. But this conclusion is not a

mere deduction from a studied proposition, It is the revealed will of God, "Who will have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth." 1 *Tim.* ii, 4. In order to this, God gives to every man what is called in this Article, *preventing* grace. This word is not known in modern language, in the sense in which it is used in this place. It comes from two Latin words, *præ* and *venio*. *Præ* means before, and *venio*, to come, or go before. *Provenio* is the compound, and means to come, or go before. To go before, to assist, is the sense in which it is used in the Bible, and in this Article. It therefore means, that the grace of God, through Christ, comes before the sinner has power to seek it, or a disposition to ask for it. It is sent into the soul to quicken it into a life of free moral action, and to present to it the things of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Thus it is that man is elevated from a condition of bondage in which his will is so enfeebled, that he cannot choose that which is good, to the condition of a free and responsible moral agent, competent to choose the good, and refuse the evil. At whatever period of life this grace is given to man, at that period his moral freedom begins, and he is regarded by the government of God, as personally responsible for all his transactions.

3. But the particular office of this free gift is, not only to go before, to quicken the soul into a state of moral freedom, but to enlighten it, to convince it of sin, and to strengthen it in all its purposes to right actions. Before the grace of God is communicated to the heart, the depraved sinner has no disposition nor power, to do a single act towards his own salvation; not even to see, or feel his need of redemption. But with this life-giving power going before, he has gracious ability to repent of sin; to believe to the justification of his soul; and to "work

out his salvation with fear and trembling." And hence the propriety and reason of the duties that are enjoined upon men. They are commanded to "repent," to "believe," to "pray," to "grow in grace," to "press forward;" and though it may be said that Christ "gives repentance," and that faith is of the "operation of God," yet the fact is, that grace is given to the unregenerate, that they may see and feel the need of repentance and faith, but the acts are their own; God neither repents, believes, or prays for any man. Hence the evidence that man is made free, and strengthened by Divine grace, is the fact that God treats him as a free moral agent. This, we believe, is the true and most satisfactory interpretation of gracious ability and moral freedom. By this, we may harmonize the whole system of salvation with the moral freedom and personal responsibility of every man that comes into the world; as well as with the justice and mercy of God. If a man is saved, it is because he submitted himself to the will and mercy of God, by the assistance of Divine grace; and if he is lost, it is because he resisted the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit.

4. This is not a question of mere *theory*, but of *fact*. If it were a question of mere theory only, error would but spoil its symmetry; but as it is a question of fact, error must be fatal to the best interests of the soul in time, and in eternity. It being a question of fact, it is eminently a practical question. It gives all the glory to God for his free grace; and it enables man to say, it is all of grace; "*it is the gift of God.*" At the same time it pre-supposes that some men will be lost; but it reconciles this with the goodness and mercy of God, by these facts, involved in the free moral agency of man. *John v, 40, "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life."* *Acts, vii, 51, "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost."* But to touch the Article

finally, and more directly, "The grace of God by Christ," reverses the condition of man. For weakness it gives him strength ; for a will inclined only to evil, it gives him a will capable of good ; for works of evil, it prompts him to "works pleasant and acceptable to God ;" and for hope of salvation by good works, it inclines him to look for salvation by "faith and calling upon God." *Eph. ii, 8, "By grace ye are saved, through faith ; and that not of yourselves ; it is the gift of God."* Hence it is, that God has emancipated the enslaved human will from the bondage of the fall ; and has given it the strength and self-determining power, in its freed condition, to choose the good, and refuse the evil, that it may magnify the riches of the grace of God in Christ Jesus.

5. It will now appear that the semi-Pelagian error, "that man, before he received grace, was capable of faith and holy desires," and against which this Article is mainly directed, has no foundation whatever, in the word of God. And it appears very clearly that the whole system of salvation, from first to last, is based upon the great atonement of Christ ; and that this, as a remedial plan, is the free gift of God. But it likewise is very evident, that, while God has so strengthened and fortified the soul, as to make it free in choosing or refusing eternal life, he has impressed upon it the power of assuming the most fearful responsibility. To such an extent, indeed, that it may be said, man has his eternal salvation and his eternal ruin in his own hand.

"O ! to grace how great a debtor,  
Daily I'm constrained to be ;  
Let thy goodness, like a fetter,  
Bind my wandering heart to thee  
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it—  
Prone to leave the God I love ;  
Here's my heart, O take and seal it ;  
Seal it for thy courts above."

## ARTICLE IX.

### OF THE JUSTIFICATION OF MAN.

“ We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our own works or deservings ;—Wherefore, that we are justified by faith only, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort.”

#### SECTION FIRST.

*Man Justified for Christ's Sake, and not for Good Works.*

1. “ We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our own works.”

This Article contrasts the merit of Christ with the merit of good works ; and teaches that no man can be accounted righteous for his good works, but only for the merit of Christ. The main object of this comparison of good works with the merit of Christ, is to give to each its appropriate place, and to enforce the Bible doctrine of Christ's merit as the only *ground* of man's salvation, in opposition to the Romish doctrine of salvation by good works. This Article is based upon the Scripture fact, that the *atonement of Christ* is the only reason why God can “ be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.” *Rom.* iii, 26. This is the free gift of God's grace, and no man can be justified but “ by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,” *verse* 24. It clearly follows, then, that justification is, *Eph.* ii, 9, “ Not of works, lest any man should boast.”

But if it is true that man has sinned, and thereby forfeited all right to the good pleasure of God ; and if it is

true that the end is redemption for him only through the merits of Christ, how is he to avail himself of the benefits of that redemption? Certainly not by good works, for then it could not be by grace. *Rom.* iii, 28, "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law."

2. But upon what ground is it possible for a man to be justified, even by faith? The Article answers this important question in these words, "only for the merit of our Lord Jesus Christ." If this be the fact, what are we to understand by the *merit of Christ*? It denotes the value of all that Christ suffered for the salvation of mankind. *1 Pet.* iii, 18, "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust; that he might bring us to God." *Gal.* iii, 13, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." These passages bring before us, not only the fact of the suffering and sacrifice of Christ, but also the *object* of the sacrifice. The object, as it is expressed in the Scriptures, was to transfer the curse of the law from the guilty to the innocent, or from sinners to himself. Hence he is called our *Ransom*. He bought us off from the curse of the law, by laying down his own life for ours, and thereby secured our redemption.

" Lamb of God, for sinners wounded!  
Sacrifice to cancel guilt!  
Thou the word, the Lord's Anointed  
Son of man, and Son of God."

Now, if Christ has satisfied the claims of the law against us, so that we may be justified by the merit of his suffering, then he has redeemed us from the law itself, as a rule of justification. Hence it is, that a man cannot be justified by obedience to the claims of the law, for these claims have been already met in the obedience of Christ.

It therefore follows, that men are justified, not by the deeds of the law, but by faith. And this privilege is granted to all men, for it is just as reasonable to suppose that the one act of obedience by Christ, procured for all mankind the blessings of God's grace, as to suppose that the one act of disobedience committed by Adam, should have brought the curse of the law upon all his posterity. The one offering of Christ has so fully satisfied the claims of the law, that man is brought upon the higher ground of faith; and in place of looking to the law of works for the justification of his soul, he may believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and he shall be saved. This is the ground of justification ordained by God himself. Every work therefore, that man can perform, and every sacrifice that he can make, is without merit. If man is righteous before God, it is "only for the merit of our Lord Jesus Christ, by faith."

3. This view of the subject, grounded, as it is, upon the testimony of God's word, makes it impossible for a man to be justified by his own "works or deservings." His nature is so depraved, that he cannot even will to do an act that is good; and surely it cannot be supposed, that a righteous God will reward an evil work with justification from sin. But man cannot be justified by works, for the reason that God has ordained that sinners shall be "saved by grace through faith." Any attempt, therefore, to merit justification by works, must discredit God's own plan of salvation, and thereby increase the condemnation of unbelief. But this is not all, for if a man confides in the merit of his good works, he never can be saved; for his works not only make void the grace of God, but also render the death of Christ useless, and of no effect. *Gal. ii, 21*, "For if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."

But finally, justification by works is in direct contradiction to the uniform testimony of the Scriptures, St. Paul fully discusses the subject in his Epistles to the Romans, and the Galatians. In both of these Epistles, he especially declares, that "by the deeds of the law there shall be no flesh justified in the sight of God," *Rom.* iii. 20, *Gal.* ii, 16. To this doctrine of our Article, sustained as it is by the Scriptures, we have the testimony of antiquity. St. Clement says, "We are not justified by ourselves, neither by our own *wisdom*, or *knowledge*, or *piety*, or *works that we have done in the holiness of our hearts*; but by that *faith* by which God Almighty has justified all men from the beginning." *Ep. ad Cor. c.* 32. And the testimony of Polycarp is the same. He says, "Ye are saved by grace, *not by works*, but by the will of God through Jesus Christ."

4. This Article assumes the Scripture doctrine, that men were counted righteous in all ages of the world, only for the merit of Christ by faith. It lays hold of the fact that such is the efficacy of the atonement of Christ and his merits, that although he offered himself a sacrifice for sin but once, yet the influence of this one offering for the sins of the whole world, in procuring pardon for the penitent, has reached back to the fall of man, and will reach forward to the end of time. The merits of Christ was the *ground* of all the righteousness of the Patriarchal and Mosaic believers. And although these were periods of works and subordinate typical sacrifices, yet the justification of sinners was, even then, not by works, but by faith in Christ. Hence St. Paul refers to the case of Abraham and others, as illustrations of this fact. There is no record of the merit of good works in any of these cases, not even in the case of Abraham.

He, it is true, was circumcised, but this was not the

means of his justification. *Rom. iv, 11*, It was only the "Seal of the righteousness of the *faith* which he had, yet being uncircumcised; that he might be the father of all them that believe, *though they be not circumcised*, that righteousness might be imputed to them also."

This whole doctrine, as it is implied and taught in this Article, represents the justification of sinners, "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus," by faith, as the free gift of God's grace. He provided the *plan* of our salvation; and he provided the *sacrifice* and *merit* of Christ for us, to be appropriated to our hearts by faith, and not by works. And even the faith by which we may make this appropriation of Christ's sacrifice to ourselves, is, in a certain sense, the free gift of God's grace. The power to believe is from God, but the act of believing, which is the appropriate result of this power, is our own. Hence we have the testimony of St. Paul, in *Eph. ii, 8, 9*. "For by grace ye are saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast."

" Grace first contrived the way  
To save rebellious man;  
And all the steps that grace display  
Which drew the wondrous plan."

So clearly is the merit of Christ the ground of pardon and salvation, that "our own works or deservings" are as nothing. And so clearly does this doctrine condemn the doctrine of merit in good works, that Romanism, in this, as in many other of her doctrines, is proved to be anti-Scriptural, and of dangerous tendency—one of "the doctrines of devils."

But finally, this doctrine of salvation by faith in Christ, is most happily expressed in the *post communion service* of our Church; "Most humbly beseeching thee to grant

that, by the merits and death of thy Son Jesus Christ, through faith in his blood, we and thy whole church may obtain remission of our sins, and all other benefits of his passion.”

Thee we own a perfect Saviour  
 Only source of all that's good,  
 Ev'ry grace and ev'ry favor  
 Comes to us through Jesus' blood

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#### SECTION SECOND.

##### *Man Justified by Faith alone.*

1. The language of the Article on this doctrine is this: “Wherefore, that we are justified by faith only, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort.” Two things are here stated—the condition, or term of justification, which is faith; and the moral influence of the doctrine, it is “very full of comfort.”

Faith alone is the term of man's justification before God. But there are two kinds of faith spoken of in the Scriptures—dead faith and living faith. The first is an intellectual assent to the truth of Christianity, without any change of heart, or reformation of life, and is allowed to be possessed by wicked men professing Christianity, and by devils. The second is called living faith, and consists first, in intellectual assent to the truth, and second, in “the entire *trust* and *reliance* of an awakened and penitent sinner in the atonement of Christ alone as the meritorious ground of pardon.” The former may exist without the latter, but the latter cannot exist without the former.

To state the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith more clearly, we may remark, that the merit of Christ in the atonement is the only *ground* of pardon, and faith is the ordained *condition*, or term of pardon. The

merit is in the atonement of Christ as the free gift of God's grace, and not in faith as the condition of pardon. Faith is but the qualifying condition to which the promises of God unite the pardon of sin, so that without faith, in its highest sense, there can be no justification. Still, I remark again, the merit or value does not lie in the faith that justifies, but in the atonement of Christ; and hence it is, that if Christ had not merited the favor of God, no promise of pardon would have been extended to any man, upon any condition; and if God had not promised pardon, justification could never have followed, upon any condition. It follows, therefore, that the connection of faith and justification is of God's institution. In ordaining faith as a term of justification, God has bound himself to give the benefits of the atonement of Christ to every penitent upon the right performance of the condition.

2. If the soul is justified by faith alone, as the only condition of pardon, then it is clear that men cannot be justified by works, and consequently cannot claim the remission of sin by anything good that they may attempt to perform. *Gal. ii, 16*, "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ." And as if to enforce more fully the doctrine of justification by faith, in opposition to the supposed value of good works, the Apostle says: "By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."

It follows, with equal clearness, that sinners are not justified by the imputation, or transfer of a righteousness that is not of faith. If they are, then there must either be more than one way of justification, or else justification by faith alone, as it is taught in the New Testament, is a senseless doctrine. But that the penitent sinner, who rightly believes, is justified by faith alone, is the uniform teaching of the Scriptures. Hence the theory of the im-

putation of Christ's personal moral obedience to believers, involves not only a perversion of the Scripture method of justification, but is fatal in its consequences. It leads the penitent soul away from that thorough and deep contrition, and full exercise of faith that must necessarily exist as the condition of pardon. It moreover beclouds the mind with doubt, and forbids that clearness of Christian experience that is so uniformly encouraged as the privilege of every believer.

Justification by faith alone is so clearly the doctrine of the Bible, that its nature and importance can scarcely be misunderstood; yet it is greatly mystified by writers who profess to fear that it endangers what are known as the doctrines of grace. But so far is this doctrine from prejudicing the free grace of God, that it makes man's justification by faith alone, proof that remission of sin is the effect of free grace, and not of faith. "Therefore it is by faith, that it might be through grace." Hence it is, that boasting of our faith is cut off by the consideration that salvation is by grace through faith, and that even the faith itself by which we are justified, is the gift of God.

3. By affirming that faith is the *term*, or *condition* of justification, I mean, first, that there is no justification without it. "He that believeth not, is condemned already;" and so long as he believeth not, that condemnation cannot be removed, but the "wrath of God abideth on him." As there is no other merit whereby a condemned sinner can be saved from the guilt of sin, but the merit of Jesus; so there is no other way of gaining the saving efficacy of his merits, but by "faith in his name." Hence we have, *Acts* xvi, 31, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Faith, therefore, is the necessary and only condition of justification.

The second point carefully to be observed is this: "The

very moment God giveth faith (for faith is the gift of God) to the ungodly that worketh not, that faith is counted to him for righteousness." ~ *Wesley*. Now, if faith is taken for righteousness, then is the soul justified by faith, and God accepts of faith in the merits of Christ, as the righteousness of him that believes. *Rom. iv, 3*, "Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness." *Verse 5*, "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted to him for righteousness." Now, it is plainly said in the above and other passages, that where righteousness is imputed to a believer, he is considered the actual doer of a righteous act. A man cannot have actual sin imputed to him when he never committed sin, and so a man cannot have the righteousness of faith imputed to him when he has not believed with a heart unto righteousness. Abraham believed God, and his faith was counted to him for righteousness. This reconciles the claims of the gospel with the exercise of faith, as the only condition upon which the merits of Christ are made available to the penitent sinner. It is clear, then, that the atonement of Christ is accepted in the place of the personal punishment of the sinner, on condition of his faith. When faith in Christ is exercised, then God for Christ's sake takes away sin by pardoning the offender, and restoring him to his favor. In this sense, faith cannot be called a work, nor can it be said to have merit, for no merit can be allowed to faith. Merit is only allowed to Christ, and justifying faith is the exclusive reliance or trusting in the merits of Christ for salvation. Therefore it is, that by the very nature of faith as the gift of God, it shuts out all assumption of merit to the penitent believer, and gives all the glory of our salvation to the grace of God. To believe, is to do that which God requires of us—that which must be done in order to

justifica'tion ; and as faith is the gift of God, it may truly be said, that sinners are saved "by grace through faith, and that not of themselves."

4. Justification is synonymous with pardon, as is evident from the many instances in which both terms are used to express the same thing. But while this is true, both the terms differ from the meaning of the term regeneration in several particulars. Justification is a change of *relation* to the government of God, and regeneration is a change of *character*. In the one case, sin is pardoned ; and in the other, the moral nature is washed by the renewing of the Holy Ghost. One is a work done *for* the believing penitent ; the other is a work wrought *in* him. One is a restoration to the *favor* of God ; the other is a restoration of the *image* of God. With this Scriptural distinction before the mind, we will readily see that justification must precede regeneration, both in the order of time and in the order of nature. Justification is not regeneration, but it must necessarily go before ; so that the offender may sustain that relation to the moral government, in which, only, it is possible for the inward regenerating work of the Holy Spirit to take place.

This fact very naturally leads us to remark upon the moral influence of this doctrine, "*It is very full of comfort,*"

*First.* It will not be forgotten that justification is a change of relation to the moral government of God. Guilt and condemnation are the prominent facts in the moral nature of every unrenewed man. Being wicked and rebellious, he has no peace—he is condemned because of unbelief. But as soon as faith takes hold of the merit of Christ, as the only ground of recovery from the condemnation of the law, then there is *peace*. *Rom. v, 1,* "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God,

through our Lord Jesus Christ." This is not only a doctrine of the Bible, but a fact in the experience of every Christian. When the soul is justified and regenerated, it is said to be "*in Christ*," as the branch is in the vine. Then it follows, as the earliest development of the believer's experience and conscious reconciliation to God, that "there is no condemnation." And here is the reason—*Rom.* viii, 2, "For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me *free* from the law of sin and death." Now, if it is as true in the philosophy of spiritual consciousness, as it is in the Scripture statement of the effect of justification, then it follows as a consequent fact, that if the soul is conscious of its state of condemnation, being unpardoned, it is conscious of a state of peace in its justified state. *2 Cor.* v, 17, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." The old man is put off, with all his sins and consequent condemnation, and the new man is put on. In this new man there is, first, a full and clear consciousness of peace with God, with an inward spirit that "rejoices in hope of the glory of God." Second, *Rem.* v, 3-5, "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Ho'y Ghost, which is given unto us." All this joy, hope and consolation, is consequent upon having access to the pardoning grace of God by faith. This whole passage is peculiarly expressive of inward conscious comfort, and outward Christian deportment and submission to the will of God.

*Second.* But added to all this, and as a means of the fuller development of conscious justification, there is a higher testimony of the new life in the soul. This testimony is not only circumstantial and confirmatory of the

inner witness of the soul itself, but is direct. *Rom.* viii, 16, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." Here we have the higher evidence, that not only our own renewed feelings prove that we are at peace with God, but the Holy Spirit himself conveys to our souls the assurance of this delightful fact. Here we have, first, the testimony of our own spirits; and, second, the testimony of the Holy Spirit. *Gal.* iv, 6, "God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father." It is clear, then, that the doctrine of justification by faith alone, "is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort." It is a wholesome doctrine, because it leaves out of its scope all doubtful experience, as the result of "little faith," and because it fully contemplates the highest possible evidence of pardon, and the greatest possible enjoyment of peace, hope and love. Hence it is, that the justified believer is not left to *infer* his state of peace with God, from what he may have done, or from what he may suppose to be certain fruits of the Spirit, as "meekness, gentleness, charity." The evidence of the Christian state is directly proved as the work of the Holy Spirit. "How this is done, we cannot fully understand, any more than we can understand the mode in which he produces any other effect in the mind." The fact itself is clearly asserted in the Bible, and this is enough.

*Third.* All these facts are predicable of the doctrine of justification by faith alone. They are recognized as springing up in the believer's heart by a *reformation in his own spirit*, and a renewing of his soul by the regenerating influences and testimony of the Holy Spirit, and not by the transfer of the righteousness of another. He *knows* that *he* has "believed on the son of God," and he *knows* for himself that *he* "has the witness in himself." He has

the "testimony that he pleases God," that is, that his own former corrupt moral nature is so changed into the likeness of God, that he is pleased with him in his own distinct and renewed character. And this is the ground of his consolation; this gives him peace; this gives him joy; and this gives him a well founded hope of eternal life.

*Fourth.* The doctrine of justification by faith alone, reconciles the Bible with itself. The uniform injunction is, *Acts* xvi, 31, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." *Mark* xvi, 16, "He that believeth not, shall be damned." In these two passages, we have a clear view of the results of belief and unbelief. It is therefore as clear as language can make it, that faith, and not works, is the *term*, or *condition* of justification, but not the *ground* of this state. - This is the merit of Christ. This doctrine reconciles the ultimate action of the government of God, with his favor to all men, and with man's moral free agency. The ability to believe is given to men through Christ, and the use or abuse of this ability secures a corresponding moral character, good or bad. Hence it is, that belief or unbelief will form the test of moral character in the final judgment of the world. It is, therefore, the duty of every man to believe that he may be justified here, and be a partaker of the life that never ends, in heaven. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

"This is the faith we humbly seek,  
The faith in thy all-cleansing blood;  
That faith which doth for sinners speak,  
O let it speak us up to God!"

## ARTICLE X. OF GOOD WORKS.

“ Although good works, which are the fruits of faith, and follow after justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God’s judgment ; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and spring out of a true and lively faith, inso-much that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known as a tree is discerned by its fruit ”

1. This Article was drawn up in opposition to two fatal errors—that of Romanists, who hold that good works are meritorious ; and that of Antinomians and others, who hold that faith alone, without any good works, is sufficient for all the purposes of an effective religious life. The propositions contained in this Article are these : Good works “ cannot put away sin, or endure the severity of God’s judgment ; ” “ yet are they acceptable to God in Christ. ” They are acceptable because of the merit of Christ, and not because of any merit in themselves. They “ spring out of a true and lively faith. ” They “ cannot put away sins, ” because they cannot atone for them. The atonement of Christ is the alone medium of pardon. *Acts* iv, 12, “ Neither is there salvation in any other ; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. ”

Good works cannot endure the severity of God’s judgments, because they are not perfect. They are pleasing to God, because he has commanded them to be done ; and because “ by them a lively faith may be as evidently known as a tree is discerned by its fruit. ” Hence all Christians are exhorted to good works. *Matt.*

v, 16, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Now, it is evident that if good works glorify God, "they are pleasing and acceptable to him." It is for this very purpose that men are justified. *Eph.* ii, 10, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." As has been said, good works are signs of inward faith, and to keep this in an active state, and to exert a good influence upon each other, is the duty of every Christian. *Tit.* iii, 8, "These things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men." These two passages show the reason why good works are pleasing to God. Those who engage in them have been "created in Christ Jesus unto good works;" they "have believed in God." This new creation, consequent upon belief in God, admits them into the Christian covenant, and hence their persons and their services are "accepted to God in Christ."

2. This doctrine is well expressed in the Westminster Confession of Faith, *Chap.* xvi, *Sec.* 2, "These good works, done in obedience to God's commands, are the fruits and evidences of a true and living faith, and by them believers manifest their thankfulness, strengthen their assurance, edify their brethren, adorn the profession of the gospel, stop the mouths of the adversaries, and glorify God, whose workmanship they are, created in Christ Jesus; thereunto; that, having their fruit unto holiness, they may have the end eternal life." To understand this aright, we must ascertain what it is that constitutes the quality of a good action, and determines its real character. It is certainly the new creation of the soul in Christ Jesus un'o good works. This directs and sanctifies

the motives, and these give quality and character to the actions. Two acts may be done by different persons, and may be the same, so far as the outward action itself is concerned, yet one may be good and the other bad. The ease of the Publican and the Pharisee will illustrate this thought. Both performed the same act—they prayed—but their acts were very different in character. The motive of the Publican was good, therefore his act was good; but the motive of the Pharisee was evil, therefore his act was evil. The quality of an action that is good, is produced by the motive to glorify God. If the actuating motive is changed, as it always is in regeneration, then the same act that once had no good quality in it, is now a good work, because it is done with a good motive. It “springs out of a true and lively faith,” and this faith is established in the heart by the Holy Ghost. This is very clearly expressed by the Thirteenth Article of Religion of the Protestant Episcopal Church. “Works done before the grace of Christ, and the impartation of his Spirit, are not pleasant unto 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 they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin.” In Christian good works, therefore, everything depends upon the disposition with which they are performed. If the heart is right, and governed by the law of God, the work may be called good, for, *Luke vi, 45*, “A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man, out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is evil; for of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.”

3. We must admit, then, that there are good works,

and that they proceed from a good heart: but this admission does not elevate them to a condition or term of pardon, for they "cannot put away sins." There is nothing of an expiatory character in them; nor can they be regarded, in any sense or degree, as a substitute for a pure heart. In the case of a justified man, who alone can perform a good work, his chief dependence is upon Divine grace, and this dependence must always exist. *John xv, 5*, "For without me, ye can do nothing." Now, if it is true that even the good man must depend upon God for all the good that he is able to perform, his good works cannot merit the Divine favor, or put away sin; for dependence and merit are so wholly incompatible, that it is not conceivable how any being can merit anything by doing what is his duty, and what God assists him to do. But it is the duty of every good man, with the assistance he has, to do all the good works he can. *Ps. xxxvii, 3*, "Trust in the Lord, and do good." *Heb. xiii, 16*, "But to do good, and to communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." Hence, doing good works is to be the habit of the Christian life. It is therefore neither possible nor requisite that he should be distinctly conscious of the motive to right action, at all times, and in every single action. The habit of doing right implies a prevailing feeling of love to God, and the value of actions performed under the force of this principle, as the constant controlling spirit of the life, is not less, but often much greater. Hence it is, that actions are considered by God with relation to the moral character and life of him who does them. His principles and motives, with all the other circumstances of the action, come into the notion of a work purely good. For, unless all these be good, the action in its own abstract nature may be ever so good, and it cannot render the doer acceptable in the sight of God. But

there are some actions good in themselves, as justice, temperance, charity. These are called good from the morality and nature of the actions themselves, whatever may be the real character of the doer; but either or all of these cannot be substituted for the regeneration of the heart.

4. But good works are "pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ." They please God, because he has commanded them, and because they "spring out of a true and lively faith." To see this more clearly, we may consider some of their uses.

*First.* They are the fruits and evidences of a lively faith. Inoperative faith produces no fruit, and is called, in *James* ii, 17, dead faith, for "if it hath not works, it is dead, being alone." If this dead faith is without works, then it follows, that if there is a living faith in the heart, there will be good works as signs of that faith. Hence, *James* says, "I will show thee my faith by my works." Thus it is that "a lively faith may be as evidently known as a tree is discerned by its fruit." It is therefore impossible to please God, or perform any real good work, without faith. *Heb.* xi, 6, "But without faith, it is impossible to please him."

"Plead we then for faith alone,  
Faith which by our works is shown."

*Second.* By good works, Christians show their thankfulness to God for his goodness to them. *Ps.* cxvi, 12, 13, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord."

*Third.* Good works strengthen the believer's confidence in God, and his assurance of Christian love. *1 John* ii, 5, "But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God," and *verse* 3, "Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments."

*Fourth.* Good works adorn the Christian profession, and glorify God. *Matt. v. 16*, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven."

*Fifth.* Good works are the fruits of holiness, and anticipate eternal life. *Eph. ii, 10*, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." *Rom. vi, 22*, "But now being made free from sin, and become servants of God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." All the above passages clearly establish the use of good works.

5. But such is the connection between Christian good works and eternal salvation, that one depends upon the other. It is true that salvation consists in the entire renovation of the soul, and that this is the gift of God through faith, and cannot be merited by good works. But, at the same time, it is the uniform testimony of the Bible, that this blessing may be forfeited by that man who omits good works. These are necessary to the continuance and progress of renewing grace in the heart, and consequently to the reward of eternal life. The happiness of the soul consists in rewards, or proofs of the Divine favor, as peace with God, and joy in the Holy Ghost, with the promise and positive assurance of the future life. But these rewards, whether bestowed in this life or in the life to come, cannot be merited by good works in themselves, any more than the pardon of sin. "But faith and the good works connected with it, are the conditions alone on which alone these rewards are bestowed; and the degree of reward is regulated by the degree of zeal in holiness which is exhibited." Obedience to the law of God is as essential a part of true faith, as trust in God through Christ. We may therefore justly say, that good works are as essential

to the attainment of eternal life, as a condition, as faith is, though they are not to be regarded as in any degree meritorious, or in any degree as the procuring cause of this final blessing. Hence we have this testimony of *Justin Martyr*: "Christ hath declared that not they only who profess his religion, but they who do the works which he hath commanded them, shall be saved." It is clear, then, that good works are essential prerequisites to an admission into heaven. And though they do not merit this ultimate blessing, yet are they necessary in all who are "heirs of the grace of life;" for as these are "made free from sin," they "have their fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." *Rom. vi, 22.*

6. The doctrine of this Article is of very great practical value to every Christian. Among other things, it teaches us that there is but one method of salvation, and but one set of conditions upon which this salvation may be obtained. But it teaches,

*First.* That if there is a settled desire to do that which God has commanded and thereby to glorify him, there is very conclusive evidence that the soul is under the influence and direction of the Holy Spirit. This desire to do the will of God is not natural, and if it exists to any degree at all, it exists as the implantation of the grace of God. It is the source of Christian action, and this in its turn is the evidence of the inworking of the truth as it is in Christ. It is very evident, therefore, that no man who is in the carnal state can possess a disposition to do the will of God. *Rom. viii, 7,* "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God." But the disposition to do right actions is peculiar to the man of God, and by this he knows that he has passed into the new, or spiritual state, and can rejoice in his conformity, as far as it goes, to the Divine will. This is the man who can say, in truth,

“ Lord, I believe, and rest secure  
 In confidence divine,  
 Thy promise stands forever sure,  
 And all thou art is mine.”

*Second.* This doctrine should impress every Christian with the duty of doing good to all men. It embraces the apostolic advice in *Gal.* vi, 10, “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.” This duty is limited by no circumstance but the absence of opportunity. If there be no occasion for good works toward others, the disposition of course will still remain in the heart. If so, it follows that when the believer is not inclined to do that which is good, he has reason to suspect that all is not right within. Good works are the signs of that faith which purifies the heart, and no good work, however small, shall loose its reward. *Mark* ix, 41, “For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not loose his reward.” But the works that God has commanded us to do, tend to lead out, and to perfect the faith that prompts the action. *James* ii, 22, “Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? Now, if good works tend to make faith perfect, and if they shall be rewarded as signs of a perfecting faith, with the final favor of God, then it is the duty of all professing Christians to do that which is good to all men, but more especially to those of their brethren in the household of faith.

*Third.* We see by the prominency given to both, how it is that a man is justified by faith, and how it is that a man is justified by works. St. Paul urges the doctrine of justification by faith alone, but never opposes the exhibition of this faith by good works. St. James urges the

necessity of works as signs of faith, and teaches that a man is justified by faith and works together. The one urges the theory of justification, while the other urges the theory and practice of the whole Christian life. True saving faith is planted in the heart by the Spirit of God, and prompts the believer to good works as its legitimate fruit, and as the testimony of its genuineness. This is seen in the fact stated by St. James—“*Faith without works is dead.*” But neither of these Apostles urge either the merit of faith, or good works, as the ground of justification. When properly understood, they both insist upon faith as the *term* of justification, and good works as the evidence of this faith, and as essential to its life and progress. St. Paul urges faith as the only term of the justification of sinners, and St. James urges the continuation of this faith, with its appropriate sign of good works, as the term of the justification of believers,—their good works being the sign of the faith which they have. He also very forcibly illustrates the whole argument by referring to one single fact, that any one may comprehend. “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead.”

Save us by grace, through faith alone,—  
 A faith thou must thyself impart ;  
 A faith that would by works be shown ;  
 A faith that purifies the heart.

## ARTICLE XI.

### OF WORKS OF SUPEREROGATION.

“ Voluntary works, besides over and above God’s commandments, which are called works of supererogation, cannot be taught without arrogancy and impiety. For by them men do declare that they do not only render to 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 is commanded of you, say, We are unprofitable servants.”

1. This Article is directed against an error of Romanism. The error is expressed by the Latin words *super* and *erogatio*, which, when joined together, give the word, supererogation. This compound term, signifies literally, *to give above what is required*, and it designates that overwork, or surplus service rendered to God above what he has required. It is designed to express how much more, pious Romanists do for God, than he requires of them by anything he has revealed in his holy Word. To justify themselves in this assumption, they assert that Christ suffered more than was necessary for the salvation of man, and that the saints have done the same ; and that this surplus merit of good works is placed at the disposal of his holiness the Pope, to be dispensed at his will for remission from purgatory by indulgencies. It is asserted in this Article that such a doctrine “ cannot be taught without arrogancy and impiety.” *Arrogancy*, because it exalts human merit ; and *impiety*, because it detracts from the honor of Christ, and is, therefore, essentially wicked. To see that this is a groundless and wicked error, we have but to refer to the words of Christ, “ who

saith plainly, When ye have done all that is commanded of you, say, We are unprofitable servants."

2. That we may see the reason of this Article, and the fact that it does not embrace more than is involved in the blasphemous error against which it is directed, we will let Romanists make their own statements. They say, "that every human action which proceeds from *free will*, moved not only by actual grace, but also instructed by sanctified grace, if it merely be referred to God, *is worthily meritorious*; and thus, not only acts of charity, but also of temperance, justice, and every virtue, *are meritorious of eternal life*." "These points have been settled." *Council of Trent, Sess. 6, Chap. 16, Canon 32.* "If any one shall say, that the good works of a justified man, do not truly merit an increase of grace, eternal life, and the attainment of eternal life itself, on condition, however, that he shall die in a state of grace, and even in increase of glory, let him be accursed." *Breg's Trans. of Dens' Theol.* When they speak of satisfaction for sin, they say, "A certain temporal punishment God reserves for the penitent himself to endure;" and that "the Church believes and teaches, that her *jurisdiction extends to this satisfaction*, so as to be able to *remit it wholly or in part*, in certain circumstances, by what is called *INDULGENCES*." *Milner's End of Controv.* Such is the doctrine of the merit of good works, as held and taught by Papists. *Dr. Mosheim* states this doctrine of Romanists thus; "there actually is an immense treasure of *merit*, composed of the pious deeds of the saints, which they have performed beyond what was necessary for their own salvation, and which were applicable to the benefit of others; that the guardian and dispenser of this precious treasure was the Roman pontiff; and that of consequence he was empowered to *assign*, to such as he thought proper, a *portion*

of this inexhaustible source of merit, suitable to their respective guilt, and sufficient to deliver them from punishment due to their crimes." *His. Vol. 2, p. 238.*

3. The abuse of this assumed power, and the extensive public sale of indulgences to commit sin, was the immediate cause of the Reformation. This powerful development of truth took hold upon the roots of this immense evil, and so exposed them to the sifting fires of truth, that kingdoms and nations beheld in them nothing but a blasphemous scheme of fraud and covetousness. And now, the whole Protestant world maintains that there is not the slightest foundation for works of merit, or supererogation in the Scriptures; and that this error has no other foundation than the corrupt imaginations of wicked and designing men. Hence the doctrine is both arrogant and impious, because it exalts and dignifies human merit to the direct and clear contradiction of the Bible; and because it takes away from the honor and power that is attached to the merit of our Lord Jesus Christ. The propriety, therefore, of an expression of what Protestant Christians believe to be dangerous errors, and of what they believe to be the truth, in an Article of faith like the one now under review, must be approved by all correct thinkers.

4. This Article of Religion denies that man is able to do more than is necessary for his own salvation; and, that he is able by any possibility of sanctity or faith, to merit anything by his good works, or to transfer the merit of any of his good works, if merit they have, to the account of another. The first of these propositions is disproved by *Luke xvii, 10*, "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do." The second proposition is disproved by *Psa. xlix, 7*, "None of them can by any means redeem

his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him." But this doctrine may be further disproved by considering how much is required of the Christian by the law of God. The requirement is in these words, *Luke x, 27*, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind ; and thy neighbor as thyself." Now nothing more can be conceived of as within man's ability to perform, than is embraced in these two commands. It therefore follows, that if the law of God requires of man all that he is able to perform, by the utmost possible use of the mental and moral powers of his being, there is neither ability nor room for works of supererogation.

All the good works that man can perform in his best state, proceed from the ability that God gives him to do good. His love dwells in the heart of the Christian, and gives character to the motive by which only, the work may be said to be good. And hence it is, that the Christian's motive to do good, and his good works proceed from God. *Phil. ii, 13*, "For it is God which worketh in you both to *will* and to *do* of his good pleasure."

5. But if the doctrine of supererogation be true, then will every man have an equal reward of happiness in the life to come. Merit will be taken from the extra, and added to the scantiness of the works of individuals, and all will share alike in the joys of heaven. But this is contrary to the Scriptures, and cannot be true. Their uniform and most reasonable testimony is, that there will be differences of reward and punishment in a future state ; and that this difference shall be based upon what men do in this life. When Christ shall come in the glory of his Father, "Then he shall reward every man according to his works," *Matt. xvi, 27*. Nothing is said here of the surplus merit of good works, set to the credit of

another ; but on the contrary, every man shall be personally rewarded for whatever he may have personally done. *1 Cor. xv, 41, 42*, "For one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead." This error can have no support from this passage, but on the contrary, a direct rebuke. Nor has it any support from any other portion of the Scriptures, because they uniformly prove that the reward of the most useful and the most enlarged sanctified capacity, is a reward of grace, and not of debt. This is the view of the truth as it was entertained by early Christians, and as it was supported by the Christian Fathers. How then can Romanists account for the historic fact that the absurd assumption of works of merit, and works of supererogation had no existence in either faith or practice till some time in the twelfth century ? And how can they account for the historic fact that the doctrine of salvation by faith alone, as taught by St. Paul, was lost sight of in proportion as the doctrine of human merit and surplus works was made prominent ?

6. If the doctrine of supererogation be true, and of as much value in man's present and future happiness as Romanists contend for, it is not conceivable why the Scriptures should not only be entirely silent upon the subject, but clearly contradict and condemn the most favorable bearing of the whole theory. If in anything the gospel should be full and explicit, it should be in that which concerns our peace and reconciliation with God, and the means of escaping his wrath. But the Bible is full and explicit, and contains all the necessary doctrine and instruction to "thoroughly furnish unto all good works." It everywhere teaches that man is justified by faith alone, and not by works, for "Christ saith plainly, when ye have done all that is commanded you, say, We are unprofitable

servants." Thus we have the testimony of the Bible, not only against salvation by works, but against the possibility of any man doing more than God requires of him, or in any degree making satisfaction for the sins of another. In full view of this clear Scripture principle, *Bissil*, in his work on the Forty-eighth Psalm lays down this proposition and question; "He that cannot make satisfaction or propitiate God for his own sins, how can he do it for another?" But to carry the influence of good works to the utmost possible limit, we may say with *St. Augustine*, that, "Brethren may die for brethren, yet the blood of any martyr is not poured out for the forgiveness and remission of their brethren's sins." This remark is founded upon the fact, uniformly contended for by *Augustine*, and every other correct Biblical thinker on this subject, that, "The offering of Christ once made is that perfect redemption, propitiation and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin, but that alone." *Art. xx.*

7. But with all the array of Scripture and reason that may be leveled against this error, still Romanists cling to it; and to make a show of argument in its defense, they torture the parable of the Ten Virgins, into what they suppose to be very clear testimony. This parable might be of some use to them, if all the virgins had been wise; but unfortunately for Rome, five were foolish, and these were the persons that seemed to believe somewhat in works of supererogation. They cried for a transfer of merit that they might go in to the wedding, and have an equal enjoyment with the other virgins. But these wise virgins had nothing to spare; they seem to have had no knowledge of the new mode of getting into heaven. They had toiled all their lives in the old fashioned way,

and when the cry was heard, "Lo he cometh !" they had just enough, and nothing to spare. While the foolish virgins were gone to get oil, "The bridegroom came ; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage ; and the door was shut." But what of the poor foolish virgins who could obtain no transfer of the merit of good works from others ? They came with all the horrors of disappointment, "Saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not." Why not ? They seem to have been Romanists, for they demanded the surplus merit of the good works of others to help them into the kingdom of heaven. They were, however, a little mistaken, for they did not make the request of sister Romanists, and consequently, they got no oil. What then ? Papists say they have gone to Purgatory, and after they have suffered for their sins a sufficient length of time, they will have enough merit of good works to purchase their souls, and then they will go into heaven also. It seems then, that Romanists have more chances for their lives than one. But how they contrive to get so many ways of entrance into the Holy heavens, and pass by the only way the Bible points out, is a mystery to Protestants. And how it is that they can make out to do more than they can is another great mystery.

8. But this doctrine is so absurd in itself, and so contrary to right reason and the Scriptures, that it scarcely demands a serious notice ; and were it not for its fatal consequences in the moral perversion of the thousands who are enslaved to the superstitious mummeries of Romanism, and the efforts that are made by her swarm of priests to propagate this, with her thousand other errors, nothing would have been said upon this Article beyond a mere analysis and definition. But to profit as much as

may be, by what has been said in opposition to this supererogation of Romanism, I remark,

*First.* The error opposed by this Article is full of falsehood, and tends to evil. It is contrary to reason, to the Scriptures, and to every principle of truth within the scope of human intellect. Its evil moral results may be seen in the fact that it tends to damp the Christian's ardor in the pursuit of holiness, by narcotizing his soul with the fatal idea that he has already gained enough; and if not, that the surplus merit of the good works of some other person will be transferred to his account, and therefore he need strive no longer.

*Second.* The doctrine, as it has been investigated and condemned by the Scriptures, has brought out some of the opposing truths of God's word, and has assisted us to see more clearly the great benefit of the doctrine of justification by faith alone. We have seen, that although the good works of believers are not meritorious, yet are they acceptable to God in Christ, as signs of an inward faith. That even this may be true, we have also learned the necessity of our persons being accepted of God; that we be justified by faith. When God accepted the offering of Abel, he testified that he had respect to his person, or, that he esteemed him righteous. This but confirms the whole scope of the New Testament, in its uniform teaching. We find here, that no man's works or offerings can avail with God, unless the heart is right with the Divine law. The fountain must be pure in order that it may send forth sweet water.

Even then, no man is authorized to expect any merit of God's favor from any, or all of his good works however pure.

*Third.* We learn from the proofs of error in the doctrine under review, the great value of the Bible as the

only rule of faith and practice. It acknowledges no power to ordain doctrines but that of God ; no other Mediator but Jesus Christ, and no other test of righteousness before God, but a pure heart. Wherever the Bible is, and is in the common language of the people, as it always should be ; and where it is read, there is less of superstition and ignorance than where it is not. And wherever it has gone among Romanists, it has been the means of many conversions to God. With this Book before us, we learn that the best of our works are not accepted of God as they are ours, but only on account of the merit and mediation of Christ ; for, as our persons are accepted in him, so also our works are only acceptable to God by him. We must be “lively stones,” and “built up a spiritual house ;” “a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”

“ We have no outward righteousness,  
No merit of good works to plead ;  
We only can be saved by grace :  
Thy grace, O Lord, is free indeed.”

## ARTICLE XII.

### ON SIN AFTER JUSTIFICATION.

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

#### SECTION FIRST.

##### *Not Every Sin the Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.*

1. “Not every sin willingly committed after justification, is the sin against the Holy Ghost.” It is assumed here that justified persons may sin; that they may sin willingly, and not commit the sin against the Holy Ghost. To understand this aright, we must see what justification is. Justification is a forensic term, and means the declaring of a person to be righteous, according to law. In theology, the term is synonymous with pardon, and means the act by which God brings the sinner out of a state of guilt and condemnation, into a state of pardon and spiritual liberty. It is the pardon of all sin that is past. This is justification. The question now is, Can the believer commit sin after justification? Antinomians say they cannot, because they are regenerate, and within the covenant of grace. But in opposition to this error, our Article assumes that he can; and the assumption is based upon the Scripture doctrine, that the believer is liable to fall into sin as long as he is in a state of trial. St Paul

says, in *1 Cor.* ix, 27, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast away." Now, the possibility of falling into sin, and of being finally lost after justification, is most clearly stated in this passage. The Apostle well understood, that, in this state of probation there is danger of falling into sin; and that the best of Christians can stand no longer than they do their duty and depend upon God. *1 Cor.* x, 12, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." These, with numerous other passages, prove the truth of our Article, and establish the fact, that if this liability to fall into sin were removed, there could be no such a thing as trial, and the many exhortations to steadfastness, to faithfulness, to perseverance, would be without meaning; and the idea of moral freedom would be but the phantom of a vague philosophy.

2. This Article denies that every sin committed after justification, "is the sin against the Holy Ghost, and unpardonable." But what is the sin against the Holy Ghost? If this question be rightly answered, it may be of great use to many Christians. But it is to be regretted that the phrase "sin against the Holy Ghost," was permitted to find a place in theological writings, for it is not only unscriptural, but very indefinite, and well calculated to mislead. The Scripture term is "blasphemy," as in *Matt.* xii, 31, 32, "But the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men." "But whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." The other proof texts that properly relate to this subject, are *Mark* iii, 28-30, and *Luke* xii, 10. In all these passages the phrase, blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, is the uniform mode of expression.

The term blasphemy expresses a grade of wickedness, and a settled malignity of soul that can be predicated of no other sin, and hence it is unpardonable. But to see what this sin is, we must consult the *occasion* of the foregoing texts. Christ had been engaged in casting out devils, and while "all the people were amazed," the pharisees said, "This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub, the prince of devils." *Matt.* xii, 24. Here we find what constitutes blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. It is neither less nor more than ascribing the miracles of Christ, which were wrought by the power of God, to the spirit of the devil. This was done by the pharisees with the malicious purpose of rendering Jesus, in the estimation of the people, as nothing more than a magician, standing in alliance with satan. This blasphemy, therefore, was not committed against the personal dignity of the Holy Ghost, as God, but against those Divine operations which were manifest, as the peculiar work of the Holy Spirit. "The pharisees, therefore, committed the sin against the Holy Ghost, not only by obstinately denying, against their own convictions, the miracles which Jesus performed in proof of his Divine mission, and which they knew in their hearts to be performed through Divine agency: but, by giving them out as imposture and the effect of an evil spirit, with which Jesus stood in alliance." "This, considering the circumstances in which the pharisees were, showed a high degree of wickedness, and was actual blasphemy against God,—a designed and deliberate blasphemy too, which they were by no means disposed to repent of, or to retract."

3. Whether this blasphemy can be committed now, is a question of great importance to some. The Article seems to admit that it can; but on the other hand, it is contended that it cannot, inasmuch as the days of mira-

cles are past, and no one at present has an equal advantage with the pharisees for attaining to a full conviction of the reality of miracles. Hence it is supposed this sin cannot be committed, because miracles are no longer performed. "But there is still, however, one case in which the same sin which was committed by the pharisees, may be still committed, viz ; where one is fully convinced of the historic truth of the miracles of Jesus, and that they were done through Divine power, and yet, in total opposition to his convictions, and with the same malicious purpose which the pharisees had, pronounces them to be imposture and deception, the effect of magic or other wicked arts. This would in reality be the same case with that of the pharisees. For the circumstances of having seen the miracles ourselves is of no special consequence, and it is enough if one be convinced of their truth. When the conviction of the truth of the miracle is equally strong in one who has not seen them, and in one who has ; the same degree of guilt would seem to be necessarily involved in denying them. Such a case, indeed, will seldom occur, but the possibility of it must be admitted."

Hence the framers of this Article very properly inserted, that, "not every sin willingly committed after justification is the sin against the Holy Ghost." This is but *one* sin, and every other sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven but this.

4. But while this Article maintains that all the sins of believers may be forgiven, though willingly committed, it by no means encourages sin. Nor has the believer any right to commit sin willingly or otherwise, simply because a merciful God will forgive sin when repented of. Christians are liable to fall into sin in every period of their state of trial, but this liability to sin is not sin itself ; it is no reason why sin should be indulged in, nor a reason

why every Christian should neglect the means of resisting sin, or pray constantly to be delivered from temptation.

“ From dark temptation’s power,  
From Satan’s wiles defend  
Deliver in the evil hour,  
And guide us to the end.

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SECTION SECOND.

*Sin after Justification.*

1. “After we have received the Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin, and by the grace of God, rise again and amend our lives.” The first thing assumed in this part of the Article is, that true believers receive the Holy Ghost. This is not a mere assumption, but a clear doctrine of the Bible. *Rom. viii, 15, 16*, “For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.” *1 Cor. iii, 16*, “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you.” *Gal. iv, 6*, “And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father,” and *1 Jo:hn, v, 10*, “He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.” But the fact that the Holy Spirit is in the hearts of true believers, is still further made out by a notice of the fruits of the Spirit, in *Gal. v, 22, 23*, as “love,” “joy,” “peace,” “long suffering,” “gentleness,” “goodness,” “faith,” “meekness,” “temperance.” With these and other similar passages before us, we cannot doubt the propriety of the language of our Article; nor can we doubt that it is the high privilege of the Christian to enjoy the comforts

and testimony of the Holy Ghost in his heart, from the period of his adoption into God's family on earth, until his soul is admitted into the upper and better state.

2. But, "After we have received the Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin." These words of the Article are founded, *first*, upon the *possibility* of falling into sin; and *second*, upon the *danger* of falling into sin, after the soul has been justified by God's free grace. Upon both of these points there is a general agreement among all sound Christians, and especially between Armenians and Calvinists. Both admit the possibility, and by consequence, the danger of falling into sin after justification. But when they advance a step farther they divide; Armenians believing that the Christian may so far fall from grace given, as to be finally lost; while the Calvinists believe that the decree of election secures to every believer the certainty of final salvation. Here is their own statement of this doctrine; "They whom God hath accepted in his Beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, *can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace*; but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved." *Conf. of Faith, Chap. xvii, Sec. 1.*

The opposite doctrine, that true believers may so far backslide from God, as to be finally lost, is founded in the following and other passages of Scripture; indeed, we believe it is implied in the whole fact of independent moral free agency. But to the text, *Ez. xviii, 24*, "But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned; in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall

he die." The doctrine of this passage is in accordance with the general doctrine laid down in *verse* 20. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." The death here spoken of, cannot mean the death of the body, for it will die whether there is sin or not. *Chap.* xxxiii, 18, "When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall die thereby." These two passages plainly teach that one who is esteemed righteous by God himself, may fall from that righteousness, and perish in everlasting death. *John* xv, 6, "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." The persons here spoken of were in Christ as branches of the true vine, but they did not abide in him, and were therefore cast forth as branches, "and they are burned." *1 Cor.* x, 12, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Hence in *2 Pet.* i, 10, believers are exhorted to "give diligence to make their calling and election sure." Now, if their "calling and election" were sure already, why exhort them to make it sure? and if there were no danger of falling so far from God as to be irrecoverably lost, why exhort them to diligence, that this fatal end might be avoided? This whole passage teaches the one doctrine, that believers may *stand* or *fall*, and that their standing depends upon their diligence in building up a true Christian character, fortified with "faith," "virtue," "knowledge," "temperance," "patience," "godliness," "brotherly kindness" and "charity." Then it is affirmed that "if ye do these things, ye shall never fall." The foregoing involves the general principle, that salvation, from first to last, is *conditional*. It must be so, if this life is a state of trial, which it surely is. It then follows as an action of liberty, that a man, by God's grace,

may turn from bad to good ; and if his trust is not continued in God, by a faithful performance of duty, he must necessarily relapse into sin and consequent danger of eternal ruin.

3. Hence it is, that a Christian cannot be assured that he shall not fall so as to loose heaven, if he will not do his duty. Trial is a feature in God's government that extends to all his intelligent creatures, even to the angels ; *Jude* 6, " And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." These fell because they " kept not their first estate ;" they " left their own habitation." In like manner our first parents fell, because they did not trust in God, and faithfully observe his law. The Jews fell from their holiness as a nation, " because of unbelief." *Rom.* xi, 20. And the Christian being in the same danger of falling, and having no more assurance of standing than the angels, our first parents, or the Jews, had, is exhorted in *Phil.* ii, 12, to " Work out his own salvation with fear and trembling." *1 Pet.* ii, 7, " Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear." Now, it is manifest that Christians are exhorted to " fear," and that the fear of falling is designed to preserve them from falling. Inasmuch, therefore, as our success in the religious life depends not upon any assurance of final perseverance, apart from Christian duty, that we can perform, it is all important that we " give all diligence to make our calling and election sure."

4. But if we do fall into sin, we may, " by the grace of God, rise again and amend our lives." This part of our Article is based upon the general condition of pardon to any penitent sinner. And the recovery of an apostate Christian is accomplished by the same grace the same

penitence, prayer and faith that are requisite to the conversion of any other sinner. Hence *Cyprian* says, "But I wonder that there are some so obstinate, as not to think that repentance ought to be given to such as are fallen, or suppose that pardon should be denied to penitents, when it is written, '*Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent and do thy first works.*'" *Epis. ad Antonianum.*

But *Heb.* vi. 4-6, is sometimes quoted in opposition to this, and the term "impossible," and the phrase, "*to renew them again unto repentance,*" are regarded as wholly forbidding the possibility of returning to God. But this impossibility, says Bishop Taylor, "concerns not those that return and confess Christ, but those that willingly and maliciously reject this only way of salvation, and never return to it again." *Taylor on the Effect of Repentance.* This interpretation is in agreement with the whole tenor of the Scriptures. "And therefore they are to be condemned who say they can no more sin so long as they live here; or deny the place of forgiveness to such as truly repent." The penitent and humble backslider may say as did penitent David. *Ps.* li, 12, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation."

" Ah! Lord, with trembling I confess,  
A gracious soul may fall from grace;  
The salt may loose its seasoning power  
And never, never find it more.

Lest that my fearful case should be  
Each moment knit my soul to thee  
And lead me to the mount above  
Through the low vale of humble love."

## ARTICLE XIII. OF THE CHURCH.

“The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly administered according to Christ’s ordinance in all things that of necessity are requisite to the same.”

### SECTION FIRST

#### *What the Church is.*

1. “The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men.” The analysis of this definition of a church, will show it to be sufficiently comprehensive for all useful purposes. The term church, in its most enlarged sense, signifies the whole number of those who agree in worshipping God according to the doctrines of the Holy Scriptures. The word was used by the Greeks to denote an assembly of men, called together for any particular purpose. It was applied to all assemblies, without respect to their precise nature, which could only be determined by the circumstances which brought them together. These assemblies might be good or bad, or a mixture of both. In a restricted sense, the term was used by the Hebrews to denote all those who belonged to the Jewish nation, and professed the Jewish religion. It is said that the early Christians took this word from the Jews, and applied it to particular societies of believers in particular places, as in *Acts*, viii, 1, “The church which was at Jerusalem.”

The term sometimes means the *assemblies* of religious societies as in 1 *Cor.* xi, 18, “For first of all, when ye

come together in the *church*, I hear that there be divisions among you." *Ch.* xiv, 19, "Yet in the *church* I had rather speak five words with my understanding." *Verse* 28, "But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the *church*." It matters not whether the congregation is in a house, or in the open air, the term still has its application, and means the same thing.

But the term church is used to denote all those who profess the Christian religion, without respect to particular places, as 1 *Cor.* xii, 28, "And God hath sent some into the *church*, first, apostles," &c. *Matt.* xvi, 18, "And upon this rock will I build my *church*." These passages distinguish the whole body of believers as the Church of Christ.

The term often means the *places* where the people of God assemble for prayer and other religious services, and the congregations assembled with them. But in its more limited and Scripture sense, it means the whole collective body of believers, redeemed out of every nation, and which are called the Church of Jesus Christ. In this connection, the term occurs very often in the Scriptures.

2. The church is called visible to distinguish it from the universal church. The term visible means that which may be seen, or falls under the observation of the senses. The members of the visible church may be seen; their assemblies are public; we may be present with them, and observe the celebration of their several parts of worship. But when the visible church is spoken of, we are not to understand that there are two churches, visible and invisible. The visible church includes that part of the invisible church that is still on earth. The invisible church includes the whole family of God, on earth and in heaven, from the beginning to the end of the world, and are known to God alone. It consists only of true believers,

and these are, of course, not visible to us. As men, they are objects of sense, but as believers, they are not. These are the spouse of Christ, and as a part of his invisible church, their glory is internal. *Ps. x'v, 13*, "The king's daughter is all glorious *within*." It is called the mystical body of Christ, and is united to him by spiritual bonds. *1 Cor. xii, 13*, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into the same spirit." On the contrary, the visible church consists of all who by a profession of their faith in Christ, belong externally to the visible body of believers. This being true, it follows that the visible church thus composed, may comprehend both good and bad men—those who are known to God to be sincere, and those who are insincere, or hypocrites. On this account, it is compared to a *floor*, upon which there is both "*wheat*" and "*chaff*;" to a *field*, where "*tares*" as well as "*good seed*" are sown; to a *net*, in which there are both "*good*" and "*bad*" fish; and to a *great house*, in which there are good and bad materials.

It is called "the visible Church of Christ," because its members publicly profess Christ's religion, and because he has given himself for the church—*Eph. v, 26, 27*, "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word. That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

3. The church is called "*a congregation of faithful men*." But the term congregation does not restrict the term church to one single society of believers, worshiping in any one particular place. The visible church is universal, consisting of the whole body of believers dispersed through all parts of the world. Hence, it is called in the

Scriptures by various names, as "a body," "the kingdom of God," "the house of God." "A body" is composed of various members, all so connected as to form *one body*. "A kingdom" is but one, though made up of many subordinate provinces and states. "The house of God" implies, that though made up of many parts, it is but one spiritual family. Now, as it is impossible for this universal society to assemble in one place for the observance of religious ordinances, it is necessary that particular churches be formed for this purpose, and which shall constitute the integral parts of the one visible and universal Church of Christ.

The church is said to be composed of "*faithful men*," men who have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Saviour of sinners, and who have yielded a full assent to the doctrines of the gospel, and who have joined themselves, by a profession of this faith, to the society of God's people. By the term faithful, we are not to understand that all the members of the visible church are full of faith, in its limited sense of justifying faith. They are faithful men by *profession*, just as the church is called *holy*, because holiness is the profession of its members. But this general remark is not designed to modify the fact, that there are many, very many, in the visible church who are renewed by the Holy Ghost, and who constantly walk with God as did Enoch.

4. Though this Article speaks of the Church of Christ, it does not follow that the church had no being on earth previous to the personal ministry of Christ. The Bible is full of proof of its regular establishment and permanent existence from the earliest periods. And as it has existed in all past ages, so it is destined to exist through all coming ages. Whatever may be the condition of earthly kingdoms and nations, certain it is, that neither power nor

policy can accomplish the overthrow of the Church of Christ.

“Immovable by mortal power —  
Built on eternity.”

How, then, can men look upon the church, but with feelings of profound reverence? How can they lightly esteem her high and ennobling privileges, and how can they be contented to indulge merely in the outward ceremonials of the church, when it is their high privilege and duty to be “all glorious within?”

‘Vessels of mercy, sons of grace,  
Be purged from every sinful stain  
Be like your Lord, his word embrace  
Nor bear his hallow’d name in vain.”

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#### SECTION SECOND.

##### *Outward Tests of a True Church.*

1. The first test of the true Church of Christ is, that “the pure word of God is preached.” By this, and not by the authority and decisions of the church itself, are we to judge of the purity and effectiveness of the Church of Christ. Romanists maintain just the reverse of this. They affirm that the authority of the Scriptures is derived from the church, and that it has a right to determine what is, and what is not, the pure word of God. Assuming this absurdity, Romanists have not only corrupted the pure word of God, but they have even maintained that, of itself, it is not sufficient for salvation, and have therefore joined to it the traditions of men. Not content with this, they placed the Apocryphal books on an equal standing with the Scriptures, at a solemn convocation of the Council of Trent, in A. D. 1546. These books contain many things that are erroneous, superstitious, and demo-

ralizing ; but still Romanists presume to give them an equal standing with the Bible, and boldly denounce all who claim that the Bible without these is sufficient for all the purposes of justification and a pious life.

But Protestant Christians claim, in opposition to all this, that the Bible, without tradition and the Apocrypha, is the pure word of God, and make this, together with the proper administration of but *two* sacraments, the distinction between themselves and Papists.

2. But the pure word of God is *preached* in the visible Church of Christ ; that is, publicly read and explained, either by texts, paragraphs, or chapters. But by whom is the word of God to be preached ? By such persons only as God has called to this important work. The office of public preaching was appointed by Christ himself, as an institution to maintain and spread the gospel through all nations and ages, and to complete the organization and effective construction of the church itself. The Apostles were set apart as preachers and founders of churches wherever they went. These again set apart a perpetual office of teaching, and directed the churches to receive them as the called and appointed of God. To these, and their successors in office forever, God has committed the care and instruction of the visible church. It is their chief business to preach the pure word of God to the people, and to defend it from the encroachments and errors of papists and infide's.

3. The second test of the true visible Church of Christ is, "*the sacraments duly administered according to Christ's ordinance in all things that of necessity are requisite to the same.*" There are but *two* sacraments in Christ's Church—Baptism and the Lord's Supper. These two sacraments are substantially the same with those of the Old Testament—Circumcision and the Passover. In the Old Testa

ment, these sacraments represented Christ *as to come*, as in the New Testament, the sacraments represent him *as already come*. In both of these dispensations, the sacraments were both *signs* and *seals* of the righteousness of faith.

A sacrament is defined to mean a sacred oath or obligation. The word denotes those ordinances of religion by which Christians come under obligations to serve God in the experience and practice of religion, and are defined to be the "outward and visible signs of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ himself as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof." According to this definition, Baptism and the Lord's Supper are certainly sacraments, for they both have the outward and visible sign of the inward and spiritual grace. But Romanists add to these two, *confirmation, penance, extreme unction, ordination, and marriage*, making in all, as they affirm, *seven sacraments*. To this high-handed assumption, they add, if possible, a worse blasphemy, by perverting the Scripture formula and nature of baptism, and by teaching the bodily presence of Christ in the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper. Then they pervert the express words of Christ by withholding the cup from the people. Hence the propriety and necessity of this Article.

4. The "*things that of necessity are requisite*" to the due administration of the Christian sacraments, are, for Baptism, *water* applied to the subject in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and for the Lord's Supper, *unleavened bread* and *wine*. These are the essential *matters* of the sacraments of Christ's Church. In the Lord's Supper, the bread must be *broken*, and the wine *poured out*. This is the due *form* of this ordinance, with these words, "Take, eat." "Drink ye

all of it." "Do this in remembrance of me." Now, without these things, none of the Christian sacraments are, or can be duly and properly administered.

By these sacraments, and by their forms of administration, the visible Church of Christ is distinguished from Romanists, Pagans, Mohammedans, Jews, and Infidels. By Baptism, the subject is admitted into the Christian Church, whether he be an adult believer, or the infant child of one or both believing parents.

"Thus we engage ourselves to thee,  
And seal our cov'nant with the Lord."

By the Lord's Supper, the Christian believer keeps before him, and in perpetual memory, the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Cor. xi, 26, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come."

"Thy body, broken for my sake,  
My bread from heaven shall be;  
Thy testamental cup I take,  
And thus remember thee."

5. In the Episcopal Homily for Whitsunday, we have what may very appropriately close this Article: "The true Church is a universal congregation of God's faithful and elect people, built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone. And it always hath these notes or marks whereby it is known; *pure and sound doctrine, the sacraments administered according to Christ's holy institution, 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." *Ox. Ed.*, p. 413

From the foregoing, we may learn the value of church purity.

*First, externally.* This is predicated of the church by the superior excellence of its religious principles. It is called *holy*, and its members, in all their external deportment, should conform to the rules and regulations of a holy life. This is external purity and Christian duty.

*Second, internally.* Internal, or moral purity, is the leading and main object of the establishment of the church on earth. The pure word of God preached, is the instruction of the Christian Church in doctrines and morals, and is designed to bring its members under the influence of the Divine Spirit, and, consequently, into a state of internal purity. Without this, "no man shall see the Lord." But, "blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

"Blest are the pure in heart.

For they shall see our God

The secret of the Lord is theirs;

Their soul is his abode.

Still to the lowly soul

He doth himself impart,

And for his temple and his throne,

Selects the pure in heart."

## ARTICLE XIV OF PURGATORY.

“ The Romish doctrine concerning purgatory, pardon, worshiping, and adoration, as well of images as of relics, and also invocation of saints, is a fond thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warrant of Scripture, but repugnant to the word of God.”

1. “ The Romish doctrine concerning *purgatory*.” This doctrine has no proof in reason, the Scriptures, or the history of the primitive church. It was not brought into the church by the authority of God, and it is very evident that the churches which were planted by the Apostles knew nothing of purgatory, for the Apostles never taught such a doctrine. It “ is a fond thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warrant of Scripture.” It is no doubt of heathen origin. It first obtained countenance in the church by Pope Gregory, about the end of the sixth century, and in process of time obtained a very general reception, especially after fictitious miracles and visions began to govern the church. Meanwhile, the very ways to purgatory were discovered ; one in Sicily, one in Pazzueto, and one in Ireland. One was found out by the help of an angel, and another by the devil. Gregory was quite carried away with these illusions, and some even now are not ashamed to own them. This doctrine gradually worked itself into the Romish Church during the sixth, seventh and eighth centuries, but in rather a rude shape. For some ages it seems not to have obtained as a matter of certainty, so far was it from becoming an article of faith. Still, the error existed, and continued to win the

confidence of the popes, till the Council of Florence, in A. D. 1439, when it was solemnly decreed to be an article of faith in the Catholic Church. This decision was subsequently confirmed by the Council of Trent, and is embraced in the seventh article of the creed of Pope Pius IV, in these words: "I constantly hold that there is a purgatory, and that the souls there are assisted by the faithful." With this brief sketch of the origin and history of purgatory, its nature may be learned from Bishop Burnett, in these words: "The doctrine of the Church of Rome is, that every man is liable both to temporal and eternal punishment for his sins; that God, upon the account of the death and intercession of Christ, does indeed pardon as to its eternal punishment; but the sinner is still liable to temporal punishment, which he must expiate by acts of penance and sorrow in this world, together with such other sufferings as God shall think fit to lay upon him; but if he does not expiate these in this life, *there is a state of suffering and misery in the next world, where the soul is to bear the temporal punishment of its sins*; which may continue longer or shorter till the day of Judgment. And in order to the shortening of this, the prayers and supererogations of men here on earth, or the intercession of the saints in heaven, but above all things, the sacrifice of the mass, are of great importance." *Expos., Art. xxii.*

This doctrine of a middle state of suffering for sin, is said to be "a fond thing, vainly invented, and founded upon no warrant of Scripture, but repugnant to the word of God."

*First.* No passage of Scripture can be produced, that in any possible interpretation proves this doctrine.

*Second.* This doctrine contradicts every passage of the Bible that refers to the pardon of sin and the future state. Pardon of sin can be obtained only on account of the

merit of Christ, and the Scripture speaks only of two states beyond the grave—heaven and hell; happiness and punishment. The state of the rich man and Lazarus, noticed in *Luke* xvi, 22, 23, is what is to be understood of the righteous and the wicked in the future world. Christ says, when speaking of the future state of these different persons, in *Matt.* xxv, 46, “These shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal.” Neither of these passages, nor any other that may be cited, give any intimation of such a place as purgatory, either by this peculiar name, or by any other name. But if we ask a Românist to prove purgatory by the Bible, his first passage is, *1 Pet.* iii, 19, “By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison.” A more irrelevant passage could not be selected, and yet this is the main proof of purgatory. All this passage can mean, and which is the true meaning too, is, that Christ preached to the antediluvians in the person of Noah, before, and while he was building the ark. It is very evident, therefore, that purgatory finds no support in this passage. And this is its fate throughout the whole Bible.

But the doctrine of purgatory, in common with numerous other Romish dogmas, detracts from the merit of Christ. If Christ died for sinners, and thereby redeemed them from sin and hell, then the idea of farther meritorious suffering, either by Christ himself, who has suffered once for sin, or by the sinner himself, detracts from the original perfection of Christ’s work, and places merit in the actions of the creature. No one, who is a careful inquirer after truth, can fail to see that this is exactly opposite to the uniform doctrine of the Bible, and must therefore be false.

2. This Article opposes the Romish doctrine of *pardon*. Papists maintain that the church has power to “renew” the

whole, or any part of the pains of purgatory, on certain conditions. This supposed power of the church depends upon two other errors for whatever of support it may have—*purgatory*, and *works of supererogation*. Purgatory is false, as has already been shown, and supererogation is false, as has been proved in the Notes on Art. XI; therefore the doctrine of pardon, as held by Romanists, is false. It gives to man the power to pardon sin, whereas, *Mark* ii, 7, “Who can forgive sins but God only?” Thus it is, that the Romish doctrine concerning pardon, is clearly “repugnant to the word of God.”

It is true, however, that the Church of Christ has a warrant in the Scriptures, and therefore a right, to put notorious sinners, within her own jurisdiction, under discipline for their sins. But this discipline is confined to this world, and is designed to secure the reformation of sinners. Hence, the offender may be reprovèd, or excluded from the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper for any given length of time, or until he gives evidence of repentance and reformation; or he may even be excluded from all connection with the church. But all this does not assume that the church has power to remit his sins. This is the prerogative of God, and none else.

3. But this Article forbids the “*worshiping and adoration, as well of images as of relics.*” That Romanists do both, is so clear, that proof were unnecessary. Image worship is expressly forbidden in *Ex.* xx, 4, 5, “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in the heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them.” Notwithstanding this plain command, the Israelites fell into the very sin here forbidden, and were sorely punished. These very persons were told that the reason why

God did not assume some visible shape, when he gave the law from Sinai, was, "Lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image." *Deut. iv, 16.* But Romanists, not frightened either by the force of God's law against images, or by the punishment of the Israelites, attempt to defend the use of images by making a difference between an image and an idol; the image being a true representation of a thing, while an idol represents nothing. They then assert that images may be used as aids to the mind, and as directories of the thoughts in our approaches to God. They plead that the early Christians used them for this purpose. But this is not true, for it is a historic fact that the heathen reproached the *1.* for not using them. Moreover, images were not introduced into Christian churches till the fifth century. Hence the testimony of *Origin*, A. D. 300: "We do not honor images, that as much as in us lies, we might not fall into the suspicion that these images were other Gods." To this we add the testimony of *Gregory the Great*, in A. D. 490: "To worship images, by all means avoid."

But this Article is alike opposed to *relics* as belonging to that class of objects that may not be worshiped. By these we may understand the remains of departed saints, as their bodies, their bones, their hair, their clothes, &c. To such things as these, Romanists attach great virtue, and even claim that miracles have been wrought by them. An example of worshipping relics is recorded in *2 Kings xviii. 4.* But in connection with this record, is the fact that Hezekiah "brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made; for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it." The sin of these Israelites was reprov'd by destroying the brazen serpent, which clearly proves that such a practice was not allowed even in that rude age. That Hezekiah was commended for

this act, there can be no doubt, for it is said in *verse 7* that "the Lord was with him ; and he prospered whither soever he went forth." Meanwhile it is true that the Israelites preserved Aaron's rod and a specimen of the manna that fell in the wilderness, but there is no evidence that they worshiped them. They were preserved as records of God's power and goodness. We cannot omit in this place the remarkable case recorded in *2 Kings* xiii. 21, "And it came to pass, as they were burying a man that behold, they spied a band of men ; and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha ; and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet." This was a real miracle, effected, no doubt, by contact with the bones of the prophet. but we have no record that ever these bones were worshiped, or that pilgrimages were undertaken simply to see, or to be healed by these bones. *Acts* xix, 11, 12, "God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul ; so that from his body were taken unto the sick, handkerchiefs, or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them." Now here is another real miracle by the clothes of St. Paul, but there is no record that the people adored or worshiped them. *Acts* viii, 2, "Devout men carried the body of Stephen to his burial," but it is not said they worshiped it, though it was the body of a better man than any Romish pope that ever lived.

Now, from all these facts, we draw this general conclusion : If relics had been intended to be objects of adoration, they would have been spoken of as such, and would have been preserved by special Divine care. But no such thing appears in any part of the Holy Record, therefore it has no authority from God. Hence *St. Augustine*, in A. D. 410, says : "Let us not make it any part of religion to worship men that are dead."

4. *Invocation of saints.* This is another Romish error against which this Article is directed. This doctrine may be stated in these words: "The saints reigning with Christ offer up their prayers for men, and it is good and useful to invoke, or pray to them." But to prove by Romanists themselves that they do pray to, and invoke the saints, we refer to the encyclical letter of Pope Gregory XVI, dated Aug. 15, 1832: "Let us raise our eyes to the most blessed Virgin Mary, who alone destroys all heresies, who is our greatest hope, yea, the entire ground of our hope." With this letter before us, together with some of the written prayers of Romanists, it is folly for them to deny the well known fact that they do make prayer to saints. This practice is "a fond thing, vainly invented," because it assumes that the saints are *omnipresent* and *omniscient*, which can be predicated of no being but God. It is "repugnant to the word of God," because, 1 *Tim.* ii, 5, "There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;" and because there is no example of prayer to saints noticed in the whole Bible, except the prayer of the rich man in hell, and that received no answer.

From what has been said, we conclude that "The invocation of saints is not contained in the word of God, or in the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. This has been expressly admitted by many Romanists. There is no part of Scripture which *teaches* the invocation of saints. There is no *express command* which enjoins it. There is no *promise* that such invocation is acceptable to God or useful to men. There is no *example* furnished in Scripture, that the saints who have departed this life have been worshipped. There is no *threatening* in Scripture, no example of punishment threatened or executed against those who refuse to worship saints." *Elliot on Rom.*

Thus it is that the objections of this Article to Romanism are fully established, and thus it is that “the Romish doctrine concerning purgatory, pardon, worshiping, and adoration, as well of images, as of relics, and also invocation of saints, is a fond thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warrant of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the word of God.”

These corruptions of doctrine that are so manifestly contrary to the Bible, and the consequent corrupt practices of the Romish people, that detract so much from the pure morality of the New Testament, should induce every Protestant Christian, and every philanthropist and patriot in the whole land,

*First.* To a more thorough study of the Holy Scriptures. These, it is said by St. Paul, *2 Tim.* iii, 16, 17, are “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” Hence it is, that anything beyond the limits of this Book, that may be claimed as a fundamental Christian doctrine, or that might tend in the least to injure the faith or practice of the least of God’s children, should be instantly discarded. The church is to be judged by the purity of her doctrines, and her doctrines are contained only in the Scriptures, and not in the decrees of councils, or the traditions of men.

To be familiar with the doctrines of Christianity, and thereby to avoid error in faith and practice, is the duty of every man who would be an intelligent Christian. This duty can only be discharged by a careful and thorough study of the Bible.

“Tis like the sun, a heavenly light,  
That guides us all the day ;  
And, through the dangers of the night,  
A lamp to lead our way.”

*Second.* Seeing that Romanism is rapidly spreading her errors and superstitions—the mass, purgatory, idolatry, &c.—it becomes the duty of every professing Christian to sustain by all the Scriptural means that may be in his power, the institutions of Protestant Christianity. The Bible is one; the Missionary cause is another; and by no means is the cause of Sabbath Schools to be forgotten. These are the great powers of the church by which the truth is to be propagated, and by which the rising generations are to be fortified against the cunning devices of the “man of sin.” Meanwhile the Christian parent, the Christian child, should never forget—*Zech. iv, 6*—that it is “not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts,” that their efforts to do good shall be made successful.

Confident trust in God, the Divine Spirit in the soul, the faithful performance of every Christian duty; a continued and lively effort to disseminate the truth, and to establish a pure Christian worship, will constitute a power that will soon subdue the proud nations of the earth, demolish the fictions of Romanism, and bring men and nations to the cross of him who has said in *Matt. xxv’ii, 18*, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.”

“Tis his the drooping soul to raise  
 To rescue all by sin oppress’d;  
 To clothe them with the robes of praise  
 And give their weary spirits rests.”

## ARTICLE XV.

### OF SPEAKING IN THE CONGREGATION IN SUCH A TONGUE AS THE PEOPLE UNDERSTAND.

“ It is a thing plainly repugnant to the word of God, and the custom of the Primitive Church, to have public prayers in the Church, or to minister the Sacraments in a tongue not understood by the people ”

1. This Article is based upon the obvious common sense nature of religious worship. It opposes the unnatural practice of the Romish Church in the use of a language not understood by the people, as both antiscritptural and contrary to the custom of the Primitive Church. But unnatural and as unscriptural as the practice of conducting public worship in an unknown tongue may be, still Romanists cling to it as an element of life, and boldly affirm the propriety of it by quoting the acts and doings of their councils, by which it was established. This Article contains two reasons why the public services of the church should not be conducted in an unknown tongue.

*First.* “ *It is a thing plainly repugnant to the word of God.* ” All Scripture is founded upon reason, and nothing more than a reasonable practice is required of churches or individuals by anything that God has written. And as religious worship consists in a series of acts by which we acknowledge God and his attributes, rejoice in his goodness, and lay claim to his promises of mercy, it is a dictate of obvious reason that such a language should be used in the worship of God as is best understood by the people. In such a language the people are

to be instructed in religion. Hence, when Ezra and Nehemiah were instructing the Jews, *Neh.* viii, 8, "They read in the book in the law of God *distinctly*, and *gave the sense*, and *caused them to understand the reading.*" St. Paul says, in *1 Cor.* xiv, 2, "He that speaketh in an unknown tongue, speaketh not unto men, but unto God, for no man understandeth him." *Verse* 11, "So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak unto the air." *Verse* ii, "If I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me." Then follows the general direction for the edification of the people, in *verse* 27, 28, "If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. *But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the Church; and let him speak to himself and to God.*" These words of the Apostle prove the common sense fact, that teaching in the church in an unknown tongue is equal to no teaching. If the teacher cannot use the language of the people, "let him keep silence in the church." This fully justifies every word of our Article, and clearly sustains the framers of it, in their opposition to the Romish practice of speaking to the people, in the ministration of the sacraments, in an unknown language.

*Second.* To conduct the services of the church in an unknown tongue is contrary to "to the custom of the primitive church." This is the second reason assigned by this Article why the common language of the people should be employed in the service of the church. The custom of the primitive church in respect to this fact, is described by *Origin, Head of the School at Alexandria*, in A. D. 202. "The Grecians pray to God in the Greek,

the Romans in the Roman, and every one in his own tongue." Other passages from *Origin*, as well as from *St. Basil*, which mention every tongue's praising God; and on the spread of the gospel, every nation worshiped and praised God in the language of that nation, might be cited here; but they are wholly unnecessary, inasmuch as the Bible settles the question beyond all controversy.

2. Why it is that Romanists still adhere to the unmeaning and unscriptural practice of praying and administering the sacraments in an unknown tongue, is matter of astonishment, unless it be to support their unfounded and superstitious pretensions. But the practice is stoutly contended for, and a bitter curse is pronounced upon all who condemn it. Hear the *Council of Trent*. "If any one shall say the practice of the Roman Church, in uttering with a low voice part of the canon, and the words of consecration; or that the mass should be celebrated in the vernacular language only; or that water is not to be mixed with the wine when the sacrifice is offered, because it is contrary to Christ's institution; let him be accursed." Here the claim is, if possible, more unreasonable; not only shall the language be such as the people cannot understand, but it shall be spoken "with a low voice;" then all who oppose this useless and unscriptural practice shall "be accursed."

'Blind unbelief is sure to err.'

3. With these, and a thousand other stupifying appliances of Romanism that crush down the intellectual and moral freedom of millions of our race, who can doubt the divine character and the redeeming elements of the Great Reformation? It developed the fact, that all the people have a right to the Holy Scriptures; and it uncovered the Scripture truth that all the services of God's house should

be conducted in a language known to the people. It redeemed from papal slavery and tyranny, nations and states, by speaking to them in their own language, the pure word of life, and by directing their minds and hearts to the one sacrifice for sin, in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ.

4. But Romanists offer many reasons why the Latin language should still be continued in religious worship. The authority and infallibility of the church—modern tongues change so rapidly and so often—the unity and catholicity of the church demand that one language be used, so that any priest may officiate wherever he may go. To the first of these reasons we have but to say, that the authority and wisdom of the church, however pure, cannot exceed the authority and wisdom of God. When we look for what God has said on this subject, we go to the Bible, which teaches that the public worship of God should not be conducted in an unknown tongue. But Romanism says it should, and therefore Romanism contradicts God's word. To the second we have this single answer; Better expend a small amount in every age, in changing some words in the church service, if need be, so as to fully accommodate it to the change of language, than to endanger the salvation of thousands by the constant use of a language they know nothing about. To the third we reply in a quotation from Bishop Burnett, "Finally, they urge the communion of saints, in order to which they think it necessary that priests, wherever they go, may be able to officiate, which they cannot do if every nation worships God in its own language. And this was indeed necessary in those ages in which the See of Rome did, by provisions, and other inventions of the canonists, dispose of the best benefices to their own creatures and servants. That trade would have been spoiled, if stran-

gers might not have been permitted till they had learned the language of the country ; and thus, instead of taking care of the people that ought to be edified by the public worship, provision was made at their cost for such vagrant priests as have been the scandals of the church in all ages, and the reproaches of religion." *Art. xxiv.*

But quite enough has been said to establish the doctrine of our Article, and to show how little foundation there is in either reason or the Bible for the Romish practice of using an unknown language in the services of religion. And enough has been said to excite in our hearts a desire to praise God for the Bible in our own language, and for the abounding privileges of Protestant Christianity.

## ARTICLE XVI.

### OF THE SACRAMENTS.

“ Sacraments, ordained of Christ, are not only badges or tokens of Christian men’s profession ; but rather they are certain signs of grace, and God’s good will toward us, by the which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm their faith in him.

“ There are two Sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord in the gospel ; that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord.

“ Those five commonly called Sacraments, that is to say, confirmation, penance, orders, matrimony, and extreme unction, are not to be accounted for sacraments of the gospel, being such as have partly grown out of the *corrupt* following of the Apostles ; and partly are states of life allowed in the Scriptures, but yet have not the like nature of baptism and the Lord’s Supper, because they have not any visib’le sign, or ceremony ordained of God.

“ The sacraments were not ordained of Christ to be gazed upon or to be carried about ; but that we should daily use them. And in such only as worthily receive the same, they have a wholesome effect or operation ; but they that receive them unworthily, purchase to themselves condemnation, as St. Paul saith, *1 Cor. xi, 29.*”

#### SECTION FIRST.

##### *Definition of a Sacrament.*

1. The Latin word *Sacramentum*, from which the word sacrament is derived, originally signified an oath of fidelity. But as it is now used, it denotes those ordinances of religion by which Christians come under obligations of obedience to God ; hence they are “ not only badges or tokens of Christian men’s profession ; but rather they are certain signs of grace and God’s good will toward us.” There are but two sacraments in the Christian Church, Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. These have full force of obligation and dignity of character, because they have *Divine origin* and express *institution*. This being true, it follows of course, that no

ordinance ought to be observed in the church, as claiming a sacramental character, but such as have been ordained of God. It is his right, and his alone, to institute sacraments, and to confer the blessings which are thereby represented. No rite or institution can deserve the name of a sacrament, unless it be instituted of God.

2. They are "*badges of Christian men's profession,*" by which they are distinguished from Jews, Mohammedans, Heathens and Infidels.

3. "*They are certain signs of grace and God's good will toward us.*" They show God's good will to us by the fact of their institution, as means whereby we may join ourselves to him in solemn obligation to renounce sin, and to be dutiful in his service.

4. They are also the means "*by which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm their faith in him.*" Hence there is in every divinely authorized sacrament two parts; the *sign*, and the *thing signified*. The sign is something sensible and visible; as in baptism, the sign is *water*; and in the Lord's Supper, the signs are *bread* and *wine*. The things signified by these signs, are the benefits of God's grace secured to us by the sacrifice and mediation of Christ.

The Christian sacraments may, therefore, be regarded as signs between God and believers, implying, on the part of God, the gracious tender of salvation, on condition of faith and obedience; and as implying on the part of believers, the free acceptance of salvation on these conditions. Hence, the sacraments are both signs of God's grace, and of the Christian's profession of faith in God. They are so many channels of God's grace to all who use them according to their true import and the directions of their Divine Author.

To this definition I will subjoin that of the Westmin-

ster Divines, "Sacraments are holy signs and seals of the covenant of grace, immediately instituted by God, to represent Christ and his benefits, and to confirm our interests in him; as also to put a visible difference between those that belong unto the church, and the rest of the world; and solemnly to engage them to the service of God in Christ, according to his word." *Conf. of Faith, Chap. xxvii, Sec. 1.* This definition will apply to the two sacraments named in this Article, and to no others. Both of these sacraments were instituted by Christ; Baptism in these words, *Matt. xxviii, 19,* "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

The Lord's Supper was instituted in these words, *1 Cor. xi, 24, 25,* "And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat, this is my body which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also, he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me." These are the words of *institution* in both these ordinances, and they show clearly that Christ, and no other, is their Author. The matter of baptism is *water*, and the matter of the Lord's supper is *bread and wine*. The *form* of baptism is, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;" and the *form* of the Lord's supper is, "This is my body, which is *broken* for you." "This cup is the new testament *in my blood*." Now, none of these essential requisites can be predicated of the "five commonly called sacraments," of the Romish Church, "that is to say, confirmation, penance, orders, matrimony, and extreme unction;" and hence these "are not to be counted sacraments of the gospel."

5. Baptism and the Lord's Supper, as Christian ordi

nances, occupy the same place, and have respect to the same spiritual blessings that circumcision and the passover had in the Old Testament church. Both are *signs* of God's love and mercy to his people, and both are *signs* of the faith of God's people in his words of promise to them. Circumcision was the sign of visible membership in the "household of faith," as well as the ordained means of entrance into the visible church. Baptism is the *sign* of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, either in the subject of baptism himself; or in the parents or sponsors of those who are baptized in infancy. It is also a sign of membership in the visible church of Christ. The passover was a commemorative ordinance, and looked forward to Christ; and its annual celebration greatly increased the faith and love of God's people. The Lord's Supper is eminently commemorative, while it looks forward to Christ as coming the second time "without sin unto salvation." It strengthens and confirms the faith of God's children, and is the means of drawing them into bonds of closer and more perfect union with Christ, their spiritual head, as well as with each other.

6. But while the Sacraments of Christianity are not to be elevated to the dignity of regenerating ordinances, they are, nevertheless, to occupy the highest stand points in the practical operations of the church. No one can be said to be in the visible church without *baptism*; and no member of the visible church can innocently neglect the *Lord's Supper*. "Do this in remembrance of me," has all the force of any other command of God.

"The grace which I to all bequeath  
 In this divine memorial take,  
 And, mindful of your Saviour's death  
 Do this, my followers, for my sake  
 Whose dying love hath left behind  
 Eternal love for all mankind."

## SECTION SECOND.

*The Five Romish Sacraments false.*

These are, “*confirmation, penance, orders, matrimony, and extreme unction.*” We have said these are false, and for the following reasons: They “are not to be counted for sacraments of the gospel, being such as have grown partly out of the corrupt following of the Apostles, and partly are states of life allowed in the Scriptures; but yet have not the like nature of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, because they have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God.” I will now proceed to show that these are false by the word of God and the testimony of the Fathers.

1. *Confirmation* is not a sacrament. In church history it is defined to be a rite whereby a person who has arrived at proper years, or years of discretion, undertakes the performance of every part of his baptismal obligation, either made by himself or his sponsors, at the time of his baptism. This rite finds its principal support in *Acts* viii, 12–17, but especially in *verse* 17, “Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.” In *Chap.* xix, 6, we have this farther proof of what is called confirmation: “And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them.” Now, it appears from this narrative that this was a usual thing at that time, and is recorded here as a matter-of-course transaction. And this seems to have been the universal practice of the primitive church. *Tertullian*, a presbyter of the church at Carthage, in A. D. 200, says: “After this (baptism), *the hand is laid upon us*, with invocation, and invitation of the Holy Spirit.” *Cyprian*, Bishop of Carthage, in A. D. 248, in speaking of the Samaritan converts, says: “That having obtained the legitimate baptism of the church, then,

what was wanting was done by Peter and John, namely, that prayers being made for them, with *laying on of hands*, the Holy Spirit should be invoked and poured upon them; which now also is done among us, those baptized in the church being brought to the Bishops of the church." *Epist 73, Sec. 8.*

This right is still retained by several of the Protestant churches of Europe and America, but without any claim to the impartation of the Holy Spirit, as was the case in the days of the Apostles. Neither of the churches that now practice this rite, claim for it any of the properties or forms of a sacrament, nor did the primitive church fathers, nor did any of the Apostles themselves. All that is claimed for this rite by any Protestant church, and especially by those churches that regularly practice it, is apostolic institution. This being the highest claim, it is therefore regarded by no correct Christian church as a sacrament. It does not answer to any of the essential tests of a sacrament; it was not ordained by Christ himself, and is not, therefore, a sacrament.

But in the face of all these facts, and in the entire absence of anything like *divine institution*, of *matter*, or of *form*, Romanists have elevated this simple rite to the high rank and dignity of a third sacrament. To supply what they assume to be defects in the original order of this rite, they have appointed a mixture of *olive oil* and *balm*, which they call *chrism*: the oil to signify unity, and the balm to signify the savor of a good reputation. So much for the *matter* of this pretended sacrament. The form must be supplied also. This consists in the application of the chrism to the forehead of the subject with the forefinger of the bishop, with these words—Latin, of course—" *Signo te signo et crucis, et confirmo te chrismate alutis, in nomine Patris, Filii, et Spiritus Sancti.*" I sign

thee with the sign of the cross, and confirm thee with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Then follows a priest, or some other person, with some raw cotton, whose business it is to cleanse the forehead from the chrism applied by the Bishop. Then the subject is forever sealed an heir of salvation, as they are given very clearly to understand, both before and after confirmation.

With these facts before us, we may readily see why it is that this Romish sacrament is rejected by this Article of Religion. It is not a "sacrament of the gospel," because it was not ordained of Christ, and "because it has no visible sign, or ceremony ordained of God." This is the fatal end of the first Romish sacrament, when brought to the test of truth, and such must be the end of the other four.

2. *Penance*. This is rather a singular name for a sacrament, but no more singular than the thing itself, as taught and understood by Romanists. But still it is one of the veritable five sacraments, and a very complicated sacrament it is. This must be so in order to give it any claim to the high dignity of a sacrament, or any hold upon the faith, or imagination, if you please, of the faithful. Its name is of course derived from the Latin word *penitentia*. Thus you see it has at least Latin origin, and this is something in its favor. But let us look at the various constituent parts of this sacrament. 1. *Contrition*, or a hearty sorrow for sin, and a firm purpose to sin no more. 2. *Attrition*, a sorrow for sin, but no resolution to forsake sin. 3. *Confession*, which is to accuse one's self of sin, and confess to the priest. 4. *Absolution*, which is the taking away of all sins by the Priest. 5. *Satisfaction*. This is the most singular of all the ingredients in this sacrament. It means, that after sin is all forgiven, still the penitent must do some

more penance. This, as to time and severity, must be decided by the priest. But if he is a kind-hearted and merciful priest, he will commute the penance, if the poor, suffering penitent will *pay him a little money*. But if he should happen to die before the money is paid, he is doomed to the fires of purgatory, and there he must go. Now, it is clear that this is no sacrament from the very nature of the case, and from the fact that it has not the least shadow of warrant as such in the Scriptures. It has neither the outward sign nor ceremony of a sacrament, and therefore it is not a "sacrament of the gospel."

3. *Orders*. Papists claim that the ordination of ministers is a sacrament, founded upon the institution of Christ and his Apostles. This, too, is a complicated sacrament, from the fact that it embraces no less than seven orders of ministers. "The number according to the uniform and universal doctrine of the Catholic Church, is seven—*Porter, Reader, Exorcist, Acolyte, sub Deacon, Deacon, and Priest*." *Cat. Council of Trent*, p 288. It is contended that ordination is a sacrament, because it was instituted by Christ. Now, that ordination, as one of the qualifications of a true gospel minister, was instituted by Christ, none will deny, yet we read of no outward and visible sign appointed by him for this purpose. Christ ordained his Apostles, and gave them authority to ordain others, but neither of them used the same ceremony. Christ *breathed* on his Apostles, but these *laid their hands on those whom they ordained*. Moreover, there is nothing said in the whole of the New Testament that in the least justifies the belief that this was intended to be observed as a sacrament. It is destitute of both the *matter and form* of a sacrament, and if there were no other facts to justify the opposition of our Article, this would be quite sufficient. While ordination was instituted by Christ, and practised

by the Apostles, and while it is commanded as essential to a valid and true succession of ministers in Christ's Church, it has no more the character and necessary requisites of a sacrament, than any other apostolic command or usage; and hence we conclude that ordination, and especially as it is so confounded with error in the Romish Church, is not, in part nor in whole, a sacrament.

4. *Matrimony.* This is another Romish sacrament. Is it not strange that they have such facilities for making, and yet have not the true administration of even one sacrament in their whole church? But to give this pretended sacrament some weight of character, they call it—in Latin of course, because this gives it an unction that the old-fashioned English cannot—“*Hoc est magnum sacramentum*”—the great sacrament. But lest we may be thought to trifle with the sacred institution of marriage, we will freely admit, once for all, that it was “instituted of God in the time of man's innocency,” and that it “is commended of St. Paul to be honorable among all men.” That it was intended to be the safe-guard of virtue, and the guardian of the social interests of society, none will deny; but how it comes to be the great sacrament, is the difficulty. It has neither *matter* nor *form*, nor is it the sign of any inward grace—and how can it be a sacrament? The most that can be said of it is, that it is a “state of life allowed in the Scriptures,” which may or may not be entered into without injury to persons or morals.

But while Romanists claim that matrimony is a sacrament, is it not strange that there is a standing canon against their priests partaking of the blessings of this “*magnum sacramentum*?” And why is it that the various orders of sisterhood do not receive this sacrament?

“Since Jesus freely did appear,  
To grace a marriage feast.”

But is there not a strange and irreconcilable contradiction between Romanism and the Bible on this subject? The boasted head of their church, St. Peter, it seems had a wife, and there is no account whatever of his being separated from her that he might become Bishop of Rome. *Matt.* viii, 14, Jesus “saw his *wife’s* mother laid, and sick of a fever.” St. Paul claimed, in *1 Cor.* ix, 5, to “lead about a sister, a *wife*, as well as the other Apostles.” But again, *1 Tim.* iii, 2, “A bishop must be the husband of one wife.” Now, we are not to understand this as a command to marry, but we are to understand that any bishop has a right to have *one* wife. From this, and many other passages, we understand that not only bishops, but other ministers of God’s word, have a Scripture right to marry.

But the Romish doctrine of the celibacy of the clergy is one of “the doctrines of devils.” *1 Tim.* iv, 1–3. “Now the spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some should depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, *and doctrines of devils*, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron; *forbidding to marry.*” Now, this whole passage applies to Romanism, and clearly shows, among other things, that their doctrine of celibacy of the clergy, is in direct opposition to the word of God, which allows “all to marry, who are able with judgment to give their consent.” “Marriage is honorable in all.” *Heb.* xiii, 4.

5. *Extreme Unction.* Here is still another Romish sacrament, and the last in the list. The reader no doubt is glad of it, and so is the writer. This sacrament is administered by applying oil or other ointments to the dying

man's body, or more properly to the five senses, and hence it is called "extreme unction." It is very evident that this is the most *oily* and *smooth* of all the other Romish sacraments. And to contradict the Bible as much as possible, and to outrage reason as far as they can, they administer it that the sick *may die*, and not that they *may live, or be healed*. Hence they are careful not to administer this *smoothest* of all their sacraments, until they are certain the person will die; then they apply their oil, or other ointments, for the forgiveness of sins. But still the poor man must go into Abraham's bosom by way of purgatory, and suffer in this place of final purgation until all his sins are consumed. Now, one would think that where so much had been done by priests and others, that a dying man, and especially one of the faithful, might have permission to go strait to heaven, if his sins were forgiven by faith in Jesus Christ. But so inconsistent and absurd are all the Romish attempts at creating sacraments, that they are scarcely worthy of a serious notice. They are false in *number*, and false in *nature*—in number, because there are but two genuine sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper; false in nature, because they have none of the Scripture *tests* of a true sacrament, and because they were not instituted by Christ as sacraments, but by designing and corrupt men.

6. But this Article defines the *use* and *effects* of the term sacraments.

*First.* "The sacraments were not ordained of Christ to be gazed upon, or be carried about, but that we should only use them." Nothing is more distinctly taught in the Bible, than the truth that is contained in these words. The elements of the Lord's Supper—the *bread* and the *wine*—when consecrated, are to be received into the communicant's mouth. "Take *eat*," and "*drink* ye all of it."

We eat the bread, and drink the wine,  
But think on nobler things."

No other mention is made of any other use of the consecrated elements, and therefore we conclude that they are not "to be gazed upon, or be carried about."

The *effect* of the sacraments is stated in these words: "And in such only as worthily receive the same, they have a wholesome effect or operation; but they that receive them unworthily, purchase to themselves condemnation, as St. Paul saith, 1 *Cor.* xi, 29." Now, it is plainly implied in this part of the Article, as it is in all the Scripture doctrine pertaining to the sacraments, that the effect of the holy communion is conditional. If the person is worthy, that is, if ye "do truly and earnestly repent of your sins," and if ye "are in love and charity with your neighbors,"—if ye "intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God," and if ye have faith, then ye are a worthy partaker, and then the Lord's Supper will "have a wholesome effect."

This shows plainly enough that there is no intrinsic virtue in the elements of the communion itself, which confers any "wholesome effect or operation," apart from the proper qualification of the communicant himself. Hence it is, that the moral quality of the person determines the effect of the Lord's Supper upon the receiver. 1 *Cor.* xi, 29, "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." To communicate intelligently, there should be a faithful examination of the nature of a sacrament, and a faithful preparation of the heart for this holy service.

If the writer has said a word, or expressed a thought, that will tend to assist any follower of Christ in a better and more distinct understanding of his duty in approaching

the Lord's table, he shall be more than compensated for his labor in preparing the Notes on this Article.

“ The Father gives the Son;  
The Son his flesh and blood,  
**The Spirit seals; and faith puts on**  
**The righteousness of God”**

## ARTICLE XVII.

### OF BAPTISM.

“Baptism is not only a sign of profession, and mark of difference, whereby Christians are distinguished from others that are not baptized; but it is also a sign of regeneration, or the new birth. The baptism of young children is to be retained in the Church.”

#### SECTION FIRST.

##### *Definition.*

1. Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, ordained by Christ as a sign of distinction between Christians and Jews, and Heathens; and designed to be continued in his church to the end of the world. It was instituted in these few words, *Matt. xxviii, 19*, “*Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*” The matter of this ordinance is *water*; the form, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and the thing signified is *regeneration*. If these things are carefully considered, together with the Divine authority of the institution itself, it will be manifest that baptism was originally appointed to be the boundary of visible Christianity, and the mark of distinction between Christian and Heathen nations. As such, it comprehends the Christian doctrines, together with a public profession of faith in these doctrines. It embraces the fundamental doctrine of the Trinity, as its foundation; the expiation of sin by the atonement of Christ, and the regeneration of the soul by the Holy Spirit. In all these doctrinal

aspects, baptism is of the highest importance to the Christian Church; and fitted to impress the greatest truths of the gospel upon the mind in the happiest manner.

But, while it embraces these, and all other necessary Christian doctrines, it likewise embraces *belief* in these doctrines, either by the subject of baptism himself, or upon the part of parents, or others, who may present their children for baptism. At the same time it embraces a profession of this faith.

In this profession of faith, solemn obligations are entered into to “renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the carnal desires of the flesh.” While sin is renounced by this obligation, there is a declaration of belief in the doctrines of the Christian religion, together with a pledge to “keep God’s holy will and commandments,” and walk in them during the whole of our life. Hence it is called a sacrament. Nothing, therefore, can so distinctly draw the boundaries of the Christian Church as baptism. *Gal. iii, 27*, ‘For so many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.’

When the Apostles preached the gospel to all nations, it was to make believers in the Christian doctrines, and to baptize these believers in the use of the prescribed form of Christian baptism, and thus constitute them members of the visible and regularly constituted Christian Church. This was their specified work, and what else did it prove but their right to extend our holy Christianity among both Jews and Gentiles? And what else did the baptism of believers in the Christian doctrine signify, but a “sign of profession and mark of difference,” between these, and the unbelieving Jews and Gentiles? And hence it is,

that circumcision and baptism are precisely of the same import. Circumcision was the sign of difference between the Jews and the Heathen ; and baptism is the sign of difference between the Christian, and both Jews and Heathens. As the Jews constituted one outward and visible church of God, by the outward sign of circumcision, so believers in Christ and his doctrines constitute one outward and visible church of God, by the distinguishing sign of Christian baptism. Hence it is, that the unity of the Christian Church is just as distinct and perfect as was the unity of the Jewish Church, though it is composed of both believing Jews and Gentiles. Such is the scope and spirit of Christianity, that it brings believers of all nations, however distinct their habits of life, or modes of thought, into one body, and into the unity of one faith. Hence the superiority of Christianity to every other system of religion ; and hence, too, its adaptation to the wants of all nations. In nothing did St. Paul rejoice more, than in the power of Christianity to break down all differences of faith and conduct between nations, and to show that all men are equally concerned in the great sacrifice of Christ on the cross. The whole thought is expressed in 1 Cor. xii, 13, “ For by one spirit are we all baptized into *one body*, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free ; and have all been made to drink into the same Spirit.”

2. *Baptism is “ a sign of profession.”* By the term *sign* we may understand either a mark of something that *has taken place*, or of something to be *conferred* at some *future time*. In this Article it is used to denote what has or may take place. Hence it is, that Christian baptism is the sign of the outward profession of Christianity ; and likewise the sign of the inward and particular benefits of God’s grace—as the forgiveness of sins ;

adoption into the family of God ; or the sanctification of the soul by the Holy Spirit.

When an individual makes a profession of faith, baptism is a sign of that profession, as well as of the pledge of fidelity to the church. And if he is not already regenerated, then his baptism is a sign of the benefits of God's grace that may be conferred at some future time. But if he is regenerated when he makes his public profession of Christianity, then baptism is both, and at the same time, the sign of the outward profession, and of the inward benefits of God's Spirit. And hence it is a "sign of regeneration, or the new birth."

3. *Baptism is a "mark of difference whereby Christians are distinguished from others that are not baptized."* To understand fully the meaning of this part of the Article, we must consider the fact, that in all ages, God's people were distinguished from all others, by some mark of religious profession. The Jew was distinguished from the Gentile, by the significant mark or sign of circumcision. This was the ordained token of his covenant relation to God ; and by this he was brought into public church fellowship with the people of God, and was thus distinguished from the Gentile who had no visible connection with the true worshippers of God.

But the "mark of difference" is changed so as to suit the more simple and spiritual nature of the gospel church ; so that, in place of circumcision, as the "mark of difference," we have the ordained sacrament of baptism. This is a "mark of difference" in *itself*, and it is a "mark of difference in the *effect* that it produces. The baptismal engagement involves the vouchsafement of God's grace to the subject ; and it involves repentance, faith, and obedience, with a hearty forsaking of sin, a

steadfast belief in the promises of God, and a sincere purpose of heart to lead a new life.

This "mark of difference" is still more clear, when we consider what Christ has said both of faith and baptism, in *Mark* xvi, 16, "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved, but he that believeth not, shall be damned." Here faith and baptism are joined together; *faith* as the instrument in the great work of justification, and *baptism* as the *sign* of regeneration, by God's Spirit operating on the heart.

"Baptized into thy name,  
 Mysterious One in Three,  
 Our souls and bodies claim,  
 A sacrifice to thee;  
 And let us live one faith to prove,  
 The faith which works by humble love."

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## SECTION SECOND.

### *Subjects of Baptism.*

1. "The baptism of young children is to be continued in the church." But before this question is examined, it may be proper to show that *adult believers* and penitents are proper subjects of baptism.

*First.* Adult believers. That this ordinance is to be administered to all adult persons who profess faith in Christ, and who have not been baptized, is admitted by all who acknowledge the Divine authority of this institution. But what is meant by a believer? There are two classes of persons entitled to this name. 1. Those who consent to the truth and obligations of the Christian system, but who are not penitent, and have no desire to engage in the service of God. Such believers, of course, are not justly entitled to, nor are they proper subjects of

Christian baptism. 2. Those who not only acknowledge the obligations of Christianity, but who heartily receive and rest upon Jesus Christ alone for salvation, as offered by God in the gospel. These are proper subjects of baptism. 3. But penitent believers are proper subjects of baptism. By these we intend such as believe the doctrines of Christianity, and are heartily sorry for their sins, and are seeking favor and peace with God, and wish to make a profession of their faith in Christ, by taking upon them the obligations of Christian baptism.

For this we think there is sufficient authority in the Bible. When Peter was preaching, on the day of Pentecost, as it said in *Acts* ii, 37, 38, the people who heard him "were pricked in their hearts," and said, "Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost." Now, these persons were penitent; their hearts had been penetrated by the truth, and they were penitently inquiring what they should do. They had not yet been pardoned, and the Apostle directed them at once, to repent and be baptized for the remission of their sins, with the subjoined promise that they should receive the Holy Ghost. This passage clearly warrants the administration of baptism to penitent inquirers after salvation. But I will notice one other proof of this duty of the church. It is the case of Saul of Tarsus. When Ananias came to him, he found him blind, fasting and praying for three days, in a state of deep penitence, and not knowing what to do. While in this state of penitence, he was directed to "Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord Jesus." *Acts* xxii, 16. Now, in both these cases, the penitent seeker of pardon is recognized; and

in both these cases the penitents were directed to be baptized as a means and seal of their pardon.

“ And thus our sense assists our faith,  
And shows us what the gospel means ”

2. Young Children are proper subjects of baptism. To the truth of this proposition, we have the concurrent testimony of the *Heidleburg Catechism*, and the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. In the catechism, *Ques. 74*, “ Are infants also to be baptized ? *Ans.* Yes, for since they, as well as the adult are included in the covenant and church of God ; and since the redemption from sin by the blood of Christ and the Holy Ghost, the author of faith, is promised to them no less than to the adult ; they must, therefore, by baptism as a sign of the covenant, be also admitted into the Christian Church, and be distinguished from the children of infidels ; as was done in the Old Covenant or Testament, by circumcision, instead of which baptism was instituted in the New Covenant.”

In the *Westminster Con. of Faith, Chap. xxviii, Sec. 4*, “ Not only those that do actually profess faith in and obedience unto Christ, but also the infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptized.” These two Articles take high ground in favor of infant baptism, but no higher than they are entitled to by the uniform practice of the church in all ages. Infants were admitted into the visible church, under the rigorous covenant of the law, by circumcision ; and they are capable of admission into the same church of God, under the covenant of grace, by Christian baptism.

But to see more fully the strict propriety of the practice of infant baptism, and the ground upon which it stands, I will remark, 1. *That the Church of Christ has been substan-*

tially the same in all ages of the world. This cannot be doubted, if we carefully consider the nature of the covenant which God made with Abraham, of which circumcision was the sign. It was a covenant of perpetual *duration*, and of perpetual *obligation*. It is usually called the *covenant of grace*. It is in these words, in *Gen. xvii, 7*, "I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations for an everlasting covenant; to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." The token of this covenant was circumcision. *Verse 11*, "And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you." The infant children of Abraham were admitted into this covenant, and had the same token of the covenant placed upon them. *Verse 12*, "And he that is *eight days old* among you shall be circumcised, every male child in your generations."

This covenant embraced *two* things, having special reference to the spiritual state of Abraham, and his generations forever.

*First.* God promised to be their God. This implied more than temporal blessings. With these, it implied higher and spiritual blessings. *2 Cor. vi, 16*, "As God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." The expressions, "I will be their God," "and dwell in them," are indicative of spiritual union between God and his children, and are so used throughout the Scriptures.

*Second.* This covenant is called by St. Paul, the covenant of promise, because God said to Abraham, in *Gen. xxii, 18*, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast heard my voice." It did not, therefore, contemplate blessings to Abraham and his seed only. It had a much wider scope, even blessings in

the posterity of Abraham, *for all the nations of the earth*. But by what part of his posterity, and how, shall all the nations be blessed? To this question we record the answer of St. Paul, *Gal. iii, 16*, "He saith not, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." Now, that Christ is of the seed of Abraham, none will doubt; and that Christ is a blessing to all nations, none will doubt. Hence it is, that the same spiritual blessings which came upon Abraham, because of his faith and covenant relation to God, are dispensed to all who receive Christ by faith, as did faithful Abraham. "They which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham," and the same are the children of Abraham," *verse 7*. This, of itself, is quite sufficient to prove that the church has ever been the same; founded upon the one and the same covenant.

But the covenant with Abraham, as is very evident, looked to some future manifestation, as the fulfillment of the promise. That future manifestation was Christ. It is obvious, then, that Christ was the object of Abraham's faith; and that by faith in Christ he was justified. But Abraham looked to Christ as to come. This is very true, but it did not change the nature and influence of his faith; for it is said, he was justified by faith in the same sense that believers are now justified. The only difference between Abraham and the Christian, is in the circumstances; the one was *before* Christ came into the world, and the other was *after*. Both are justified by faith in the same Christ, and therefore the Church, in its great sections, *before* and *after* Christ, is one and the same church. There was no change in the spiritual import of this covenant, not even by the giving of the law. St. Paul affirms in *Gal. iii, 17*, "That the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was

four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect." Now, Christ did not come till nineteen hundred and eleven years after this covenant of promise was made with Abraham. In the mean time, the law was given four hundred and thirty years after this covenant, and fourteen hundred and eighty one years before the promise to Abraham could be fulfilled. It is evident, therefore, that the law given on Mount Sinai did not annul the covenant with Abraham. The covenant still stands in full force ; no intermediate transaction before Christ came could affect it, and Christ did not set aside its spiritual purport and obligations, and therefore, it still stands as an everlasting covenant.

This establishes the fact, that but one covenant has existed as the basis of the visible church in all ages. The covenant of the church under the former dispensation, was the covenant with Abraham, and in its spiritual and fuller import, it is the covenant of the church now. This is established beyond a doubt by St. Paul, in *Gal.* iii, 27, 28, " For as many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ, There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female ; *for ye are all one in Christ.*"

3. But the identity of the Jewish and Christian church is made still more distinct by some New Testament illustrations, as the Parable of the Vineyard, in *Matt.* xxi, 33-43. Here, the vineyard evidently represents the church, with all its holy privileges, both before and after the coming of Christ. The first-named husbandmen were the Jews, who were destroyed for their wicked treatment of Christ, who came as the heir, to receive fruit from the vineyard. The second-named husbandmen were the believing Gentiles. To these the vineyard was

“let out,” that they might render fruit to the owner in proper season. Two sets of husbandmen are spoken of, but there is but one vineyard. This we regard as a conclusive illustration of the identity of the church.

The same truth is expressed when Christ represents the church under the figure of a sheepfold, *John x.* Here, Christ calls himself the good Shepherd, and gives to the Jews, the original members of this church, this distinct and conclusive information; “And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring in, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one Shepherd.” Before the coming of Christ, the Gentiles were called “*aliens and strangers,*” but after the coming of Christ, they were called into the vineyard; into the fold; and now they are “fellow-citizens with the saints and household of God.” Both are reconciled unto God, in “*one body,*” and are “built on the foundation of the *Apostles and Prophets,* Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.” These considerations show very clearly, that, while the church has been operating under two dispensations, it has been one and the same church, based upon one and the same covenant. And this covenant is essentially the gospel covenant. *Gal. iii. 8,* “The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel to Abraham.” And, speaking of the Jews, St. Paul further says, *Heb. iv. 2,* “For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them.” It follows from the foregoing that the church has been the same in all ages, and differing only in circumstances. The difference is chiefly in this. The Jewish church was limited to the Jewish nation, and its covenant was signified by *Circumcision,* and the *Passover;* whereas, in the Christian church, the Gentiles were incorporated with the Jews, so that both became one body,

and the same covenant that was made with Abraham, was signified by *Baptism*, and the *Lord's Supper*.

It is no offset to this argument, to say that the church now is not the same that it was in the days of Abraham, because it is called by another name. This change of the name of the church was foretold by the prophet. *Is.* lxii, 2, "And thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name." This prophecy was fulfilled at Antioch. *Acts* xi, 26, "And the disciples were called *Christians* first at Antioch." The name is appropriate because it recognizes all believers as followers of Christ, of whatever nation they may be. And this of itself might satisfy any one of the unity of the church in both dispensations.

These remarks suggest the following conclusions. *First.* That the covenant that God made with Abraham and his posterity, was the *covenant of grace* that was to be continued in full force through all coming time. *Second.* That the Jewish church being constituted according to the principles and provisions of the covenant of grace, was essentially the same as the Christian Church.

4. This opens the way for another important proposition. Children were included in the covenant made with Abraham, and received circumcision as the sign of that covenant relation, and as this covenant has never been abrogated or changed, therefore children are still included in this covenant, and have a right to its Christian sign, and its blessings.

Upon the first member of this proposition, there can be but little, if any controversy. God said to Abraham, *Gen.* xvii, 7, "I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and thy seed

*unto thee.*" That the infant offspring of Abraham received the sign of the covenant, *see verse 12*, "And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you." This sign was continued in the Jewish church until John the Baptist, and Christ. John was circumcised on the eighth day. *Luke i, 59*, "And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child." Christ was circumcised on the eighth day, *Chap. ii, 21*, "And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called Jesus." It is worthy of remark, that in both of these cases, names were given to the children; one was called *John*, and the other was called *Jesus*.

That children are still included in the covenant of grace, is susceptible of clear Scripture proof; as *Acts. ii, 39*, "For the promise is unto you and your *children*, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." In this passage, the covenant relation of infants is clearly recognized; not only the children of Jewish parents, but the children of as many Gentiles "as the Lord our God shall call." This, too, fully accords with what has been said concerning the unity of the church. The "olive tree" has not been destroyed; the natural branches only are broken off, and the believing Gentiles grafted in. These "partake of the root and fatness of the olive tree," and of course, they have the right of placing their infant children in a covenant relation with God, as well as with the believing Jews, or the natural branches that have not been cut off. But it is expressly said that children are members of the visible church, in *Mark x, 14*, "For of such is the *kingdom of heaven.*" The phrase, "kingdom of heaven," means the church of Christ, or the visible community of God's people, constituted according to the principles of the gospel.

Now, Christ assigns the fact that they belonged to the "kingdom of heaven," or the church, as the reason for his displeasure with his disciples for rebuking those that "brought little children to him," and also for the command, "Suffer them to come unto me, and forbid them not."

But again, Christ presented these little children as *patterns* of purity to all who might, at any time, enter into this "kingdom of heaven." And this, of itself, goes to show that infant children are members of the church under the gospel, as they were members of the church under the law. This passage teaches this common sense fact; as little children are declared by Christ to belong to the Church of God, and as baptism is the ordinance of visible induction into, and the seal of its blessings, they have a right to the blessings and benefits of the covenant, and none should forbid the exercise of that right.

But once more; it is nowhere said that the original right of infants to membership in the church, is taken away or disannulled. This, no doubt would have been done, if there had been any change in the covenant. In the absence, therefore, of anything against the right of infants to membership in the Church of Christ, and in view of the fact that Christ declared them to be *in the church*, we here conclude, with the solemn conviction that they have a right to the *sign*, and the blessings of the covenant of grace. They should be baptized. This we believe to be the will of God, and the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures.

5. Infant baptism has been practiced in the church from the days of the Apostles to the present time.

If so, then baptism must have taken the place of the old Jewish token of the covenant. To see the truth of what is here alleged, we have but to examine the commis-

sion given to the disciples, in *Matt.* xxviii, 19. Here baptism takes the place of circumcision, by the express appointment of God. The disciples were, therefore, authorized to extend the right of baptism to all who believed in Christ, everywhere, and also to their children.

“ Jesus, kind, inviting Lord,  
We with joy obey thy word,  
And in earliest infancy  
Bring our little ones to thee.”

But to see the truth of our proposition, in the light of the history of the church, we must consult the testimony of the early Christian *Fathers*. The first that we shall name is *Origin*, who flourished about A. D. 300. He says, “ Infants are baptized for the remission of sins ;” and again, he says, “ The church hath received the tradition from the Apostles, that baptism ought to be administered to infants.” *Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage*, who was contemporary with *Origin*, says, that “ Sixty-six Bishops, being convened in Carthage, in a council, having the question referred to them, ‘ *Whether infants might be baptized before they were eight days old ;*’ unanimously decided, that *no infant is to be forbidden from the benefit of baptism, although but just born.*” Mark this testimony of *sixty-six bishops*. It ought to go very far in settling the question of the right of infants to baptism, and especially when it was given in so short a time after the Apostles, and when every practice in the church was proved by Apostolic usage. *Gregory Nazeanzan*, who died A. D. 389, testifies, in his discourse on baptism, “ That infants are to be baptized.” In the fifth council of Carthage, held A. D. 401, it is declared in canon 72, “ *that children ought to be baptized, when there is no proof nor testimony that they have been already baptized.*” And *St.*

*Augustine*, who flourished A. D. 410, says, "*Infant baptism the whole world practices*; it was not instituted by councils, but was *ever in use*." Thus we see, that certainly for four hundred years after Christ, there was a universal consent that infant baptism should be practiced. No one denied their right to this ordinance. True, *Tertullian* advises the delay of infant baptism, but this was because of his peculiar notion of baptismal regeneration. And there was one *Gregory* who practiced such delay in the baptism of his own children; but there was no society of men nor church, that entertained any doubt as to the propriety of infant baptism.

*Dr. Wall* says, in *Hist. of Inf. Bap.*, that for "700 years after this," making in all 1100 years, there is not so much as one man to be found, who either spoke for, or practiced such delay, but all to the contrary;" *Tertullian* and *Gregory* alone excepted. He further says; "And when about the year 1130, one sect among the *Waldenses* declared against the baptism of infants, as incapable of salvation, the main body of their opinion was in favor of it." This sect soon disappeared, and the church was at peace upon this subject, "until the rising of the German Antipedo baptists, or baptists, in the year 1522." The next society called baptists, that greatly disturbed the peace and quiet of the church by their opposition to the practice of infant baptism, was formed in England, in 1640. And the first that was formed on the continent of America, was in 1638. This latter Society was originated and organized by one Roger Williams, who was once a Presbyterian. But, becoming somewhat restless and disaffected, he called upon one Ezekiel Holliman, a layman, and who had not been immersed himself, to administer baptism to him by immersion. Then Mr. Williams immersed Mr. Holliman, and ten others, and

thus was constituted the first society of antipedo baptists in America. *Knowles Mem. of Williams.*

From what we have seen of the practice of the church since the days of the Apostles, as proved by the foregoing testimony of the Fathers, we see why it is that, "the baptism of young children is to be retained in the church." It is because they are included in the covenant of grace; because Christ, by express command, has changed the sign of this covenant from circumcision to baptism; and because baptism has been administered to infants in every age of the church, from the Apostles to the present time.

"How large the promise, how divine,  
To Abraham and his seed"

6. If the right of infants to a part in the covenant of grace has been established, and we believe it has, we can easily see how strong is the obligation upon Christian parents to dedicate their children to God, and the church by baptism, at an early period of their life. The command given to Abraham to circumcise his children at eight days old, was imperative. He dared not to neglect it, but willingly and gladly set upon them the sign of the covenant that God had made with him, and all his posterity. He rejoiced to have his children with him in the visible church of God. How, then, can Christian parents, who profess to be the children of God by faith, and to be enjoying the blessings and benefits of the covenant of God with Abraham, refuse to submit their children, by baptism, to the same covenant benefits? They cannot, and at the same time be innocent; nor can they neglect the proper baptismal instruction of their children, without endangering their own happiness, if not the morals and eternal welfare of those whom they "should train up in the way they should go." If they neglect this in order

to afford their children, at a more mature age, an opportunity of selecting the *mode*, they need not be surprised, if they never make choice of any mode. Indeed, there are so many fearful demonstrations of the great evil of this unscriptural neglect, that we wonder why parents have not long ago repented of it, in dust and ashes. Trace to its origin, the reason why more of our children are not in the church with us, and it is usually found in this neglect of infant baptism, and proper baptismal instruction.

Let all Christian parents closely follow the example of faithful Abraham; let them dedicate their children to God and the church, in baptism, and not give themselves so much injurious perplexity as to the particular *mode*; and let them not forget that God holds them responsible for the manner in which they educate their children, and especially for the manner in which they are taught and trained in the doctrines and practice of our holy Christianity.

“ With flowing tears and thankful hearts,  
 We give them up to thee;  
 Receive them, Lord, into thine arms  
 Thine may they ever be.

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### SECTION THIRD.

#### *Baptism not Regeneration.*

1. In this Article, baptism is said to be a “*sign of regeneration*,” and if a sign, it is not regeneration, for that is the thing signified by the sign. The sign, therefore, and that which is signified, are two separate and distinct things. Any one of these may exist without the other.

But to all of this the Romanist objects. He says, “The effect of this sacrament is the *remission of all original and actual guilt*, also of all punishment which is owed

for any guilt," and, "Whosoever shall affirm that baptism is indifferent, that is, not necessary to salvation, let him be accursed." *Counc. of Trent*. "Baptism is a sacrament instituted by Christ the Lord, in which, through the external ablution of the body, with the invocation of the most Holy Trinity, a person is spiritually regenerated," *Den's Theology*.

This Romish error is held by the modern sect called *Campbellites*. Mr. Campbell, who is the founder of this heretical sect, says, in his debate with *M'Calla*, that God "appointed baptism to be to every one that believed the record he has given of his Son, a formal pledge, on his part, of that believer's *personal acquittal or pardon*; so significant and so expressive, that when the baptized believer rises out of the water, *is born of water, enters the world a second time*, he enters it *as innocent, as clean, as unspotted as an angel*. His *conscience is purged from guilt*, his body is washed with pure water, even the washing of regeneration." The above words are not to be mistaken, and orthodox Christians are not to be blamed if they vigorously oppose these errors.

The passages of Scripture that are chiefly relied upon in support of this doctrine, are, *Mark xvi, 16, John iii, 5, and Titus iii, 5*. Mark says, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned." The first part of this passage seems to support this doctrine, but the last part fully refutes it. *Belief* is made the instrument of salvation, and not baptism. He that *believes* shall be saved. And he that believes not, whether baptized or not, shall be damned. Now, this could not be true, if baptism were regeneration. Faith is the instrument of regeneration, and not baptism. Hence this passage proves nothing for the advocates of baptismal regeneration. John says, "except

a man be born of water, and of the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." The uniform teaching of the New Testament is, that regeneration is the peculiar work of the Holy Spirit, and this passage teaches the very same doctrine. Regeneration, by this Divine agent, is the great and essential qualification for the kingdom of God, and baptism, with water, is the ordained sign and seal of this qualification. This passage, therefore, does not teach baptismal regeneration.

Titus contains this record; "According to his mercy, he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." If baptism is denoted in this passage by the words, "washing of regeneration," it is used as the symbol of the inward work, called "the renewing of the Holy Ghost." It is clear then, that this passage does not teach baptismal regeneration.

2. Baptismal regeneration is not taught in the Scriptures. Adults are uniformly required to *believe* before they are baptized. "He that *believeth* and is baptized, shall be saved." Faith in Christ, therefore, and not baptism, is the instrument of justification; *Rom. v, 1*, "Therefore being *justified by faith*, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." When the Ethiopian Eunuch desired baptism, Philip replied, "If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest."

3. The Scriptures testify that baptism is not the instrument of regeneration. *1 Pet. iii, 31*, "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth now save us; not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God." This passage *seems* to prove "that baptism doth now save us" yet this is not the teaching of the text, for it is expressly said that we are not saved by "the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God." But

again, 1 *Cor.* i, 14-17, "I thank God that I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius." "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel." Now, if the doctrine of baptismal regeneration be true, then St. Paul thanked God that none of the Corinthians were regenerated, but Crispus and Gaius. Only these two in all the Corinthian church were regenerated, for Paul baptized no others except "the household of Stephanus." He assigns two reasons for this, 1. "Lest any should say that I baptized in mine own name," *verse* 15. 2. "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel," *verse* 17. Now, if baptism be essential to regeneration, as some men suppose, St. Paul must have cared but little whether the Corinthians were regenerated or not. If baptism is in fact regeneration, then St. Paul thanked God that he regenerated none of the Corinthians. And he must have contradicted the whole purpose of his commission to the Gentiles, for he was sent to them, *Acts* xxvi, 18, "To open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of satan unto God, that they might receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me." But this he did not do; he was sent to preach the gospel, as the great instrument of turning the Gentiles "from the power of satan unto God," and *faith in Christ* through the gospel, as the means of their sanctification. Where, then, is the doctrine of baptismal regeneration?

4. This doctrine is contradicted by observation and experience, as well as by the Scriptures. Persons who have been baptized by regular and pious ministers, even by the Apostles, have, by their lives, proved themselves to be unregenerate. Simon Magus, though baptized, was "in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." St. Paul, speaking of some who had made

shipwreck of faith, says, "Of whom is Hymenius and Alexander, whom I have delivered unto satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme." With these might be named Philetus, Phygellus, and Hermogenes, together with those gross and wicked transgressors in the seven churches of Asia. Every succeeding age of the church has borne ample testimony to this lamentable truth. Great numbers are found, even now, in every Church in Christendom, who prove by their daily immoralities, though some of them may have been *baptized twice or thrice*, that they are still in their sins.

Experience, too, proves that baptism is not regeneration, though the baptism may have been performed by the submersion of the whole body. How many are there, who *know* that they came "up out of the water" as vile as before "they went down into the water?" And what a rebuke is this to the advocates of baptismal regeneration, and to those who deny the agency of the Holy Ghost in the great work of regeneration? May not the church pray that this evil and dangerous error may be banished from the world, and that its advocates be truly converted to God? It is faith and the Holy Ghost that justifies and sanctifies the soul, and not baptism.

" But the righteousness of faith  
 Hath taught me better things ;—  
 Inward turn thine eyes,—it saith,  
 While Christ to me it brings ;—  
 Christ is ready to impart  
 Life to all, for life who sigh ;  
 In thy mouth, and in thy heart  
 The word is ever nigh."

## ARTICLE XVIII. OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

“The Supper of the Lord, is not only a sign of the love that Christian's ought to have among themselves, one to another, but rather is a sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death ; inso-much that, to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith, receive the same ; the bread which we break is a partaking of the body of Christ : and likewise, the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ.

“Transubstantiation, or the change of the substance of bread and wine in the Supper of the Lord, cannot be proved by holy writ, but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions.

“The body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten in the Supper, only after a Heavenly and spiritual manner. And the means, whereby, the body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper, is faith.

“The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not by Christ's ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshipped.”

### SECTION FIRST.

#### *Definition.*

1 This institution evidently takes the place of the Passover. The parallel between them is so close, and so clear, that we cannot doubt the substitution of the one for the other. And besides this, there is no evidence that the Passover was ever celebrated by the Apostles, or early Christians, after the institution of the Lord's Supper. This, of itself, is sufficient evidence that this institution takes the place of the Passover, and that the one answers to all the important purposes of the other. The materials of this sacrament were taken from the materials of the Passover. After Christ had celebrated this ancient festi-

val for the last time, with his disciples, he took of the bread and wine that remained, and set them apart by solemn consecration, for this new, and more simple sacramental feast. And thus, he adapted this ordinance to the more simple and spiritual operations of Christianity.

But let us notice, more particularly, some of the circumstances that are common to both the Passover and the Lord's Supper.

1. The Passover was *appointed* of God, and so was the Lord's Supper. *Ex.* xii. 3-28, and *Matt.* xxvi. 27. 2. The Passover was a *memorial* of deliverance from temporal bondage; and the Lord's Supper is a *memorial* of deliverance from spiritual bondage. 3. The Passover *prefigured* the death of Christ before it took place; and the Lord's Supper *represents* that death now past. 4. As no person could partake of the Passover before he was circumcised; so, no one should come to the Lord's Supper before he has received baptism. 5. As the Passover was to continue until Christ came, so, the Lord's Supper is to continue until Christ come the second time, "without sin unto salvation." 6. The neglect of the Passover subjected the person to be cut off from Israel; so, the neglect of the Lord's Supper necessarily excludes every man who indulges this sin, from the benefits of Christ's death.

2. The Lord's Supper is known by various names, each indicating some important quality, or purpose of the ordinance itself. It is called the *Eucharist*; the *Lord's Supper*; the *Communion*; the *Sacrament*. The term Eucharist, means the giving of thanks. *Luke*, xxii, 17, "And he took bread and gave thanks." *Matt.* xxvi, 27, "And he took the cup and gave thanks." It is called the Lord's Supper, because he instituted it the same night in which he was betrayed. *1 Cor.* xi, 23-25, "The Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took

bread. And when he had given thanks, he break it, and said : Take, eat, this is my body, which is broken for you : This, do ye in remembrance of me. After the same manner, also, he took the cup, when he had supped, saying : This cup is the New Testament in my blood ; This, do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me." And in verse 20, it is expressly called the " Lord's Supper." It is called the communion, 1 *Cor.* x, 16, " The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ ?" And it is called the sacrament, because he, who comes to this ordinance in a proper manner, binds himself to God by the most sacred vow, to live according to the rules of Christian life.

3. It is a commemorative ordinance. This is clear from the very nature of the institution, as a substitute for the Passover. The Passover was celebrated annually for the purpose of commemorating the wonderful deliverance of the Israelites from their bondage in Egypt, *Ex.* xii, 14-27. This kept them in the remembrance, not only of the historic fact of their deliverance, but of the mercy and love of God in the vouchsafement of that deliverance. The Lord's Supper is celebrated " as oft as ye do it," for the much higher purpose of commemorating the redemption of the world from the bondage of sin, by the one offering of Jesus Christ on the cross. And those who worthily receive this ordinance, keep in remembrance this great fact, and by so doing, they acknowledge the vicarious, and propitiatory nature of Christ's death. They show forth his death, not only as an event in the history of the world, but as the perfect and final sacrifice for sin, the benefits of which are to be received by faith. " This do in remembrance of me," has all the force of a command,

while it sufficiently proves the commemorative character of this ordinance. That these words do refer to the death of Christ, is evident from his own words. "This is my body which is broken for you." "This cup is the New Testament in my blood."

4. This ordinance is designed to "show the Lord's death till he come." As the Passover directed the mind of the Jew to Christ as the great antitype of the Pascal Lamb; so the Lord's Supper directs the mind of the Christian to the great fact that Christ will come the *second* time, "without sin unto salvation." And hence, it is that believers not only publish the doctrine of Christ's sacrificial death, as often as they partake of the Lord's Supper, but they proclaim their unwavering faith in Christ, and their entire confidence that he will "descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God." This important purpose of the Lord's Supper should never be forgotten; for no consideration can furnish Christians with greater consolation than this; nor can consolation be furnished in a more impressive manner. While they are at this sacramental feast, they can experience their right to a better inheritance, and they can exclaim, "who is he that cometh?" and they can hear the answer, "It is Christ."

5. The obligations to observe this Institution are peculiarly sacred. "Do this as oft as ye shall do it, in remembrance of me," is a command of the God-man. And besides this, it connects believers, by an unbroken chain of witnesses—by an unbroken chain of obligation, and by the sacred ties of truth, with the disciples when they were at the last pascal supper with Christ. It connects them with the weeping spectators who looked upon the cross and the suffering Redeemer.

In this ennobling Christian ordinance, we have a living

symbol transmitting the facts of its institution, and the fact of the sacrifice of Christ, from witness to witness, from the Apostles to the present time. And thus it is, that while the Lord's Supper is to be observed in memory of Christ, and his death, and while it is to be observed as a pledge to the church, that Christ will come and take her up to himself; it is at the same time, a standing witness to the truth, the necessity, and the divine origin of our holy Christianity.

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SECTION SECOND.

*The use of the Lord's Supper.*

1. The covenant that God made with Abraham, that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed, was fully ratified by the blood of Christ being shed for the sins of the whole world. The blood of Christ is, therefore, called by St. Paul, in *Heb. xiii, 20*, "The blood of the everlasting covenant." Hence, the Lord's Supper is a visible *sign* and *seal* upon the part of God who made the covenant with Abraham, that it was established in, and ratified by the sacrifice of Christ, once offered for the sins of the whole world.

1. *It is a sign.* As such it shows. 1. *The love of God to the world,* *John, iii, 16.* "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." 2. *The love of Christ,* *1 Pet. iii, 18,* "For Christ has also suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." 3. *The nature of Christ's suffering,* *Phil. ii, 8,* He "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." 4. *The vicarious and sacrificial character of that death,* *Rom. v, 6,* "In due time Christ

died for the ungodly," and *Heb. ix*, 26, "But now, once in the end of the world, he hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

2. *It is a seal.* It is a constant assurance from God, that the covenant of redemption is still in full force, and that it shall continue in full force to the end of the world. God keeps this sign and seal before the church, and as often as believers communicate, they receive spiritual food, and an increase of living faith.

" We see the blood that seals our peace ;  
Thy pard'ning mercy we receive ;  
The bread doth vicibly express,  
The strength through which our spirits live."

2. But a still farther use of this ordinance is expressed in this Article. "The Supper of the Lord, is not only a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves, one for another, but rather is a sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death; insomuch that to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith, receive the same, the bread which we break, is a partaking of the body of Christ; and likewise, the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ."

1. *It is a sign of Christian love.* None are invited to this holy feast but such as "are in love and charity with their neighbors." All others are excluded, so that discord may be banished from all the house of God. Christians are represented as a family; and at the Lord's table they profess to be of one faith, and to have the same hope and assurance of immortality. Hence St. Paul says, in *1 Cor. x*, 17, "For we being many are one bread, and one body; for we are partakers of that one bread." Love must be cherished by every follower of Christ. *Rom.* xii, 10, "Be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love." *Eph.* v, 2, "Walk in love." *1 Thess.* iv,

9, "For ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another." *Heb. xiii, 1*, "Let brotherly love continue." *1 Pet. ii, 17*, "Love the brotherhood." These and other passages encourage the Christian to brotherly love; and when Christians sit down together at the Lord's table, they thereby give a pledge to the world, and to each other, that they are in love and fellowship one with the other.

"Then shall the world, admiring, view  
The gather'd flock at rest,  
And own the Son divinely true,  
The saints divinely blest."

2. *It "is a sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death."* That is, it is a pledge upon the part of God, that man is redeemed by the one offering of Christ; and it is a solemn pledge upon the part of the believer to engage in all the duties and obligations of a Christian life. Persons may come under engagements by performing certain significant actions, as well as by words, so that the Christian, in partaking of the Lord's Supper, brings himself under solemn obligations to serve God all the days of his life. In this solemn act, all Christians acknowledge that they are not their own, but are bought with the blood of Christ. And in this sacramental act, they bind themselves to glorify God in their bodies and spirits which are his.

3. *How this sacrament is to be received.* Three qualifications are named in this Article,—"*Rightly*," "*Worthily*," and with "*Faith*."

. *Rightly.* This refers to the proper administration of this ordinance. In order to this, there must be a regularly ordained minister, whose duty it is to consecrate, in due form, the elements of bread and wine, and thereby set them apart from a common to a holy use. But by this it is not pretended that any real change is made in

the substance or nature of these elements. The change is only relative, so that they are not to be looked upon as common bread and wine, but as the sacred symbols of Christ's body and blood. Then the minister is to *take* and *break* the bread, which is to represent the breaking of the body of Christ under the weight of our sins. He is farther, to *take* the cup, and *pour out* the wine, which is to represent the shedding of the blood of Christ. Then he is to distribute these consecrated elements to the communicants, saying, "Take, eat ; this is my body which was broken for you. Eat ye all of it." And when he shall have given the cup, he shall say, "This is my blood which was shed for you. Drink ye all of it." The authority for all of this is the example of Christ and the record of the evangelists.

2. *Worthily.* This refers to the qualifications of the communicant. The first that we name here is Baptism. That this is an indispensable qualification, may be learned from the law of the Passover. No one was admitted to that ordinance before he was circumcised. *Ex. xii, 43*, "There shall no stranger eat thereof." By stranger is evidently intended one who has not been brought into the visible church by circumcision. But this is made still more definite by *verse 43*, "For no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof." But on the other hand, *verse 44*, "Every man's servant that is bought with money, when thou hast circumcised him, then shall he eat thereof." This settles the question of qualification for the observance of the Passover.

The same law was observed by the Apostles. *Acts ii, 41, 42*, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized ; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the Apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in

breaking of bread, and in prayers." The preaching of Peter, on the occasion named in this chapter, produced the conviction that Jesus Christ, whom the Jews had crucified, was the Saviour of sinners. And those who "were pricked in their hearts" on account of their sins, were baptized "in the name of Christ for the remission of sins." This act excluded all those believing Jews from the fellowship of the Jewish Church; but it immediately introduced them into the fellowship of the Christian Church. Here, it is said, "they continued steadfastly in the Apostle's doctrine," and in all the other duties of their Christian profession. Among these were Christian Church fellowship, and "breaking of bread," in commemoration of Christ and his death upon the cross. The Christians of Corinth were addressed by St. Paul as communicants, and as it is everywhere assumed that Baptism is the first and indispensable qualification for the Lord's Supper, we have good reason to believe that no others are qualified.

The nature of these two ordinances teaches most clearly that Baptism must necessarily precede the Lord's Supper. In the first, the believer avows himself a disciple of Christ, and by Baptism he enters through the ordained and only proper door into the visible church. The second is the ordained church feast, by which believers are strengthened in their faith, and by which there is a direct expression of love to Christ, and a public renewal of membership in the family of God on earth. And thus is exhibited the natural relation there is between the one and the other;—Baptism involves an *engagement* to be the Lord's; and Christians, in partaking of the Lord's Supper, *renew* that engagement.

The second qualification that we name here, respects the *moral character* of communicants. It is universally agreed, that all who are truly regenerated have the requi-

site qualification for, and are entitled to, the benefits of the Lord's Supper.

But there is another interesting class of persons found in almost every branch of the church, that may be called *penitent believers*. What shall the church do with these? They are earnestly seeking redemption, and we hesitate not to avow, that these are entitled to a place at the holy communion. They are brought within the care of the church by their baptism; they are recognized as members of the visible church, believing all her doctrines, and living in conformity to the rules and laws of the visible church, while they profess to be earnestly groaning for redemption from sin, with a strong persuasion that their prayers and faith will be owned and blessed in their regeneration. What, I say, is the church to do with such persons? The commanding probability that they are genuine penitents, and that the Lord's Supper may be the means of their regeneration, ought to be the rule in this case. And besides this, there can be no difference between the original penitent, and the penitent backslider who communes on every suitable occasion. If the one is excluded, so must the other, for the one is as much a sinner as the other. As unregenerate persons are not excluded from Baptism, and hearing the word of God preached, neither should they be from partaking of the sacrament, for one and all of these are ordained means of grace, whereby we may be edified and comforted in the Christian life. No church, therefore, has a right to exclude from the Lord's table any who make a credible profession of their faith, for God only is the judge of the heart, while men can only act according to outward conduct and appearances.

Meanwhile, I am fully aware that various sects of the Calvinistic school object to such views as are stated in the

foregoing paragraph. But why should they? If it is true, as they affirm, that regeneration precedes awakening, penitence, and justification, then we maintain that we are still correct, for our penitents, according to that theory, are regenerated. There is evidently, therefore, a want of agreement between the theory and practice of Calvinism. But if the standard consists in the experience of "a hope," as it is called, still we are correct, for all our penitents express a hope of pardon, and of heaven itself. Then again, if the standard consists in feeling oneself to be a great sinner, as is often taken for a bright evidence of piety, we are still correct, for all our penitent seekers feel that they are great sinners.

But after all that has been said, on what seems to be the difference between Calvinists and Armenians upon this subject, there is at last but little difference. The difference consists more, perhaps, in the meaning attached to the words, than in the main fact, when properly understood.

But to examine the qualifications of communicants still farther, we must examine the Scripture law upon the subject. The Jews were obliged to come to the feast of the Passover, free from all defilement, unless in the case of burying the dead, as in *Numb.* ix, 6-9. They were careful to search their houses, in the most diligent manner, for the old leaven, sweeping every part most carefully. In like manner, Christians are to "keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." *1 Cor.* v. 8. They are, therefore, to "purge out the old leaven," that they may be pure, and in a proper moral state for the blessings of profitable Christian communication. With what great propriety, then, does our church extend the following invitation? "Ye that do truly and

earnestly repent of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbors, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in his holy ways, draw near with faith, and take this holy sacrament to your comfort, and making your humble confession to Almighty God, meekly kneeling on your knees." Coming to the Lord's table with these qualifications, and qualities of mind and dispositions of heart, the true believer and earnest seeker of salvation, may feed upon Christ to the great comfort of the soul. He is drawn into closer personal union with Christ. "This is my body, which is given for you," and "This cup is the New Testament in my blood," are words that show how intimately and closely the believer is joined to Christ, when he eats the one and drinks the other, in the true spirit and faith of a sacramental ordinance. Every one may truly say—

"We come, obedient to thy word,  
To feast on heavenly food;  
Our meat, the body of our Lord;  
Our drink, his precious blood."

4. But the benefits of the Lord's Supper are more clearly and distinctly stated in the concluding part of this Article. "The bread which we break is a partaking of the body of Christ, and likewise the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ." Thus we see the adaptation of Christ to the wants of his people. He gives the emblems of his broken body and shed blood as the means of spiritual strength; and his people receive these "after a heavenly and spiritual manner," and are made strong. Thus as eating and drinking gives strength to the body, so eating and drinking the Lord's Supper, by faith in Christ, gives strength to the soul.

O what a taste is this  
Which now in Christ we know,  
An earnest of our glorious bliss,  
Our heaven begun below !”

It is obvious from the nature and ends of this holy ordinance, as well as from what has been said above, that the wicked and the ungodly, who are in no sense trying to serve God, are unworthy of a place at the Lord's table. They may receive, it is true, the outward elements, but they do not receive that which is signified by them. They cannot come to this table without exposing themselves to the displeasure of God, for the Bible declares plainly, that “Whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of Christ.” Such profane persons “eat and drink damnation to themselves, not discerning the Lord's body.” So well was the table of the Lord defended from the approach of the wicked by the Apostles, and especially by St. Paul, that many of the Fathers did but little else than read the apostolic epistles, as rules of preparation for this holy service. *Origin* says, “Christ is the true food ; whosoever eats him, shall live forever ; of whom no wicked person can eat ; for if it were possible that any who continues wicked should eat the Word that was made flesh, it had never been written, ‘Whoso eats this bread shall live forever.’ ” *Com. on Matt., c. 15.*

With such guards as the Scriptures throw around the holy communion, and with the care that the church has always taken of this ordinance, we cannot well be mistaken as to what is our duty. How carefully ought every member of the church to examine himself, lest he “crucify the Lord afresh, and put him to an open shame ;” and lest, while he is in the church, he may not be preparing for perdition. Great care is needed at this very

point, and every professed Christian should so live that the holy sacrament may be to him life and joy in the Holy Ghost.

The Lord's Supper cannot be neglected by the church member without great danger. Neglect of the Passover subjected the neglecter to be cut off from Israel. *Numb.* ix, 13, "But the man that is clean, and is not on a journey, and forbearth to keep the Passover, even that soul shall be cut off from among his people; because he brought not the offering of the Lord in his appointed season, that man shall bear his sins." And so with that man who neglects the Lord's Supper. In the very nature of his neglect, he must exclude himself from the benefits of Christ's passion and death. He cuts himself off from God's people. Hence it is said by *St. Augustine*, "He that does not abide in Christ, and in whom Christ does not abide, certainly does not spiritually eat his flesh, nor drink his blood, though he may visibly and carnally press with his teeth the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ."

This quotation suggests the duty of due preparation for the worthy partaking of the Lord's Supper. Such preparation was made before the Passover, and those who neglected it were cut off. This fact is stated in *Ex.* xii, 15. It is equally the duty of true believers, who expect to communicate, to "keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." *1 Cor.* v, 8. And *verse* 7, "Purge out, therefore, the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened; for even Christ our passover is crucified for us." This duty may be more fully learned from several of the apostolic Epistles.

"Let all who truly bear  
The bleeding Saviour's name,

Their faithful hearts with us prepare,  
And eat the Pascal Lamb."

5. The last thing named in this Article, is the manner in which the Lord's Supper is to be used. "The body of Christ is given" by a regularly ordained minister, and "taken" by the communicant himself, "and eaten," "only after a heavenly and spiritual manner." "And the means whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper, is *faith*." The communicant sees Christ's death symbolized in the broken bread, and the poured out wine. He is reminded by these, that Christ died to atone for the sins of mankind, and while he eats and drinks the outward and visible elements of the sacrament, he inwardly, and "after a heavenly and spiritual manner," feeds upon Christ by faith, and receives the benefits of his sacrificial death.

"A faith that doth the mountains move,  
A faith that shows our sins forgiven,  
A faith that sweetly works by love,  
And ascertains our claims to heaven."

This faith is not in the minister, nor in any one, or all of the members of the church, as acting for any individual beyond themselves; but it is in one and every worthy receiver of the Lord's Supper, as acting for themselves. Their faith has but an individual and personal application. "With all persuasion," therefore, "let us partake of it as of the body and blood of Christ, for under the type of bread his body is given to thee, and under the type of wine his blood is given to thee; that partaking of the body and blood of Christ, thou mayest be of one body and blood with him." *Cyril, Bishop of Alexandria, A. D. 415,*

## SECTION THIRD.

*Transubstantiation a Romish Error.*

1. This part of our Article affirms that “the change of the substance of the bread and wine in the Supper of the Lord, cannot be proved by Holy Writ, but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions.”

The error here condemned consists, in the language of Romanists, in the transmutation of the bread and wine in the Lord’s Supper, into the soul, body and divinity of Jesus Christ. The whole substance of the elements is, as this fatal absurdity teaches, changed into the true, real, numerical, and integral God and man. Nothing of the bread and wine remains after consecration. All, except what they call the accidents, is transformed into the true Christ, in his godhead, with all his perfections; and in his manhood, with all its compound parts, as soul, body, bones, flesh, nerves, muscles and veins. The whole God and man, therefore, is entire, as they are comprehended in every crumb of the bread, and in every drop of the wine,—entire in every particle of each element. And of course he is without division in the countless hosts that are exhibited throughout Romanism. The same substance may, at the same time, be in many places. True, therefore, as *Faber* says, “Transubstantiation is the greatest miracle of Omnipotence.” If there is such a thing, it surely is. The substance of the bread and wine is transformed into flesh and blood, while the color, taste, touch and smell of both remain the same. These are the accidents of these elements. It follows, of course, that taste and smell continue without anything to taste or smell; and color remains without anything to which it belongs, and is there-

fore the external show of nothing; and what is usually called quantity, is only the hollow show of nothing but emptiness. But still these *appearances* can be eaten, and afford sustenance to the body.

But to state this wonderful doctrine in the language of Romanists themselves, I will record an extract from the "Catechism for the use of all the churches in France," published in 1806, and sanctioned by the Archbishop of Paris. The answer to the question, "What is the sacrament of the eucharist?" is as follows:

"The eucharist is a sacrament which contains *really and substantially*, the *body, blood, soul and divinity* of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the forms or appearances of *bread and wine*." That which is laid on the altar at first is bread and wine, "and it continues to be bread and wine, *till the priest pronounces the words of consecration*," then "*the bread is changed into the body, and the wine is changed into the blood* of our Lord," and "nothing of them remains, *except the forms*."

This error is founded, for the sake of a show of Scripture proof, on the *literal* construction of the words, "This is my body," and "this is my blood." Hence Romanists virtually deny that the matter of the Lord's Supper is bread and wine. These are so changed by the words of consecration, that nothing of them remains, and in their place is the actual body, blood, soul, and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus it is, that they "overthrow the nature of a sacrament," and, consequently, have no sacrament of the Lord's Supper in their church.

2. This doctrine cannot be proved by holy writ," and is, therefore, unworthy of credit. It not only cannot be proved by one single passage; but it cannot be proved by any reasonable construction of any chapter, verse, sentence, or figure of speech in the whole word of Revela-

tion. In place of being true according to the Bible, "it is repugnant to the plain words of scripture." When the Lord's Supper was instituted, it was before Christ's death; while he was yet living in the perfect and undivided form of a man. He took bread, and said, "This is my body." He took the cup, and said, "This is my blood." Now, if Romanists are correct in their views of this transaction, then the disciples eat of the body of Christ before he was crucified; while he was yet present with them; and they drank of his blood before it was shed. But before Christ gave the bread to the twelve Apostles, he "brake it," thus signifying his death; and before he gave them the wine, he poured it out, thus signifying the shedding of his blood. But after this transaction, Christ was still living in an unbroken and undivided form; therefore, the Apostles did not eat his flesh, or any part of it, nor did they drink his blood; but only the broken bread, and poured out wine, which signified the broken body and shed blood of their Lord and Saviour.

But if Papists will claim the literal meaning of the words of our Lord, let us try them by the literal meaning of *Luke* xxii, 20, "Likewise, also, the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you." Not that which was *in* the cup, but the cup itself; and this cup was not the cup, but the New Testament, and this New Testament was the cup, and this cup was in the blood of Christ. They deny figurative language, when speaking of the bread, and they *must not* use such language, when speaking of the wine. Here is the cup, but it is not the cup, for it is the New Testament. Now, how can this be, unless the cup was changed from a gold or silver cup into the New Testament or will? But then, this cup which was changed

into the New Testament, or last will of Christ, was in his blood. The cup, therefore, according to the logic of Romanists, was in the blood, and not the blood in the cup. But the text says, "in my blood which is shed for you;" but Christ had not yet shed his blood, or any part of it; therefore, we are to understand something else, than the real blood of Christ. The common sense teaching of the text is, that the wine which was in the cup only represented the blood of Christ. The language used by the Saviour in this whole ceremony, was manifestly used in a figurative sense, and must have been so understood by the Apostles to whom it was immediately addressed. Such figurative forms of language occur often in the Holy Scriptures; as, "I am the vine," "I am the way," "I am the door." Now, no one will suppose, or dare to teach, that Christ is literally a vine, a way, or a door. But if Papists must have the literal construction of the language used in the institution of the Lord's Supper, they are compelled, by their own claims, to regard Christ as a literal vine, a literal door, and a literal way. But, to see the absurdity of this rule of interpretation, we will take some other illustrations, as *Gen. xli, 26, 27*, "The seven good kine are seven years; and the seven good cars are seven years; the dream is one. And the seven thin and ill-favored kine that came up after them are seven years; and the seven empty ears blasted with the east wind shall be seven years of famine." Now, if Papists would be consistent with themselves, they must believe and confess, that seven fat cows, and "seven good cars" of corn, are changed by some singular power of transubstantiation, into seven years of three hundred and sixty-five days each. And the same rule must equally apply to poor cows, and the seven empty ears of corn. If this be correct, then Papists have a wonderful facility

for making years out of cows and corn. But it is their misfortune, that as soon as they come to the Bible, they are confounded, and this is the reason why they hate the pure word of God. The exposition of the dream of Joseph in the above verses, is contained in *verses 29 and 30*, "The seven good kine" "and the seven good ears," *represented* "seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt." And on the other hand, the "thin ill-favored kine" and "empty ears of corn," *represented* "seven years of famine."

But again, when St. Paul speaks of the rock which Moses smote in the wilderness, he says, in 1 *Cor. x, 4*, "That rock was Christ." Now, if the interpretation of Romanists is applied to this passage, it must be confounded by its own absurdity. Thus, we see, that transubstantiation "cannot be proved by holy writ." It is alike contrary to *reason* and the senses. Reason tells us, that the body of Christ cannot be in heaven, and in thousands of places on earth, at the same time; and our senses tell us, that the bread and wine are precisely the same after consecration as before.

3. Transubstantiation "overthroweth the nature of a sacrament." We have seen in the Notes on another part of this Article, that two things are necessary to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper; a *sign*, and a *thing signified* by that sign; an object presented to the senses which is called the *matter* of the sacrament, and some *promised blessing*, which is represented and sealed by this matter or sign. But transubstantiation destroys the outward and visible sign, and puts the thing signified in its place. And hence follows this absurdity; the matter and sacramental sign is converted into the real body and blood of Christ, therefore, Christ's veritable body is the sacramental sign of his body. From this obvious conclusion, it follows,

that there is no sacrament of the Lord's Supper by signs and symbols, in the Romish church. And it follows still further, that, if transubstantiation is true, Christ is put to death to all intents and purposes, every time the eucharist is celebrated. This absurd doctrine, not only clearly overthrows the nature of a sacrament, and deprives the Romish people of anything like the true sacrament, but it plainly contradicts the Scriptures, *Heb. x, 12*. Here it is said, that Christ, "after he had offered *one sacrifice* for sins, forever sat down on the right hand of God."

But we may see the absurdity and blasphemy of this doctrine, if we consider still further, the language of the French catechism. "It continues to be bread and wine, till the priest pronounces the words of consecration." Then "the bread is changed into the body, and the wine into the blood of our Lord." What else does this teach, than a Romish priest creating out of bread and wine, the body and blood of Christ?

But it is enough to say, that this masterpiece of Romish error was introduced, for the first time it was ever heard of, in the ninth century; and that not till A. D. 1215, did it become publicly known as an article of faith. Then it was decreed by Romish bishops to be a doctrine of the Scriptures by the third Latern Council.

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#### SECTION FOURTH.

##### *Transubstantiation the Origin of other Errors*

1. It "hath given occasion to many superstitions." Some of these are named in the last paragraph of this Article. "The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not by Christ's ordinance, *reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshiped.*"

*First. Reserving the consecrated elements.* Conceiving that the bread and wine were changed into the real body and blood of Christ, Papists reserve parts of the holy wafers for the purpose of giving them to the sick, or other persons at a distance, at some future time. Now, whatever may have been the practice of the primitive church, when regularly ordained ministers were scarce, and when Christians were very much scattered by persecution, and other causes, is not the question. The true question is, Is there any proof of this in the Scriptures? There is not the least shadow of proof of this custom in any part of the Bible; it is purely of modern Romish origin. If there are sick persons, or others, who cannot come to the place of communion, why not go to them and consecrate the elements for the sacrament in their presence? This of itself would be a means of quickening their faith, and of giving them a better preparation of heart for the ordinance itself. It would, likewise, show a much closer adherence to the example of Christ, and the prescribed form of consecration. But with Papists, the example of Christ counts but little, when compared with the examples and decrees of their infallible popes, and their infallible councils. The origin of this error is transubstantiation, as it is the origin of many other errors.

*Second. Carrying the elements about* is another Romish practice, which has grown out of the same common root. Among Papists, the consecrated *wafers*—for that is the sum and substance of Christ, containing his soul, blood, and divinity—is carried in solemn procession to the sick. This can be no part of the ceremony of the Lord's Supper, for it is not taught in the Scriptures, neither has it any countenance in the practice of the Apostles or primitive Christians. It is, as its very nature indicates, purely of Romish origin.

*Third.* And for the *lifting up* of the elements of the Lord's Supper, there is not a word of authority in the whole Bible. This, too, is one of the inventions of Rome. When the priest is supposed to have destroyed the bread and the wine, by changing into the real body and blood of Christ, contained in one small *wafer*, he adores it as God, with bended knee, and rising, he lifts it up, that it may be seen and adored by the people also. This is technically called *the elevation of the host*. This wafer is nothing more than a thin piece of bread, and yet it is said in the French catechism, to be "really and substantially, the body, blood, soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ."

*Fourth.* This Article continues its cutting off process, so as to restore the Lord's Supper to its original simplicity, and to the rules of its original administration. Hence, it teaches us in the fourth particular, that the elements of the Lord's Supper were not designed to be worshipped. In the Romish catechism from which I have already quoted, is this question and answer: "*Must we worship the body and blood of Christ Jesus in the eucharist?*" "*Yes, undoubtedly.*" Then comes the reason, "for this body and this blood are inseparably united to his divinity." And the following is the language of the Council of Trent: "There is, therefore, no room to doubt, but that the faithful of Christ *should adore his most holy sacrament with the highest worship due to the true God*, according to the usage of the Catholic Church." I shudder as I write, at the clear and bold idolatrous blasphemy of the above passage. The practice of worshipping the host, is not occasional, as we learn from other sources, but is the constant practice of the Romish Church, as often as the host is elevated, which may be every Sabbath day.

Not contented with this regular idolatry, Pope *Urban*

*the Fourth*, instituted a festival, in A. D. 1264, called *Corpus Christi*, to be observed annually in honor of the holy sacrament. This festival is held on the first Thursday after Trinity Sunday.

It owes its origin, as Papists say, to a pious nun, whose name was Juliana, and who lived in Liege, in 1230. She professed to have found a gap in the orb of the full moon, which greatly troubled her pious soul. While she was meditating on this strange phenomenon, she had a revelation from heaven, which disclosed to her troubled mind the fact, that the moon represented the Romish Church, and the gap in its orb, the want of a festival in honor of the real body of Christ in the consecrated host. The same revelation required her to begin the celebration of this festival, and to announce it to the world as an essential institution of the church. In order to confirm this revelation, a notable miracle was wrought in Bolsena.

The miracle was as follows : While a priest was consecrating the host, drops of blood fell on his surplice, and when he attempted to conceal them in the folds of this garment, they formed bloody images of the host. This bloody surplice, with the images of the host upon it, is still shown as a precious relic at Civita Vecchia.

This festival being regarded as one of the greatest in the Romish church, is celebrated with splendid processions, with flags and crosses, and lighted candles, with solemn music, with a gorgeous canopy sustained by four laymen, under which the priests carry a precious box containing the consecrated host. The people follow with great solemnity, dropping to their knees on the ground every time the host is laid on the numerous altars erected at various places on the corners of the streets.

In Spain, this festival is a general holiday, in which bull fights, dancing, and various games are common. In

Sicily, passages from Scripture history are theatrically exhibited in the public streets for the amusement of the crowd, while the people indulge in the greatest excitement, and revel in the gratification of the basest passions of their nature; and this, too, under the sanction of a license from the Pope, and in connection with what they call a religious festival. And this festival is observed with great pomp in the large cities of Protestant America, though not in connection with bull-fights and public masquerades, as in Papal countries, *O tempora! O mores!* But for the shocking blasphemy of transubstantiation, the festival of *Corpus Christi* would never have disgraced human reason.

Now, in view of these, and many other proofs that might be brought from their own books, and from their own public teaching and practice, how can Papists, or how dare they attempt to resist or deny the charge of the most gross and blasphemous idolatry? This they dare not do, and, as Bishop Burnett has said, “many writers of the Church of Rome have acknowledged, that if transubstantiation is not true, their worship is a strain of idolatry beyond any that is practiced among the most depraved of all nations of heathens.”

But they run the risk of being idolatrous from their own words, on the subject of consecrating the bread and wine for the Lord's Supper. For due and proper transubstantiation, three principle things are necessary: “That the words of consecration be properly spoken; that he who speaks them be a lawful priest; that the priest speak the words with the *intention* of making the body of Christ.” These three things embrace a catalogue of such indefinable contingencies, that no Papist, however faithful, has power to know or determine. It is impossible to tell, whether the priest is a successor of *Joan*, the female pope,

or of *Gregory the Great*; nor can he tell what the intention of the priest is; whether it is to make the real body, blood, soul and divinity of Christ, or something else; and certainly, he cannot determine, by the use of his senses, whether there is any change in the bread, or not, and therefore, he is in constant danger of worshipping a thing that is not God.

What disastrous consequences result from this capital and damning error! Why is it, that enlightened Papists do not see their error, and flee from it, as from any other evil forbidden in God's word? And why is it, that enlightened Protestant Europe and America, are not doing much more than they are, to bring Papists to the simplicity of gospel ordinances, and to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Christ?

2. From the above brief exposition of the Romish doctrine of the sacrament, and of some of the errors that immediately grow out of this doctrine, it is evident that the Lord's Supper is not received, or administered among Papists. Their Popes and Councils have *added* to and *subtracted* from, the original words and form of administering this sacrament, and so mutilated and distorted this simple institution, that a common reader of the New Testament, and a worshiper in a Protestant Church, cannot tell, if he visits a Romish Cathedral when the sacrament is being administered, what the priest is doing. He sees the burning candles, the genuflections of the priest and people; he hears the muttering of words in an unknown tongue, and the occasional ringing of a small bell, but as to the meaning of all this, he is perfectly ignorant. And if he asks what part of worship that is, he may be told it is the "sacrifice of the mass;" and, in all probability, if he asks what that is, he can get no definite answer. So little are Papists accustomed to hear things

called by their Scripture names, and so much accustomed are they to the substitution of error for truth, that many of them know no difference. Romanists have changed and corrupted the simple word of God and his ordinances, and then changed the worship to suit it. And in all these changes and corruptions, the effort has been to remove, as far as possible from their people, all true and correct notions of the true worship of God ; and to substitute in his place, as objects of adoration, the host, images, and saints.

Now, if we go to the Bible, and read all that is there written concerning the Lord's Supper, we will not find one word from which it can be inferred, that the Apostles worshiped, or in any way gave divine honors to the consecrated bread and wine, or required others to do so. They never carried them about to the sick or dying ; they never carried them about on a holy day in solemn procession, calling upon all that passed to kneel before the host, or they would be cast into prison, or into the crushing jaws of the inquisition. Nor do we find any such thing among primitive Christians, simply because they knew nothing of transubstantiation.

But enough has been said to show the true Protestant, and, above all, the Scripture character of our Article. Meantime I have tried to defend one of the distinguishing institutions of our holy religion against the blasphemous attacks of Papal Rome ; and to present it in all simplicity to the careful consideration of all who love the truth. If any thing I have written, will in any degree enable the Christian to partake of the Lord's Supper with more enlightened faith, and assist him in determining the true import of this sacrament, my object is gained. And if any thing I have written shall tend to expose the damning errors of transubstantiation, and the corrupting influence

of Romanism, I shall consider myself honorably enrolled with the Protestant world, in "contending for the faith once delivered to the saints."

"And when these failing lips grow dumb,  
And mind and mem'ry flee,  
When thou shalt in thy kingdom come,  
**Jesus, remember me.**"

## ARTICLE XIX.

### OF BOTH KINDS.

“The cup of the Lord is not to be denied to the lay people ; for, both parts of the Lord’s Supper, by Christ’s ordinance and commandment, ought to be administered to all Christians alike.”

1. The Romish error against which this Article is directed, grows directly out of the greater error, transubstantiation. Like that, it is in direct opposition to Christ, and the plain language of the Gospels and the Epistles. And, though very strange, Papists admit this, but still they cling to the error, and boldly affirm that the Church has power to set aside even a commandment of Christ, and to establish such laws and usages, as may better suit their evil purposes. Rome says, through the *Council of Constance*, A. D. 1414, “*Christ did institute the sacrament in both kinds, and the faithful in the primitive church did receive in both kinds ; yet a practice being reasonably brought in to avoid some dangers and scandals, they appoint the custom to continue, of consecrating in both kinds, and of giving to the laity only in one kind ; since Christ was entire and truly under each kind.*” Here it is admitted, that “*Christ did institute the sacrament in both kinds,*” and that primitive Christians “*did receive in both kinds ;*” yet, in the face of these well known and Scripture facts, the Romish Church has decreed to give “*the laity only in one kind.*” And, instead of laying aside this admitted error as time advanced, they only become more determined to sustain it. Hence the *Council of*

*Trent*, in A. D. 1562, made the following law, which again contradicts what they admit as fact; "Although, from the beginning of the Christian religion, the use of both kinds in the administration of the sacrament of the eucharist has been common, yet, in process of time, that custom being widely changed, the church, for weighty and just causes, *approve this custom of communicating under one kind only, and have made it a law*, which, to condemn or change, without her authority, is unlawful." Then follows, as a matter of course, the curse: "If any man shall say, that all Christians ought, by God's command, for the sake of salvation, to receive the most holy sacrament of the eucharist in both kinds, *let him be accursed.*"

These decrees contain some strange contradictions, though put forth by a supposed infallible church, in her infallible councils. The first is, that the authority of the church is greater than the authority of Christ; and, therefore, has the power to set aside the commandments of God. The second is, that, though God has commanded his people to receive both the bread and the wine in the Lord's Supper, yet, if any man says, that he ought to obey God in this respect rather than the church, "*let him be accursed.*" What is this, but the work of "the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God?" 2 *Thess.* ii, 3, 4.

2. As before stated, this error arose out of that prince of errors, transubstantiation; Papists teaching that the bread and wine are actually changed, by the priests, into the very body and blood of Christ. They therefore teach, that Christ is whole and entire, in either the bread or the wine, so that whichever part the communicant may re-

ceive, he therein receives the body, blood, soul and divinity of Christ. To all and every part of this presumptuous error and monster of iniquity, our Article stands directly opposed. It affirms that "the cup of our Lord is not to be denied to the lay people;" it assigns this important reason: "For both the parts of the Lord's Supper, by Christ's ordinance and commandment, ought to be administered to all Christians alike." Hence this Article assumes the Scripture doctrine, in contradiction to Romanists, that the authority of Christ is superior to the authority of the church. This makes the church subordinate to Christ, and vindicates the fact thereby, that his commandments are the rules of church practice, and not the rules and laws ordained by herself. But let us examine the commandment of Christ, and see what is the fact in this case. *First*, "Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body." So much for the authority and commandment of Christ in the bread. *Second*, "And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it." *Matt.* xxvi, 26, 27. Now, Christ did not say, drink ye all the wine in the cup, as is the practice of the Romish priest; *but drink ye all*—every one that is here present, drink of it. It is for each and every one of you. Then the reason for drinking of the wine in the cup, is given in *verse* 28, "For this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." By this we are taught, how essential the cup is to the complete communion. It points to the blood of Christ as the very essence of the institution, and as the symbol of the blood of atonement. It was necessary that each person then present, should have a particular and personal application of the blood of atonement, and therefore Christ said, "Drink ye all of it." The

same necessity for a personal application of the blood of atonement still exists, in the person of every communicant, and therefore, the command of Christ is still in force, and every believer is entitled to the cup in the Lord's Supper. So St. Paul believed, 1 *Cor.* xi, 26-28, "For as oft as ye eat this bread, *and drink this cup*, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." \* \* \* "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, *and drink of that cup.*"

3. Surely Romanists will not say that St. Paul and other early believers were ignorant of the true import of the Lord's Supper. They do not make such a charge directly, it is true, but they do it by very clear implication; for they say the command, "Drink ye all of it," was delivered to the Apostles only, and is not, therefore, binding on the lay people. But certainly, St. Paul was not talking to Apostles, when he said, "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." But the fallacy of this argument is seen in the fact, that if none but Apostles were to receive the Lord's Supper in both kinds, then there can be no Lord's Supper now, for there are no Apostles to receive it. At most, if the Lord's Supper still exists as an institution of Christ, it is confined exclusively to ministers. Is it not strange, then, that Romanists have not long ago taken the whole sacrament from the people? They could do this with much more reason than they have for taking away the cup.

But not only did St. Paul and other Christians of his day rightly understand the command of Christ, in the eucharist, but it was the practice of the whole primitive Church, for several centuries, to administer the Lord's Supper in both kinds. Hence *Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage*, in A. D. 284, says, "If it be not lawful to loose any one of the

least commandments of Christ, how much more unlawful it is to break so great and so weighty a one, that does so very nearly relate to the sacrament of our Lord's passion, and of our redemption; or by any human institution to change it into that which is quite different from the Divine institution." All this leads to two general conclusions.

*First.* The doctrine and practice of Romanists overthrow the nature of a sacrament, and therefore the Lord's Supper is not administered in the Romish church; and her popes and priests have committed the grossest sacrilege in taking from the people the ordained symbol of Christ's blood.

*Second.* The doctrine and practice of Protestant Christians, on the subject of the Lord's Supper, must be right, for they are based upon the pure word of God. Now, if they are right in heart, and feed upon Christ by faith, they have nothing to fear. Let them, therefore, rejoice in the truth, and continue to "Show forth the Lord's death till he come again."

" Truth crushed to earth will rise again,  
 The eternal years of God are hers;  
 But error, wounded, writhes in pain,  
 And dies among her worshippers."

## ARTICLE XX.

### OF THE ONE OBLATION OF CHRIST FINISHED UPON THE CROSS.

“The offering of Christ once made, is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin but that alone. Wherefore the sacrifice of masses, in the which it is commonly said, that the Priest doth offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, is a blasphemous fable, and dangerous deceit.”

#### SECTION FIRST.

##### *But One Sacrifice for Sin*

1. In Art. II, Sec. 5, the same doctrine is stated and discussed, that is contained in this Article, though for a very different purpose. There it is stated and defended as an Article of Faith, and a doctrine of the Bible; but here it is stated in a controversial form, in opposition to the Romish doctrine of the mass. This Article teaches that Christ made but one offering of himself for sin; whereas Romanists affirm that he is again offered for sin every time the mass is celebrated. To see that this is a dangerous error, we have but to turn to the Scriptures. These affirm most clearly that Christ was offered but once for sin. *Matt. xxvii, 50*, “Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the Ghost.” The true import of this passage is, that Christ did willingly, and of himself, die for sinners; but not a word is said about his giving up his life more than once. But it is said in *John xix, 30*, “It is finished,” What is finished? The redemption of the world, and no more sacrifice for sin is

needed. But this doctrine is more directly established by *St. Paul*, in *Heb. ix*, 28, "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." Hence the Apostle concludes that believers are sanctified, "Through the offering of the body of Christ Jesus *once for all*. The same Apostle is still more definite and clear in *Rom. vi*, 9, 10, "knowing that Christ being raised from the dead, *dieth no more*; death hath no more dominion over him; For, in that he died, *he died unto sin once*." By these passages alone, taken in their proper connection, there is but one single doctrine proved, that Christ died for sinners *but once*, and there is, therefore, *no more sacrifice for sin*.

2. But no more sacrifice for sin is needed, because the one offering of Christ is a perfect satisfaction for all sin. This is the uniform doctrine of the Bible, and redemption is nowhere ascribed to any other. *Rom. iii*, 24, "Being justified freely by his grace, through the *redemption* that is in Christ Jesus." *Gal. iii*, 13, "Christ hath *redeemed* us from the curse of the law." *Eph. i*, 7, "In whom we have *redemption* through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace." From these and many other passages, it is evident that *Christ alone* has redeemed sinners. The work is ascribed to him, but never to any other; therefore Christ is the only Redeemer.

But Christ alone is the only propitiation for sin. To propitiate, is to turn away the wrath of the offended. In the case before us, the wrath of God is turned away from offending man by the propitiation of Christ, and no other. *1 John ii*, 2, "And he is the *propitiation* for our sins." *Rom. iii*, 25, "Whom God hath set forth to be a *propitiation* through faith in his blood." Now, whatever God does is right and complete. He has "set forth" his Son to be "*the propitiation*" for the sins of mankind; therefore

the sacrifice of Christ once offered, "is that perfect redemption, propitiation and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world." *Eph. v, 2*, "And hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God, *for a sweet smelling savor.*" Christ himself announces the completeness of this satisfaction, when he said, "*It is finished.*" But there is other proof of the satisfactory nature of the sacrifice of Christ in the fact of his Resurrection, his Ascension into heaven, where "he ever liveth to make intercession for us," and in the fact that the Holy Ghost descended upon the church according to his own promise.

But the proof is final, when we consider the fact that sin is pardoned for Christ's sake. *Eph. i, 7*, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the *forgiveness of sins*, according to the riches of his grace." *1 John ii, 12*, "I write unto you, little children, because *your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.*" These passages prove that there is the pardon of sin, and that pardon is extended to the sinner because of the one sacrifice of Christ, and no other. It is therefore evident, that whatever other pretended means of pardon there may be, as Baptism, the Lord's Supper, Extreme Unction, or the Sacrifice of the Mass, they are all in direct opposition to the word of God, and the ordained plan of salvation by Christ alone. Indeed, it is said in *Acts iv, 12*, "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

3. This one offering of Christ was "*for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual.*" *Firs.* Christ died for the whole world. This is proved by those passages which declare that Christ died for the "*whole world,*" and for "*all men.*" *1 John ii, 2*, "And he is the

propitiation for our sins ; and not for ours only, *but also for the sins of the whole world.*" *John* iv, 42, "And know that this is indeed the Christ, *the Saviour of the world.*" *Heb.* ii, 9, "That he by the grace of God should *taste death for every man.*" These passages, with many others that might be named here, prove that the extent of the atonement of Christ was for the *whole world*, and for *every* man. We can then, "Look steadfastly upon the blood of Christ, and see how precious his blood is in the sight of God, because, being poured out on account of our salvation, it has obtained the gift of redemption for the whole world." *St. Clement*, in A. D. 93. *Second.* Christ died "*for both original and actual sin.*" By *original sin* we mean the inherent depravity and corruption of every man's nature, "whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and of his own nature inclined to evil, and that continually." *Actual sin* "is the transgression of the law," or that sin which is committed after the individual has attained to the state of independent moral responsibility. This Article teaches that the atonement reaches both these sins. If so, then the infant is included, as well as the adult believer. This is manifestly the will of God. *1 John* i, 7, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son *cleanseth us from all sin.*"

" Thy blood we steadfastly believe,  
Shall make us thoroughly clean."

From the foregoing considerations, we see the reason why the framers of this Article so directly condemn the Romish Mass, as a destructive and dangerous error. Destructive because it perverts the clear doctrine of the Bible ; and because it so lightly estimates the atonement of Christ, as to cause the ignorant to place more confidence in the sacrifice of the mass, than in the sacrament of Christ "*once for all.*" Dangerous, because it tends to

priesthood. Not indeed in the modern, but in the original and true sense of that term. Hence they affirm, that as the priests under the law offered living sacrifices to God for the expiation of sin, so do they, when they offer the sacrifice of the mass. But let it be observed here, that the priesthood and sacrifices under the law were typical. They both looked to the priesthood and sacrifice of Christ, and as soon as these were brought in, the types could no longer remain in force. The priests and sacrifices under the law, were two distinct things, but Christ combined in himself both *priest* and *sacrifice*. By the final sacrifice of Christ, the Old Dispensation, with its many and oft repeated sacrifices, is taken away, and a new dispensation, with but one high priest and but one sacrifice, is introduced in its place. *Heb. x, 9*, "He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second." The reason of this change is given in *Chap. x, 1*, "For the law having a shadow, of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never, with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect." *Verse 12*, "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down on the right hand of God." *Verse 14*, "For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." From these few verses, and indeed from the entire Epistle to the Hebrews; it is evident that the whole ritual of the old dispensation, with its "changeable priesthood," and "the blood of bulls and of goats," is set aside for the better dispensation, with its permanent high priest, and the blood of Jesus Christ, *once* shed for the sins of the world. This being the fact, and there being no proof that Christ or his Apostles set apart any man to the office of a priest, to offer the sacrifice of the mass to atone for sins, it follows as an unavoidable conclusion, that the

whole theory of priesthood in the Romish Church is a blasphemous assumption.

3. But the iniquity of the Romish doctrine of the mass is still more obvious, if we consider the pretended object of this supposed sacrifice. It is a "propitiatory offering" "for the *living* and the *dead*, for sins, punishments, and satisfactions ;" and they add for "other necessities," but they do not tell us what these are. But when they are met on this assumed ground, by the plain passage, "There remaineth no more sacrifice for sin," they affirm that the sacrifice of the mass by the priest, is a continuation of the one offering of Christ. They therefore assume that Christ is still suffering. But this is a plain contradiction of the Scripture, for it is said in *Heb. x, 1?*, "But this man, *after* he had offered *one sacrifice for sins*, forever sat down on the right hand of God." Now, there is just this difficulty presented by this passage: either Christ suffers in the mass, or he does not suffer;—if he is sitting at the right hand of God, as the text says he is, he does not suffer, and therefore the Romish mass is no sacrifice. But the Romish mass cannot be a sacrifice for sins in view of this simple fact, "without shedding of blood is no remission."

4. We are now somewhat prepared to see the force of the words of our Article. Romish masses are called "blasphemous fables." They are fables for the simple reason that there is no warrant for them in the word of God; and they are blasphemous, because they derogate from the sufficiency of the one sacrifice of Christ. They are "*dangerous decei's*," because they encourage the grossest wickedness, and because they hold out a method of pardon and salvation which is contrary to the word of God. Masses were sold, as the result of this error, and became sources of trade and wealth. "A small piece of

money became their price, so that a profane sort of simony was set up, and the holiest of all the institutions of the Christian religion was exposed to sale. Therefore we, in cutting off this, and in bringing the sacrament to be, according to its first institution, a communion, have followed the words of our Saviour and the practice of the church for the first ten centuries." *Bishop Burnett.*

We will now close our remarks on this Article, and on the Lord's Supper, hoping that we have been able to redeem it somewhat from the corruptions of Romanism by exhibiting the truth, and exposing the error. We sincerely pray that this institution of Christ's own appointment may be worthily received, apart from any Romish embarrassment, in commemoration of him who has said, "As oft as ye do it, ye do show forth his death till he come again."

“ And when these failing lips grow dumb,  
And mind and mem'ry flee,  
When thou shalt in thy kingdom come,  
Jesus, remember me.”

## ARTICLE XXI.

### OF THE MARRIAGE OF MINISTERS.

“The ministers of Christ are not commanded by God’s law to either vow the estate of single life, or to abstain from marriage; therefore it is lawful for them, as for all other Christians, to marry at their own discretion as they shall judge the same to seem best to godliness.”

1. But the Church of Rome has commanded her clergy to abstain from marriage. Because of this and numerous other departures from God’s law, she is very properly called “*Anti-Christ*,”—“*the man of sin*,”—“*the mother of harlots* ;” and forbidding to marry is particularly mentioned as one of her distinguishing characteristics. 1 *Tim.* iv, 1–3, “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and the *doctrines of devils* ; Speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron ; *Forbidding to marry*, and commanding to abstain from meats.” But Rome has not only assumed the authority of forbidding the marriage relation to her clergy, but she has exalted marriage to the unscriptural dignity of a *Sacrament* ; one of the *five* that *she* has subjoined to the *only two* that were ordained by Christ. To this, she adds another contradiction ; she forbids her priests to partake of this sacrament, while every man knows that the sacraments of Christ were set apart by Christ for the use of all true believers ; and that they are to be continued to the end of time. This brings out two facts : *First*, Romanism contradicts the Scriptures ; *Second*,

Romanism contradicts itself. This is the legitimate result of her theory,—“the doctrine of devils”—and of her practice,—“speaking lies in hypocrisy.”

2. But not only is there no commandment, text, or word in the whole Bible, that forbids the marriage of ministers ; but on the contrary, their right to this relation, in common with other men, is recognized throughout the entire Book. The Bible records numerous instances of the ministers of religion living in the honorable relations of husband and father. These relations are based upon an express institution of God, which, from its very nature and object, was designed for universal use and application. It was instituted before sin had defiled the world, and must, therefore, be a holy institution, and in no way injurious to ministers, or other religious men in the service of God. But in view of the subsequent abuse of this religious institution, various laws have been ordained to perpetuate its original purity ; and to point out, more fully, the design of God in the marriage covenant, and the various relations that grow directly out of it. But never do the Scriptures lose sight of the fact, that “it is not good that man should be alone.” As God made but one woman for Adam, he thereby plainly indicated that every subsequent man should have but one woman, and every woman but one husband. Not indeed, that neither shall marry more than once, but that each should have but one wife or one husband at the same time. A practice opposite to this law, was first introduced by Lamech, an abandoned son of Cain. *Gen. iv, 19,* “And Lamech took unto him two wives.” Though this evil was practiced in subsequent ages by many who were called good men, yet it is contrary both to the spirit and intention of the institution itself, and to the law of nature.

3. But while there is no law to forbid the marriage of ministers, "it is as lawful for them, as for other Christian men, to marry at their own discretion as they shall judge the same to seem better unto godliness." It is evident, that the priesthood, under the Old Dispensation, was confined but to one family; and it follows, of course, that the high priest was obliged to marry in order to perpetuate the priesthood in his own particular family. Under the New Testament, also, the ministers of religion have a right to the marriage relation, though there is no ordained succession of ministers from any one Christian family. This right was recognized by Christ, and was not overruled by him in the selection of his first disciples. Peter, though claimed by Romanists as the head of their church, was evidently a married man, for it is said, *Matt.* viii, 14, "When Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his *wife's* mother laid, and sick of a fever." When Papists say that Peter had been married, but his wife was dead before Christ called him to the ministry; and that his "wife's mother" was keeping house for him, we deny the whole assumption, and demand the proof. It is also evident, that Philip the Evangelist was a married man, for he "had four daughters, virgins, which did prophecy." *Acts* xxi, 9. How many of the Apostles were married, we cannot tell, but that some of them were, and that St. Paul claimed the right to marry, is evident, from *1 Cor.* ix, 5, "Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other Apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?" But when St. Paul gives directions to other ministers of Christianity, he clearly distinguishes the qualifications of married men. *1 Tim.* iii, 2, "A Bishop must be blameless, *the husband of one wife.*" When the same Apostle speaks of another order of ministers, in *verse* 12, he says, "Let the Dea-

cons be the husband of *one wife*." But it is argued from 1 *Cor.* vii, that St. Paul prohibited the marriage of ministers. Now, the most that can be said of his remarks here, is, that they were advisory, in view of the embarrassing circumstances of the church at that time. But even in view of these, and to avoid evil, he says, in *verse 2*, "Let every man have his own wife."

4. From the consideration of the above facts, it is evident that Christian ministers have a right to marry, as well as other Christian men; and that Papists have no right to set aside the law of God upon this institution, nor to elevate it to the dignity of a sacrament by the councils of men. History and observation inform us, that from the time the celibacy of the Romish clergy was established by Gregory VII, A. D. 1085, to the present, that popish priests have been an embodiment of profligacy and licentiousness. They have ever been an illustration of the iniquity and presumption, that set aside the express institution of God. From what has been said, it is evident, likewise, that the Protestant churches maintain the doctrine of the Bible on the subject of marriage. They regard it as the nursery of virtue; as the crystal cup into which God pours his choicest blessings. And they regard it as the great safeguard of peace, of happiness, of virtue, and of the Christian religion.

5. While marriage is restricted to but one wife and one husband at the same time, it is likewise restricted within certain degrees of consanguinity or affinity. *Lev.* xviii, 6, "None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to him." The violation of this law is not only a disregard for the authority of God, but for the law of nature, and the laws of mind. It usually carries with it its own punishment in the enfeebled or deformed body; the enfeebled intellect, idiotism, and a host of maladies

which render life a burden. Wherever the church has had authority to impart an enlightened instruction, she has always opposed marriage between near relations, either by blood, or the affinity of marriage. The Levitical law, from which the instruction is derived, prohibits marriage between relations that are within three degrees of kindred. This subject ought to be closely studied, for enlightened views of it are very important in order to an enlightened and judicious practice. Were the writer to decide according to his clearest and most extensive observation of the evils of marriage, within the bounds of blood relation and affinity, he would adopt the old Roman law, and decide that in no case should the children of brothers and sisters join in marriage; not even to the fourth generation. Then would our race be freed from the numerous and great evils of the marriage of near relations; and we would better observe the laws of our nature and the law of God.

## ARTICLE XXII.

### OF THE RITES AND CEREMONIES OF THE CHURCH.

“It is not necessary that rites and ceremonies should in all places be the same, or exactly alike; for they have been always different, and may be changed according to the diversity of countries, times, and men’s manners, so that nothing be ordained against God’s word. Whosoever through his private judgment, willingly and purposely doth openly break the rites and ceremonies of the Church to which he belongs, which are not repugnant to the word of God, and are ordained and approved by common authority, ought to be rebuked openly, that others may fear to do the like, as one that offendeth against the common order of the Church, and woundeth the consciences of weak brethren. Every particular Church may ordain, change, or abolish rites and ceremonies, so that all things may be done to edification.”

#### SECTION FIRST.

##### *Rites and Ceremonies.*

1. By the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church we may understand the external form and manner in which the ministers of religion perform the several parts of religious worship. In the Jewish Church, rites and ceremonies were very numerous, and all of God’s appointment; but in the Christian Church they are few and simple, and chiefly appointed by the church itself. Rites and ceremonies are essential to the right exhibition of the doctrines and institutions of Christianity, though they do not constitute an essential element of Christianity itself. Whatever is essential to Christianity, is distinctly stated in the New Testament, but *how* these are to be administered under all circumstances, is left to the wisdom of the church, “so that nothing be ordained against God’s word.”

With this common view of the doctrine of this Article, we are at no loss to understand the fact, that the doctrines and institutions of the Christian religion are *positive* and *unchangeable*, while her rites and ceremonies are *circumstantial*. This is undoubtedly the spirit and meaning of this Article. It is therefore of great value to the church, because it gives her the power to direct her outward movements, and because it teaches the propriety and importance of the church adapting herself, in all her rites and ceremonies, to the wants and claims of society. In doing this, it recognizes God's word as the immovable standard, and forbids any rite or ceremony that might in the least lessen the influence of this standard upon the human heart.

This Article expresses the Protestant doctrine, that no rite or ceremony originating in the church itself, is of greater force of obligation than the institutions ordained of God. It is therefore in direct opposition to Romanists, who maintain that the authority of the church is supreme, and that whatever rite or ceremony she may ordain, though it may be a clear and palpable contradiction of the Scriptures, is of supreme and endless obligation. This Article opposes Romanists again, when they affirm that rites and ceremonies must be the same in all countries, without regard to circumstances. Protestants rightly comprehend their duty when they affirm that the Bible is the supreme and only rule of faith and practice, and when they regard the rites and ceremonies of the church as but ordinances of men, and the mere forms by which the doctrines and institutions of religion may be applied to the hearts of the people.

2. That some form of public worship and administration of the Christian ordinances is necessary, none will doubt. But the great difficulty to be determined, is the extent to which it is prudent to go in the accommodation of reli-

gious rites and ceremonies to the infirmities of man's nature. The great point is, to establish a medium in which a due regard may be shown to the outward senses and the imagination, without, at the same time, violating the dictates of reason, and counteracting the purposes of true religion. Romanists have gone so far in the number and complication of their rites and ceremonies, that the simplicity and power of the Christian religion is nearly lost to their worshipers. They have so far abused human weakness by the number and variety of their unmeaning and ridiculous ceremonies, that scarcely any other effect is produced by them than an increase of ignorance and superstition.

To what extent a just opposition to these mummeries of Romanists may have carried well meaning Protestants into the opposite extreme, is a consideration of great weight. They may have gone so far as to enfeeble the operations of the church, and materially defeat the object of both the doctrines and institutions of Christianity. Both these extremes should be avoided, and such rites and ceremonies should be ordained as will exhibit the most clearly the true import of religion, and make the strongest impression on the heart. An intelligent and dignified simplicity in rites and ceremonies, is always to be preferred.

3. The doctrines and institutions of religion involve *times, places and forms*. As to times,—the Sabbath, and such other days as may be appointed for worship, together with particular hours of these days for morning and evening service. Such hours may be set apart as will suit the greatest number of worshipers. With these regulations properly observed, instruction may be imparted in the most extensive method. As to places,—these should always be suitable, and in the most central

position ; and at whatever hour the public services commence in these places of worship, at *that hour*, and *no other*, the people *should assemble*. These places of worship should be solemnly set apart for the worship of God, and nothing else.

But when the people are assembled in these houses of worship, there must be forms of worship,—as prayer either read or extemporary, or both. And this should always be optional with the minister. Prayer may be offered to God acceptably, either in the standing or kneeling posture of the body. Then there is the reading of the Holy Scriptures, which should never be omitted, except on days when one or both of the sacraments are administered. Such is the value of Scripture lessons, that they cannot be innocently neglected. These lessons should be as appropriate to the particular occasion as may be, and should be read, either by the minister alone, or, which is much better, by the minister and people together. Then should follow the solemn songs of praise and thanksgiving.

“ Let the elders praise the Lord  
 Him let all the people praise,  
 When they meet, with one accord  
 In his courts on holy days.”

Then the ministration of God's word, or one or both of the sacraments, as occasion may require. Form is very essential in all these parts of public worship, and especially in the administration of the sacraments. In Baptism there must be form, or it cannot be administered. *The water must be applied to the subject*, whether an infant, or an adult believer, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and this should be done in the most solemn manner. In the Lord's Supper, the bread and the wine should be so placed as to be most convenient to the minister. They must be set apart by solemn conse-

eration so as to distinguish them from an ordinary meal, and so as to most deeply impress the hearts of the people. A written form of consecration should be in use in all well-regulated churches, and this form should be strictly and faithfully observed. Then the bread *must be broken*, and the wine *poured out*, and both must be given to the communicants—the bread first, and then the wine.

The communicants, while receiving these symbols of Christ's body and blood, may either sit or kneel, but all present should conform to whatever may be the established form of the church in which they communicate. Without the above form, as indicated in the gospels, the Lord's Supper cannot be rightly administered.

4. The essentials of these two ordinances have always been the same, but some of the attendant ceremonies have varied. They have sometimes been omitted entirely, or very materially changed. Diversities of countries must necessarily effect the *mode* of baptism. In cold climates, sprinkling would be resorted to rather than dipping; and reason would dictate that this is the most reasonable and appropriate mode for any climate.

In the celebration of the Lord's Supper, the kiss of peace was one of its attendant ceremonies among primitive believers; but is no longer given, being contrary to the manners of the times and the customs of the country. Times and countries have affected the mode of public worship, it being no longer necessary to assemble in caves of the earth, or in close and secret places, to offer devotion to God. All this shows very clearly that "it is not necessary that rites and ceremonies should be the same in all places." It is therefore a mark of weakness, or bigotry, to cling to a ceremony simply because it is old, or because some great or good man, two or three centuries past, advocated its utility.

SECTION SECOND.

*Rites and Ceremonies to be Observed—Offenders Rebuked.*

I. "Whosoever, through his private judgment, willingly and purposely doth openly break the rites and ceremonies of the church to which he belongs, which are not repugnant to the word of God, and ordained and approved by common authority, ought to be rebuked openly, that others may fear to do the like, as one that offendeth against the common order of the church, and woundeth the consciences of weak brethren."

Rites and ceremonies are a part of the common order of the church. They are essential to the outward movements of the church; and because they are ordained and approved by the common authority of the church, they are to be observed by all its members. Reference is made here, of course, to such rites and ceremonies only as are in accordance with the Bible. These, with her entire polity, both temporal and spiritual, together with all her doctrines, are made public by the fact that the church exists, and that her ministers are continually exhibiting her doctrines, in the use of such forms as have been approved; and, at the same time, administering her sacraments in the use of such rites and ceremonies as may have been ordained and approved by common authority. Another means of publication, which comprehends the instruction of the people, is the fact that these forms and ceremonies are *repeated* every time the church meets for public worship, or the administration of her ordinances. It is presumable, therefore, that all who apply for membership in the church, do so with a full knowledge of her doctrines and polity,—her rites and ceremonies,—and with a full purpose of heart to conform to, and abide by the rules and usages of the church to which he joins himself.

2. When an individual unites with the church, whatever may be the peculiar form of union, he enters into covenant with God, which brings him into new relations with him as the Head of the Church. He deliberately promises that he will obey God's holy commandments, and exhibit before the world the beauty, the symmetry, and the purity of the Christian character. His new relation constantly says, "I have lifted up my hand unto the Lord;" "I have vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob."

But he enters into a covenant with all the members of the church to which he unites himself. He adopts their Articles of Faith; he assents to the discipline of the church,—to her rites and ceremonies,—to her whole economy. By this act, he promises to waive his private judgment in matters of forms and ceremonies, and to confide in the judgment of the body of Christians with whom he is associated, and who have received him as a brother among them; provided, always, that the church, in her congregational or representative capacity, ordains and approves nothing which is contrary to the word of God.

3. Now, if, after all this, any person shall assume the attitude of resistance to the rites and ceremonies of the church to which he belongs, and which are not repugnant to the word of God, and ordained and approved by common authority, "he ought to be rebuked openly." Why? *First.* "That others may fear to do the like." *Second.* Because he "offendeth against the common authority of the church." *Third.* Because he "woundeth the consciences of weak brethren." This is the right of the church,—indeed it is her duty,—that she may preserve her unity and order. If every member of the church were left to the free exercise of his private judgment, in opposition to the authority of the church, all uniformity of worship would be destroyed; the peace and harmony

of the church would be broken up; and the very existence of the church, as a visible society of believers, would be greatly endangered. It is therefore of the utmost importance that each member of the church shall avoid every word or action that might injure the church as a body, or any of its members. Especially are church members to avoid anything that might cause divisions, as controversy, and opposition to the rules and usages of the church. 1 *Cor.* i, 10, "Now, I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye *all speak the same thing*, and that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the *same mind*, and in the *same judgment*." Here St. Paul urges the unity and peace of the church, and consequently its prosperity, by

*First.* An agreement in conversation,—“Speak the same thing.” We must see the propriety of this, if we look at the many evils and alienations of feelings that arise from private controversies, and when we consider the fact, that some indulge the controversial spirit to that extent, that private and social intercourse must either be cut off, or endured with much suffering. To say the very least of this spirit, it is impolite, and displays great egotism. It is greatly injurious to the love that one Christian should have for another.

*Second.* The unity and peace of the church is urged by the duty of being of “the same mind,” and of the “same judgment;” that is, to willingly conform to the order of the church, because this is ordained by authority, and because it is not essential, one way or the other, to salvation.

But this duty is farther urged by two weighty considerations.

*First.* “The consciences of weak brethren.” Such brethren have ever been in the church, and have ever

seemed to glory in their weakness. Sin against these is sin against Christ. 1 *Cor.* viii, 12, "But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, *ye sin against Christ.*"

*Second.* "That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another." *Chap.* xii, 25.

4. The nature of the punishment for such offenses may next claim a remark. The "offender ought to be rebuked openly." The authority for this is St. Paul in 1 *Tim.* v, 20, "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear." *Tit.* i, 13, "Rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in faith." To rebuke, signifies to reprove, check, advise, to reform. This is usually done by the minister, and always supposes that previous effort has been made to cure the evil, and that all the preliminary measures have been taken to bring the offender properly before the church. The reproof must be administered in all Christian kindness, though the offense may be such as to demand that the offender be rebuked "sharply." The object should be to reclaim the offender, and to vindicate the harmony and purity of the church. No duty requires a higher exercise of the Christian graces than this; and the faithfulness with which it, as a part of the church discipline, is performed, is one of the sure tests of a pure and faithful minister. At the same time, it is the duty of every member of the church to cherish Christian love and kindness toward the erring. This is often a very difficult, but always a very profitable duty. The *object* is "to restore such an one," and he must be treated with "the spirit of meekness." This is still more important if we consider the fact that our actions may be the means of the eternal life of the erring, or of his eternal death.

“ Among the saints on earth,  
 Let mutual love be found ;  
 Heirs of the same inheritance,  
 With mutual blessings crown'd.  
 Thus will the church below  
 Resemble that above ;  
 Where streams of bliss forever flow,  
 And every heart is love.”

5 But the Article furthermore teaches, that whosoever shall offend against the rites and ceremonies of the church, “ought to be rebuked *openly*.” The reason for this open rebuke is, “that others may fear to do the like.” This action of the church in the case of offenders, is based upon the fact that the discipline of the church, properly applied, is a means of peace and purity, and by legitimate consequence, a means of prosperity and enlarged influence. Every church has the right to exercise this care and discipline over its members ; and this right grows out of, and is an essential counterpart of, the power and right to admit persons to membership in the church. The church, therefore, is bound to the prudent exercise of this right, in order to secure the purity, the influence, the reputation, and united spiritual and outward efforts of all her members, in doing the greatest amount of good ; and so that they may exert the greatest possible power on those who are not in her communion, that they also may come to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Christ.

“ Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity ! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard ; that went down to the skirts of his garments. As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion ; for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life forevermore.” *Ps.*  
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“Sweetly may we all agree,  
Touched with softest sympathy  
Kindly for each other care ;  
Every member feel its share.”

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### SECTION THIRD.

#### *Rites and Ceremonies may be Changed or Abolished.*

1. “Every particular church may ordain, change, or abolish rites and ceremonies, so that all things may be done to edification.

This part of the Article states the difference between the power of each branch of the Christian Church, and that of the Jewish Church, in matters of rites and ceremonies. The Jewish Church had no power to ordain or change any of the ceremonies. These were all appointed of God, and established by the universal consent of the whole nation. They were adapted to the peculiar circumstances and wants of that people, and supported by a law providing for their expenses. But as no such appointment of rites and ceremonies is made for the Christian Church ; and as Christianity is designed to operate among all nations, in the propagation of her doctrines, she must consult the peculiar customs of all nations, and adapt herself, in her rites and ceremonies, to these customs, “so that all things may be done to edification.” This was the practice of the church in the days of the Apostles, and in the ages immediately succeeding them ; and this has been the practice of the church in all ages to the present time.

The church has never assumed the right to change or abolish the distinguishing doctrines and institutions of Christianity. These are matters of divine appointment, and essential to the existence of the church. They are

under the exclusive control of God. But the church has a right, and it is within her power, to ordain such rites and ceremonies as may, in the clearest manner, convey to the minds of the people proper notions of the nature and intent of the several doctrines of religion; provided, always, that she is confined to the limitations of God's word.

Every church has an undoubted right to take care of itself, and to ordain such a ritual as will give her the greatest success in applying the truth to the hearts of the people among whom she may be laboring. The laws of God are equally binding upon all men, and at all times; but the rites and ceremonies of the church are provisions made upon the present state of things in human society, and upon what may appear to be the most perfect fitness for the great ends of religion and religious progress.

All these forms and ceremonies may be, and ought to be so altered, if circumstances demand, as to suit the present and increasing calls of the present age. The authority to do this grows out of the fact, that the authority of the church is complete in every age, and is as great now as it was in any former age. Its powers in matters of this kind are confined to the present time, because the present generation of men have a right to ordain rules for themselves. But the church has no right to ordain immovable rules for other and succeeding generations, because these generations have the same right to take care of themselves, that other, and former generations had, and because the church cannot foresee what will be the peculiar circumstances of future times and future generations. It should never be a rule, therefore, among Christians, to obstinately adhere to rites and ceremonies, simply because they are ancient, when it is evident to every intelligent observer, that the ends for which they were originally introduced have ceased to exist.

2. We may name some of these unessential usages that may be changed to suit "the diversity of customs, times, and men's manners." 1. *The Pastoral Relation.* Under certain circumstances it may be proper, and entirely in accordance with the demands of the times, to have a frequent change of this relation; but, under other circumstances, and when the church and the communities in which she is set up become perfectly organized, and when the ends of a shifting ministry appear to be fully accomplished, then there is great propriety in the permanent pastoral relation. By this permanent relation between pastors and churches, there is a mutual benefit. The pastor can be more orderly and definite in his studies, and more specific in all his pastoral operations. And the church will be more firmly established, and more fully edified in the entire structure of Christianity. It were folly to object to this by the plea that ministers generally have not sufficient talent to edify a congregation more than one or two years at a time. It is not a fact that those churches who have a shifting ministry are more intelligent than those other churches who have a settled ministry. But the reverse is true in general. Why then, shall we reflect upon the intelligence and capacity of ministers so far as to say they have not the ability to sustain themselves more than one or two years, in any one congregation? Men of studious habits, and whose income will justify the purchase of books, may be able to instruct any congregation, for any number of years. And congregations thus served may be more thoroughly instructed in the minutia, as well as in the main facts of Christianity. But itching ears are always fond of something new, and the very frequent recurrence of new things have great power in the creation of just such ears.

3. *The Separation of Males and Females in the Public Assemblies of Christians.* The time was when this was necessary to the safety of female character, and the good order of religious congregations. But these rude times, and consequently these dangers, have in a great measure passed away, in most of the places where the church is now operating, and with them the propriety of this rule. It is, therefore, a reflection upon civilization, and upon Christian men's regard for female character, to enforce this rule in the more highly cultivated communities. And besides this, the rigid enforcement of this rule, interferes for the time being with the divine right that families have to associate together; and with the divine right that parents have to the constant government and oversight of their children. If this rule is not productive of positive evil at the present time, it is productive of no apparent good, and is, therefore, of no use to the present age.

4. *The Manner of Conducting Public Worship.*

*First. Of Singing.* As there are no rules prescribed in the word of God, beyond singing with the "spirit and with the understanding," it is a matter of indifference, whether the worshiper stands or sits; but the hymn to be sung should not be announced by one or two lines at a time. This makes it almost impossible for any congregation or choir to sing with spirit and impression. If the singer consults his own ease in singing, together with the more full and distinct impression of musical sounds, he will stand.

" Arise and bless the Lord,  
 Ye people of his choice ;  
 Arise, and bless the Lord your God,  
 With heart and soul, and voice."

*Second. The Attitude of the Body in Prayer.* No rule for this is laid down in the Scriptures. Standing and kneel-

ing are both recognized, and it is therefore indifferent as to the posture of the body, if the heart is right with God. *Third. The manner of administering the ordinances.*

1. *Baptism.* The *matter* of this ordinance is *water*; and the *form*, "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." Beyond these, which are essential to the right administration of this ordinance, it is indifferent whether the candidate stands or kneels, while receiving it, or whether the water is poured or sprinkled. Whatever ceremonies are used with this ordinance, should, as clearly as possible, indicate its covenant character and spiritual import. 2. *The Lord's Supper.* The *matter* of this ordinance is bread and wine. The *ceremony* is, to *break the bread*, and to *pour out the wine*. The *form* is, "Take, eat," "Drink ye all of it," "Do this in remembrance of me." These are essential to the proper administration of this ordinance, but the attitude of the body is not.

The leading object of the church should be, to administer both these ordinances, "so that all things may be done to edification." The church is competent to construct suitable forms of public worship; and to ordain such forms of consecration, to be used in the ordinance of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, as may best accord with the nature and design of their institutions; and to prescribe the manner of administration, so that there may be order and uniformity in her ritual, and so that the greatest impression may be produced by her public services.

This fact brings her under obligations to consult closely her own interest and duty, and to take hold of such developments of time and circumstances as may justify her farther progress into an elevated state. With doctrines she has nothing to do; these are the fixed facts of Chris-

tianity, as established by the great Legislator of the universe. But her ritual is in her own hands, and she is competent to ordain, change or abolish any part or parts that may demand her attention.

5. In closing our remarks on this Article, we are reminded of two things—

*First.* Whatever may be the peculiarities of the rites and ceremonies of the church to which we belong, if “ordained and approved by common authority,” and “are not repugnant to the word of God,” are in full force until they are either changed or abolished by the common authority of the church. It is, therefore, the duty of every church member to observe these rites and ceremonies for the time being; though a change for the better, in some things, might be very desirable, in order to the greater and more permanent success of the church. Any obstinate violation of the established rules and usages of the church, is usually attended with evil, and especially when it “woundeth the consciences of weak brethren.” Let every one, therefore, avoid, as far as possible, any offence against the church, lest he bring upon himself an open rebuke;—

“Lest innocence should find a snare;  
And tempted virtue fail”

*Second.* The authorities of the church should secure to themselves enlightened and liberal views of the condition and wants of the church, and of the demands of the age in which the church is now living. Not, indeed, to study any compromise of principle or doctrine with the world, but to meet in the best manner the opening spiritual wants of the world. And when any rule of the church, which may have contained an unscriptural demand, or test of church membership, is neglected by common consent, or cannot be enforced without great injury,—greater than

the neglect of the rule,—it were well either to modify it or remove it out of the way.

The church should always be equal to the wants of the age, the times and men's manners, if not greatly in advance of them; never, never behind, for then she must drag heavily. She should ever pursue a liberal and enlightened, but firm policy, making no compromise with formality, and never obstinately adhering to rites and ceremonies whose utility is doubtful, simply because they were the usages of generations long since gone to the grave.

“ I love thy kingdom, Lord—  
 The house of thine abode,—  
**The Church our blest Redeemer saved**  
**With his own precious blood.”**

## ARTICLE XXIII.

### OF THE RULERS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

“The president, the congress, the general assemblies, the governors, and the councils of state, as the delegates of the people, are the rulers of the United States of America, according to the division of power made to them by the Constitution of the United States, and by the Constitutions of their respective states. And the said states are a sovereign and independent nation, and ought not to be subject to any foreign jurisdiction.”\*

\*NOTE.—“As far as respects civil affairs, we believe it is the duty of Christians, and especially all Christian ministers, to be subject to the supreme authority of the country where they may reside, and to use all laudable means to enjoin obedience to the powers that be; and therefore, it is expected that all our preachers and people, who may be under the British, or any other government, will behave themselves as peaceable and orderly subjects.”

1. This article did not originally belong to those which Mr. Wesley selected from the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England. It was drawn up in A. D. 1784, and inserted in its proper place among the other Articles of Religion of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and published in the book of Discipline for the first time, in A. D. 1786.

The note which is appended to this Article was drawn up in A. D. 1820, for the express benefit of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada, which was at that time under the jurisdiction of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States. At the same time, it was designed to reach the case of any of our ministers or members who might be under any foreign form of government, and to en-

join upon them the duty of being "peaceable and orderly subjects." This note is of great value, inasmuch as it gives a clear, though brief, exposition of the spirit and design of the Article, both as to its specific and general application. Meanwhile, the Article very distinctly acknowledges the Independence and Sovereignty of the United States, the authority of her chief magistrate, together with the authority of the rulers of the several states of which the confederacy is composed. It very clearly asserts that the United States of America "*are sovereign and independent,*" "*and ought not to be subject to any foreign jurisdiction.*" In this affirmation it is assumed, *First.* That there were good and sufficient reasons for the separation of the colonial states from the jurisdiction of Great Britain. To the truth of this, the Declaration of Independence, which was adopted, July 4, 1776, together with the entire history of the suffering and oppression of these colonies, bear the most ample testimony. *Second.* This Article teaches that the Supreme power of this compact of states is in the hands of the people, and that ours is, therefore, a representative republic. *Finally,* this Article presupposes that the church and state are two separate and distinct organizations, though sympathizing with, and protecting each other, in their several relations and interests. While the church enjoins upon the ministers and members, the duty of being "peaceable and orderly subjects," she expects that the state will protect them, and sustain them in all their church privileges, institutions, and forms of Christian worship. Both the framers of the Constitution of the United States, and the framers of the Constitution and Discipline of the Church, knew full well, from observation and painful experience in the mother country, that the church and state ought not to be connected. Yet, in the construction of

each, the one had respect to the protection and support of the other.

2. This sympathy between the church and the state, as separate and distinct associations, is the immediate and natural result of the divine origin and authority of both. It is the uniform doctrine of the Scriptures, that civil government is an ordinance of God. It is manifestly his will that men should live in society, and that the social relations must be maintained and regulated by specific laws and executive authority. The one very clearly supposes the other; for it is evident that where there is no executor of law, the law must become a dead letter. But men do live in society, and the social relations are maintained. Their rights are secured by general and specific laws, and these laws are administered by executive power. This power is from God, and it is not left as a matter of choice, whether men shall be governed or not; nor are they at liberty to resist the powers that be, when employed to secure the legitimate ends of government. *Rom. xiii. 1*, "The powers that be, are ordained of God." Civil government is not of men, but from God; and it is his appointment that men shall be subject to this government, and to those rulers, whom he, in his government of nations, has placed over them. The power of these rulers is the power of God delegated to them, in this particular mode of its exercise. It is not men, therefore, whom the Bible calls upon us to obey, but God himself. We are to submit ourselves, it is true, to men, "for so is the will of God;" but in doing this, we are not the servants of men, but "the servants of God."

The power to govern nations and states, must of necessity be distributed to a great many persons, and in very different degrees; but to this power of God, in whomsoever vested, or in whatsoever degree, we as subjects are

to yield that measure of submission which the law requires. This obedience is not so much due to the *officer* as to the *office*; therefore, it must be rendered by every one, who would be a good citizen, without respect to anything that may be offensive or inoffensive in the person of the officer. Nero was the cruel and wicked governor of the Roman Empire, yet the Apostles were careful to observe his laws "for the Lord's sake." And though the authority of the ruler may not always be executed for the public good, and for all the best ends of government; yet our duty is still the same.

3. But to see the fuller force of the Christian's obligation to obey the mandates of civil government, we must consult the Scriptures. These testify that government is an ordinance of God; yet it is equally true that every particular *modification* and *form* of government is of man. But this does not change the obligation to obey the laws of the land; for it is not the particular *form* of government, but the fact that government exists as an ordinance of God; and the fact that government in some of its forms or modifications recognizes us as its legitimate subjects, that renders obedience to law a Christian duty. *Rom. xiii, 1-7*, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same; For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid, for he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth

evil. Wherefore, ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake. For, for this cause pay ye tribute also; for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render, therefore, to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor." 1 *Tim.* ii. 1-3, "I exhort therefore, that, first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour." *Tit.* iii. 1, "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work." 1 *Pet.* ii. 13-15, "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of men for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the King as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so it is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men."

These, with many other passages of a similar import, show how clearly it is the duty of all Christians to maintain and support the civil laws and rulers of the state in which they may live. The duty is urged for the sake of God and for the sake of peace.

4. But the Bible is equally clear upon the duty of Christians in the choice of their rulers. *Ex.* xviii, 21, "Thou shalt provide out of all the people, *able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness;* and place such men over them to be rulers." 1 *Sam.* xxiii, 3, "He that ruleth over men *must be just, ruling in the fear of God.*" Therefore political party spirit should never run so high as to overlook these essential qualifications in

our rulers ; nor should we complain if, after party zeal has promoted wicked and weak men to high offices, the curse of God should rest upon the whole nation.

There is no want of Scripture history and facts, to confirm the notion of the comparative good or evil that results to a nation from the character of its ruler. The rulers of Israel were either curses or blessings to the people over whom they ruled. The example of David, Jehosaphat, Hezekiah and Josiah, are remarkable for the influence of piety in the ruler in securing the happiness of the people, and in turning the attention of their subjects to piety of heart and the service of God. A nation is usually blest for the sake of its pious rulers ; and that man who has not the fear of God in his heart, and does not observe the Scriptures and the institutions of religion, must sooner or later be a curse to himself, and the people over whom he presides. The history of the profligate Abab and Jeroboam, as rulers, should cause every ruler and every nation to shrink with horror from the thought of being like them, or of promoting such men to the government of any nation.

5. The example of rulers should be a blessing to the people, and none should be promoted to high office whose example is contrary to morality and the word of God.

As a man, every ruler is bound, by the peculiar requirements of the Bible, to be an example of all the Christian virtues. St. Paul calls such rulers, "The ministers of God, for good unto his people." But how can they be ministers of good, when they are corrupt in their hearts, and profligate in their lives, disregarding even the decent proprieties of life ? But such are often in office, and their power and splendor of state give dignity to whatever they do ; and however absurd or ridiculous the act may be, many there are who will imitate them ; and thus their ex-

ample spreads contagion and death around them. They travel on the holy Sabbath, and thereby give occasion to others to do the same ; and yet, if such men condescend, as they often do, to give a heartless compliment to the Bible or the Christian religion, or to visit some house of religious worship on the Lord's day, their piety is heralded over the whole nation.

But on the other hand, if the ruler is really a man of God, and has been chosen as such by the people, his example will greatly discourage vice and strengthen virtue ; it will give him a charm of virtuous influence, and a persuasiveness of character that will fascinate the better classes of society, and commend the piety of the Christian to all sections of the state or the nation. Such men, and no others, should be the choice of every Christian people, for no nation can stand guiltless before God, if they knowingly promote to offices of trust, the viscious and profane. Piety should ever commend itself to rulers as one of their chief qualifications, for it is true that this is of much consequence.

“ The acts of pious rulers shine  
With rays above the rest.”

6. It should ever be borne in mind, that in a government like ours, the power is in the hands of the people, and that, if rulers are not men of wisdom and piety, the electors are the cause of the evil. All our public officers are chiefly “ *the delegates of the people,*” as they are recognized in this Article. If the people, by casting a majority of their votes, elect to office a vicious man, they thereby publicly attest their preference for such a man, rather than for the virtuous. And it is not a little mortifying to conscientious Americans, that their own people have too often promoted to the highest offices in their gift, the weak, military hero of a few battles,—the man of

blood,—rather than the virtuous civilian or the profound statesman. They have too often lost sight of the fact, that pious rulers are the “ministers of God for good,” and that the wicked and profane are “as a roaring lion and a raging bear.”

But it may be said that the people are often unable to make the proper selection of public officers, especially if the candidates are strangers. Now, this inability does not lie so much in the ignorance of character, as in a fixed purpose of party success, or in a want of a fixed determination to make choice of the virtuous, irrespective of party bounds. Ignorance cannot be pleaded in the case of legislators, members of Congress, or governors. These are our neighbors, and it is presumable that no elector is ignorant of the moral character of his fellow-townsmen. And with regard to the character and piety of the candidate for chief magistrate, the people need suffer no want of information. This might be as easily determined as that he is a member of one or the other party in politics. Select the best man, and thereby meet the demands of Christian duty, and all the ends of good government will usually be met.

7. But whatever may be the moral character or ability of our rulers, it is the duty of Christians to pray for them. St. Paul says, in 1 *Tim.* ii, 1, 2, “I exhort, therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty.” Our duty is here clearly made known, and hence the Protestant

• Episcopal Church has the following prayer on all her public occasions: “Most heartily we beseech thee, with thy favor to behold and bless thy servant, *The President of the United States*, and all others in authority; and so re-

plenish them with the grace of thy Holy Spirit, that they may always incline to thy will, and walk in thy way." This prayer, or something like it, should be in the heart and mouth of every American Christian.

" Lord, while for all mankind we pray,  
Of every clime and coast ;  
O hear us for our native land,  
The land we love the most."

This is the true and only relation that religion sustains to politics, and thus it is, that religion and politics are joined together. Not indeed, that religion and politics are one, but that the religious element should always govern in the affairs of politics ; and especially in the selection of rulers. By the right discharge of our duty as Christians, we may be enabled "to use all laudable means to enjoin obedience to the powers that be," and to behave ourselves "as peaceable and orderly subjects." And we may confidently expect God to bless and prosper our nation, and to perpetuate her republican freedom to the end of time.

" Here may religion shed her light  
On days of rest and toil ;  
And piety and virtue reign,  
And bless our native soil."

## ARTICLE XXIV.

### OF CHRISTIAN MEN'S GOODS.

“ The riches and goods of Christians are not common, as touching the right, title, and possession of the same, as some do falsely boast. Notwithstanding, every man ought, of such things as he possesseth, liberally to give alms to the poor, according to his ability ”

#### SECTION FIRST.

##### *Riches of Christians not Common.*

1. The first paragraph of this Article condemns the notion of a community of goods, which rose in Germany soon after the Reformation, and was entertained and propagated by that fanatical sect called Anabaptists. These persons maintained, among other things, the following points of doctrine: “ That the Church of Christ ought to be exempt from all sin ;—*that all things ought to be common among the faithful* ;—that all usury, tithes, and tribute ought to be abolished ;—that the baptism of infants was an invention of the devil ;—that every Christian was invested with a power to preach the gospel, and, consequently, that the church stood in no need of ministers, or pastors ;—and that God still continued to reveal his will to chosen persons by dreams and visions.” *Dr. Mosheim, Ec. Hist.*

This sect, it is true, are not named in this Article as they are in the Thirty-Eighth Article of the Protestant Episcopal Church; The word “some” is supplied for the word “Anabaptist,” and we think with great propriety, inasmuch as these have given place to certain societies of

half infidels, who still maintain the doctrine of a community of goods. These are of so little importance, and have so signally failed in all their attempts to establish their communities, that they are scarcely entitled to notice.

But to show that this Article contains a correct Scripture principle, I remark that every Christian man has a right to whatever may come into his possession according to the principles of common justice, and the laws of the country in which he may live. This right is recognized both in the Old and New Testament. *Ex. xx, 15-17*, "Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house; thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's." Now, the general precept, "thou shalt not steal," shows the right one man may have in property, and the great evil of taking that property, or any part of it, without an equivalent, or the consent of the owner. It is evident, therefore, that stealing implies the right of ownership, vested in one or more persons, and that without this right, no property could be possessed, and of course there could be no such thing as theft.

But stealing is a sin, and consists in taking, in a clandestine manner, that which belongs to another. Hence it is, that this precept establishes the principle, that one man may have a right to certain property that another man has not, and therefore there is nothing here to justify the infidel notion of a community of goods.

The next precept recorded here, recognizes the *personal ownership of specific things*, as a "house," a "wife," "servants," and working animals. These, with "anything that is thy neighbor's," are not to be coveted, because this leads to stealing, and because they *are not yours, --they belong to your neighbor*. These two passages es-

establish the existence of rights to property, and these rights give rise to sentiments of right and sentiments of wrong. And if the sentiment of right is virtuously cultivated, it will produce strong sympathy for the rights of others, and strong opposition to any infraction of those rights. Hence it is, that the right of property is a test of virtue, and a means of benevolent sympathy.

2. But the Christian man's right to property is recognized with equal clearness in the New Testament. *Matt. v, 42*, "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away." This passage clearly implies *possession* in the person to whom it is directed, and it teaches the benevolent use of those possessions. Why borrow a thing from another, if he has no right to it? Why are we commanded to give to him that asketh, if we have no better right to the thing asked for than the person who asks? This passage so clearly establishes the right to property, that farther comment is unnecessary.

The same principle is involved in *Matt. xii, 29*, "Or else, how can one enter into a *strong man's house*, and spoil *his goods*, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil *his house*." Why attempt to spoil the "house," and the "goods," if they belong alike to the strong and the weak? The same doctrine is taught in *John xix, 27*, "Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple *took her unto his own home*." *First*. John had a home of his own, to which he had an independent right. *Second*. Jesus, knowing and recognizing this, commended his mother to the care of John, whose virtuous and benevolent heart would dictate the kindest sympathy and care for the bereaved Mary. "And from that hour, that disciple took her unto his own home."

But there are still other passages that contain the same principle. *Rom.* xii, 13, "Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality." Now, if all the saints had an equal interest in property, then no one could be in necessitous circumstances, or if there was but little property in common, all must have suffered, and therefore this precept must have been without meaning. But the precept has meaning. It was addressed to the rich,—those who owned more than others,—so that they might distribute to the poor. *Clement*, in A. D. 190, expresses this same principle: "Let the *rich* contribute to the *poor*, and the *poor* give thanks to God." *1 Tim.* v, 8, "But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." This passage inculcates the duty of industry in every man in the support of his own family, and it likewise makes every man individually responsible for this duty. It is clear, then, that this passage does not favor the doctrine of a community of goods.

3. The objections to the Christian man's right to property are chiefly founded upon *Acts* ii, 44, 45, "And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need." Now, we grant that this was the practice of the Christians in and about the city of Jerusalem; but it was not intended to be of universal obligation, for this would make it necessary for all Christians, or the whole body of believers, to be together, in or very near one place, and this is clearly impossible. This practice was *limited* to the church at Jerusalem, and was occasioned by her peculiar circumstances. This is proved by the prophecy of Agabus, and the practice of the Apostles.

Agabus signified "that there should be a great dearth throughout the world." "Then the disciples, every man

according to his ability, determined to send help unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea, which also they did." *Acts* xi, 28-30. Now, it is evident from these circumstances, as well as from the account of Ananias and Sapphira, in *Chap.* v, 4, that the early Christians were under no obligation to give their property to the church; but whatever they did in support of the church and the poor, was *voluntary*. Nor is there any proof that the conduct of the church at Jerusalem was followed by any other church in the age of the Apostles, except as an example of generous love triumphing over the selfish feelings of the heart. From the above, it clearly follows, that "the riches and goods of Christians are not common, as touching the right, title, and possession of the same, "as some do falsely boast."

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SECTION SECOND.

*Christian Liberty.*

1. "Notwithstanding, every man ought, of such things as he possesseth, liberally to give alms to the poor, according to his ability."

We apprehend no difficulty with the first part of this Article, either in point of proof or in point of belief. Nor is there any danger of the error here condemned obtaining much popularity, especially among the rich. But little argument is needed to convince men of their right to all the property they can accumulate; but there is but little hope that they will readily, and to the full extent, adopt the practice recommended in the second part of the Article. Never, indeed, until their hearts are less set upon uncertain riches, and more fully set upon the riches of eternal life, or until they confide more fully in the certainty and regularity of the gifts of Providence.

“Teach us, with glad, ungrudging heart,  
As thou hast blest our various store,  
From our abundance to impart  
A lib’ral portion to the poor.”

Let us now see how far the doctrine of Christian liberality to the poor is sustained by the word of God. The Old Testament is full of proof that God himself took particular care of the poor, and that he made this the duty of every member of the church. The same principle of benevolent and charitable care for the destitute, is incorporated into the Christian system. But it is to be carried as much higher among Christians, as the law of love is elevated by the higher claims and benevolence of the gospel. So high is this principle and duty elevated by the New Testament, that, when Christ represents the transactions of the judgment day, he records the smallest act of charity toward the least of his disciples, as a blessing of Christian kindness bestowed on himself.

This duty is inculcated in the Old Testament, *Lev. xxv, 35*, “If thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with thee; *then thou shalt relieve him; yea, though he be a stranger, or a sojourner; that he may live with thee.*” *Deut. xv, 10, 11*, “Thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him; because that for this thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto. For the poor shall never cease out of the land; *therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in the land.*” *Ps. xli, 1*, “Blessed is he that considereth the poor, the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble.” *Prov. xix, 17*, “He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.”

These are a few of the many passages in the Old Testament, that clearly enjoin the duty of liberality to the poor. But, to make this duty profitable in its practical application, the heart must be in the duty. "Thy heart shall not be grieved." Hence it is, that this, like every other religious duty, must be performed from principle, and from the love of it. Then there will be present enjoyment and future prosperity; "Because that for this thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto."

But this duty is a prominent part of the religious code of the New Testament, and it is evident that the Apostolic Churches so understood it. *Rom. xv, 26*, "For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem." The rule for the systematic performance of this duty is prescribed by St. Paul, in *1 Cor. xvi, 2*, "Upon the first day of every week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." But the obligation to Christian liberality was recognized and practiced upon *after* the days of the Apostles. *Justin Martyr*, in A. D. 150, says, "Those of us that have much, and are willing, according to every one's pleasure, give and contribute as much as themselves will; and that which is gathered is given to the President, and he helps orphans and widows with it, and those that are in want by reason of sickness, or any other cause; and those that are in bonds, and strangers that come a great way: and in brief, he takes care of all that are in necessity." The same principle exists still; and the practice of the duty will be recognized in the last day. *Matt. xxv, 35, 36*, "For I was a hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and

ye clothed me ; I was sick, and ye visited me ; I was in prison, and ye came unto me." Not indeed that these things were done to Christ in person, but they were done to his suffering people ; and inasmuch as they were done to these, they were done to Christ also ; for his people are one with him. Hence the beauty of Christian liberality appears in the fact, that the pious donor is personally rewarded in this life, and shall be rewarded in that which is to come. *Acts* xx, 35, " It is more blessed to give than to receive."

But finally, the exercise of this principle is made the test of true Christian character. 1 *John* iii, 17, " But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him ?"

2. But while it is the obvious duty of the Christian to assist the poor, " according to his ability," it is not his duty to share the fruits of his honest toil with the idle, the drunkard, and the luxurious libertine. This would be to encourage them in their base habits, and to prevent the ends and defeat the object of all good morals, and all well regulated government. The settled policy of every well ordered government is to encourage virtuous economy and industry, and to discourage extravagance and idleness. This is an obvious principle of revealed religion, 1 *Thess.* iv, 11, 12, " And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you ; That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing." 2 *Thess.* iii, 10-12, " For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat ; For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busy bodies. Now them that are such, we command and exhort by our

Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread." 1 *Tim.* v, 8, "But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." Idleness, as you perceive, is here regarded as a source of evil, a sin against God, and against society; and the idle man is a meddler in other men's business,—a common news carrier, and "worse than an infidel."

3. The Christian man's benefactions are, therefore, to be governed by the indications of Providence. While the idle and vicious have no claims upon these gifts, according to the dictates of reason and the Scriptures, yet there are those who are proper objects of benevolent sympathy and charitable donations, by the stern and unyielding decree of Providence. Whatever charity may dictate for the benefit of these—Hospitals for the sick, and Asylums for the poor and infirm—are all within the spirit of the law of Christian benevolence. The Christian, therefore, should never forget the doctrine of this Article of Religion, sustained as it is, by so much of the word of God. He has a right, it is true, to whatever he may honestly accumulate of this world's goods; but out of this right arises the duty of liberal benefactions to the necessitous. All we have comes from God, and we should ever be impressed with a sense of dependence upon him; and with the fact that we are but stewards of the rich blessings of a kind and beneficent Providence.

"To thee our all devoted be,  
 In whom we breathe, and move, and live;  
 Truly we have received from thee,  
 Truly may we rejoice to give.  
 And while we thus obey thy word,  
 And every call of want relieve,  
 O! may we find it gracious Lord!  
 More blessed to give than to receive."

## ARTICLE XXV.

### OF A CHRISTIAN MAN'S OATH.

“As we confess that vain and rash swearing is forbidden Christian men by our Lord Jesus Christ and James his Apostle ; so we judge that the Christian religion doth not prohibit, but that a man may swear when the magistrate requireth, in a case of faith and charity, so it be done according to the prophet's teaching, in justice, judgment, and truth.”

#### SECTION FIRST.

##### *Against Profane Swearing.*

1. “As we confess that vain and rash swearing is forbidden Christian men by our Lord Jesus Christ and James his Apostle,” so we believe this part of the Article is intended to prohibit the irreverent and rash use of any of the names or titles of the Supreme Being. If this be a correct view of the Article, just conceptions of it cannot be too earnestly sought for, nor too highly estimated, inasmuch as it is directed against a useless, a very extensive, and a damning sin against God's law, against God himself, and against the interests and success of the Christian religion among men. Profane and rash swearing is forbidden by the word of God. *Ex. xx, 7*, “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.” Now, the name of God, as used in the Scriptures, denotes his name literally ; his titles of every kind ; his perfections, and every thing by which his character and his will are made known to mankind. *Lev. xix, 12*, “Ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God ; I am the Lord.” *Matt. v, 34-37*, “I say unto you, swear not at all ; neither by

heaven, for it is God's throne ; neither by earth, for it is his footstool ; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great king ; neither shalt thou swear by thy head, for thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay ; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." *James v, 12*, "Above all things, my brethren, swear neither by heaven, neither by earth, neither by any other oath ; but let your yea be yea ; and your nay, nay ; lest ye fall into condemnation." These passages set forth in the clearest possible manner, the Divine prohibition of the sinful and vain use of profane language. And these prohibitions come from the highest possible source, and are clothed with no less than the authority of God. Let no man, therefore, be disobedient to this law.

2. The greatness of the sin of profane swearing may be farther seen in the examples of punishment recorded in the Scriptures. *Lev. xxiv, 10-16*, "The son of an Israelitish woman, whose father was an Egyptian, went out among the Israelites ; and this son of the Israelitish woman and a man of Israel strove together in the camp. And the Israelitish woman's son *blasphemed the name of the Lord, and cursed*. And they brought him unto Moses ; and they put him in ward, that the mind of the Lord might be showed them. And the Lord speak unto Moses, saying, Bring forth him that hath cursed without the camp, and let all that heard him lay their hands upon his head, *and let all the congregation stone him*. And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, Whosoever curseth his God, shall bear his sin. And he that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, he shall surely be put to death, and all the congregation shall certainly stone him ; as well the stranger, as he that is born in the land, when he blasphemeth the name of the Lord,

shall be put to death." How clearly does the above point out the conduct of many young men ; and it may be, the sons of members of the Church of Christ. They frequent liquor dens, fight and swear, and banish all fear of God from their heart. Think of such, and think of their parents.

3. But, if we look at the recorded account of the effects of profane swearing, we may still farther see its evil. *Jer.* xxiii, 10, "Because of *swearing*, the land mourneth ; the pleasant places of the wilderness are dried up." *Hos.* iv, 2, 3, "By *swearing* and lying and killing, and stealing and committing adultery they break out, and blood toucheth blood. Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish." *Zech.* v, 3, "This is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth ; for every one that stealeth shall be cut off as on this side, according to it ; and every one that *swareth* shall be cut o'f as on that side according to it." It is evident from the foregoing texts, that the framers of this Article did well in raising their voices in the symbolic records of the church, against the sin of "vain and rash swearing ;" and well were it for the church if she would raise her voice more loudly against this, as against every other form of iniquity. All men ought to do this, for the experience of every day informs us most clearly, that profane swearers are a curse to good morals—to society ; men whom the young should be admonished to dread and avoid ; men who should be branded as nuisances to any community, and as foul blots upon the creation of God. But the effects of profane swearing are farther seen in the fact that the swearer speedily loses all proper sense of the awful character of God, and the binding obligation of the truth. By trifling with God's name, they soon learn to regard

him as nothing more than one of themselves; or, as an object of mockery and insult, God is degraded in the estimation of the moral sense, by the blighting mildews of its own blasphemy; and then he is insulted and intruded upon by habitual falsehood and deliberate perjury. For certain it is, that he who is a profane swearer, will, in ordinary cases, soon swear falsely.

4. But there is another evil very closely connected with this, if it is not a part of the evil itself. It is that which is involved in what are called "*by-words*." These, I am sorry to say, are but too common among Christians. They are so very numerous and of so great variety, that we can scarcely hope to give any distinct or general specimen of them; nor can we refer the reader to any book, dictionary, or written language where he may find them. They belong to that class of floating words that have never obtained sufficient character or meaning to entitle them to a place in any respectable lexicon, or other book. Like the profane swearer, they are out of respectable society; they are avoided by chaste lips, and abhorred by the virtuous and well trained heart. They find a welcome home, however, in the mouth of the vulgar and thoughtless; and in the vocabulary of the novice in the way to the higher orders of profanity. In common with other profane and useless words, they are unnatural; no reason can be assigned for their use; they can gratify no passion; they create no enjoyment; they procure no advantage; they promise no glory either in time or eternity. They are the vile excrescences of a wicked heart and a foul mouth; a stupid, senseless, causeless crime against God and against humanity.

5. As we have seen that profane swearing is forbidden by the word of God, it is easy to infer our duty. We should carefully avoid mentioning any of the

names of God on any, except solemn occasions of worship, or in connection with his goodness, his mercy, and his justice. And we should never speak or think of God, of his Son, of the Holy Spirit, without awe and reverence. We should never approach his word, his house, the altar of prayer, without due preparation of heart, and a sense of his all-seeing presence. Christians should shun all those words and forms of expression, which, though not directly profane, are merely a series of steps towards profaneness. Their prayer to God should constantly be, "Lead us not into temptation," and, "*Set a watch, O Lord! before my mouth keep the door of my lips.*"

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## SECTION SECOND.

*Judicial Oaths not Sinful.*

1. "So we judge that the Christian religion doth not prohibit, but that a man may swear when the magistrate requireth, in a cause of faith and charity, so it be done according to the prophet's teaching, in justice, judgment, and truth." This part of the Article expresses the opinion of the church in all ages, and teaches what can be shown to be the Scripture doctrine upon the subject of judicial oaths. *St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo*, A. D. 410, says, "Though it be said we shall not swear, yet I do not remember it is anywhere read that we should not receive or take an oath from another." Some of the early Christian fathers claimed, that the word of a good man should have the obligation of an oath; hence *Cyri], Bishop of Alexandria*, in A. D. 415, says, "Let yea and nay, amongst those that have chosen to lead the best lives, have the use and force of an oath, and let things be

so confirmed ; but if yea and nay be despised by any, let oaths be at last turned or directed to that which is greater than us, yea and every creature, viz. : the Deity." This is the rule that should obtain among the members of Christ's Church, but as it is impracticable, and not of sufficient force in mixed society, it stands aside for the higher obligation, which may be innocently required by the magistrate in "causes of faith and charity."

2. But what is an oath ? "Among Christians an oath is a solemn appeal for the truth of our assertions, the sincerity of our promises, and the fidelity of our engagements to the only God, the Judge of the whole earth, who is everywhere present, and sees, and hears, and knows whatever is said or done, or thought in any part of the world." *R. Watson*. It is, "A solemn action, whereby we call on God to witness the truth of what we affirm." *Butterworth*. Judicial oaths are believed to be lawful by all sects of Christians, except the Anabaptists, which flourished about the time this Article was drawn-up ; and the Quakers and some others at the present time. But their opinion is refuted by the word of God. The practice and lawfulness of oaths on certain important occasions, is confirmed by numerous approved examples under the Old Testament Dispensation. *Gen. xxi, 23, 24*, "Now therefore swear unto me here by God, that thou wilt not deal falsely with me, nor with my son, nor with my son's son ; but according to the kindness that I have done unto thee, thou shalt do unto me, and to the land wherein thou hast sojourned. And Abraham said, I will swear." This and other examples occurred before the giving of the law, so that an oath can be no peculiarity of the Mosaic dispensation. But that dispensation did not forbid the taking of an oath, for there are examples of holy men swearing to each other after the giving of the law and in

full view of all it forbid and of all it required. 1 *Sam.* xx, 17, "And Jonathan caused David to swear again, because he loved him." *Chap.* xxiv, 22, "And David swear unto Saul." This practice was not repealed by anything that was said or done by Christ or his Apostles. On the contrary, there is evidence that Christ himself conformed to the judicial demands of his country, in a solemn affirmation. *Matt.* xxvi, 63, 64, "And the high priest answered and said unto him, *I adjure thee by the living God*, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, *Thou hast said.*" "I adjure," signifies to impose an oath on another, and Jesus did not object to the course of the high priest in bringing him under the obligations of an oath; but answered in the Eastern mode of affirmation, "Thou hast said." Examples are found in the Epistles to justify the belief that judicial oaths are lawful. *Rom.* i, 9, "For God is my witness." *Chap.* ix, 1, "I say the truth in Christ." 2 *Cor.* i, 23, "I call God for a record upon my soul." It must be evident, therefore, that the words of Christ, in *Matt.* v, 34, "Swear not," do not prohibit all swearing on necessary occasions. Nor do the similar words of the Apostle, *James* v, 12, "Swear not," prohibit the lawful use of such forms of obligation as the state may devise. All that is forbidden, is "vain and rash swearing" on unsuitable and unnecessary occasions. This whole subject must have been understood in this sense by the framers of this Article, for they say, "that a man may swear when the magistrate requireth."

3. This Article directs how Christian men should swear; "*in justice, judgment and truth*;" and upon what causes; "*of faith and charity.*" *Faith* here means simply the business of establishing the credit of anything; and *charity* includes any good and Christian motive. The di-

rections for judicial oaths are derived from *Jer. iv, 2* "And thou shalt swear. The Lord liveth, in *truth, in judgment, and in righteousness.*"

*First.* "In truth;" that is, with an entire agreement between the sentiments of the mind and the words of the oath, in their common obvious meaning, and as understood by those who are competent to administer it, and those who receive it. An oath must be taken without any mental reservation, for it is obvious that this must defeat the very object of the oath, destroy all confidence among men, and involve the swearer in the sin of perjury. This is allowed by Papists, and hence the care in the wording of this Article, that this error may be avoided and exposed.

*Second.* "In judgment;" that is, so as not to swear ignorantly, but deliberately, and after considering carefully the circumstances of the matter about which we are to swear, so that all the facts in that particular case that are within the compass of our knowledge, may be properly stated.

*Third.* "In righteousness;" that is, so as not to swear falsely, but with a fixed and steady purpose of mind to perform whatever we pledge ourselves to do at the time of the obligation. These directions are intended to perpetuate the dignity and solemnity of the oath; and to make it the means of arriving at the truth. "*the whole truth and nothing but the truth.*"

Oaths are of two kinds; *assertory* and *promissory*. The former refers to facts past or present, and the person swearing asserts these facts, according to the best of his knowledge. The latter refers to certain actions in time to come, which the swearer promises to perform with all faithfulness, and to the best of his ability.

4. It will be seen from the foregoing examples, that

there is no prescribed form of obligation in the New Testament. This was, and is still left to the discretion of the state. This is just as it should be, for it were impossible to construct a form of oath that would apply to, and involve all the facts and circumstances that the multitudinous transactions of life might demand. Whatever the form may be, it must involve an appeal to the Supreme Being, for this is what constitutes the spirit and obligation of an oath. It is no matter in what form this appeal is made, whether by *holding up the hand, kissing the Holy Book*, or by *affirmation*, for the purport of the oath is the same, because the appeal is made to God. This is the doctrine of the examples we have recorded, and it is a command of God. *Deut. x, 20*, "And to him shalt thou cleave, and *swear by his name.*" Swearing by any other name is prohibited by Christ, in *Matt. v, 34*, and by St. James, *chap. v, 12*. Swearing by the name of God, implies a belief in his being, an acknowledgment of his Omniscience, Omnipotence and Justice; together with an acknowledgment of a future state of rewards and punishment. Hence it is said, in the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, that, "A lawful oath is a part of religious worship."

4. It becomes Christian men, therefore, to enter upon this service with the utmost care and reverence; and with a gravity of deportment and an exactness of truth, to which they may conscientiously and without fear, call upon God to witness. This act, simple as it is, joins the soul with the awful and heart-searching transactions of the last day. It involves an appeal to God, —to his justice in the administration of his own government, and to the impartial investigations of the nature and influence of words, actions and all the different aspects of moral character, in the day when a universe of intelligent

beings shall be judged and rewarded "according to the deeds done in the body."

“How careful then ought I to live ;  
With what religious fear ;  
Who such a strict account must give  
For my behaviour here.”

## CONCLUSION.

A review of the Articles of Religion, as they are arranged in the book of Discipline, and of the matter contained in the foregoing Notes, suggests the following brief Analysis—Doctrines—Rule of Faith—Rules of Christian Practice.

From Art. I to Art. IV, is a statement of the Doctrines involved in the general Doctrine of the Holy Trinity. From Art. V and VI, we learn what is the Rule of Faith. From Art. VII to Art. XI, are the Doctrines that refer to Christians as Individuals; and from Art. XIII to Art. XXV, are the Doctrines that relate to the conduct of believers as members of the Christian Church. This analysis is added to the foregoing work, for the purpose of showing, in a condensed form, not only the extent of ground that is covered, but the amount of matter that the Articles contain. And as the foundation of true religion is an intelligent belief in one God, the first Article in the series announces the existence of but one Supreme Being. This announcement is made upon the authority of both natural and revealed religion. The fact that a being existed anterior to the great framework of nature, and that he still exists to superintend and direct its vast operations, is alike the testimony of philosophy and the Bible. Philosophy, in her investigations, casts floods of light upon the Bible, and both together confirm the fact of a Su-

preme existence. So minute and definite are the revelations of God in his works, that

“The meanest pin in nature’s frame,  
Marks out some letter of his name ;  
Across the earth, around the sky,  
There’s not a spot, or deep or high  
Where the Creator hath not trod,  
And left the footsteps of a God.”

But the Bible affords the clearest and most direct evidence of but one God. To this we must constantly refer. Then follows the doctrine—

#### I.—OF THE HOLY TRINITY.

“And in unity of this Godhead, there are Three Persons, of one substance, power and eternity; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.” A reader of ecclesiastical history need not be informed of the obvious necessity of this Article; nor need we say to the wise reader of the Bible, that this Article contains a doctrine of Divine revelation. Those who take this view of the subject are called *Trinitarians*. But there are those, on the other hand, who affirm that there is no distinction of Persons in the Godhead; that Christ has but one nature; that he is a created being, neither human nor Divine; and that the Holy Ghost is merely an *attribute* or *emanation* from the Father. These are called *Unitarians*. Of these, there are three distinct subdivisions; the *Arians*, who regard Christ merely as an *exalted being*, and the Holy Ghost as the *breath* or an emanation from God. And the *Socinians*, who believe Christ to be but a man. Then the *Sabellians*, who affirm that the terms Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are merely three names for the one person of the Father.

It is worthy of remark, however, that while the before

named Articles oppose Arianism in general, the Arianism of the present age, is not the Arianism of the fourth nor of the seventeenth century. It has been greatly modified and transformed, though in its principal features it is still the same. It is an old error modernized and surrounded with drapery, and presented in such plausible costume, as to easily lead astray the young and unreflecting mind. Hence the propriety of a clear and Scriptural, and enlarged exposition of the several doctrines that enter into the one fundamental doctrine of the Trinity. Though the foregoing Articles and appended Notes consider but one main error, as the root of what may be called *modern Arianism*, yet they are sufficiently full and explicit to meet this error in all its various phases and modification. And as a defense of the doctrine of the Trinity, they are as well adapted to a Socinian or a Sabellian, as to an ancient Arian.

In controversy with this grand heresy, the first Article states the doctrine of the Divine unity, and that in this unity there are Three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Arians do not deny that the Father is a Divine essence. In this they do not materially differ with Trinitarians. But they deny the Divinity of the Son, and ridicule the idea of two distinct natures in Christ, and deny that the Scriptures ought to be interpreted on this principle. To meet this flat denial of what all correct thinkers believe to be a clear doctrine of the Bible, we have the whole of the second Article, embodying the Scripture statement of these doctrines. And when the doctrines of this Article are read in connection with the numerous plain proof texts of God's Word, they establish beyond the possibility of a reasonable doubt, one essential part of the doctrine of the Trinity. Then when there is added to this the fourth Article, with its equally clear statement of

the Divinity of the Holy Spirit, fully sustained as it may be also by the direct authority of Inspiration, and the doctrine of the Trinity is at once confirmed. While it is true, that the proof of this doctrine is spread out at great length in the Bible, and especially in the New Testament, and inwrought in the matter of the Apostolic Epistles, yet it is incapable of illustration by anything in nature or science. It is a doctrine which addresses itself purely to our faith, and we are bound, on the authority of Revelation, to receive it as an Article of Faith, and to give it a prominent place in our creed. Without this, much that is written must be without meaning, and the church must ever be in doubt. But with the Bible before him, the minister of truth can confidently teach the sublime lesson, “*De fide Sacro Sanctum Trinitatum.*”

“ Thee, holy *Father*, we confess,  
Thee, holy Son, adore ;  
And thee, the *Holy Ghost*, we bless,  
And worship evermore.”

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## II.—THE RULE OF FAITH.

The fifth and sixth Articles affirm that the Rule of Faith is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament. In doing this, they assert most positively, that the Rule of Faith is here, and nowhere else. And this is the united belief of the whole Protestant world ; and for this belief there is the obvious testimony of the Bible itself. But Romanists deny this, and affirm that the Rule of Faith is not confined to the Scriptures alone, but it is also contained in written and oral tradition. The result of this error must be fatal. Already do its effects appear in all Papal countries, and among all Romanists

wherever they are found. This error necessarily lessens the high estimate that the Scriptures should have, and of course, their claims as a Rule of Faith are disregarded. It follows, then, as almost a necessary consequence, that Papists have no Rule of Faith, for it is very certain that the whole mass know as little about tradition as they do about the Bible. Hence the universal ignorance, immorality and idolatry of Romanists. How far this prince of errors is entitled to any credit whatever, is seen only in the force of mere impudent assertion, and not in any proof that the Bible itself offers. Left to this, and our faith is based on the confidence we may have in the simple unsupported declaration of a Papist. How far this will satisfy the cultivated heart, and how far it may go to prove, that a huge mass of uncertain tradition is a part of the Rule of Faith, is left for every intelligent reader of the Bible to determine.

In the investigations of the claims of the Old and New Testament, as the only Rule of faith, three things must be determined ; and these things can never be predicated of Romish tradition.

*First.* Are the Scriptures genuine ? that is, Were they written by those whose names they bear ?

*Second.* Are they authentic, containing true accounts ?

*Third.* Are they inspired ?

The last question is answered by St. Paul, " All Scripture is given by *inspiration of God.*" 2 Tim. iii. 16. To what extent the Scriptures are *theopneustic*, is stated in the text, and very ably shown by Gaussin on the Inspiration of the Bible. A full answer to the last question is an answer to both the others. If the Scriptures are the work of *plenary inspiration*, they must be both *genuine* and *authentic*. The Spirit of God is too just and merciful to commit a fraud on the credulity of man. Nothing but

the word of inspiration can be the Rule of that Faith upon which is suspended the ultimate destiny of the immortal soul. But no such claim for the inspiration of tradition is urged, and how can it be any part of the Rule of Faith? It cannot be urged, that because a corrupt church, claiming infallibility, has merely pronounced this to be a part of the Rule of Faith, that *this* will definitely make it so. Papists may claim what they please on this subject, but it will be a long time before any intelligent set of Protestants will award this power to the Romish Church; and it will be a much longer time before Papists will accomplish their original design in the destruction of the use of the Scriptures, by the elevation of tradition. God alone has the *right* and the *power* to construct and publish the rules of a believer's faith; and He has acted upon this right and used this power, and now we have the Old and New Testament, and these contain all that is necessary for a correct faith and a correct practice. With these we should be content, and make them our study by day and by night.

“ Still we believe, Almighty Lord,  
 Whose presence fills both earth and heaven,  
 The meaning of the written word  
 Is by thy inspiration given;  
 Thou only dost thyself explain  
 The sacred mind of God to man.”

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### III.—DOCTRINES THAT REFER TO CHRISTIANS AS INDIVIDUALS.

From the seventh to the twelfth Article there is a statement of facts and rules that grow directly out of the Rule of Faith, and that are recognized as belonging to man, both in his natural and gracious state. Original sin

is defined as belonging to man's nature, and is so stated in the Scriptures. In this doctrine, there is direct opposition to that error which claims that sin consists in following the example of Adam, and not in the nature of every man that comes into the world. This is an ancient heresy, reaching down to the present time, and taking deeper root in the sceptical mind, just in proportion to the spread of other forms of infidelity. It is not claimed that original depravity adds anything to the glory of human character ; but inasmuch as it is a fact, deplorable indeed, which pervades the whole man from the beginning of his existence, and which is the root of all the sins of his whole life ; and inasmuch as the Bible and all human experiences attest the existence of this evil, why attempt to evade its force ? Pelagians of every shade of difference admit the existence of evil in man's practice, and of evil as it exists all over the earth ; and they admit, too, the necessity of Christ's atonement as the antidote for the evil, but still they cling to the error that the origin of sin is simply in following a sinful example. But quite another view of the subject is presented in these Articles of Religion. After stating that sin is in the *nature* of every man, the effects are referred to as evidence of the fact stated. So fully and entirely is man under the enfeebling influence of depravity, " that he cannot turn himself by his own natural strength," and that " without the grace of God by Christ," he cannot even *will* to do that which is right. *Art. VIII.* With this view of the subject, the doctrine of *natural* ability falls to the ground. But, turning to the idea of Redemption, we ascertain where is the source of man's ability to please God. St. Paul says it is "*Grace*," and that this " is the gift of God." Whatever may be man's ability in the transition from the natural to the gracious state, is all of God. And when

he is justified by faith as the gift of grace, then he has in himself the spirit of God prompting him to acts that are pleasant and acceptable to God. *Art. IX.*

But while he is enabled thus to do good works, these "cannot put away sins, and endure the severity of God's judgments." At most, they are but fruits of a saving faith, "for faith without works is dead." *Art. X.*

But free as man may be, and however capable of good works in Christ, he is not able to do more than God has required of him, for in his very best state, and with all he can possibly do, he is an unprofitable servant. This is the obvious doctrine of *Art. XI*, as it is also the doctrine of God's word. At this point the Romish doctrine of good works receives a deadly blow, and the truth is made more prominent. While *Art. XII* offers no encouragement to sin, it at the same time alleges, that for whatever sin the believer may commit, in his times of forgetfulness or temptation, if he is truly penitent, he may ask and obtain pardon. This doctrine is founded on the general scope of the gospel, and upon the uniform promise of pardon to all true penitents.

These doctrines embrace enough to show that the Christian system proposes to impress upon every man clear conceptions of his distinctiveness, and personal responsibilities. So fully does the Christian Religion individualize, that no one, who will give it any attention, can fail to see a distinct recognition of himself, and that he is addressed as directly as if there were no other human beings but himself. While it prescribes the bitter cup of penitence and self-loathing for sin, and points to the straight gate, and narrow way, it never fails to speak the consoling promise, "My grace is sufficient," and to elevate the faith, and the hope of the Christian to crowns of glory, reward, and immortality.

#### IV.—DOCTRINES THAT REFER TO CHRISTIANS AS MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

These doctrines run through a series of Articles, beginning with Art. XIII, and ending with Art. XXV. They prescribe rules for the various relations of Christian social life. Christians are said to compose the "congregation of faithful men," known as the *Church*. And without entering upon the learned question of what constitutes the only true church, it simply speaks of the church as a visible organization in which the "Word of God is preached,—and the sacraments duly administered." Where God is worshiped as the Eternal Spirit, without the use of "*images*," and where he alone is invoked for pardon, rather than any of the *saints*, however holy they may have been; and where all the services of religion are conducted in such a "tongue as the people understand."

No one can fail to see the two-fold object of these Articles,—*first*, to bring out the Scripture idea of a church, and to defend its worship against the ceremonials of superstition and idolatry; and *second*, to expose the errors and pagan mummeries of Romanism. To the true friend of Protestantism, these facts are of great importance,—much greater than the vexed question of determining, by ancient records, what is the only or true church of Christ. Farther on, and there is a definition of the Sacrament of Baptism. This is the appointed initiatory rite, for a proper entrance into the Christian Church. It is defined to be a "sign of profession, and mark of distinction, whereby Christians are distinguished from those that are not baptized." It is farther defined to be a "sign of regeneration." And if but a sign of regeneration, it therefore follows, that it is not regeneration itself. The

sign of a thing is very different from the thing signified. The controversy at this point, is with the Romish doctrine of baptismal regeneration, and with the later but similar heresy of Alexander Campbell. The Romish error is well known, and lest the same error in Mr. Campbell's hands should not be as well known, I will give his own words. Speaking of the Ethiopian eunuch, he asks, what made him go on his way rejoicing? His answer is in these words, "he had found what thousands before him had experienced, peace with God, from a conviction *that his sins had actually been forgiven in the act of immersion.*" *Christian Baptism*, p. 422. The reader is referred back to the Notes on this subject, and to Faber's sermons on regeneration, for a more extensive refutation of this giant error.

To advance still farther in our review, it becomes necessary to remark that the adult believer, and member of Christ's church, is authorized by all the terms of the Covenant of Grace, to place upon his children the same sign of the Covenant that was placed upon himself. And the terms of the Article recognize this right in these words, "The baptism of young children is to be retained in the church."

But within the Scripturally defined boundaries of the church, there is another ordinance, which is a sign of the love, and higher life of its members; and which is a commemorative "Sacrament of their Redemption by Christ's death." Again are we in contact with the endless errors of papists, and when we say that this ordinance is "not to be divided," but to be administered, "in both kinds," to all Christians alike, the reader will know what Romish error is referred to. When this holy Sacrament is properly administered, there is exhibited the clearly defined fact, that "the offering of Christ, once made, is

that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, both original and actual." The point of contact with error as it is implied here, is the Romish doctrine of the *mass* which argues that Christ is offered in sacrifice for sin, whenever the mass is celebrated. But Christians, as members of the church, are furnished with the benefits of Religious Teachers. And not to detain the reader with remarks on the importance of the office, nor the qualifications of the Christian minister, I simply wish to say that the rights and privileges of the marriage covenant, are as fully allowed to them, as they are to other Christians. And why not? None but a Romanist will object, and his objections here are as unscriptural as his argument for extreme unction as a sacrament, or, as for his doctrine of purgatory. But nothing seems to be too sacred for these unholy hands; and the more sacred the institution may be, the greater is their zeal and triumph in its desecration. The holy institution of marriage is invaded, and denied to all who call themselves ministers. But it may not be forgotten that the benevolent design of the marriage covenant is seen, in part, in the fact that it enlarges benevolence and friendship, by joining and cementing various families in close alliance; and in the true incentives to the education, protection, and morality of the rising generations. It is an institution of God, and set apart for wise purposes, and without any restrictions, except so far as the relationship of blood is concerned. And certainly no one who is at all familiar with the decidedly evil effects of relations marrying together, will, for a moment, object to the only restrictions that God has laid on the formation of the marriage covenant. But none of the Scriptural objections to marriage are pleaded by Romanists. They object to the marriage of ministers on what they suppose

to be even higher ground than the word of God—the authority of the church. But whether ministers shall marry or not, as the Bible teaches, and as the whole Protestant world believes, is left entirely to their own discretion, and “as they shall judge the same to serve best to godliness.”

But the Christian church must, of necessity, have certain rites and ceremonies. Some form must be adopted for the conduct of public worship, and for the order of each worshiping congregation. Whether these forms shall be simple or complicated, is not the question here; but rather is the question of the right, and competency of the church to ordain and adapt her rites and ceremonies to “the diversity of countries, times, and men’s manners,” provided always, “that nothing be ordained against God’s word.” But when these are ordained by the common authority of the church, they demand that the conduct of Christians shall be in accordance with these claims.

Surrounding the church, and protecting her right to worship God in the use of whatever forms she may ordain; and protecting the persons and civil rights of her members, is the civil government of the country. This is an ordinance of God, and claims, in return, the personal support, and the prayers of every Christian. In the exercise of the rights of citizenship, the Christian is bound to contribute his influence in the selection of civil rulers, whose character and administration shall be a virtuous ornament to the nation, and whose example shall best comport with the claims of God’s word. In a government like ours, where every man is a sovereign in himself, and free to cast his vote for whom he pleases, the follower of Christ should be careful, lest political partizan feeling shall be consulted rather than his duty to

God and the country. No Christian man is consulting the best means to promote the glory of God, who will support a political party and vote for a wicked man.

But we recognize among the numerous other civil rights of Christians, their right to hold property. But with this right there is involved a very important Christian duty. The duty is inculcated in every part of God's word, and is expressed in the Article, in few words. Every Christian man "ought, of such things as he possesseth, liberally to give alms to the poor, according to his ability." The proper objects of charity are more fully described in the Notes than they can be here. To them please refer. The last, but by no means the least of the rules that relate to Christians as members of the church are the rule of a Christian man's oath, and the prohibition of unnecessary and rash swearing. The rules of an oath, "in a cause of faith and charity," are laid down by the Prophet as consisting of "Justice, Judgment, and Truth."

Here ends our review of that system of truth that is so clearly taught in God's Word, and is so universally believed. While it may differ in some unimportant respects with other creeds, it maintains in common with them, the fundamental Articles of a pure Protestant faith. It is so obviously the doctrine of the Bible, that it is incorporated into the ministrations of almost every Christian pulpit in the Protestant world. Within the limits of Methodism, 49,000 ministers are constantly publishing these doctrines in thirty-two different languages, to about 8,000,000 of adherents. But the fact may not be forgotten, that too many of the discussions of the present age are about *forms* and *developments*. Not that these are unimportant, in their appropriate places, but because they are secondary to the internal and

more spiritual doctrines of Christianity. These are the basis of all true piety. The true remedy for the many evils that threaten to injure, if not destroy, both the church and the civil institutions of the country, is to be found in the clear understanding, and practical application of the vital doctrines of our religion. If these pass out of the public mind, all deep inwrought experimental godliness will soon be lost in the wild frenzies of fanaticism on the one hand, and the cold and heartless formalities of Romanism on the other. If we inquire for the cause of the thousand evils which exist both in the church and the state, we may find that it lies deeper than most of us imagine. So practical is the present age, that first principles are almost forgotten, in our efforts to be like the age in which we live. This is our great error, and we should be alarmed lest its growing influence shall destroy the main source of our hopes. We must have more of that intelligent, deep experimental piety which always results from intimate, and prayerful communion with Christian doctrine. These are based on no human or vain speculations, but on the plain and obvious teachings of God's Revelations of himself and his government. These demand several things intelligently carried out, namely, *Theory, Feeling, Practice*. And to be successful in meeting these demands, there must be *study*, close and critical,—*Prayer*, fervent and faithful, and *Watchfulness* over all our actions, lest the adversary shall destroy us by the way; and lest the infidel's distorted dreams of reason, and the superstitious and pagan mummeries of the "Mother of Harlots," shall so far overcast the Christian canopy with clouds and vapor, that the Son of Righteousness shall be forever concealed, and the world fall into the dismal vortex of universal scepticism, or the worse bondage and confusion of a universal Popery.

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