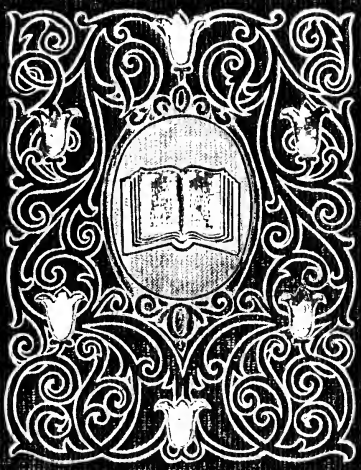
PRINCIPLES OF THE REFORMATION



PRINCIPLES OF THE

PRACTICAL AND HISTORICAL

BY

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PREFACE

I have ventured to collect these studies in the history and the practical principles of the Reformation, in the hope that they may do something to promote a better appreciation among us of the depth and grandeur of that great movement. They are the result of many years' study of the writings of Luther, and of the chief sources in which the course of the movement is to be seen; and I hope that they will be found to indicate some of the deep springs in human thought and experience which brought a new life to the Christian Church and to Europe at that time.

Like all great truths of a spiritual and moral character, those of the Reformation will always

be liable to misunderstandings, and will always encounter deadly opposition in some quarters. The Roman Catholic Church, with its grievous perversions of Christian truth, does but exhibit in an extreme form permanent tendencies of human nature, and we may always have to contend against similar influences. But the only effectual method for resisting them is to maintain before the minds of men and women, in full force, the momentous realities and the profound truths from which the Reformation drew back the Medieval veil. I believe that those realities and truths lie at the very foundation of the spiritual life and the moral force of our people, and that the Church will command confidence in proportion as she teaches the cardinal truths of Christian faith in the light of those principles. In the following pages Luther and the great Reformers will speak in great measure for themselves, and I have confidence that in proportion as they are heard, they will command

the gratitude and the allegiance of Christian thought and belief.

I have ventured to add three papers, in which some urgent controversies of the present time are considered in the light of the same principles.

H. WACE.

THE FIRST PRINCIPLES OF PROTESTANTISM

I

In September 1896 Archbishop Benson of Canterbury paid a visit to Ireland, and at the first public meeting he attended, held in Dublin in aid of the restoration of Kildare Cathedral, he saw opposite the platform a motto, which described the Church of Ireland as "Catholic, Apostolic, Reformed, and Protestant." He took occasion to say that we, in England, have not been careful enough to teach our children and the mass of our people the history of the Church of England. "I hope," he said, "we have awakened lately to this matter, and we are now intending to do it far more thoroughly. To you," he added, "the appeal comes most strongly, and you cannot justify those four words, 'Catholic,' 'Apostolic,' 'Reformed,'

and 'Protestant,' unless you teach everybody you have to do with 'why you are what you are.'" On October the 9th, two days before his death, he attended, in the Ulster Hall, Belfast, the last public meeting in which he took part, and he recurred to the same thought in very emphatic and impressive words. "I reciprocate," he said, "with my whole soul your most earnest desire that intercourse between our Churches should be constant and complete; that, as we look each other more in the face, we will know each other the better, and live equally in that true faith and fear of God which I saw characterised by a motto at Dublin—the faith taught by that Church, which is at once Apostolic, Catholic, Reformed, and Protestant. There was not one," he proceeded, "of those words that could be spared; and if ever it was necessary, if ever we began to doubt whether it was necessary, to lay so much emphasis upon that last word"—the word Protestant—"I think that events which have been occurring in the last few weeks, and the tone which has been adopted towards this primeval Church of Ireland and England, are things which warn us

that that word is not to be forgotten." He was referring to the Pope's Encyclical respecting English Orders. "No," he added, "it is not a word to be forgotten ; but it is a word to be understood—a word which must not be used as a mere earthly, secular war-cry. Those are words which have a deep meaning for our children, which we should try to penetrate, even better than now, and which we should hand down to them to be cherished for ever."[1]

There are misconceptions now prevalent respecting the meaning of the word *Protestant*, which render peculiarly necessary such an endeavour to penetrate its meaning better as Archbishop Benson desired. A clergyman of great authority once spoke of "the disastrous notion that we live in negations, as Protestants, but are unable, or afraid, to put forth positive truth as Catholics." It must be supposed by any one who uses such language that Protestantism consists in protesting against error, and particularly against the errors of the Church of Rome. This misapprehension of

[1] 'Archbishop Benson in Ireland : a Record of his Irish Sermons and Addresses, 1896.' London, 1896. Pp. 26, 27, 110, 111.

the meaning of the word has probably been fostered by an unfortunate expression of Burke, in his letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe in 1792. In that letter he urges, in some most instructive observations, that the settlement at the time of the Revolution did not bind the nation barely to a Protestant religion, but to "the Protestant, Reformed religion, as it is established by law." The sovereign, says Burke, by that settlement, "may inherit the Crown as a Protestant, but he cannot hold it, according to law, without being a Protestant of the Church of England." In other words, 'Protestant' is an indispensable qualification of the religion which the sovereign of England is bound to profess, but it is only a qualification, and the substance of that religion is the Catholic form of the Christian religion as established by law among us. But in the course of these important observations he threw out the *obiter dictum* that "a man is certainly the most perfect Protestant who protests against the whole Christian religion." So that the idea to which Burke has thus helped to give currency is that Protestantism is, at all events in general, a protesting against something, and

in particular against more or less of the religion taught by the Church of Rome. In other words, it would thus be essentially a negative attitude of mind.

Now, let us observe, in the first place, that such an interpretation of the word is inconsistent with its Latin derivation. It is a post-Augustan word, and is said, in one of the best dictionaries, to mean "to declare publicly, to bear witness, to testify, and so to protest." It seems particularly important, in connection with its historical use, to notice that this is its meaning when employed by a jurist like Ulpian; as, for instance, in the phrase, "quippe protestantur pietatis gratia se id facere." According to Dr Johnson, the predominant meaning of the word, as used in English, is of the same character. To *protest*, he says, is "to give a solemn declaration of opinion, or resolution;" and *protestation* is "a solemn declaration of resolution, fact, or opinion." This is the primary meaning of the word. But, of course, such a protestation may be made in opposition to some other declaration or act, and so the noun *protest*, says Dr Johnson, had come to mean "a solemn declaration of opinion, com-

monly against something, as, the Lords published a protest." But the primary and predominant idea of the word remains a public declaration and attestation—a declaration and attestation of a truth and a resolve. "But to your protestation," says Shakespeare, in the 'Winter's Tale,' "let me hear what you profess." It is, in fact, apart from the special association now in question, a great word in our language, for which, perhaps, no substitute could be found to express a solemn declaration of conviction or belief.

Such being the general meaning and use of the word, let us turn to consider its application in that religious sense with which we are immediately concerned. The better understanding of the word which Archbishop Benson desired will probably be best promoted by a historical consideration of the circumstances under which it arose, and of the principles which it originally implied. The use of the word in this religious sense dates from the second Diet of Spires, held in March and April 1529.[1] To appreciate what then passed,

[1] For what passed at this diet, see Julius Ney's 'Geschichte des Reichstages zu Speier im Jahre 1526,' Hamburg, 1880;

we must bear in mind that by the Edict of the Diet of Worms of 1521 Luther had been placed under the ban of the Empire, and his adherents were to be seized and their goods confiscated. The Emperor accordingly, in his hereditary dominions, repressed by force all movements in support of him, and expected the same course to be taken in the dominions of the other princes of the Holy Roman Empire. But there were several of those princes, like the Duke of Saxony, who were not prepared to carry this edict into effect, and the Emperor was too much engaged in foreign wars and enterprises to be able to enforce the observance of the Edict upon them. The consequence was that Luther's opinions spread, and his cause gained more adherents from year to year. But when, in 1526, the Emperor summoned the first Diet of Spires, he hoped to bring this confusion to an end, and, as he said, "he desired to restore the empire again to a happy unity"—words characteristic of thoughts which have been prominent in the minds of rulers

and his short narrative in 'Schriften für das deutsche Volk,' entitled, "Die Protestation der Evangelischen Stände,' Halle a/S, 1890.

from Constantine downwards. But the princes who were on the side of the reformed doctrines did not scruple to bring their preachers to Spires ; and though the churches were closed to them, they preached day by day in the inns in which the reformed princes lodged, and numbers of people came to hear them. Meanwhile the Pope quarrelled with the Emperor, and it thus became impracticable to carry through a strong papal policy in the Diet. It was therefore thought better to temporise, and it was resolved to send a special deputation to the Emperor, begging him to return to Germany, which he had left in 1521, and to take measures for the speedy summoning of a free General Council on German soil, or at least a Provincial Council, to decide the ecclesiastical questions at issue. But until such a Council was summoned, every authority in the Empire was to be at liberty "to live, to govern, and generally to act, as each might hope and trust to answer for himself before God and the Imperial Majesty." In other words, each State, each prince, or each free city was to be left at liberty to carry out the Worms Edict or not, on its own responsibility to God and

the Emperor. Thus already, in the first Diet of Spires, the principle is recognised, though only temporarily, that, in matters of faith and religion, governing authorities must be left to act on their own responsibility, and were not to be compelled by force to carry into effect, in those matters, a law which had been laid down by the supreme authority.

It was the same principle, in substance, which was destined to receive a more formal and permanent assertion in the second Diet of Spires, summoned in 1529. The situation had become much more alarming for the Reformed States. A good understanding had been established between the Emperor and the Pope; and, in a treaty made the same year between them, the Emperor and his brother Ferdinand, King of Bohemia and Hungary, pledged themselves "to use all possible endeavours to resist the pestilential disease of Lutheranism, and to bring back to the true Christian Church those who were in error." There was no sign, indeed, at the opening of the Diet, that the princes thus denounced were the least disposed to acknowledge themselves in error. They bore on the arms displayed at their several

quarters the initial letters of the words which had become their watchword, "*Verbum Domini manet in Æternum*"—"The word of the Lord endureth for ever"; and again, in spite of a direct remonstrance from the Emperor's brother and representative, their preachers were heard, day by day, in their own residences, by crowds of people. The opening communication from the Emperor commenced with a reference to the danger with which the Empire was then threatened by the Turks, and implicitly reproached the Reforming States, by saying that the errors in the Christian faith had hitherto prevented a unanimous resistance to this common enemy. But the Emperor went on to declare, more particularly, his extreme displeasure with these errors, and his determination, as the supreme head of Christendom, to endure them no longer. He said that the long-promised Council might soon be expected, and that the Pope would gladly promote it. But meanwhile, under peril of the ban of the Empire, he forbade any further promotion of the Reformed doctrines and practices. He complained that the Edict of the previous Diet of Spires had been used against the interests of the Holy

Faith ; and, in the exercise of his supreme imperial authority, he declared that Edict to be null and void ; and called on the authorities of the Empire, then assembled in the Second Diet of Spires, to adopt an edict which would repress all religious innovations.

The consequence was that, in spite of strenuous resistance on the part of several influential princes, supported by some of the free cities, the Diet at length adopted a resolution with this object. It declared that the edict of the former Diet, according to which every one should act, in regard to the Edict of Worms, as he was prepared to do on his own responsibility, had been misunderstood, and had been misused in the excuse of all kinds of horrible doctrines and sects ; and therefore it was resolved that those who had hitherto adhered to the Edict of Worms should continue to do so until the forthcoming Council, and should require their subjects also to adhere to it. In other States, in which the new doctrines had arisen, and in which they could not be abolished without great disturbance, inconvenience, and danger, there should, at all events, be no further innovations allowed until the Council met. More particularly,

doctrines and sects which were injurious to the blessed sacrament of the true Body and Blood of our Lord—a phrase which referred to the doctrines of Zwingli as distinct from those of Luther—should not be permitted by the authorities of the Holy Roman Empire, nor allowed to be preached; that the office of the Holy Mass should not be suppressed, and that in countries where the new doctrine had arisen, no one should be prevented from hearing Mass.

By this decision of a majority of the Diet, the progress of the Reformation would have been brought to a standstill. It was to be restrained by all the force of the Empire, even in the States in which it had found a footing; and while in all the Reformed States the Mass was to be allowed, in Roman Catholic States not only was the Reformed worship proscribed, but any propagation of Lutheran doctrine was to be prohibited. Consequently, the States which adopted the Reformed belief had to consider whether they would submit themselves to the will of the majority in the matter, as they were called upon to do by the Emperor and his representatives, and so acknowledge that they had been wrong in the past, and were

not free to act on their own convictions in the future. They came to the conclusion that this was impossible, and they were consequently under the necessity of repudiating the right of the Diet to exercise any such coercive authority over them. They accordingly drew up, first of all, on April 19, 1529, a Protestation, and, further, on the 22nd, an *Instrumentum Appellationis*, presenting their protest with greater completeness. This is a very long document, but its substance is sufficiently presented by Gieseler in the following passage.[1] He says :—

"In the great 'Instrumentum Appellationis' the previous representations of the Evangelical States, and their appeal, are embodied. They demand that the previous imperial Edict of 1526 should remain in force, since otherwise it would be difficult for peace to be preserved ; they say they cannot assent to the observance of the Edict of Worms, nor to the maintenance of the Mass, as they would then be condemning their own doctrines. In all other points of their responsibility they declare themselves ready to render obedience to the Emperor.

[1] Kirchengeschichte, vol. iii. 1, p. 231 note. Bonn, 1840

'But these,' they say, 'are matters which touch and concern God's honour, and the salvation and eternal life of the souls of each one of us, and in which, by God's command, and for the sake of our consciences, we are pledged and bound to regard before all things the same our Lord and God, in the undoubting confidence that your Royal Serenity, our beloved fellow Princes and the others, will in a friendly spirit hold us excused that we are not one with you therein, and that we cannot in such a matter give way to the majority, as we have several times been urged to do in this Diet, especially having regard to the fact that the Edict of the previous Diet of Spires specially states, in the article in question, that it was adopted by a unanimous vote, and in all honour, equity, and right, such a unanimous decision can only be altered by a similarly unanimous vote. But besides this, in matters which concern God's honour and the salvation and eternal life of our souls, every one must stand and give account before God for himself; and no one can excuse himself by the action or decision of another, whether less or more. . . .' Against the rejection of the Zwinglian doctrine of the Holy

Communion in the Imperial Edict, Luther and Melanchthon had nothing to object; but the Landgrave, with Melanchthon's assent, managed that a protest was also made against the issue of such a decision by the Diet, especially as those 'who are concerned in that question have not been summoned nor heard; and it is a matter for much consideration and deliberation that such grave and weighty articles should be handled without reference to the forthcoming Council, or that any decision or order should be taken upon them without requisite and fitting audience had of all those whom the matter affects.'

This appeal is made 'to and before the Roman Imperial and Christian Majesty, our most gracious Lord; and further, to and before the forthcoming free Christian General Council, before our National Assemblies, and further, before every competent, impartial, and Christian judge of these matters.' In short, the burden of this Protest is aptly summed up by the eminent Church historian Karl von Hase. "The Protest," he says,[1] "is an assertion that

[1] Kirchengeschichte, 1891; Third Division, first part, p. 118.

there are obligations against which no positive legal right has any force; or, as Minkwitz, the Saxon delegate at the Diet, expressed it, 'In matters of conscience, there can be no question of majorities'—'*In Sachen des Gewissens gibt es keine majorität.*' But the legal foundation of the Protest is not wanting, and is twofold: 1. That a decree unanimously passed by a previous Diet can only be reversed by an equally unanimous consent. 2. That in matters which concern God's honour and the salvation of our souls, every one must stand for himself. This," adds Von Hase, "is precisely the point in which the essence of Protestantism consists."

It will thus be apparent what is the spirit and the essence of this momentous declaration, from which the title of *Protestant* is derived. Its authors were not then taking upon themselves to make any protest, either general or particular, against the doctrines of the Roman Church. The initiative, in the proceedings of the Diet, did not rest with them. Whatever protest there was in a negative sense was made *against them.* They were denounced as innovators against the order and peace of the Church and the concord of the Empire,

and they were threatened with forcible control and repression. Upon this they came forward with a solemn positive protestation, before God and the Empire and the Estates of Germany, that they had acted in obedience to what they believed to be the teaching of the Word of God, which was the supreme authority, and in accordance with their conscience, and that they could not admit the right of a majority of the Diet to coerce or control them in such a matter. It is thus the first assertion by public authorities of the principle which Luther asserted for himself, as an individual, at the Diet of Worms in 1521, when he declared that the only authorities which he recognised as having a binding obligation upon his conscience were the Word of God and evident reason. "Unless," he said, "I am convinced by testimonies of the Scripture, or by evident reason—for I neither believe the Pope nor the Councils alone, since it is clear that they have often erred and contradicted one another—I am overcome by the Scriptures I have quoted, and my conscience is taken captive by the words of God, and I neither can nor will retract anything, since it is neither safe nor right to act against conscience." This

declaration, of the duty of abiding by the authority of conscience, under the supreme guidance and authority of the Word of God, and of not yielding in such matters to any human authority or majority, was carried by the *Protest of Spires* a step farther: it was extended from the individual to the community and the ruler; the right and the duty of the independent assertion of what is believed to be the truth in religious matters, by every State and every Church, was publicly claimed, and, by one great Protestation, was made the commencement of a new order of things, in Church and State.

It is, indeed, necessary to observe, if justice is to be done to the Princes and States at Spires, and to the true principle of the Protest, that no general or easy assertion is made of what is called "the right of private judgment." The princes do not claim any right to act at once for themselves, on their own sole and individual judgment, without regard to any other authority. On the contrary, it is important to notice that they only reserve their liberty of action until the matters in dispute can be considered by a General, or even a

Provincial, Council. No doubt the principle involved in their Protest, as in that of Luther, precludes them from regarding themselves as absolutely bound even by the decrees of such a Council. They would still have to consider whether their consciences would allow them, under the supreme authority of the Word of God, to submit to such decisions as might be made. But they formally acknowledge themselves bound to consult a Council, and it is only in the last resort that they assert the duty of independent decision and action. Now, it is one thing to say that every man has a right to judge for himself, and to go his own way in religious matters, and a very different thing to say that a man or a nation cannot be justly required to follow other people's judgment, and to go the way prescribed to them by others, in a grave matter of conscience, if, after appealing to the highest existing or possible authority, they are still unable to satisfy themselves that they can do what is asked without violating their duty to God. But the latter, and not the former, is the principle of which the Reforming princes at Spires made solemn protestation, and

it is in this that the essence of Protestantism consists.

The original Protest, in short, is a mean between two extremes—between the claim of the Roman Church for the absolute submission of all consciences to her authority, and the claim of the extreme parties on the other side for exemption in matters of conscience from deference to any authority, and for absolute individual freedom. The principle appears to be exactly expressed in the careful statement of Dr. Hawkins of Oriel, in his Bampton Lectures.[1] "I am constrained," he says, "to disallow the claim of infallibility and absolute authority, whether advanced in behalf of any particular Church, or of the Church Universal; of the ancient Church in the period of her comparative unity, as well as of the modern Church in her state of sad disunion; yielding, indeed, to use the words of Dr. Jackson, 'a conditional assent and a cautionary obedience,' wherever it is justly due; but never in any case conceding, except to the original messengers of revealed truth, 'absolute assent and unqualified obedience.'" To the same effect, Dr. Hawkins adds that

[1] Bampton Lectures, 1840, p. 200.

"the English Church, while she accepts the decrees of the four first Councils in matters of faith, nevertheless confesses that 'General Councils may err': 'Wherefore,' she adds, 'their decrees have no authority, unless it may be declared that they be taken out of Holy Scripture'; and while she acknowledges that 'the three Creeds ought thoroughly to be received and believed,' yet does she not presume to mention as the ground for her belief any consent of Fathers, judgment of antiquity, or authority of the Universal Church, but this only basis of her pure and Scriptural faith: 'For they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture.'"

The Protest of Spires, in a word, has justly given its designation to the whole reforming movement, because it laid down the principle without which no action of individual Churches in favour of Reform would have been possible. It was the indispensable foundation of the system of National Churches; and the action of Henry VIII was as much based on the principle of the Protest of Spires as was the action of the Duke of Saxony. It appears a serious mistake to say, as is sometimes done,

that, in throwing off the Papal supremacy, Henry VIII was only carrying farther a principle which the Kings of England had always asserted, as against the Popes. They had asserted, in greater or less degree, the independence of what we may call their administrative and governing authority. But they had never assumed, as Henry VIII did, that the National Church under their own supremacy had power to deal with matters of doctrine on its own responsibility, independently of the authority of the Roman Church and of the Pope. In this respect Henry VIII was far more Protestant than his daughter Elizabeth. He went much beyond the decree of Spires; and in Elizabeth's time English statesmen and prelates fell back upon its moderate and guarded position: asserting, indeed, in the Articles that, in the last resort, not even the authority of a General Council can bind the conscience, but yielding, as Dr. Hawkins says, "a cautionary obedience," as far as possible, to such authorities, and exhibiting an earnest desire to consult them whenever they may be accessible. Protestantism, therefore, as adopted at Spires, and as embodied in English teaching and practice,

does not consist primarily in protesting against particular doctrines or practices of Roman theology or order, nor in the assertion of any unqualified right of private judgment. It is simply a solemn assertion of that fundamental right, by which this Church and nation undertook, on their own responsibility before God and man, to reform themselves, and by which they claim to act for themselves in matters of faith and religion, independently of any such authority as is claimed by the see of Rome, or even, in extreme necessity, of any supreme authority in the Church at large.

II.

The Protestation at Spires answered its purpose. It gave the protesting States a firm principle on which to stand, in resisting any attempt to suppress by force the reform they had introduced. It was destined, indeed, of necessity, to work itself out to an extent on which they had not calculated. For the purpose of the Princes and the Councils of Free Cities who made the Protest, the unit of resistance to the supreme authority was the

ruling power in each State or city, and they did not scruple to assert their own authority over the individuals who were under their government. But, as Luther's own example had shown, their subjects had the same rights of conscience against them as they had against the Emperor and the Diet, and they found in due time that, in their resistance to the Emperor, they had surrendered some of their own power within their own dominions. The practical effect, in the long-run, was to render government in religious matters a question of compromise between the various forces, individual and governmental, which were concerned in the matter. Henceforth, where the principles of the Protest of Spires were admitted, no Government, no authority, could claim the right of absolute obedience. But some obedience was essential for the conduct of human affairs, and the problem of religious government thus became, in each case, the practical one of ascertaining the limits of reasonable obedience on the one side, and of reasonable authority on the other. The Protest set the various religious forces of life as free as is possible under the practical condition of human affairs ; and, from

that great moment, the recognition of relative rights between the governors and the governed, and their mutual adjustment, has been the law of religious organisation. Even the Papacy and the Empire hesitated thenceforth to assert, or at least to practise, an unconditional sovereignty. The principle of absolute obedience had to take refuge in a new Society, that of the Jesuits, which at length succeeded in impressing its spirit on the Roman Church. On the Protestant side, the Calvinistic organisation, which soon after sprang up, exhibited a somewhat similar reaction in favour of the principle of obedience to authority. The Calvinistic conception of God, as an absolute ruler, reflected itself, as the conceptions of God's character always do, upon the tone of thought, and the habits, of those who were imbued with it; and the Calvinistic Church promoted the ideal of a theocratic rule, in which men were again subject to the unbending authority of the Church. But, nevertheless, the moderating principle of the Spires Protest held its own, and made its way ; and *a just balance between freedom and authority* became, in an increasing degree, especially in England, the ideal of religious government.

The first evidence of this result was afforded by the Diet of Augsburg, which immediately followed, in 1530, the Diet of Spires of the previous year. In the interval, the Emperor had made peace with the Pope, and had been crowned by him in Italy ; but he nevertheless found himself obliged to meet the Diet in a spirit of far greater moderation than he had shown at Spires. His opening communication desired that the Diet should take measures for appeasing the religious dissensions, but so that every one's disposition, opinion, and view should be heard in all love and gentleness, in order to bring men to one united Christian truth, to conciliate them, and to put aside everything which had been unjustly charged against either side. That they should be met in this spirit, only a year after the second Edict of Spires, was a remarkable triumph for the Protestant States ; and it is to their honour that they responded with a similar moderation. The Emperor made public demonstration of his own adherence to the old faith and practice by taking part, in a conspicuous manner, on the day after he arrived at Augsburg, in the procession of Corpus Christi ; and the Pro-

testant princes similarly exhibited their adherence to their own principles by abstaining from the ceremony. But, on the other hand, they abstained from having sermons preached under their protection by their own preachers, and submitted to the Emperor's direction that none but persons appointed by himself should be allowed to preach.

But above all, it was in this spirit of moderation that they proceeded to comply with the Emperor's desire that a statement should be presented, to him and the Diet, of their beliefs and claims in the religious questions at issue. A statement for this purpose had been the subject of much careful consideration by the Lutheran theologians ; and, in consultation with them, it was ultimately drawn up by Melanchthon, and adopted by the great majority of them, though four free cities, which could not subscribe to the Lutheran assertion of the real presence in the Holy Communion, presented a separate confession, known as the *Confessio Tetrapolitana*. But the Confession was signed by the representatives of the other reforming States, and became known as the Augsburg Confession, or the Confessio Augustana, and

has ever since been the chief symbolic document of the Lutheran Church. As the Protest of Spires embodies the fundamental principle of public and private action by which religious liberty was rendered possible, alike for nations and for individuals, so the Augsburg Confession embodies, in the simplest and clearest form, the cardinal theological ideas of the reforming movement. Various Churches and individuals, as the movement proceeded, adopted variations of opinion from it on special points. But these variations, whether distinctively Lutheran, Calvinistic, or English, did not affect the central principles from which the whole movement started ; and those principles are stated in this Confession with all the responsibility and gravity which became such an occasion. For the first time, in the face of Europe, the Protestants were to declare the truth that was in them ; and they appreciated the obligation of stating that faith in the manner which would best commend it to the consciences alike of their adversaries and of their friends. It is here that Protestant principles should be studied, if they are to be fairly and fully appreciated. The germinal thoughts and experiences, out

of which the movement sprang, are, of course, more vividly exhibited in the life of Luther, and particularly in his early life, and his experiences as a monk. But his strong personal character gives them a colour which is apt to lead to their misapprehension by some minds; whereas, in the Confession of Augsburg, these personal peculiarities are eliminated, and the great principles stand out in their permanent meaning and order. At the same time, the Confession is not merely a formal theological statement like our Articles. It is instinct with the deep earnestness and anxiety of that critical moment, when it was felt that the great spiritual forces, which were dividing the world, had come face to face with each other for the final issue.

It is, in the first place, to be observed that the Reforming states express their readiness, and even anxious desire, to discuss amicably with their opponents the differences between them; and in the event of an agreement not being effected in the Diet, they offer to lay their cause before the Council which had been promised by the Emperor and the Pope. To that General Council as well as to the Emperor,

they had already, in due form of law, made their protestation and appeal; and to that appeal, they say, in the concluding words of their preface to the Emperor, they still adhere, and have neither the intention nor the power of abandoning it, as they now once more solemnly and publicly protest—*de quo hic etiam solenniter et publice protestamur*. At the conclusion of the Confession, they declare that, in doctrine and ceremonies, nothing is received among them contrary to the Scriptures or the Catholic Church, and that it is evident they have most diligently taken care that no new or impious dogmas should creep into their Churches.

In another connection they make a still more remarkable statement. The Confession is divided into two parts, the first of which gives a summary of the doctrines taught among them, and the second mentions certain abuses which prevailed in practice in the Church of their day, and which they had removed; and with respect to the former part —the doctrines they teach—they declare, not only that their doctrine does not differ from that of the Catholic Church, but that it does not differ from that of the Roman Church. "This,"

they say in Article xxii., "is a general summary of the doctrine which prevails among us, in which it will be seen that there is nothing which differs from the Scriptures, or from the Catholic Church, or from the Roman Church, as far as is known from writers. This being so, it is a harsh judgment to claim that we should be considered heretics. The dissension relates to some abuses which have crept into the Church without definite authority, in which, even if there were some divergence, nevertheless it might be hoped that the Bishops, in view of the Confession of Faith we have now made, would extend some toleration to us ; for even the Canons are not so harsh as to require the same rites everywhere, nor, in fact, have the rites of all Churches ever been quite similar. At the same time, among us the ancient rites are in great measure diligently preserved. It is a false calumny that all ceremonies and all old institutions are abolished in our Churches. On the other hand, it has been a matter of public complaint that certain abuses prevailed in the common rites ; and as these could not be approved with a good conscience, they have been in some measure corrected."

It is apparent from these solemn statements that the first Protestants—those from whom the name is derived—were most earnest and careful in claiming a Catholic position. They reiterate again and again that their Churches do not dissent from the Catholic Church in any single article of faith. They not only begin, in the first article of the Confession, by declaring their adherence to the Nicene symbol ; they claim for all the other doctrines they assert that they are part of the ancient Catholic faith. It is still more remarkable to find them claiming, in the words just quoted, that there is nothing in their teaching which differs from that of the Roman Church, "so far as it is known from its writers." But there is no reason to doubt either that they were perfectly sincere in making this claim, or that it is capable of substantial defence, with the qualification they annex to it, of judging that doctrine by authoritative writings. Our own divine, Dean Field, in his great work on the Church, maintains a similar position respecting Protestant doctrine in his day, asserting that the best divines of the Roman Church, before the Reformation, were in agreement with the

Reformed doctrines, and were, as he says, Protestants before us, and that the doctrine to which the Roman Church pledged itself at the Council of Trent represented the triumph of an arrogant modern faction. But even if this claim be a mistaken one, if it overlooks, at all events, the steady drift of opinion in the later Middle Ages, the fact that it should have been so clearly asserted serves to emphasise the earnest desire of the Protestants to maintain their unity with the great lines of Catholic tradition. Accordingly Canon Dixon points out, in his History of the Church of England, that the use of the word "Protestant" in England, up to and including the time of the Caroline divines, was understood to include the designation of Catholic, and that Laud and his friends called themselves Protestants, as against the Puritans, to indicate that they were Catholics.[1] Protestantism, in the great charter

[1] He says, vol. iv. p. 221: "The word Protestant retained its original and proper meaning in England (or a share of it) when, in the next century, it was used to denote the High Church or Laudian party in opposition to the Puritans; but unhappily it passed into vogue at last as the opposite not of Papist but of Catholic: in which abused sense it is now common to literature. This popular and literary miscon-

of its foundation, thus bound itself up with true Catholicism, and any teaching which is not Catholic is, by that fact, condemned as not truly Protestant.

But this being so, what, it must be asked, was the nature of the difference by which, as a matter of fact, Europe had become divided into two camps, ranged opposite each other, in imminent danger of nothing less than civil war? The divergence must have been deep and momentous which, in the space of little more than ten years, had produced so profound a division in Christendom. The answer is that, in the view of the Reformers, certain cardinal truths of the Catholic faith had been for a long time ignored, or at least allowed to remain in a very secondary position, and that the revival of these truths, or the reassertion of their true position and importance, had necessarily the effect of altering the balance of doctrine and

ception has reacted on the history of the Reformation with stupefying effect. The men who let themselves be called Protestants, but were never weary of declaring themselves Catholics, have been thought to have been not Catholic because Protestant. The opposite of Catholic is not Protestant but heretic; the opposite of Protestant is not Catholic but Papist."

practice, and of bringing into prominence aspects of Christian belief, and Christian practice, which, to the great disadvantage of Christian life, had fallen into desuetude. In order to apprehend the nature of this alteration of view, or point of view, it is essential to begin where the Augsburg Confession begins. That commencement requires very careful consideration. The Confession does not begin with the doctrine of Justification by Faith, nor with the assertion of any special views respecting the Sacraments or the Church. But immediately after the first article, *De Deo*, declaring the adherence of the Reformers to the Nicene Creed, it lays down their teaching respecting Original Sin. That is the real point, from which the whole movement of thought and spiritual experience starts. It is very characteristic of the situation of the moment that, not only does the Confession not commence as our Articles do—after the introductory ones which correspond to the Augsburg Article *De Deo*—with declaring that the Scripture is the sole Rule of Faith, but the Confession contains no article at all on that subject. The Reformers practically assume that the Rule of

Faith to which they appeal is the same as that of their adversaries, and they do not think it necessary to put prominently forward the sole supremacy of the Scriptures. The circumstance that the controversial part of our Articles, in distinction from the Augsburg Confession, commences with the assertion of the sufficiency of the Scriptures, seems due to the fact that, before the Articles were composed, the Roman Church, in the Council of Trent, had laid down, as the foundation of her whole position, the co-ordinate authority of tradition with the Scriptures. The Roman controversialists had discovered, after the first twenty years of their discussion with the Protestants, that they could not hold their ground on the basis of the Scriptures alone ; and accordingly, the first thing they did, in the Council of Trent, was to assert the traditions of the Church as a part of the Rule of Faith. This "formal" principle became of more and more importance as the controversy proceeded ; but, at the stage we are now considering, it is not the formal, but the material, or substantial, principle which is in the forefront of the controversy, and this principle, as has been said, arises, according to

the Augsburg Confession, out of the truth of Original Sin. The Reformers teach, in the second article of the Confession, that "after the fall of Adam, all men, who are naturally engendered, are born with sin; that is, without fear of God, without trust towards God, and with concupiscence; and that this disease or original corruption—*vitium originis*—is truly sin, involving damnation, and bringing even now eternal death upon those who are not born again by baptism and the Holy Spirit. They anathematise the Pelagians and others, who deny that this original fault or corruption is sin, and who diminish the glory of the merits and benefits of Christ by maintaining that men can be justified before God by the natural powers of reason." It will be noticed how closely in this, as in other things, our Articles follow the general lines of this Confession, alike in the substance of their statement respecting original sin, and in the order in which they place the article on the subject—immediately, that is, after the articles which define the Rule of Faith, and thus at the head of the articles which deal with the doctrinal matters of controversy.

But what is the reason why this doctrine assumes such prominence? It is because the whole movement started out of a deeper apprehension of the corruption and evil of human nature than had, perhaps, prevailed in the Church since the time of St. Augustine. The main tendency of Middle Age theology was Pelagian. Bradwardine, the *Doctor Profundus*, for a brief time Archbishop of Canterbury in 1349, declared that the whole world of his day had gone after Pelagius; and at the time of the Reformation, though orthodoxy might be saved by subtle distinctions, the practical effect of the prevalent teaching was to throw men upon their own efforts—upon their own obedience, at all events, to the rules of religion and of the Church—for their salvation, and for their attainment of perfection. The mere fact, the unquestionable fact, that forgiveness could, under express Papal authority, be bought for a price, is sufficient to prove that there was, at all events, prevalent a grave obscuration of the deadly nature of sin and of human evil. The Reformers, however, did not approach this subject as a technical theological doctrine. They came to it as to a matter of deep personal

experience. They felt in themselves, and they awakened in others, an intense feeling that man was very far gone—*quam longissime*—from original righteousness, from the nature and the perfection for which he was intended, and consequently that he must needs abandon all idea of hope or help from his own powers. For this purpose, it will be observed, they bring into special prominence man's failure to live in the due love and fear of God. They say that men are born "with sin, that is, without fear of God, without trust towards God, and with concupiscence—*cum peccato, hoc est sine metu Dei, sine fiducia erga Deum et cum concupiscentia.*" The lust of concupiscence is not the starting-point of the evil, but its consequence. In proportion as men do not live in the love and fear of God, the passions of their lower nature are inevitably let loose, and fall into disorder. The characteristic teaching of the later schoolmen on this point was that the fall did but remove an addition which had been made by God to the natural endowments of man. But the Reformers regarded the fall as having removed the mainspring, deprived human nature of its sun and

centre, and thus involved it in utter ruin and confusion. For the mere functions of civil life, it retains to a great extent the power of free-will and self-government ; though even in this sphere it can only be kept in tolerable order by the stern administration of law, and its evil impulses are perpetually at work. But for the higher purposes of the soul, for its ideal life, a fall from God was a fall from everything. When they looked into their own hearts, or when they looked around them, and saw the widespread absence of the habit of living in God, with God, and for God, it appeared to them like a permanent solar eclipse in the spiritual world, and they could not use language strong enough to express their sense of the fearful disaster which it involved.

The failure of their adversaries to appreciate their point of view in this respect is strangely exhibited in the official Confutation of the Confession, which was drawn up at the time by order of the Emperor. This Confutation, prepared by Roman Catholic divines at the Council, says that they approve the second article of the Confession, so far as it states that original corruption is really sin, bringing

damnation and eternal death to those who are not born anew by baptism and the Holy Spirit. But the statement, that it is a part of original sin that men are born without fear of God, and without trust in God, is altogether to be rejected, since it is evident to every Christian that to be without fear of God and trust in God is rather the actual sin of the adult than the fault of the new-born infant. As though the Reformers had been concerned to settle the exact relations between original and actual sin! As is said in the 'Apology of the Confession,' written by Melanchthon in reply to the 'Confutatio Pontificia,' their simple object was to recite the whole contents and consequences which are involved in original sin. They were concerned to urge that men not only failed in acts of fear and love towards God, but in the very capacity for it; so that nature, by itself, was possessed by concupiscence, and could not manifest true fear and love towards God.

This was the starting-point—an utter sense of helplessness, a conviction that men and women were so far gone from original righteousness that they had not even power "to turn

themselves," by any natural strength or good works of their own, "to faith and calling upon God." After all, it is to be remembered that this conviction was the result produced upon earnest minds, like Luther's, by the practice and experience of the Church of the Middle Ages. The history of that Church is the history of prolonged and heroic efforts to attain perfection. The most unsparing asceticism, the most unbounded self-sacrifice, an inexhaustible energy and fertility in good works of all kinds, new orders of monkery, rules of ever-increasing severity, ceremonies heaped upon ceremonies, had been produced by this insatiable craving after perfection; and what was the result? As to the general state of the Church, and the Christian life, let Erasmus's 'Encomium Moriæ,' his satirical eulogy of folly, written in 1510, before the commencement of the Lutheran movement, be a sufficient witness. The corruption which that satire lays bare throughout the Church, in the Clergy, the monastic Orders, and the Court of Rome would be incredible, if it were not thus attested by a contemporary observer like Erasmus, who, when the crisis came, stood aside from the Reform-

ing movement. It is no disparagement of the persistent efforts of the doctors and saints of the Middle Ages to say that, at the time the Reformation commenced, their system was bankrupt. It had failed, not only to produce the perfection at which it had aimed, but even to preserve the Church and the world from the most intolerable corruptions. But if it had failed publicly, it had not less conspicuously failed in individual experience. Its high ideal standard, its intense asceticism, the terrors with which, not only in hell but in purgatory, it had invested the idea of God and His righteousness, had taken comfort and hope out of the hearts of numbers of earnest souls. Few things, accordingly, are more striking in the early sermons of the preachers of the Reformation, or in the Apology itself, than the stress which is constantly laid upon the troubled and affrighted consciences to which they address themselves. The 20th Article of the Confession, for instance, on good works, speaks of the consolation brought by the Reformed doctrine to pious and trembling consciences, which could not be rendered tranquil by any works, and it says that the whole of the Reformed

teaching is to be referred to the struggle of a terrified conscience, and cannot be understood without that struggle. Formerly, it goes on to say, consciences were tormented by the doctrine of works, and did not hear the consolation of the Gospel. Some were driven by their conscience into the desert, or into monasteries, hoping to merit grace there by a monastic life.

These statements, made in the face of the world, before the Diet, and not denied by the Papal Confutation, indicate what was the prevalent need and craving to which the Reformers addressed themselves. In answer to this article of the Confession, the Papal Confutation simply asserts that good works do merit the remission of sins. The contrary doctrine, they say, as it has been formally rejected and condemned, so it is now rejected and condemned. But unfortunately, whether good works merited remission of sins or not, the bitter experience of the Reformers, and of the struggling men and women whom they addressed, was sufficient to show that they did not bring to men any assurance of the remission of sins, and that they left consciences struggling with the fear of God's wrath, and of the judgments which they

had to encounter. It was this general sense of helplessness which rendered possible such practices as that of indulgences. It was, to a great extent, in a sort of despair that men and women clutched at the extravagant promises held out to them, of escaping the punishments to which they were liable by buying the Pope's pardons, and by helping to build St Peter's. But when one great and genuine soul had wrestled with these terrors of conscience for years in a monastery, when the truth had been brought home to the depths of his conscience, by a bitter personal experience, that there was no hope in himself and his own efforts, but that he must look altogether outside himself for forgiveness and for peace, and when he brought this experience home to the hearts of others, the long struggle of the Middle Ages had reached its natural conclusion. Every door towards peace and forgiveness had been tried which human self-sacrifice could test, and every such effort had failed ; and when that failure was at length realised, men's hearts leapt up at the renewed declaration of those "comfortable words which our Saviour Christ saith to all that truly turn to Him."

If, in short, in one sense the Reformation was a revolt against the teaching of the Middle Ages, or at least its later teaching, in another sense it is the natural result and product of that teaching. The saints and doctors of the Middle Ages, by the very heroism of their efforts, by the strain to which they had put the powers of human nature, had proved the inadequacy of those powers, and the necessity of resorting to some other source of forgiveness, peace, and new life. The Reformers, in vindicating their doctrine and their messages, might well have adapted to themselves, in relation to the prevalent teaching of the Church, the words of St. Paul: "Do we then make void the teaching and the experience of the past by our doctrine? God forbid. Yea, we recognise and establish the result of that experience and that teaching." Luther could not have been the Reformer he was if he had not been a monk; and in the same way, no one can appreciate the great message of the Reformation who does not begin, in personal experience, with an apprehension of the intensity of the original sin and helplessness of his nature. It remains to illustrate the answer

given by the Reformers to this terrible sense of human weakness and misery.

III.

We have seen that the Confession of Augsburg starts from the sad fact, which a bitter experience had forced upon the Reformers, and which was too fully established by the experience of the Church at large, of the impotence of human nature in spiritual things, and of its consequent inability to obtain forgiveness, peace, or holiness by its own efforts or sacrifices. What, we are next to ask, was the remedy the Reformers proposed for this bankruptcy of human powers? The foundation for the answer is laid in the third article, following the second on original sin. "We teach also," it says, in words of which our own second article is an echo, "that the Word, that is, the Son of God, took human nature upon him in the womb of the blessed Virgin Mary; so that two natures, the Divine and human, were joined together in unity of person, never to be divided, one Christ, very God and very man, born of the Virgin Mary, who truly suffered, was crucified,

dead, and buried, to reconcile His Father to us, and to be a Sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for all actual sins of men. The same Christ descended into hell, and truly rose again the third day, then ascended to the heavens, to sit at the right hand of the Father, and for ever to reign and be Lord over all creatures, to sanctify those who believe on Him, by sending into their hearts the Holy Spirit, who should govern, control, and quicken them, and defend them against the Devil and the power of sin. The same Christ will manifestly come again, to judge the quick and the dead, according to the Apostles' Creed."

The past and present work of Christ—His sacrifice in the past, and His sanctification of the faithful by His Spirit in the present—is thus put forward as the sole source of our forgiveness and redemption ; and to this statement the Papal Confutation has no objection to make. It is, however, remarkable, and is perhaps an indication of the imperfect perception by its authors of the questions at issue, that they do not notice the important clause, repeated in our own article, that our Lord was a sacrifice, "*not only for original guilt, but also*

for all actual sins of men." When the question recurs again, in the article respecting the Mass, the Confession expressly alleges that "an opinion prevailed—which had led to an infinite increase of private Masses—that Christ, by His Passion, had made satisfaction for original sin, but had instituted the Mass as an oblation to be made for daily sins, mortal and venial; and that from thence flowed the current opinion that the Mass is a work putting away the sins of the living and the dead, *ex opere operato.*" The Papal Confutation, in dealing with that part of the Confession, disputes this statement, but practically admits it. "We do not teach," they say, "that the Mass puts away—*delet*—sins, which are taken away by penance, as their proper medicine; but it does put away the punishment due for sin—*delet pœnam pro peccato debitam*—and supplements satisfaction for sins." It is at all events evident that the words "not only for original guilt, but also for all actual sins of men," are inserted by the Reformers in their Confession with a deliberate and important purpose, in order to state, in the most comprehensive manner, that, in the words of our Prayer of Consecration, our Lord, "by

His one oblation of Himself once offered, made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world." Nothing more can be required by the divine justice in satisfaction for sin, in addition to that one perfect and sufficient sacrifice of Christ. The grace won by that sacrifice has, indeed, to be applied and used, and Christian life and Christian worship consist in its use and application ; but as a satisfaction for sin, for the sins of the whole world, it is complete and final, and nothing whatever in the way of satisfaction can be added to it.

Then it is, having laid this great foundation, that the Reformers advance, in their fourth article, to the doctrine in which this great truth is applied to the relief of that state of helplessness, and desperation of self, in which they felt themselves and their fellows immersed. "We further teach," they say, "that men cannot be justified before God by their own powers, merits, or works, but are freely—*gratis*—justified for Christ's sake, by faith, when they believe that they are received into grace, and that their sins are remitted for Christ's sake, who, by His death, made satisfaction for

our sins. This faith God imputes for righteousness before Him, as is stated in the 3rd and 4th chapters of the Epistle to the Romans." Here at length we come—not so much to the cardinal principle of the Reformed teaching, for that is rather contained in the previous article, of the absolute sufficiency of the sacrifice of Christ as a satisfaction for sin—but to its practical application, and consequently to the practical point which was at issue. Consider before you, as I have said, all the troubled consciences of those times, the earnest souls who, by asceticism and self-denial, had tried to conquer sin within them, and to win peace, and had failed, and the mass of people in ordinary life, who looked forward with dread to the divine judgments, and were clutching even at straws like indulgences to escape them —how was the blessing of forgiveness or justification to be obtained by them? The Reformers said,—It is there, and you can take it when you will. You have no need to consider whether you are fit for it; you have not to consider whether you have done and suffered enough for it; you never could do or suffer enough for it; if any part of it, however small,

depended upon your doing or suffering, you could have no assurance of it. But it is given you—given you by virtue of the one complete sacrifice of Christ, and you have but to accept it. The promise is made to you, and you have but to believe it. Only believe the promise; and, in the faith of the promise, take up the gift that is offered you, and it is yours. It is a gift, and you are only asked to accept it; but, that you may accept it, you must, of course, believe the promise; and it is by faith, therefore, by faith in God's promise and God's offer, and by that alone, that you can obtain peace for your souls, and enter into full enjoyment of God's favour and God's love." Of course, as they go on to say in the sixth article, this is but the beginning of the Christian life. We are received into God's favour, and given His grace, not only because of the infinite blessing which that favour and forgiveness are in themselves, but in order that we may enter on a life of new obedience. That sixth article, which is entitled "Of the new obedience"—*De nova obedientia*—says that "we teach that this faith ought to produce good fruits, and that we are bound to do good works commanded by God,

for the sake of God's will, though not that we may have any confidence of deserving by those works justification before God."

The Papal Confutation, on this point, exhibits a complete misapprehension of the question at issue, and a reference to it will help to make the point more clear. "It is," they say, "a Catholic truth, and in accordance with ancient Councils, that men cannot merit eternal life by their own powers, apart from the grace of God. . . . But if it be intended to invalidate the merits of men for works which are done with the assistance of divine grace, the statement is more suited to Manichæans than to the Catholic Church." "It is," they add, "altogether contrary to the Scriptures to deny that our works are meritorious," and they quote such passages of Scripture as St. Paul's statement that he had fought a good fight, and that henceforth there was "laid up for him a crown of righteousness, which God, the righteous judge, would give him in that day." But the Reformers had no idea of questioning God's gracious promises of reward for good works done by men who enjoyed the assistance of His grace. The question was, What brought them into

that state of grace? It is by virtue of their forgiveness and adoption as children—in other words, their justification—that they receive His gracious assistance. That forgiveness, that justification, constitutes the great revolution in their condition; and it was this which, the Reformers declared, was offered to all men, without any merits or work of their own, which was bestowed upon them freely, and could be accepted only as a gift.

It is because this can only be accepted, not earned, that faith acquires its importance in the matter. If you are told that a gift is at your disposal, your enjoyment of it depends, not on anything that you do, but on your belief of the assurance, your trusting it, and acting upon it. The strangest misconceptions have prevailed on this point. It has been said that the Reformers attributed some abstract virtue to Faith,—that Faith, as an abstract quality, was elevated by them to a novel supremacy, and that their doctrine was simply, "Believe that you have and you have it." But there is nothing abstract, nothing independent, in the faith of which the Reformers spoke. It exists solely by virtue of the antecedent promise and assurance of God;

and, as is urged again and again by the Confession of Augsburg and the Apology for the Confession, it is simply the response to that promise on the part of man. A promise or assurance can only be met by one of two things—belief or disbelief. God gives us the assurance of His favour and forgiveness, for Christ's sake; do you believe Him or disbelieve Him? There is no third alternative. Of course, if we believe the assurance and take the gift, and then misuse it, we are liable to forfeit it. The object for which a man is introduced into God's favour, and given God's grace, is that he may live by that grace, and may do God's will; and if he does not strive to do so, his nominal acceptance of the gift is a mockery. But the gift is offered to him absolutely, for Christ's sake; it is for him to take it or leave it. When he believes it he has it, because it is there; if he disbelieves it, he does not have it, though it still remains at his disposal; and consequently there is no possible way of stating the bare fact of the case, but that a man is freely justified, through Christ, when by faith he believes the offer made him, and closes with it.

It should, therefore, be particularly noticed

that the phrase, *Justification by faith*, is really an abbreviated expression of the truth, and is not the phrase originally used by the Reformers in the Confession of Augsburg. They say, not that men are justified by faith, but that they are *justified for Christ's sake through faith.* Our own article is in strict conformity with this expression, and brings out its meaning still more clearly, when it says that "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." That we are justified by faith is a mere consequence of the truth: the cardinal point is that we are justified only for the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. That being so, our part is reduced to the acceptance of the gift, by virtue of a belief in the promise which offers us the gift, and for this reason we are said to be justified by faith only.

This aspect of the truth may be confirmed and illustrated by another quotation from the Confession, in the twentieth article, which is one of its most famous passages. "As the doctrine of faith," it says, "which ought to be the chief doctrine in the Church, has so long

lain unknown—for all must confess that there used in sermons to be the profoundest silence respecting the righteousness of faith, and that the doctrine of works was the only one heard in Churches—our teachers have thus admonished their Churches respecting faith : First, that our works cannot reconcile God, or merit the remission of sins, or grace, or justification, but that this we receive only by faith, believing that we are received into grace for Christ's sake, who alone is set forth as our Mediator and our propitiation, and by whom the Father is reconciled. . . . This doctrine of faith is everywhere treated in St. Paul, as he says: *By grace ye are saved*, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. . . . Men are also admonished that this word *faith* does not signify merely a knowledge of history, such as exists in the godless and in the devil, but signifies a faith which believes not only the history, but the effect of the history—namely, this article of remission of sins, that is, that, through Christ, we have grace, righteousness, and the remission of sins. Now, he who knows that through Christ he has the Father propitious to him, he it is who truly knows God, is

assured that he is a subject of God's care, and calls upon Him in prayer. In short, he is no longer without God, like the heathen. For devils and the godless cannot believe this article of remission of sins. Therefore they hate God as an enemy, they do not call upon Him, they do not expect any good from Him. Augustine, in speaking of the word *faith*, similarly admonishes the reader, and teaches that, in the Scriptures, the word *faith* is accepted, not for mere knowledge, such as exists in the godless, but for trust—*fiducia*—which consoles and lifts up terrified and troubled hearts.

"But, further, we teach that it is necessary to do good works, not in order to trust to merit grace by them, but for the sake of the will of God. By faith alone we apprehend the remission of sins and grace. But because by faith the Holy Spirit is received, our hearts also are renovated, and put on new affections, so as to be able to produce good works. . . . For human powers, without the Holy Spirit, are full of godless affections, and are too feeble to be able to do good works before God. Moreover, they are under the dominion of the devil, who impels men to various sins, to

godless opinions, to open crimes: as may be seen in philosophers who have themselves tried to live honourable lives, yet have not been able to do it, but have been contaminated with many manifest sins. Such is the feebleness of man when he is without faith, and without the Holy Spirit, and governs himself by human strength alone.

"Hence it is readily apparent that our doctrine is not to be accused of prohibiting good works, but much rather to be praised for showing how we may be able to do good works. For without faith human nature is in no wise able to do the works of the first or second commandment. Without faith it does not call upon God, does not expect anything from God, does not endure the cross, but seeks for human aids, and trusts in human assistance. Thus there reign in the heart all lusts and human devices, when faith and trust towards God are absent. Wherefore also Christ said, *Without me ye can do nothing;* and the Church sings, *Sine tuo numine nihil est in homine, nihil est innoxium.*"

This classical passage, as it has been called, brings out with great clearness the momentous

practical effect of the revival of this old Catholic doctrine. It lifted all believers at once into a state of confidence towards God, of peace and joy, and set them free, with unburdened hearts, to serve God, and to do good to their neighbours. Men had been living under a cloud, with doubtful hearts, burdened with fear of mysterious future judgments and penalties, perplexing and tormenting their consciences to make satisfaction for their sins, and when they died, leaving money to buy masses to be said for their release from the pains of purgatory. But, by this great proclamation, the cloud was suddenly lifted, the face of God was revealed as gracious and propitious to them in Christ, and they were only asked, for His love, and for their Saviour's sake, to try to do His will, and to live in faith and trust towards Him, and in love towards their neighbour. It was a complete transformation of life, like that which was produced in the prodigal son, when, after struggling back in fear and shame to his Father's house, his Father saw him a great way off, and ran, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and took him, though he had done nothing to deserve it, back into his love and favour.

Accordingly, wherever this doctrine was really grasped, we witness the development of a characteristic type of free, confident, generous, energetic, and childlike Christianity. The word which is perhaps most characteristic of the spirit fostered by the Reformers' teaching, especially in Germany, is the word *child*—the tender German word *kind*—with all the relations of childlike trust and confidence, and fatherly love and protection, which it evokes. We feel this spirit, for instance, in the exquisite morning and evening prayers which Luther taught the German nation in his Shorter Catechism: "I thank thee, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Thy dear Son, that Thou hast preserved me this night from all harm and danger, and I pray Thee Thou wouldst also protect me this day from sin and all evil, that all my deeds and my life may be pleasing in Thy sight. For I commend myself, my body and soul, and all, into Thy hands. Let Thy holy angel be with me, that the evil one may have no power over me;" and "then," he adds, "go joyfully to thy work, and sing some hymn, or the Ten Commandments, or whatever thy devotion may suggest." So at night, for

an evening blessing, he bids you, when you go to bed, " sign thyself with the holy cross, and say : " In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ; then, kneeling or standing, repeat the Creed and the Lord's Prayer ; and, if thou wilt, thou mayest add this short prayer : I thank Thee, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Thy dear Son, that Thou hast graciously protected me through this day ; and I beseech Thee Thou wouldst forgive me all my sins, wherever I have done wrong, and graciously protect me this night. For I commend myself, my body and soul, and all, into Thy hands ; let Thy holy angel be with me, that the evil one may have no power over me ; and then, " he adds characteristically, " quickly and cheerfully to sleep. "

But the same childlike spirit breathes throughout the whole devotional literature, especially in Germany, which has been produced under this influence. I take, for instance, almost at haphazard, from the so-called *Housebook*, authorised by the General Lutheran Conference,[1] the following characteristic prayer : " I render

[1] Allgemeines Gebetbuch, ein Haus und Kirchenbuch,' 5th edition, 1887, Leipzig. ' Hausbuch, ' p. 46.

Thee, O true and faithful God, praise, honour, and thanks, for Thy goodness and graciousness, which Thou hast showed me this day, although I am a poor sinner, and not worthy to be called Thy child. But I know that Thy mercy is very great, and far greater than my sins, or the sins of the whole world. Therefore I confess to Thee all my sins and misdeeds, which I have committed this day, yea, and from my youth up, against Thee, and beseech Thee Thou wouldst forgive me, and pardon them, and of Thy grace have mercy upon me, as Thy dear child, and give me into the protection of Thy holy angels, that they may graciously protect me this night, and all future time, from all harm to body and soul. To Thee I commit myself, to be entirely Thine own, in death and life. Let me for ever be and abide with Thee." In such utterances love and trust have cast out fear, and, in reliance on Christ's promise, men and women live in perfect confidence with their Father and their Saviour. A similar consequence of the same faith is a robust and manly spirit, in which men go through the world with their heads up, looking God and man in the face, prepared to meet the

troubles of life, and to bear the penalties which must, while this world lasts, attach to their sins; but fearing nothing, here or hereafter, because they know, by faith, that they have God's favour and forgiveness. "It is God's design," said Luther, "to have dauntless, calm, and generous sons in all eternity and perfection, who fear absolutely nothing, but, in reliance on His grace, triumph over and despise all things, and treat punishments and deaths as sport. He hates all the cowards, who are confounded with the fear of everything, even with the sound of a rustling leaf." [1]

It must suffice, in this Essay, to indicate briefly the effect of this apprehension of the privilege of the Christian, as the forgiven and justified child of God, upon his relation to the ordinances of the Gospel, and to the ministry of the Church. While this doctrine was obscured, the inevitable tendency was to regard

[1] Deus autem proposuit habere filios impavidos, securos, generosos, eternaliter et perfecte, qui prorsus nihil timeant, sed per gratiæ suæ fiduciam omnia triumphent atque contemnant, pœnasque et mortes pro ludibrio habeant; cæteros ignavos odit, qui omnium timore confunduntur, etiam a sonitu folii volantis. (Luther 'Resolutiones Disputationum,' Conclusio xix.)

those ordinances as acts, or sacrifices, on our part, by which men hoped to procure the forgiveness or grace of which they felt the need. They were of the nature of works, by which that grace was won or merited. But from the point of view of the Reformed doctrine, they appeared rather as the manifestations and channels of God's gifts and graces to His redeemed and justified children. Instead of losing in importance, they became still more precious, because we could approach them, submit ourselves to them, and use them, in full assurance of faith. Thus the Confession, after the fourth article, on Justification, goes on to speak of the Ministry in the Church, and says that, "in order that we may obtain the faith" of which it has spoken, "the ministry has been appointed of teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments: 'For by the Word and Sacraments, as by instruments, the Holy Spirit is bestowed, who produces faith, where and when it seems good to God, in those who hear the Gospel.'" Respecting the use of the Sacraments, it says in the thirteenth article, that they were instituted—in words again echoed in our Articles—

"not only to be badges or tokens of men's profession, but rather that they should be the signs and testimonies of the will of God towards us, set forth to arouse and confirm faith in those who use them. And therefore the Sacraments must be so used that faith may be applied to them, which believes the promises exhibited and shown forth in the Sacraments." Of Baptism, it is said in the ninth article "that it is necessary to salvation, and that by baptism the grace of God is bestowed; and that children are to be baptised, in order that, being offered to God in baptism, they may be received into the favour of God." Of the Lord's Supper it is said in the tenth article "that the body and blood of Christ are really present, and are distributed to those who partake of the Supper of the Lord."

But it is in relation to the latter Sacrament that the great change, or alteration of balance, produced by the Reformed doctrine, becomes most conspicuous. In the second part of the Confession the abuses are mentioned which the Reformers desired to see removed in respect to the Mass. Their anxiety to avoid, if possible, any breach with their opponents is il-

lustrated by their retention of this current name for the Holy Communion. They urge that their Churches are falsely accused of abolishing the Mass, for, they say, "it is retained among us, and is celebrated with the greatest reverence. Moreover, the accustomed ceremonies are almost all preserved, except that, for the instruction of the people, German prayers or hymns are used, in addition to the Latin; for this is the great use of ceremonies, to teach the unlearned; and not only does Paul prescribe that a tongue understanded of the people should be used in the Church, but it is so ordered by human law. Our people are accustomed to use the Sacrament together, if any are fit to receive it, which increases the reverence and the religious use of public ceremonies; for none are admitted to the Sacrament unless they have been previously examined. Men are also admonished of the dignity and the use of the Sacrament, what consolation it brings to fearful consciences, that they may learn to believe God, and to expect and seek for all good things from God. This is the worship with which God is well pleased; this use of the Sacrament cherishes

piety towards God ; and therefore Masses are not seen to be celebrated among our adversaries with more religiousness than among ourselves." They go on, however, to denounce the sale of Masses, and the multiplication, partly from this cause, of private Masses. The abuse springs, they say, from the false supposition "that the Mass is a work which does away the sins of the living and the dead, *ex opere operato.*" Any such opinion, they say, "is inconsistent with the Scriptures, and injurious to the glory of the Passion of Christ. For the Passion of Christ was an oblation and satisfaction, not only for original guilt but also for all other sins. . . . Christ commands that we should do this in remembrance of Him ; wherefore the Mass was instituted in order that, in those who use the Sacrament, faith might remember what benefits it receives through Christ, and might raise and console the fearful conscience. For to remember Christ is to remember His benefits, and to feel that they are truly offered to us. Nor is it enough to remember the history, for this even the Jews and the godless can do. But the Mass is to be celebrated for this purpose, that in it

the Sacrament may be offered to those who have need of consolation; as Ambrose says, Because I always sin, I ought always to receive the remedy. And since the Mass is thus a communication of the Sacrament, there is observed among us one common Mass on every holy day, and also on other days, if any desire to receive the Sacrament, and it is given to those who seek it. And this is no new custom in the Church, for the ancients, before Gregory, make no mention of private Mass, but speak everywhere of the common Mass. Chrysostom says, that the priest stands daily at the altar, and invites some to the Communion and warns others away. . . . And Paul gives this direction respecting the Communion, that they should wait one for the other, so that there might be a common participation."

It is observable, and is made a matter of complaint in the 'Papal Confutation,' that nothing is directly said of a sacrifice being offered in the Mass; and it is explained in the 'Apology for the Confession' that this omission was deliberately made on account of the ambiguity of the word 'sacrifice'. "It may mean," says the 'Apology,' "either a sacrifice

of propitiation or a sacrifice of thanksgiving," and it is there explained that the Reformers denied that there was any sacrifice of propitiation, or of satisfaction for sin, offered in the Mass, but only a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and of ourselves, our bodies and souls, in response to the gracious sacrifice of Christ which we are commemorating.

It will, therefore, be clearly seen, upon the whole, what was the effect of the Reformed doctrine upon the view taken of this great central mystery of the Church, according to the Confession of Augsburg. While retaining the belief that it was in a certain sense a sacrifice, the Lutheran Reformers denied that it was in any sense a *propitiatory* sacrifice, and they regarded it primarily as the means for making Christians partakers of the Body and Blood of our Lord, which, they say, is really present and really distributed to those who partake. In short, the idea of Communion, and of the blessings received in Communion, is made the predominant idea; and accordingly, as a natural consequence, the word *Mass*, inseparably associated with the old conception, falls into disuse, and the Sacrament becomes more and more

known as the Holy Communion or the Holy Supper.

A similar transformation passed over other ceremonies and practices. Private confession, for instance, was retained by the Lutherans; but the important part of it became, not the confession, but the absolution. The object which became predominant in the practice was not that a man should enumerate his sins, which was expressly stated to be unnecessary; but that he should receive the promise of God's absolution at the hands of God's minister, and thus have his faith confirmed in God's forgiveness. The mischief of monastic vows is taught to consist in the belief, on which they were at least too largely founded, that their observance was a specially meritorious work, so as to be the means of obtaining forgiveness, not only for those who professed them, but for others. Rules about the use of food are taught to be mischievous, if they are looked on as meritorious, and not as simple means of discipline. In short, every state of life, lay as well as ecclesiastical, the life and work of the father and mother, the child and the servant, as much as that of the priest or the monk, was brought

under this wide heaven of the grace and forgiveness of God; and thus the whole of life, with all its functions and duties, was made a school of perfection. The practical effect is summarily stated in the following passage from the Confession,[1] with which this review of the original and essential principles of Protestantism may be fitly concluded :—

"The precepts of God and the true worship of God are obscured, when men hear that monks alone are in a state of perfection ; for Christian perfection is seriously to fear God, and further to conceive great faith in Him, and to trust, for Christ's sake, that we have God appeased ; to ask of God, and surely to expect His help in all things we do, according to our vocation, and meanwhile diligently to do good works abroad, and to serve in our vocation. In these things is true perfection and the true worship of God, not in celibacy, or mendicity, or in a sordid dress. . . . There are examples of men who have abandoned marriage, deserted the administration of their country, and hidden themselves in monasteries. This they called flying from the world, and seeking a kind of

[1] Part ii., art. vi.

life which would be more pleasing to God; and they did not see that God is to be served in those commands which He has Himself delivered, not in commands which have been invented by men. That is a good and perfect life which has the command of God."

Such is the Protestant ideal, as stated in its original and primitive documents. This is the ideal which, in its great outlines, commended itself to Englishmen at the time of the Reformation, and of which the adoption proved the commencement of a new era in the life of the nation as well as in the life of individuals. It is in this sense that the English nation is a Protestant nation, and that a Church which is to be the National Church of England must be Protestant too. In days when this Protestant character of the Church of England is questioned, it is a satisfaction to remember that it has been solemnly asserted, not only in Statutes of the Realm, but by both Houses of the Convocation of Canterbury, at a critical moment of the history of the English Church. In 1689, in response to a message from King William III, the Bishops had proposed to thank his Majesty for the zeal he showed "for the

Protestant religion in general and the Church of England in particular." In this expression they were echoing the words of the king himself, in whose mouth they were very natural. The Lower House, not less naturally, preferred that the Church of England should be foremost in the thoughts of a King of England, and induced the Upper House to vary the phrase. But they went even further than the Upper House had proposed in asserting their Protestant sympathies. The address, as finally agreed to and subscribed by both Houses, says that, "We, the Bishops and Clergy of the Province of Canterbury, in Convocation assembled, having received a most gracious message from your Majesty, hold ourselves bound in duty and gratitude to return our most humble acknowledgments for the same, and for the pious zeal and care your Majesty is pleased to express therein for the honour, peace, advantage, and establishment of the Church of England, *whereby, we doubt not, the interest of the Protestant religion in all other Protestant Churches, which is dear to us, will be the better secured.*"[1] Thus formally, in those critical days, did the Church

[1] Cardwells *Synodalia*, pp. 696-698.

of England associate itself with "all other Protestant Churches," and thus distinctly did its representatives proclaim that "the interest of the Protestant religion" was "dear to them." May that interest now and ever be dear to it, and may it never cease to be similarly associated with "all other Protestant Churches."

THE COURSE OF PROTESTANT THEOLOGY IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

I

In the sixteenth century the chief religious forces which have since moved the world burst into action with a primal energy. It was a century during which, in a singular degree, the chief motive powers of Europe were simultaneously at work; in which German originality, and Swiss independence, and French organization, and English comprehensiveness, were all brought into action on the same supreme subject; the controversies being diffused, and the conflicts at the same time concentrated, by the use of a single learned language; so that all the various national and personal influences, which now, notwithstanding all our means of communication, it takes

years to bring face to face with one another, were in immediate contact. The presence of foreign professors, like Erasmus and Peter Martyr, at our own Universities, is but a striking illustration of the manner in which all the elements of life and thought were brought together in one long struggle at that time; only, alas! to be too much separated again, by the action of the Reformation itself in developing national churches and national impulses, and thus breaking the bonds, both of language and religion, by which Europe had become so closely united. An attempt to sketch, even in outline, this vast scene of theological convulsion would be involved in inextricable difficulties, amidst which all practical interest would too probably be lost. It is proposed, therefore, in the following pages, to endeavour to illustrate, by means of the leading controversies, some of the great principles which were at work, and thus to point out, perhaps, the cardinal truths and realities which, though often unconsciously, are the real centres of our struggles at the present day. A writer of distinction spoke not long ago of "the arid theology" of the sixteenth century. The

expression recalls a criticism of the historian Hallam on "Romeo and Juliet," which he describes as full of "frigid conceits." They are conceits, no doubt; but the man must be singularly constituted who regards them as frigid. In the same way the sixteenth century is full of theologies; but a man must have a strange view of human nature and human history who can call them arid. At all events, they split Europe into two great camps, which have been more or less at war ever since; they evoked new and momentous forces in the Roman camp as well as in the Protestant; they opened the springs of new religious ideals, new literatures, new devotions—in a word, new worlds. It is not from arid sands that such fruits spring. Let us endeavour to appreciate in some measure the influences which gave birth to such results.

Consider, in the first place, as a matter of fact, the impulse from which the whole movement started. If we look at it from the point of view of a statesman, it is obvious that the first great public act in the momentous history is the Diet of Worms of 1521. From that moment the authority, not only of the Pope,

but of the Emperor, was challenged, and was successfully held in check in one at least of the great States of the Empire, not merely by a religious reformer, but by the powerful and authoritative Prince who was at the head of that State. From that moment the Empire, and the Church within the Empire, was no longer at one, and the long series of public acts commenced by which the Protestant world was called into existence and consolidated. Upon that followed in the next ten years the memorable Diets of Augsburg and Spires, and upon them the various leagues, treaties, wars, councils, and synods in which the principles and results of the Reformation were developed and settled. But the Diet of Worms centres around Luther, and it is in the action taken with respect to him, by the Pope and the Emperor on the one side and the Elector of Saxony on the other, that its vital importance consists.

This, however, is but the political aspect of the fact that the motive ideas of the Reformation arose out of Luther's teaching and experience. No other influence had really threatened either the Pope's authority or Roman doctrine. The new learning of hu-

manism, even in the keen and satirical hands of Erasmus, had not been able to effect any practicable breach in the great fortifications of antiquity, wealth, and power within which the existing ecclesiastical system was entrenched. That system had a profound hereditary hold on the minds and the spiritual apprehensions of men. They might distrust it or dislike it; but, in Butler's phrase, they were not so certain that there was nothing in it; and when any dispute with it came to the final issue, they were not prepared to defy it, with all the possible consequences. But Luther succeeded in convincing a number of strong men that it might be defied; he defied it himself, and he laid down the principles on which his supporters might stand in maintaining a similar defiance. We have to look, therefore, to the cardinal principles of Luther's teaching if we are to understand the germ from which the Reformation sprang. In a still higher degree must we look to that teaching if we are to appreciate the main currents of the reformed theology. There were other theological influences, of course, side by side with his; but until his death, in 1546, his voice was certainly

the most potent in the theological controversies of his day ; and even after his death his teaching became, in great measure, the touchstone by which a large part of the reformed theology was tested.

What, then, were the great principles with which Luther gave this new influence to the world ? It is a received maxim on this subject that the Reformation rests on two principles —a formal and a material one ; the formal one being the supreme authority of the Scriptures, and the material one being the doctrine of justification by faith. That maxim is true enough as far as it goes, but it does not take us to the root of the matter. As to the formal principle, that of the supreme authority of the Scriptures, not only had it been asserted by men like Wycliffe and Hus, but we find St. Thomas Aquinas, under the first question of his "Summa," in Article VIII, laying down that the authority of the Scriptures in any discussion carries with it the weight of necessary argument, whereas the authority of the doctors of the Church has merely the force of subsidiary and probable argument ; and he quotes the saying of St. Augustine which

played so large a part in subsequent Protestant discussion: "*Solis eis Scripturarum libris, qui canonici appellantur, didici hunc timorem honoremque deferre, ut nullum auctorem eorum in scribendo errasse aliquid firmissime credam... alios autem ita lego, ut quantalibet sanctitate doctrinaque præpolleant, non ideo verum putem quod ipsi senserunt, vel scripserunt.*" Perhaps, indeed, it was not until the Council of Trent that this principle was formally disregarded by the Church of Rome. It was a principle which came to the front in the course of controversy, but it did not constitute the vital germ of Reformation life and thought. That is to be seen in the other principle, justly called the material one, of justification by faith, which accordingly became of necessity the watchword of the controversy.

But it is requisite to look even beyond this principle, to its first apprehension in Luther's experience, if we are duly to appreciate its import. What had brought this principle into such prominence and intensity in Luther's consciousness? It was not any theological controversy, not the pressure of any scholastic argument, not the dispute about indulgences,

nor any other public occasion whatever; it was simply his personal spiritual experience in realizing the relation of his soul to God. The craving of his soul, to which every other was secondary, was for peace with God, and for assurance of the love of God. To obtain this peace he had entered a monastery, and submitted himself for years, with the utmost strictness, to its hard discipline; but he failed to assure himself of peace with God. He remained sensible of his sin, of the deep imperfection attaching to all his efforts, even the best; and he felt himself unworthy of God's favour and love. The main point was that it was not enough for him that his faults and sins should be forgiven, in the sense of due satisfaction being made for them, either here or hereafter, in this life or in purgatory. For the penalties of sin he cared comparatively little; the great trouble was that sin stood between himself and God, and prevented his living in the assured sense of God's favour. The forgiveness he cared for was not a material but a personal forgiveness. As he himself put it, in one of his paradoxical sayings: "A man forgiven by God would feel himself in heaven although in

hell, and a man not forgiven by God would feel himself in hell although in heaven." The personal relation of mutual love and trust between himself and God was what he cared for, and what he was striving for, and this seemed to him to be rendered impracticable by his inveterate sin and corruption.

It is the idea of this personal relation which it is essential to grasp with full distinctness and intensity if the cardinal doctrine of the Reformation is to be realized. It is quite possible to work out a whole system of theology without apprehending this personal relation, or taking any practical account of it. God may be regarded as the Supreme Judge, the Father of our spirits, but at an unapproachable distance ; and the soul's relation to Him may be mainly regarded as that of a subject to a sovereign, or, if that of a child to a father, yet of a child held at too great a distance to have intimate personal relations with its parent. So far as this is the case, the sense of sin and guilt becomes the sense of having incurred an incapacity or a penalty, and the urgent question is in what way each particular sin or failure can be atoned for, or have amends made for it.

The sense of intimate personal relationship may be hardly realized as possible, and the absence of it, consequently, may not be a perpetual grief.

This is really the key to the whole of that Roman and ecclesiastical system of penance, confession, and satisfaction, against which the Reformation waged such war. It was a system for making amends and procuring pardon for particular sins; and from that point of view it had a certain reasonableness, or could at least be presented in a fairly reasonable form. But to the great mass of men and women who submitted to it, the question of their personal relation to God no more arose in their minds than the question of their personal relation to the Emperor in the case of their violating some imperial ordinance. The Emperor personally was nothing to them, nor they to him, except so far as they came into conflict with his authority in respect to the particular ordinance in question; and all that he expected of them was that they should bear the punishment, or make the amends, which the law or the ordinance required. Even the recognised and important distinction between *culpa* and *pœna*, guilt and punishment, did not necessarily touch

the central point of the matter. *Culpa*, or guilt, might be regarded as simply a standing liability to *pœna*, or punishment, until the requisite amends were made. It need not involve, and under the prevalent feeling now under consideration it did not involve, that sense of personal disfavour, of the loss of peace and communion with a beloved person, which is the craving from which the reformed principle takes its rise. A similar point may be considered in reference to the word *forgiveness*, which has practically two meanings, or a double meaning. It may mean the remission of a penalty, the passing over of an offence, with scarcely any reference to personal relations between the person who forgives and the person who is forgiven. But it may also mean the restoration of personal relations, with scarcely any reference to the remission or removal of the material consequences of the offence. In family relations there may be offences of which the consequences are irreparable, and for which the offender must permanently suffer, but which may, nevertheless, be perfectly forgiven, in the sense of entire love, confidence, and favour being re-established between the offending and the offended relatives.

Now, this is the distinction which was brought out with a new vividness by Luther's consciousness and Luther's experience, and which gave rise to the revived apprehension of St. Paul's doctrine of justification. He wanted to know whether he could be assured of his personal acceptance with God; whether he could be taken again to his Father's heart, and live in the light of his Father's countenance. That, he was sure, he could not know, he could not claim, upon the ground of his own condition, or upon the basis of any obedience of his own. Justification meant being forgiven in the personal sense of the word—taken into favour, given the position of a good child in the heavenly Father's household, or, in technical language, accounted righteous before God. It did not mean, and does not mean, forgiveness in the mere material sense of being relieved from all the penalties of sin. Many of those penalties may be permanent in this world, and may have their effect on our position in the final judgment; but they need not interfere with the blessed personal relations towards God of filial confidence, trust, love, and perfect peace.

Now, justification, conceived in this sense, can only be an act of personal grace, and it may be, and in human relations it often must be, granted from motives which are quite independent of the merits or acts of the person to whom it is offered. It may be offered to a son for the sake of his mother, to a husband or wife for the sake of a child, to another for the sake of a friend ; but whatever the cause for which it is offered, there is one thing indispensable to its enjoyment, which is at the same time the only means by which it can be enjoyed. It must be believed and accepted. Not to believe or accept a forgiveness thus offered is, indeed, a renewed offence of the highest kind ; it is a refusal of love, an act of ingratitude, which must cause a greater personal separation than ever. But, on the other hand, if it is accepted, it must be accepted simply as an act of grace ; and, though it involves the highest obligations for the future, yet to attempt, in accepting it, to plead any merits of one's own, past, present, or future, would be felt among human beings to be evidence of a total want of appreciation of the grace with which the forgiveness is offered. Such is the

gracious, natural, human analogy, by which the doctrine of justification for Christ's sake by faith only may be best illustrated. If a father may offer forgiveness to a son for his mother's sake, we may well conceive of God as offering us forgiveness for Christ's sake, for Christ's love, Christ's suffering, Christ's perfect obedience ; and in this sense the righteousness of Christ may well be regarded as covering us, and being imputed to us, not in any fictitious sense, but as the offering for the sake of which God receives us again into His favour, and admits us to communion with Him, if we do but believe Him and accept His love, with all it involves and requires. It may, perhaps, be said, in passing, that there seems something more natural and reasonable than appears often to be realized in the old theological language respecting our Saviour's having fulfilled the law for us, not only by His death, but by His life, and having thus given satisfaction to God's justice. It seems evident, at least, that if the human race had not presented one single instance of the fulfilment of the law of its nature, if every being in human form had failed to realize the Divine ideal, it would have

been impossible for Divine satisfaction to have rested on such a race. Whereas, on the other hand, when that ideal had once been realized, an earnest had at least been afforded of the Divine purpose, and God could once more say of the nature, at least, which He had created, that it was very good.

But we are not here concerned, as a matter of controversy, with the arguments on which the doctrine of justification by faith rests, except so far as is necessary to illustrate its meaning as the starting-point of the reformed theology. The considerations which have been adduced are of importance as illustrating the fact, that the cardinal principle of the Reformation was the revival in men of a sense of their personal relation to God, as the beginning and the end, the Alpha and the Omega, of their religious life. But unless it could be proclaimed to them that that relation was one of peace and love, it would have been impracticable to revive such a sense. Unless men have the assurance that they are at peace with God, they inevitably shrink from Him. They hide themselves among the trees of the garden of the world whenever they hear His voice.

They may set up, and may develop infinitely, ecclesiastical systems for acquittal and discharge from His judgments; but they will not dare to take His hand, as it were, and look up to Him face to face, and live in assured trust and love towards Him. Yet it is this latter feeling which is necessary to bring out the full strength of the human soul. It is only when a man can say, in the full sense of the words, "O Lord, my Strength and my Redeemer," when he is assured that the eternal God is his refuge, and that underneath him are the everlasting arms, that the full truth, energy, and independence of his nature can be exerted. But this is the new life which was revived in Christendom by the exhibition of the truth of justification by faith. It was not merely proclaimed, it was exhibited in action. The denunciation of indulgences, and the long controversy which followed, had the effect of gradually familiarizing the minds of all thoughtful and earnest men with the grand truth, that they could all claim the forgiveness, the favour and the love of God, whenever they believed His promises for Christ's sake, and would accept them. An enormous cloud of apprehension was lifted off their minds, and they

were able to look even the Papal system in the face, and to act on their own consciences, in defiance of all consequences, whether in this world or in the next.

This revived sense of peace with God became everything to them, and altered all the proportions of their religious and moral life. It explains the reason for much that might otherwise seem barren controversy respecting such questions as the relation of faith and good works. What was really at issue, in all the disputes which prevailed on that subject during the sixteenth century, was not so much the truth as the balance of truth. The history of religion exhibits a perpetual oscillation between the relative attractions of the first Commandment and the second. Our Lord said that the first of all the Commandments is : " Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. " " This, " He said, " is the first and great Commandment, and the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. " That first Commandment is so high an ideal that human nature is constantly inclined to do unconsciously what an eminent and beautiful

writer—the author of "Ecce Homo"—actually printed, and to act as if our Lord had said: "The first of all the Commandments is, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."[1] It is possible, at all events, to pursue so earnestly a religion of good works towards our neighbour, as to put practically in the second place a religion of love towards God. That was in the Middle Ages, and is now, one of the dangers of the Roman system. Its orders of monks, with their lives of self-sacrifice for the good of others, may so dazzle the minds of men and women as to make them forget that the true law of human nature, as declared by our Lord, is not that we should love our neighbour more than ourselves, but that we should love God with the whole heart and soul, and our neighbour as ourselves. What was aimed at by the first principle of the reformers was to restore the true balance in this respect—to make trust in God, love of God, peace with God, the supreme object of men's lives.

In this effort their temptation, perhaps, was

[1] "Ecce Homo," fifth edition, p. 156: "To love one's neighbour as one's self was, Christ said, the first and greatest law."

to overweight the balance in the other direction. As Archbishop Benson once said, if you make a ship roll too far on one side, it can hardly be saved from sinking without rolling back, in the first instance, too far on the other. But, at all events, this is the key to the whole reformed teaching on the subject of good works, and when duly applied, it guards effectually against any danger in that respect. "Love God," said the Reformers, "with all your heart and soul, and love to your neighbour will follow"; but it is too possible, if you forget the proportion which our Lord establishes between love to God and love to your neighbour, that your very enthusiasm for good works, your very "enthusiasm of humanity," as it was called by the writer just mentioned, may be so exclusively developed, as to blind your eyes to the nature of your relation to God, and thus gradually to weaken all those higher qualities of the human soul which depend on your duly realizing that relation.

These controversies, in short, were not controversies on points of abstract theology, but between two great conceptions and systems of

life. The reformed ideal was that of the life of men justified by faith, living, all alike, clergy or laity, men or women, in the faith and love, as well as the fear, of God, clinging to His peace and His communion as the supreme privilege of their lives, and serving their neighbour in their ordinary vocations as their duty might require. On the other side, taken as a whole, was a system of life in which men and women lived, indeed, in the fear of God, but without full assurance of peace with Him, never assured of their personal forgiveness, always apprehensive of the punishments, in this world and the next, due to their particular sins, and striving, by heroic and often admirable efforts of self-sacrifice for their neighbours, to make amends for their faults, and to win some remission of evil for themselves and others. The struggle, however disguised under various forms of controversy, is a struggle as to the preponderance of the first or the second Commandment. But the first Commandment can never retain the preponderance which is given to it by our Saviour except on the basis of the assurance of the free personal forgiveness of the soul for Christ's sake. When it knows that that

forgiveness is freely offered to its faith, it can give its whole heart to God without reserve, and then its duties to its neighbour appear in their natural form and proportion, and it devotes itself to them without exaggeration, in pursuance of the ordinary claims of life.

This consideration, it may be observed, will explain the keenness, and, alas ! sometimes the bitterness, of some of the controversies respecting the nature of justification by faith which arose, in the course of the century, among the Reformers themselves, and to which it will be sufficient, from this point of view, briefly to refer, without pursuing them in detail. Such, in particular, was the remarkable controversy with Osiander. He, although firmly asserting the truth of our justification for Christ's sake, and not for any merits of our own, yet urged that it must be for the sake, not of what Christ had done for us, but for the sake of that which He produced in us, by the infusion of His own righteousness, that we were accounted righteous before God ; in fact, he practically revived that interpretation of justification which treats it as meaning to make righteous, instead of to account righteous.

Our Saviour, he represented, had redeemed the world by His life and death, and had thus made our justification possible ; but we can enjoy that justification only when, by union with Christ through faith, His Divine life becomes our righteousness. In technical language, this amounted to teaching justification by infused, instead of by imputed, righteousness, and it was at once opposed with the greatest earnestness by the leading Reformers, including Melanchthon. He urged at once that such a doctrine made our justification or forgiveness dependent, after all, on ourselves, on our own condition, and not on the sacrifice made for us by Christ. Osiander's teaching, he said, withdraws the honour due to the Mediator, obscures the grievous nature of the sin which remains even in those who are partakers of the righteousness of Christ, destroys the chief consolation of pious souls, and leads them into a state of perpetual doubtfulness. In fact, Osiander's theory struck at the very nerve of the reformed doctrine, because it deprived men of the right of claiming God's favour and peace with God for the sake of Christ alone, and consequently of entering into the enjoyment of

that peace immediately and without reserve. A man must wait, according to any such theory, until he can satisfy himself that the righteousness of Christ is duly working in him, before he can look up to God in full confidence as His justified child. The danger and mischief of it was not that it was a technical theological error, but that it barred the way to that life in the light of God's countenance which, from the first moment of awakening in the soul, the Reformers desired men to realize. So, again, the contention of others, like Major, that good works were necessary to justification, was similarly resisted at the outset; not because there was the slightest question, in the minds of any but a few fanatics, that good works and righteousness are an essential part of a Christian life, but because it was essential, for the purpose of maintaining a free relation of trust in God, that His forgiveness should be recognised as offered to us of His own grace and favour, antecedently to anything that we have done or might do. In one instance after another, the Reformers of the first half of the sixteenth century checked with the utmost earnestness any tendency to misapprehend the nature of

the forgiveness and justification, of the free admittance to God's favour, which they proclaimed, or to obscure our claim to it by putting forward any conditions for it but the merits of the Saviour Himself. What they were guarding against was not a mere erroneous doctrine respecting the terms of salvation, but the danger of weakening that sense of peace and free communion with God, which was the very ground on which they stood and the air in which they breathed.

It will be considered in the sequel how this principle worked itself out, in the course of the century, upon other great theological questions, such as the Sacraments and present predestination; but, as a conclusion to this discussion, it may be pointed out that these considerations materially affect the practical character of that "formal principle" of the Reformation to which reference was made at the outset. "The Word of God" assumes a new character to men under the conscious belief of their immediate communion with Him, and of their living in the daily light of His countenance. It was one thing to uphold the Scriptures as the supreme authority, the

ultimate law of the Church, and another thing to regard them as a daily lamp to the feet, and a light to the paths, of those who were under God's direct guidance and who looked up to Him for that guidance, day by day. The astonishing feat by which, at the very commencement of the German movement, the New Testament, and soon afterwards the Old Testament, were placed, in the vernacular, at the command of the German people, had an immense influence in deepening and maintaining this result. Within a few years after the first note had been struck, every man and woman who understood Luther's German had the means of living under the daily influence of the Word of God, as contained in the Holy Scriptures. That expression, *the Word of God*, did not mean in Luther's mouth, nor in the mouths of the Reformers, merely the canon of Scripture. It was not the mere letter of the canon which they had in view, as a fixed and, as it were, legal authority. But God Himself was recognised as speaking in those Scriptures; the words of our Lord in the New Testament, the words which He spake by holy men and prophets in the Old Testament, were felt to be

His voice, bringing those who read them into direct communion with him. The Scriptures thus established and maintained a relation between God and man by the same means as that by which such personal relations are maintained among ourselves—by mutual voices and assurances. There was thus a greater elasticity about the conception than has often prevailed in later times. But one thing was the centre of all the life and all the teaching of the Reformers—that God was speaking to them as their reconciled Father, and that they were in direct communion with Him ; and in that faith they felt themselves independent of any human power, whether embodied in Church or State. It was this feeling, above all, which gave to human life that new impulse and energy, which constituted the Reformation so momentous an epoch in human history.

II

Let us proceed to consider the manner in which these cardinal principles of the Reformed Theology affected in the course of their development the general system and the

ordinances of the Church. Of course, they had at once the momentous effect of removing any sense of necessary dependence on the Hierarchy for the highest of all spiritual blessings—that of peace with God, and for eternal salvation. When peace with God was recognised as open for Christ's sake to everyone who would seek it and accept it by faith, it followed that no one was dependent for his salvation upon Pope, Bishop, or Priest. It was the removing of this apprehension from the popular mind, by means of the primary principle of the Reformation, which rendered it possible to effect reforms opposed by the Hierarchy. If, in any sense, the Pope, with the clergy under his jurisdiction, held the keys of Heaven, then, although they might be resisted, yet, in the last resort, it was impracticable to disobey them; and it was this apprehension which lay, like a paralysis, upon the nations of Europe for some centuries. Episcopal and priestly organization might be indispensable to the best welfare of the Church; and Melanchthon, in his signature to the Smalcaldic Articles, expressed his willingness even to recognise the Primacy of the Pope, as a

matter of human order, if only he would allow the Gospel to be preached. But for the salvation of individual souls, and consequently for the existence of a community of "those that were being saved," here and hereafter, neither Pope nor Bishop was essential. In the familiar language of English divines of the Stuart period, Episcopacy might be of "the *bene esse*," but not of the *esse* of a Church. The Roman idea of a Church was that it was a visible body in communion with the Roman See, and in which the ministers derived their whole authority through that See. For this conception the reformed principle substituted at once the idea which is expressed in the Augsburg Confession, and, in very similar terms, in our own Nineteenth Article, that the visible Church is a congregation of faithful or believing men, "in the which the pure word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same." It was also recognised in all reformed Churches, including the English Church as represented even by such men as Laud and Cosin, that Episcopal Orders, however desirable, were not

essential for that due ministration. On all hands, therefore, within the Reformed Communions, whether in Germany, Switzerland, France, or England, it was acknowledged that a true Church might subsist, although the immediate and regular connection of its ministry with the ancient episcopal succession was broken.

This momentous conclusion involved one danger which, perhaps to the great advantage of the Reforming Movement, was soon made apparent. If, without sacrificing the highest interests of their spiritual salvation, men could be independent of one external organization, why not of all external ceremonies? Why not of the Sacraments, or of the Scriptures themselves? Why could they not be saved by the simple, immediate operation of the Spirit of God upon their souls, working in them faith in Christ, and bringing them into union with Him? This was the Anabaptist tendency, which broke out very early in the course of the Reformation, and led not merely to grievous religious fanaticism, but to violent social and civil tumults, which had to be suppressed by fire and sword. The effect was to lead Luther

and his fellow reformers to reassert with the utmost energy the principle, on which they had insisted from the first, that the external agencies of God's Word and the Sacraments were, by God's ordinance, indispensable to spiritual life, to the very existence of a Church, and consequently to the saving efficacy of the Gospel. The main principle of this assertion is put by Luther with characteristic practical force in his observations on Baptism in his larger catechism. "Our wiseacres" he says,[1] "with their modern ideas, make out that faith alone will save us, and that work and outward things cannot effect anything. Our answer is that assuredly nothing works in us but faith, as we shall see from what follows. But these blind leaders will not see that faith must have something to believe—that is, to which it can cling, on which it can stand and rest. So faith clings to the water, and believes that Baptism confers salvation and life, not through the water (as has been sufficiently said), but because it embodies God's Word and command, and because His name is attached to it. Now, in

[1] "Luther's Primary Works," edited by Wace and Buchkeim, p. 134.

believing this, what else do I believe but on God, as on Him who has added His Word to it, and given us this outward sign, so that we may understand what a treasure we possess in it?

"But there are some people mad enough to separate faith from the sign to which the faith is joined and attached, because it is an outward thing. Yea, it is and must be outward, in order that we may grasp it with our senses and understand it, and thus have it impressed on our hearts, just as the whole Gospel is an outward sermon by word of mouth. In brief, whatever God does and effects in us He accomplishes through such outward means; and, whenever He speaks, and wherever and through whatsoever He speaks, let faith look to it and hold fast to it."

So again, in a classical passage in his treatise "Against the Heavenly Prophets, concerning Images and the Sacrament," he says:[1] "God of His great goodness has again given us the pure Gospel, the noble and precious treasure of our salvation; and upon this gift must follow inwardly Faith and the Spirit in a good con-

[1] "Luther's Works," Erlangen Edition, vol. xxix, p. 208.

science. . . . But the matter goes thus: When God sends His Holy Gospel to us, He deals with us in two ways. In the first place, externally; in the second place, internally. Externally He deals with us through the spoken Word of the Gospel, and through corporal signs, such as Baptism and the Sacrament. Inwardly He deals with us through the Holy Spirit and faith, with other gifts; but all in due measure and order, so that the external things should and must come first, and the inner ones come afterwards and through the external ones; so that He has resolved to give no man the internal things except through the external, and He will give no one the Spirit or faith without the external word and sign which He has appointed."

Thus in Luther's view, with which all the great Reformed Churches were in harmony, it is an unalterable Divine ordinance that spiritual life and Salvation, and the faith which lays hold upon them, are bound up with the use of the Word of God, and of the Sacraments which were instituted by Christ. The continuity of the Church, from its foundation by our Lord to the present day, is thus guaranteed by these

external ordinances, which, from the first, have been passed on from generation to generation. That continuity does not depend upon the perpetual succession of a special order of individuals, but upon the perpetual succession of a Society, all the members of which are marked by these seals, of the Word of God and the Sacraments.

This consideration points to the reason why special emphasis was given, in all the Reformed Churches, to the two Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. It arose, not from a depreciation of the Sacramental idea, but from the very opposite cause—the exaltation of the conception of a Sacrament as a Divine Ordinance. The primary impulse at work, as shown in the previous discussion, was to bring men into direct communion with God, to awaken in their minds the sense of that communion, and to induce them to live in reliance on it. For this purpose a solemn ceremony, expressly established by Christ Himself, and expressly ordered by Christ Himself to be repeated to all time, appeared of the highest conceivable value. Baptism in Christ's name, and by Christ's authority, conveyed a direct message

from Christ, and the celebration of the Lord's Supper in the words in which our Saviour instituted it, the offering to the faithful, by His express command, of the sacred gifts which He promised with those words, could not but have the supreme value of a direct message and offer from Him.

It is here that there was, from the first, a cardinal difference between the school of the Swiss Reformer Zwingli and the main body of the Reformed Communions, whether Lutheran or Calvinistic. Zwingli's mind, like that of his countrymen in general, was plain and practical, and indisposed to the more mysterious aspects of the Christian revelation. Luther, on the contrary, was marked by the deep sense of mystery characteristic of the highest German mind; and while Zwingli would bring down heaven to earth, within the compass of the intelligence of a Swiss citizen, Luther clung to those aspects of Christian truth which lifted men above themselves, into spiritual and heavenly spheres of thought and faith. The Swiss confessions, indeed, under the constantly-increasing influence of Calvin, approximated to the other Reformed Churches

in their general view of the Sacraments ; but Zwingli's own disposition of mind towards them was of a far lower character, as may be illustrated from his treatise " De Vera et falsa Religione. "[1] " A Sacrament, " he says, " can be nothing else than an initiation or public consignation, and can have no power to set the conscience free ; for the conscience can only be set free by God, for it is only known to Him, and He alone can penetrate into it ; . . . so that it is an utter error to suppose that the Sacraments have a purifying effect. . . . They are signs or ceremonies by which a man approves himself to the Church as a candidate or soldier of Christ, and it is the Church which they assure of your faith rather than yourself. . . . Christ has left us two Sacraments—Baptism and the Supper of the Lord—and by these we are so consecrated that by the one we bestow a Christian name ; by the other, in memory of the victory of Christ, we approve ourselves to be members of His Church. In Baptism we receive a symbol that we will frame our life according to the rule of Christ ; in the Lord's Supper we give evidence that we trust

[1] Op. iii. 229-231.

in the death of Christ, when we are thankfully and joyfully present in the assembly of those who are rendering thanks to the Lord for that benefit of redemption which He bestowed on us by His death." The Spirit, he maintained, needs no medium, and the Sacraments, therefore, should not be regarded as channels of Spiritual grace.

Some question has been raised of late as to the real nature of Zwingli's views on this subject, and attempts have been made to vindicate for him a higher conception of the office of the Sacraments than is generally assigned to him. He gave way, it may be, from time to time, to the loftier views which were pressed upon him in the course of his controversies with the German Reformers. But the tendency of his thought is clearly indicated in such a passage as that just quoted. The truth is, Zwingli had never gone through Luther's intense spiritual experience. He was a humanist rather than a theologian, and his mind was more congenial with Erasmus than with Luther. He was asserting his countrymen's independence of the Pope in much the same spirit in which his ancestors had vindicated

their independence of the House of Austria. He was earnestly and honestly desirous of getting rid of the superstitions and abuses with which in his native country the Roman Church was discredited ; but he does not exhibit that profound religious impulse, towards reviving a personal relation with God, which was the moving impulse of the German Reformation. Consequently the Sacraments are to him only external signs and symbols which must be freed of superstitious accessories ; but they have no special preciousness in his eyes. To Luther —and to Calvin also in a great degree, but to Luther above all—they, with the Word of God, are the most precious things on earth. They are the very touch of God's hand, the direct message of Christ. Where they are administered, and two or three are gathered together in His name, there is He in the midst of them, dispensing His grace, offering forgiveness, or bestowing His very flesh and blood to be the food of the soul. They are, in the first instance, acts of God, not acts of man. It is not we, in the first instance, who offer anything to God in them ; it is He who offers every spiritual blessing to us.

But this being so, no ceremony which does not rest upon a similarly direct appointment of Christ could be admitted on a level with the two Sacraments which did rest upon that appointment. A state of life allowed in the Scriptures, a ceremony due to the appointment of the Apostles, such as Confirmation, could not for a moment be admitted as similar in authority and importance to ceremonies which had Christ's express word for them and with them. The distinction, therefore, between the two Sacraments and "those five commonly called Sacraments," which is characteristic of all the Reformed Churches, will be deemed of importance, just in proportion as it is felt to be of importance to assert that principle of direct relation to God, which lies at the root of the Reformation. Under the Romish conception, and others allied with it, the Sacraments are channels through which a mysterious spiritual force or grace is derived into the soul; and, according to the Roman system, that force or grace may be so derived by the mere operation of the ceremony, without any apprehension by the recipient of his personal relation to Christ and to God. Under that view, the conception

of Sacraments may be indefinitely extended, and there seems no reason in the nature of things why they should be restricted to the number of seven. But the moment you regard it as essential to the idea and the blessing of a Sacrament that it should be a direct pledge and message from Christ to the individual—an act continually repeated by His express command and in His name—then the restriction of the number of ceremonies properly called Sacraments to two becomes no arbitrary arrangement, but a witness to one of the highest Christian privileges. To put the matter in another form, which is eminently characteristic of Luther's thought, the two Sacraments are ceremonies which embody words or promises of God. They contain the whole word of God, the whole Gospel in brief, and whoever believes the promises they bring assuredly receives the grace so promised. God speaking to men and giving to men, and men receiving in thankfulness and faith—this is the gracious reality which, according to the reformed theology, the Sacraments exhibit.

It is unnecessary to follow out this view in detail in respect to the Sacrament of Baptism.

It is sufficiently illustrated by the brief passage from Luther's larger catechism which has been already quoted; and it is a happy circumstance that, if we put aside the purely Zwinglian view and the exceptional case of the Anabaptists, we may say that there was no material controversy among the Reformers with respect to the blessing conveyed in baptism, or the means by which it is received. Baptism gave rise, at all events, to none of that intense division which was occasioned by the controversies respecting the Lord's Supper. That sacred ordinance divided the Churches of the Reformation at least as much as, alas! it now divides ourselves. The controversies of those days are still alive among us, and it is important to have some clear conception of the chief views which were then maintained.

Now, there was one point on which all the Reformed Churches were agreed, and that was that this Sacrament did not bear that character of a sacrifice, in some sense propitiatory, offered to God, which the Roman Church assigned to it. That a sacrifice is offered in it was, indeed, asserted, but it is a "sacrifice of ourselves, our souls and bodies," and there is no sacrifice

of a propitiatory character in the act of celebration. That is the point at which the vital question respecting the sacrificial character of the Eucharist arises. Is the act of consecration a sacrifice? To say that there is a sacrifice of thanksgiving connected with the celebration is one thing, and is not denied; it is distinctly admitted in the "Apology for the Augsburg Confession." But what is denied is that the ceremony which our Saviour instituted, and in which His words are employed, has a propitiatory, or semi-propitiatory character, as a Sacrifice. Melancthon's statement in that authoritative document affords, perhaps, the clearest exposition of the teaching of the best Reformed Churches on the subject: "Sacraments," he says, under the Twelfth Article, on the Mass, "are signs of the goodwill of God towards us, and are not simply signs of men among one another, and the Sacraments of the New Testament are rightly defined as signs of grace. And there being two things in a Sacrament—the sign and the word—the word of the New Testament is the promise of grace—the promise of the remission of sins. As our Lord said, 'This is My body, which is given

for you ; this cup is the New Testament in My blood, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.' The word, therefore, offers the remission of sins, and the ceremony is like a picture of the word, or seal . . . . It was instituted that the exhibition of it to our eyes might move our hearts to faith . . . . and to this end Christ instituted it, when He bids us do this in remembrance of Him. For to remember Christ is not the idle celebration of a spectacle, nor was such a celebration instituted as a mere example . . . . but it is to remember the benefits of Christ, and to accept them by faith, that we may be renewed by means of them . . . . Then comes the sacrifice. After the conscience, raised up by faith, is sensible from what terrors it has been liberated, then it earnestly returns thanks for the benefit and passion of Christ, and uses the ceremony to the praise of God, and by its obedience shows its gratitude, and testifies that it magnifies the grace of God ; . . . . and so the ceremony becomes a sacrifice of praise." This is in harmony with the cardinal idea respecting the Sacraments which we have been reviewing, that they are acts of God towards us, more

than acts of ourselves towards God. In the Holy Communion we "show forth the Lord's death till He come," recalling and exhibiting to the congregation the memorials of His death and passion, and so assuring them of His love and forgiveness, in order that they may lay hold of that forgiveness and love with ever-increasing faith and fervour. That is one great object of the Holy Communion. By showing forth Christ's death it proclaims in the most solemn manner the remission, for His sake, of the sins for which He died, and encourages us to plead His merits, and rest upon them in seeking that remission from God. The ceremony, with the accompanying words, brings from Christ Himself an assurance that His Body was given and His Blood shed for us; and it is our part thankfully to believe and to accept that assurance, and in return for it to offer our whole souls and bodies to His service.

Such is the first gift, according to the reformed theology, bestowed in the Holy Communion; but there is another, which is the chief subject of controversy among the Churches of the Reformation—that of the Saviour's Body and Blood. In what sense is that gift

given? Here again we may put aside Zwingli, as falling much below the level of the views accepted by the Reformed Churches generally, even in his native Switzerland. The real question lies between the teaching of Luther and his followers on the one side, and that of Calvin and his school on the other. The cardinal point to which Luther held, in spite of all temptations and all opposition, was that the very Body and Blood of Christ are exhibited "in, with, and under," the forms of bread and wine. Of the manner of the Presence he would say nothing, except that Transubstantiation is unnecessary as an explanation, and is unscriptural. He is concerned only with the fact that the sacred Body and Blood are verily present, verily given, verily received, by the mouth. He can only say it is not a local Presence, but a Presence beyond human understanding, which he can only call "Sacramental." That latter word, however, used in this connection, is but an evasion of the difficulty. It simply says that the Presence in the Sacrament is such a Presence as is possible in a Sacrament, and it does not take us one step further.

The formal teaching of the Lutheran Church may, perhaps, best be learned from the "Formula Concordiæ," which was published in 1580. That formula was occasioned by the fact that grave disputes arose, after Luther's death in 1546, between the divines who regarded themselves as the special custodians of his teaching and others who followed Melancthon. The tendency of Melancthon had for some time been to soften down the vehement statements of Luther on this mysterious subject, and practically to assimilate the teaching of his Church more and more to that of Calvin. The "Formula of Concord" expresses the understanding arrived at by the Lutheran divines, in view of this and other controversies respecting the main points in dispute. It thus embodied the final result of these controversies, and has ever since been one of the symbolical books of the Lutheran Church.

The following, then (quoting with occasional abridgment), are the affirmative principles which it lays down. "We believe and teach," it says, "that in the Supper of the Lord the Body and Blood of Christ are verily and substantially present, and are truly distributed, and

taken together with the bread and wine. We teach that the words of Christ's Testament are to be no otherwise received than as they sound to the letter ; so that the bread does not signify the absent body of Christ, nor the wine the absent blood of Christ, but that by virtue of a Sacramental union the bread and wine are really the Body and Blood of Christ. As to the consecration, we teach that no human work, nor any pronouncement by the minister of the Church, is the cause of the Presence in the Supper of the Body and Blood of Christ ; but that this is solely to be attributed to the omnipotent power of our Lord Jesus Christ. At the same time, we are unanimous in teaching that the recitation of the words of institution should be maintained. . . . Further, the foundations on which we rest in respect to this Sacrament are as follows : (1) That our Lord is true God and Man ; (2) that the right hand of God at which He sits is everywhere, and that in respect of His human nature, as well as His Divine, He rules and governs all things; (3) that the Word of God is not deceitful ; (4) that God knows various modes by which He is able to be present anywhere, and is not

bound to that particular mode of presence which the philosophers are wont to call local or circumscribed. We believe, accordingly, that the Body and Blood of Christ are received with the bread and wine, not merely spiritually and by faith, but actually by the mouth ; not, however, in a Capernaitic manner, but in a supernatural and heavenly manner, by means of a sacramental union ; and that not only those who truly believe in Christ, but even the unworthy and the unbelieving, receive the true Body and Blood of Christ, so, however, that they receive neither consolation nor life therefrom, but judgment and condemnation, unless they repent. We condemn the opinion which maintains that the Body of Christ is so included in heaven that it can by no means be present simultaneously in many, or in all, places where the Supper of the Lord is celebrated. We deny that the external elements of bread and wine in the Sacrament are to be adored. Finally, we reject and condemn the Capernaitical manducation of the Body of Christ, which the Sacramentaries maliciously allege of us, as though we taught that the Body of Christ was torn by the teeth, and digested, like other food, in the

human body. For we believe and assert, according to the clear words of the Testament of Christ, a true, but supernatural, manducation of the Body of Christ, as there is a true but supernatural drinking of the Blood of Christ. But this is a truth which no one can understand by the human senses or by reason ; wherefore in this matter, as in other articles of faith, we submit our intellect to the obedience of Christ. For this mystery is revealed in the Word of God alone, and is comprehended solely by faith."

We cannot fail to be reminded, in perusing these statements, of the suggestion made by the late Archbishop Temple, that the views asserted by a certain school in our Church at the present day are really Lutheran in their character. But it will be observed that this statement asserts neither Transubstantiation nor Consubstantiation ; and it is important to remember that Consubstantiation is not the formal doctrine of the Lutheran Church. For instance, one of the most authoritative manuals of that Church, for a long period after 1610, when it was published, was Leonhard Hutter's " Compendium " ; and in answer to the question, " In what way are the Body and Blood of Christ exhibited and

received with the bread and wine in the Sacrament? " Hutter explicitly states : " Not certainly by Transubstantiation . . . . nor does it come to pass by Consubstantiation, or the local inclusion of the Body and Blood of Christ in the bread and wine, nor by any durable conjunction, apart from the actual use of the Sacrament. But it comes to pass by Sacramental union, which, by virtue of the promise of Christ, provides that, when the bread is offered, the Body of Christ is simultaneously present and truly exhibited ; and when the wine is offered, there is simultaneously truly present and exhibited the Blood of Christ. "

Now, certain important points will be observed in this doctrine which distinguish it broadly from every other upon this subject. In the first place, as contrasted with all other doctrines of the so-called Real Presence, it has this important characteristic : that, as Hutter states, no *durable union* is conceived to exist between the bread and wine and the sacred Body and Blood. They are really present, but only in the act of reception. There could, therefore, under this doctrine, be no question of reservation of the elements, for there is nothing

permanently attached to the elements to be reserved. The sacred food is present in the act of giving and receiving, and in that alone. In the next place, although no attempt is made to explain the nature of the conjunction at that moment, yet it is deemed to be dependent on a belief, very difficult to apprehend, respecting some sort of ubiquity, or ubiquitous influence, of the Body of our Lord, derived from its intimate conjunction with His Divine nature in the hypostatic union. Luther was solely concerned to assert the fact that the bread and wine, according to the literal sense of Christ's words, were His Body and Blood ; and in the defence of that belief he was led to dwell, in a manner which is in many respects instructive, on the intimate relation between the Divine and the human natures of our Lord. There can be little doubt, however, that the ubiquitarian view has a dangerous tendency in a Eutychian direction ; and its close association with the doctrine of the Real Presence, as taught by Luther, exposed that doctrine to further attacks from the Swiss and French Reformers.

Calvin accordingly propounded another

theory, which is far more profound than that of Zwingli, and which closely approaches, in practical effect, the Lutheran view, without involving its ubiquitarian difficulties. He started from the declarations of our Lord in the sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel, which he recognised as clearly teaching that a participation of our Lord's Flesh and Blood is essential to eternal life ; and he felt that the words in which our Lord instituted the Lord's Supper must have been meant to declare that it was a special means for that participation. But he considered that such participation might be effected by spiritual means, and that the virtue of the glorified Saviour's Body and Blood might be communicated to the soul by the action of the Holy Spirit, in conjunction with the participation of the sacred elements. "The Flesh of Christ," he says in the "Institutes,"[1] "is like a rich and inexhaustible fountain, which transfuses into us the life which is supplied by His Divinity to itself." "I confess," he says elsewhere, "that our souls are fed by the substance of the flesh of Christ." He denied that faith constituted the actual eating of the Flesh

[1] iv., 17, 3, 5, 8, 9.

and Blood of Christ, and considered the eating to be rather the effect and fruit of faith. More particularly he says : [1] " We cannot doubt that, in accordance with the unalterable nature of the human body, our Lord's finite being is contained in heaven, where it was, once for all, received until He returns to judgment, and consequently it seems inadmissible to suppose that He Himself is contained under these corruptible elements, or that He can be regarded as universally present in His human nature. Nor is this necessary in order that we may enjoy the participation of Him, for our Lord bestows this benefit upon us by His spirit, so that we become one with Him in body, soul, and spirit. The link, accordingly, of that conjunction is the Spirit of Christ, by which we are conjoined with Him, and His Spirit is, as it were, the channel by which is derived to us whatever Christ is or has." Calvin, therefore, taught a real participation of the Flesh and Blood of Christ in the Holy Communion, by means of the supernatural operation of the Spirit of God, in conjunction with the participation of the Sacrament ; and this is a doctrine which

[1] § 12, p. 101.

may well be regarded as receiving countenance from the prayer in the ancient Liturgies, by which the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Elements was invoked, "that they may become unto us" the Body and Blood of our Lord.

But, however this may be, it is evident that the result of the controversies respecting the Holy Communion during the sixteenth century in the teaching of Calvin and of Luther, who were together predominant throughout the Reformed Communions, was to assert in the strongest manner the fact that the Holy Communion is a special means ordained by our Lord for the participation of His Flesh and Blood, and that it is thus a perpetual witness to, and a means for, maintaining that intimate union with Him and His Father, which, as we saw, was the cardinal motive and object of the Reformation. The effect, with respect to the Sacraments, was to restore to them, in a degree which they had not enjoyed in the later practice of the Church, the character of means of communion with God. Communion had ceased to be, in the Roman Church, the predominant characteristic of the Mass. It

had become an offering from man to God, less than a means by which God imparted Himself to men. The theology of the Reformation re-established the aspect of the Sacraments as a means of union and participation with the person and nature of our Lord, and thus supplied a practical guarantee of the reality of that union and communion.

III.

It is a striking fact that the Protestant theology of the sixteenth century both began and ended in strict theories of Predestination. The first attempt at a comprehensive treatment of theology from the point of view of the Reformation was Melanchthon's "Loci Communes Rerum Theologicarum," which was published in 1521. The treatise which was the predominant exposition of the Reformed theology at the close of the century was Calvin's "Institutio Christianæ Religionis." The severe doctrine of Calvin on the subject of predestination is notorious; but it should be remembered that the teaching of Melanchthon in the first edition of his work was not less severe. The

history of that work is in great measure the history of theology in the German Protestant Churches up to the time of Melanchthon's death in 1560. It passed through a great number of editions, and remained for at least half a century the great text-book of theology for the Protestant Churches ; but it underwent during that time various important changes at the hands of its author. Originally, in 1521, it was a little work occupying less than 200 modern octavo pages, and it corresponded exactly to its second title, "Hypotyposes Theologicæ," or Theological Outlines. Melanchthon was then a young man, only twenty-four years old ; and that he should have produced at that age a comprehensive review of the revived theology, which took its place at once as its most satisfactory statement, affords a wonderful illustration, alike of his genius, and of the profound impression made upon him by Luther, after little more than three years of that Reformer's public activity. But the book derives a special interest from the fact that its successive stages mark the gradual development of the Reformed theology and of Melanchthon's teaching. In its earliest form—that of 1521

—the Reformed teaching is exhibited in its first vivid, and in some respects immature, if not crude, elements ; and it was enlarged and modified as the Reformed theology was developed and extended in scope, and as Melanchthon's own thoughts grew more mature and well balanced. In its final form it is one of the most instructive, comprehensive, and moderate treatises to be found in the literature of the Protestant Churches, and is comparable only to Calvin's "Institutes." But it is in many respects more interesting in its first form, in which the thoughts out of which the great movement of the Reformation sprang may be seen forming, as it were, in the minds of its authors. Now, as has been said, it is remarkable that this treatise commences with as strong a statement of the dependence of all things on Divine predestination as is found in the great treatise of Calvin. It lays down, at the very outset, that "since all things which happen necessarily happen according to Divine predestination, there is no liberty of our will." [1]

[1] Die *Loci Communes* Philipp Melanthons in ihrer Urgestalt herausgegeben und erläutert von G. L. Plitt. Erlangen, 1864 : p. 109.

Melanchthon was not a man of a stern dogmatic nature like Calvin, nor a man who approached questions with the intense vehemence of Luther. What, we must ask, is the reason why he should thus anticipate, at the commencement of the century, the characteristic teaching with which it ended?

The answer is apparent from this very treatise, and it casts a light upon the general bearing of the doctrines of predestination, which gives them at once a more intelligible and a more human character, than when we approach them simply from the side of theological philosophy. Melanchthon explains that the great purpose of his book is to give assistance in apprehending the practical, as distinct from the speculative, doctrines of Christianity. He enumerates the chief heads of theology as follows: God; Unity and Trinity; Creation; Man and Man's Powers; Sin; the Fruits of Sin, and Vices; Punishments; the Law; Promises; Regeneration by Christ; Grace; the Fruits of Grace; Faith; Hope; Charity; Predestination; Sacramental Signs; the Condition of Man; Magistrates; Bishops; Condemnation; Bliss. It may be noticed that in

this enumeration predestination is one of the latter topics mentioned ; but the main principles respecting it are laid down from the outset, and form the starting-point. Melanchthon goes on to say that there is no occasion for him to spend much labour upon those supreme questions respecting God, His Unity and Trinity, the mystery of Creation, and the mode of the Incarnation. The scholastic theologians, he says, have been discussing them for centuries, and he does not know what practical benefit has been gained. "Have they not," he asks, "as St. Paul says, 'become vain in their imaginations,' while they have been trifling all their lives about universals, formalities, connotations, and I know not what other inane words and expressions?" But, he says, "as to the other *loci*, respecting the power of sin, the law and grace, I do not know how a man can expect to be called a Christian who is ignorant of them. For it is from these that Christ is properly known, if at least the true knowledge of Christ is to know His benefits, and not, as the Schoolmen teach, to know His natures and the modes of His Incarnation. Unless you know for what pur-

pose He assumed our flesh and was nailed to the cross, what benefit will it be to know of His history ? . . . . St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans "—on which Melanchthon had been giving lectures, which were the germ of this treatise—" when he wrote a compendium of Christian doctrine, did not philosophise about the mysteries of the Trinity, about the mode of the Incarnation, about active and passive creation. What is it that he treats of? Certainly of the law, of sin, of grace, which are the topics on which alone a knowledge of Christ depends. "

This was the first impulse of the Reformed teaching—to make theology human, to bring it home to men's business and bosoms, and to explain its bearing on their lives and their practical necessities. Accordingly, with this brief introduction, Melanchthon goes on at once, and before everything else, to the question of human powers, and consequently of free will : " De hominis viribus, adeoque de libero arbitrio. " That was the first practical question which had to be considered by a teacher who wanted to bring home to men the nature of the Gospel and the benefits which it offered.

It is remarkable that this is precisely the order in which, some ten years later, Melanchthon explained the teaching of the Reformed Church in the formal statement he drew up for presentation to the Emperor Charles V, and which, under the name of the Augsburg Confession, became the cardinal Protestant symbol. In that Confession the first article is *De Deo*, declaring the acceptance by the Reformers of the Nicene faith; and the very next—the second—is *De Peccato Originis*, which says that all men who, after the fall of Adam, are naturally engendered, are born "with sin—that is, without fear of God, without trust towards God, and with concupiscence"; and it denies that men can be justified before God by the natural powers of reason. That Confession, however, is content to state this as a fact, without considering its cause. The characteristic of the teaching of the "Loci Communes" is that it traces the cause of this fact to the Divine predestination, and rests it upon that foundation. "Liberty," says Melanchthon, "is the power to act or not to act, the power to act in one way or another; and the question is: Has the will this liberty, and how far?"

The answer is that "Since all things which happen, necessarily happen according to Divine predestination, there can be no liberty of our will," and the discussion is concluded with the following four statements:

"If you regard the human will in reference to predestination, there is no liberty either in external or internal works; but all things happen according to Divine determination.

"If you consider the will in reference to external acts, there appears, in the judgment of nature, to be a certain liberty.

"If you consider the will in reference to the affections and passions, there is clearly no liberty, even in the judgment of nature;

"And when the affections and passions have begun to rage and burn within us, they cannot be restrained from breaking forth."

Now, as has been said, as Melanchthon grew more mature and moderate, he became content to assert the fact of the corruption of the human will, without ascribing that corruption thus absolutely to Divine decrees. But what it is important to observe is that the purpose with which the idea of predestination is introduced is to afford some explanation of the

helplessness of man's will, and of the hopelessness of his condition by nature. It is introduced, that is, for a practical purpose, and arises out of the contemplation of our moral and religious weakness. Melanchthon and those who felt with him found themselves, according to their bitter experience, in a condition of spiritual feebleness and moral corruption. That unhappy state seemed to them a part of the present constitution of things, and they could only attribute it to Divine ordination. The argument is the same in Luther's characteristic treatise, "De Servo Arbitrio," which he wrote three years after the first publication of Melanchthon's "Loci," in answer to the treatise of Erasmus, "De libero Arbitrio." He, similarly, in asserting the servitude of the will, lays down the principle that all things which happen, even if they seem to us to happen under conditions of mutability and contingency, nevertheless really come to pass necessarily and immutably, if we look to the will of God. He says that God works all things in all things and is alone free, and from hence it follows irresistibly that there is no freedom in the human will. "Hoc fulmine

sternitur et conteritur penitus Liberum Arbitrium." The will of man is ever determined and led by some other. Luther even compares it to a beast of burden, which is ridden either by God or by the devil. Now, we may again observe in this treatise that the motive, from which this extreme theory starts, is that of illustrating and confirming the fact of the free grace of God, and the complete incapacity of the human will to work or do anything of its own initiative, in matters which pertain to salvation. Luther himself describes this as the purpose of his treatise. He, too, with further reflection and experience, ceased to assert predestination in this extreme form, and the Lutheran Church, in the "Formula Concordiæ," finally determined the matter in a sense which is closely parallel to our own Article on the subject. But what it remains important and instructive for us to observe is, that the ideas of predestination took their rise in the sense of human feebleness and incapacity for good.

It will be found that it has been so throughout Church history. It is St. Augustine who was the first great representative of predestinarian

teaching, and how did he arrive at it? His teaching arose out of his controversy with Pelagius on free will. The error of Pelagius arose from his very goodness in a moral sense. He did not realize the weakness of human nature, and thought that it had natural powers still left to it which were capable of doing good. As Luthardt has remarked, it was by no moral levity that the course of Pelagius's thought was prompted, but, on the contrary, by a certain moral earnestness. He was aiming at a moral reform of life, and was vindicating the monkish efforts at self-discipline, charity, poverty, and the like, and he thought Augustine was cutting the sinews of such moral endeavours. But Augustine, in a terrible experience, had realized the utter weakness of human nature, and felt that it was solely by the grace of God, and not by any moral effects of his own, that he had been delivered. But if, as he felt, his salvation had been entirely God's work, he could not but go on to ask why it was that he had been saved from his own evil, and not others; why should grace be effectual in some cases and not in all? There seemed no answer to this question except in the

absolute power and will of God, which works irresistibly in some cases and not in others. Melanchthon and Luther were but following precisely the reasoning and the experience of Augustine, in passing from a sense of human helplessness, and of the absolute dependence of the Christian on the grace of God, to the conclusion that God's will is supreme, and that all things are predestinated by Him.

There is a striking passage in Coleridge's "Aids to Reflection," a work particularly instructive on this and the cognate subjects, in which this train of thought is illustrated with great force and beauty. It is in his comment on his Second Aphorism on Spiritual Religion. He begins by observing that "no impartial person, competently acquainted with the history of the Reformation, and the works of the earlier Protestant divines, at home and abroad, even to the close of Elizabeth's reign, will deny that the doctrines of Calvin on redemption and the natural state of fallen man are in all essential points the same as those of Luther, Zwinglius, and the first Reformers collectively." Then, after some discussion of the philosophical problems involved, he goes on to consider the case

of a man who has reason to believe, from his spiritual experience, that he has received the grace of God, and is "on the right road to the life promised under these conditions." "Now," he says, "I dare assert that no such man, however fervent his charity and however deep his humility may be, can peruse the records of history with a reflecting spirit, or look round the world with an observant eye, and not find himself compelled to admit that *all* men are *not* on the right road. He cannot help judging that even in Christian countries many—a fearful many—have not their faces turned towards it. This, then, is a mere matter of fact. Now comes the question. Shall the believer, who thus hopes on the appointed grounds of hope, attribute this distinction exclusively to his own resolves and strivings—or, if not exclusively, yet primarily and principally? Shall he refer the first movements and preparations to his own will and understanding, and bottom his claim to the promises on his own comparative excellence? If not, if no man dare take this honour to himself, to whom shall he assign it, if not to that Being in whom the promise originated, and on whom its fulfilment depends?

If he stop here, who shall blame him? By what argument shall his reasoning be invalidated, which might not be urged with equal force against any essential difference between obedient and disobedient, Christian and worldling—that would not imply that both sorts alike are, in the sight of God, the sons of God by adoption?"

In these observations of Coleridge it will be found, perhaps, that we have the secret of the earnest discussions with which the sixteenth century is occupied respecting the relations between free will and grace, liberty and predestination—the so-called Synergistic controversies, or those which concern the question of the mutual relations and actions of the human will and the Spirit of God in the conversion and salvation of men. They are controversies which arose out of the moral and religious experience of the men of that day, and they are the expression, less of their thoughts, than of their spiritual struggles.

This is indeed a characteristic of all controversies respecting subjects of this class—those which relate to the moral nature of man—which it is essential to bear in mind, if they are to be at all adequately apprehended. Res-

pecting such controversies, it may well be doubted whether they ever will be, or, rather, whether they ever can be, settled. They are not controversies respecting abstract or eternal truths, like those respecting mathematics, on the one hand, or those respecting the attributes of God, on the other. They are controversies respecting matters of human experience, and the premises from which men argue vary with that experience. Pelagius sees one side of that experience ; St. Augustine sees another ; and neither can quite appreciate the facts which his antagonist has in view. So, in the century we are considering, Erasmus is arguing from the point of view of the experience of a successful and somewhat cold-blooded scholar, who is looking at the human will from an abstract and philosophical point of observation. Luther was arguing from the point of view of a man immersed, from his youth up, in intense moral and spiritual struggles, sensible of the tremendous temptations against which he has to contend, and feeling that, if God be not for him, if he be not chosen by God and upheld by God, he has no hope of victory and deliverance.

It may be a question in this controversy on which side is the best philosophy ; but there can be little question on which side is the best experience. As Coleridge puts the case in his comments, in the "Aids to Reflection", on a passage from Bishop Jeremy Taylor on Original Sin : "What less than disease can we call a necessity of error and a predisposition to sin and sickness? Taylor, indeed, asserts that though perfect obedience became incomparably more difficult" (after Adam's fall), "it was not, however, absolutely impossible. Yet he himself admits that the contrary was universal—that, of the countless millions of Adam's posterity, not a single individual ever realized or approached to the realization of this possibility ; and (if my memory does not deceive me) Taylor himself has elsewhere exposed—and, if he has not, yet commonsense will do it for him —the sophistry in asserting of a whole what may be true of the whole, but is in fact true only of each of its component parts. Anyone may snap a horsehair ; therefore anyone may perform the same feat with the horse's tail. On a level floor (on the hardened sand, for instance, of a sea-beach) I chalk two parallel

straight lines, with a width of eight inches. It is possible for a man, with a bandage over his eyes, to keep within the path for two or three paces ; therefore it is possible for him to walk blindfold for two or three leagues without a single deviation ! And this possibility would suffice to acquit me of injustice, though I had placed man-traps within an inch of one line, and knew that there were pitfalls and deep wells beside the other ! "

In short, in proportion to the depth of men's moral and spiritual struggle, in proportion to the intensity with which they apprehend the height of the Divine righteousness and the Divine ideal, must there arise in them a sense of the utter feebleness of their own powers, of the weakness and servitude of their wills, and of their absolute dependence on Divine grace and the Divine will. They are driven to that sense of utter incapacity, and of entire dependence upon God, which St. Paul expresses so forcibly in the Epistle to the Romans. But, unfortunately, they are almost always impelled, as Melanchthon, Luther, and Calvin were, to step byond that practical statement of their experience, and to speculate on the ultimate

philosophical, or metaphysical, causes of their condition ; and then their moral conclusions become entangled in the meshes of a speculative and uncertain philosophy. As Coleridge, again, says, after the first of the two passages just quoted :

" If the self-examinant will abandon this position, and exchange the safe circle of religion and practical reason for the shifting sand-wastes and *mirages* of speculative theology ; if, instead of seeking after the marks of Election in himself, he undertakes to determine the ground and origin, the possibility and mode of Election itself in relation to God—in this case, and whether he does it for the satisfaction of curiosity, or from the ambition of answering those who would call God Himself to account, why and by what right certain souls were born in Africa instead of England, " and similar problems, " in this case, I say, we can only regret that the inquirer had not been better instructed in the nature, the bounds, the true purposes and proper objects of his intellectual faculties, and that he had not previously asked himself, by what appropriate sense, or organ of knowledge, he hoped to secure an insight into a nature

which was neither an object of his senses, nor a part of his self-consciousness ; and so leave himself to ward off shadowy spears with the shadow of a shield, and to retaliate the nonsense of blasphemy with the *abracadabra* of presumption. He that will fly without wings must fly in his dreams : and till he awakes will not find out that to fly in a dream is but to dream of flying. "

These observations of Coleridge are an admirable commentary alike on the strength and on the weakness of the predestinarian theories of the Reformers. Only let us remember that, when men are in the thick of a mortal struggle for great spiritual and moral truths, they naturally lay hands on any weapon that is within their grasp ; and that they are almost forced to become philosophers and speculative theologians, against their will, if they are to maintain what they feel to be the most vital moral truths, against the assaults that are made on them from all sides.

There is, however, a special aspect of Calvin's doctrine of predestination which deserves distinct recognition, and which distinguishes it, in great measure, from those of Luther

and Melanchthon. There does not seem evidence that Calvin was drawn into his theory by such intense moral experience as we have traced in Augustine, Luther, and others, and there seems to be another impulse operating in him. He is a man with a profound sense of the necessity of law and government. His conversion, he says, was sudden ; and as soon as he is converted and convinced of the truth of the Reformed theology, his dominant idea is that of obedience to the will of God. It has been said of him that obedience was the watchword of his life. He is the Protestant Loyola; and as Loyola taught that every Jesuit should be as a staff in the hand of his superior, so Calvin's idea was that every Christian should be at the absolute command of God---as, in fact, every man really is, whether consciously or not. God is regarded by him, not so much in the character of a Father, which is Luther's favourite conception, but as a Lord and Judge. He is the Lord of lords, who, according to His unrestricted will, disposes of the destinies of men. Accordingly, in his view of the relation of God to the world, the emphasis is laid upon the power of God, and the relation of

men to Him is pre-eminently that of obedience.

Calvin's work at Geneva was to realize this aspect of Christianity and of the Church. Luther leaves the utmost possible amount of freedom to the renewed and sanctified will. "Christian Liberty"—the title of Luther's most beautiful and least controversial work—is also the watchword of his practical conception of the Church. He would have as much liberty as possible, within the bounds of Christian life and love. But Calvin's conception was that of a strictly regulated life. "Under his influence Geneva is transformed into a theocracy. The Church lays down the rules and regulations for faith and life, and the State enforces them. . . . Amusements are forbidden; the very discipline of the family is brought under control; attendance at church and Communion at stated times are made obligatory."[1] No doubt Calvin rendered a great service to the Protestant cause at a critical juncture by thus insisting, even with this exaggeration, upon the necessity of discipline and order in the Christian life. But by that inevitable

[1] *Cf.* Thomasius' *Dogmengeschichte*, ed. Seeberg, vol. ii., p. 639; edit. 1889.

tendency by which men transfer, in some degree, their own image and similitude to their conception of God, so Calvin conceives of the world as regulated by definite and immutable Divine decrees. All is determined by God beforehand, all is regulated by precise decisions ; and the place and fate of every individual has been assigned to him. Carried to this speculative length, it was an exaggeration which provoked a dangerous reaction ; yet we have only to look to our sister Church in Scotland in order to see that such a view exhibits a real side of human experience, and has worked out magnificent results. Human nature disregards, in practice, the extreme points in such theories and systems, and assimilates their excellences. It may be, as Calvin himself confessed, a *horribile decretum* that some men are everlastingly predestinated to damnation, as others are to salvation. In some cases such a doctrine leads men to the desperation of which our Article speaks ; but the great mass of men instinctively disregard the supposition that they themselves may be among the condemned. They hope for the best for themselves ; and then there remain for them only the grand and fortifying

elements of the system. There remains for them the spectacle of a firm, holy, unbending law, to which they must conform if they are to be in harmony with the truth and reality of things. There remain for them those conceptions of the eternities, the infinities, the immutabilities of life, which Carlyle, for instance, brought out of his Scottish training and habits, though he discarded their Christian form. Calvin was to the men of his day something of what Carlyle was, though in so different a shape, to the last generation of Englishmen. He deepened immeasurably their sense of the eternal and unalterable realities of life, and impressed upon them the absolute necessity of conformity with the will of God. Had not such a proclamation of universal predestination and immutable law been combined with the more gracious message of the Gospel, it would have been intolerable to the feebleness of human nature. But, with whatever inconsistencies, it was in fact combined with that message ; and men and women learned, at one and the same time, their insignificance amidst tha vast and eternal system of decrees and laws with which they were surrounded, and the

grace of God, by which they were saved from the effects of such crushing and awful powers.

It is hoped that even these slight sketches of the vast and profound subjects, with which the theology of the sixteenth century was occupied, may have served to illustrate the intense human interest by which that theology was prompted and animated. Whatever the cause may be, something in that century stirred human nature to its very depths, threw up to the surface all its struggling forces, and challenged the theologians of the day to interpret them and to bring them into order. To some thoughtful readers[1] Shakespeare, at the end of the sixteenth century, has seemed an isolated phenomenon, concerned only with the passions and affections of human nature, and standing calmly aloof from the controversies of his day. But it may be, on the other hand, that he is but the final illustration of the whole character of the century—a century in which human nature, too long confined in the swathing-bands of medieval discipline and philosophy, cast them aside, burst into the realities of the great world of man and nature,

[1] Brewer's "English Studies," p. 271.

asked itself what they meant, what nature meant, what God meant, what Christ was, not to theologians, but to common men and women; not to theological virtues and vices, but to common struggles, common passions, common experiences. The theologies of the sixteenth century are the record of this experience and of its interpretation. They are marked by errors and exaggerations, like the human beings who threw them up to the surface of their hearts and minds in that battle of giants. But considered from the point of view here suggested, they cast an intense light upon the needs of the human heart and upon the Divine answer to them; and it may be added, in conclusion, that their best results, and the truest record of the experience they have won for us, are embodied in our own Thirty-nine Articles, which are, as it were, the aphorisms of the *Novum Organum* of a new religious world.

THE PRIMARY PRINCIPLES OF LUTHER'S LIFE AND TEACHING

AS EXHIBITED IN HIS "THREE GREAT REFORMATION TREATISES" [1]

Much has been written about Luther, and the general history of his life and work has been sketched by able pens. But in the works here translated, he speaks for himself to Englishmen by his greatest and most characteristic writings. The three works which, together with the Ninety-five Theses, are included in the volume here reviewed, are well known in Germany as the *Drei Grosse Reformations-Schriften*, or "The Three Great Reformation Treatises" of Luther; but they seem never yet to have been brought in this character before the English public. The Treatise on Christian Liberty has indeed been previously translated,

[1] Luther's Primary Works, edited by Henry Wace D. D., and C. A. Buchheim Ph. D., Hodder and Stoughton, 1896.

though not of late years. But from an examination of the catalogue in the British Museum, it would appear that no complete English translation is accessible, even if any has yet been published, of the Address to the German Nobility or of the Treatise on the Babylonish Captivity of the Church. Yet, as is well understood in Germany, it is in these that the whole genius of the Reformer appears in its most complete and energetic form. They are bound together in the closest dramatic unity. They were all three produced in the latter half of the critical year 1520, when nearly three years' controversy, since the publication of the Theses, on Oct. 31st, 1517, had convinced Luther of the falseness of the Court of Rome and the hollowness of its claims ; and they were immediately followed by the bull of excommunication in the winter of the same year and the summons to the Diet of Worms in 1521. Luther felt, as he says at the commencement of his Address to the German Nobility, that " the time for silence had passed, and the time for speech had come. " He evidently apprehended that reconciliation between himself and the Court of Rome was impossible ; and he appears to have

made up his mind to clear his conscience, whatever the cost. Accordingly, in these three works, with a full heart and with the consciousness that his life was in his hand, he spoke out the convictions which had been forced on him by the conduct of the papacy and of the papal theologians.

Those convictions had been slowly, and even reluctantly, admitted ; but they had gradually accumulated in intense force in Luther's mind and conscience ; and when " the time for speech had come " they burst forth in a kind of volcanic eruption. Their maturity is proved by the completeness and thoroughness with which the questions at issue are treated. An insight into the deepest theological principles is combined with the keenest apprehension of practical details. In the Treatise on Christian Liberty, we have the most vivid of all embodiments of that Life of faith to which the Reformer recalled the Church, and which was the mainspring of the Reformation. In the Appeal to the German Nobility, he first asserted those rights of the laity and of the temporal power without the admission of which no reformation would have been practicable, and

he then denounced with burning moral indignation the numerous and intolerable abuses which were upheld by Roman authority. In the third Treatise, on the Babylonish Captivity of the Church, he applied the same cardinal principles to the elaborate sacramental system of the Church of Rome, sweeping away by means of them the superstitions with which the original institutions of Christ had been overlaid, and thus releasing men's consciences from a vast network of ceremonial bondage. The rest of the Reformation, it is not too much to say, was but the application of the principles vindicated in these three works. They were applied in different countries with varying wisdom and moderation; but nothing essential was added to them. Luther's genius—if a higher word be not justifiable—brought forth at one birth, "with hands and feet," to use his own image, and in full energy, the vital ideas by which Europe was to be regenerated. He was no mere negative controversialist, attacking particular errors in detail. His characteristic was the masculine grasp with which he seized essential and eternal truths, and by their central light dispersed the darkness in which men were groping.

It occurred therefore to my colleague at King's College, London, and myself, on the occasion of the celebration of the fourth centenary of Luther's birth in 1883, that a permanent service might perhaps be rendered to Luther's name, and towards a due appreciation of the principles of the Reformation, if these short but pregnant Treatises were made more accessible to the English public; and in the following remarks an endeavour will simply be made to indicate the nature and the bearings of the central principles of the Reformer's life and work, as exhibited in the accompanying translations.

It is by no mere accident of controversy that the Ninety-five Theses mark the starting-point of Luther's career as a Reformer. The subject with which they dealt was not only in close connection with the centre of Christian truth, but it touched the characteristic thought of the Middle Ages. From the beginning to the end, those ages had been a stern school of moral and religious discipline, under what was universally regarded as the Divine authority of the Church. St. Anselm, with his intense apprehension of the Divine righteousness and

of its inexorable demands, is at once the noblest and truest type of the great school of thought of which he was the founder. The special mission of the Church since the days of Gregory the Great had been to tame the fierce energies of the new barbarian world, and to bring the wild passions of the Teutonic races under the control of the Christian law. It was the task to which the necessities of the hour seemed to summon the Church, and she roused herself to the effort with magnificent devotion. Monks and schoolmen performed prodigies of self-denial and self-sacrifice, in order to realise in themselves, and to impose as far as possible on the world at large, the laws of perfection which the Church held before their vision. The glorious cathedrals which arose in the best period of the Middle Ages are but the visible types of those splendid structures of ideal virtues, which a monk like St. Bernard, or a schoolman like St. Thomas Aquinas, piled up by laborious thought and painful asceticism. Such men felt themselves at all times surrounded by a spiritual world, at once more glorious in its beauty and more awful in its terrors than either the plea-

sures or the miseries of this world could adequately represent. The great poet of the Middle Ages affords perhaps the most vivid representation of their character in this respect. The horrible images of the *Inferno*, the keen sufferings of purification in the *Purgatorio*, form the terrible foreground behind which the *Paradiso* rises. Those visions of terror and dread and suffering had stamped themselves on the imagination of the mediæval world, and lay at the root of the power with which the Church overshadowed it. In their origin they embodied a profound and noble truth. It was a high and Divine conception that the moral and spiritual world with which we are encompassed has greater heights and lower depths than are generally apprehended in the visible experience of this life ; and Dante has been felt to be in a unique degree the poet of righteousness. But it is evident, at the same time, what a terrible temptation was placed in the hands of a hierarchy who were believed, in whatever degree, to wield power over these spiritual realities. It was too easy to apply them, like the instruments of physical torture with which the age was familiar, to extort

submission from tender consciences, or to make a bargain with selfish hearts. But in substance the menaces of the Church appealed to deep convictions of the human conscience, and the mass of men were not prepared to defy them.

Now it was into this world of spiritual terrors that Luther was born, and he was in an eminent degree the legitimate child of the Middle Ages. The turning-point in his history is that the awful visions of which we have spoken, the dread of the Divine judgments, brought home to him by one of the solemn accidents of life, checked him in a career which promised all worldly prosperity, and drove him into a monastery. There, as he tells us, he was driven almost frantic by his vivid realisation of the demands of the Divine righteousness on the one hand, and of his own incapacity to satisfy them on the other. With the intense reality characteristic of his nature, he took in desperate earnest all that the traditional teaching and example of the Middle Ages had taught him of the unbending necessities of Divine justice. But for the very reason that he accepted those necessities with such earnest-

ness, he did but realise the more completely the hopelessness of his struggles to bring himself into conformity with them. It was not because he was out of sympathy with St. Anselm or St. Bernard or Dante that he burst the bonds of the system they represented, but, on the contrary, because he entered even more deeply than they into the very truths they asserted. Nothing was more certain to him than that Divine justice is inexorable ; no conviction was more deeply fixed in his heart than that righteousness is the supreme law of human life. But the more he realised the truth, the more terrible he found it, for it seemed to shut him up in a cruel prison, against the bars of which he beat himself in vain. In one of his most characteristic passages, in the Introduction to his Latin Works, he describes how he was repelled and appalled by the statement of St. Paul respecting the Gospel that " therein is the righteousness, " or justice, " of God revealed. " For, he says, " however irreprehensible a life I had lived as a monk, I felt myself before God a sinner, with a most restless conscience, and I could not be confident that He was appeased by my satisfaction. I

could not therefore love—nay, I hated—a God who was just and punished sinners ; and if not with silent blasphemy, certainly with vehement murmuring, I was indignant against God. As if, I said, it were not enough that sinners, miserable and eternally ruined by original sin, should be crushed with all kind of calamity by the law of the Decalogue, but God in the Gospel must needs add grief to grief, and by the Gospel itself must inflict still further on us His justice and anger. I raged with this savage and disturbed conscience, and I knocked importunately at Paul in that place, with burning thirst to know what St. Paul could mean. " Such an experience is not a mere revolt against the Middle Ages. In great measure it is but the full realisation of their truest teaching. It is Dante intensified, and carried to the inevitable development of his principles.

But if this be the case, what it meant was that the Middle Ages had brought men to a deadlock. They had led men up to a gate so strait that no human soul could pass through it. In the struggle, men had devised the most elaborate forms of self-torture, and had made

the most heroic sacrifices, and in the very desperation of their efforts they had anticipated the more vivid insight and experience of Luther. The effort, in fact, had been too much for human nature, and the end of it had been that the Church had condescended to human weakness. The most obvious and easy way out of the difficulty was to modify, by virtue of some dispensing authority, the extreme requirements of Divine justice, and by a variety of half-unconscious, half-acknowledged devices, to lessen the severity of the strait gate and of the narrow way. Such a power, as has been said, was an enormous temptation to unscrupulous Churchmen, and at length it led to the hideous abuses of such preaching of indulgences as that of Tetzel. In this form the matter came before Luther in his office as parish priest and confessor ; and it will be apparent from the Theses that what first revolts him is the violation involved of the deepest principles which the Church of his day had taught him. He had learned from it the inexorable character of the Divine law, the necessity and blessedness of the Divine discipline of punishment and suffering ; he had

learned, as his first Thesis declares, that the law of Christian life is that of lifelong penitence ; and he denounced Tetzel's teaching as false to the Church herself, in full confidence that he would be supported by his ecclesiastical superiors. When he found that he was not—when, to his surprise and consternation, he found that the Papal theologians of the day, under the direct patronage of the Pope and the bishops, were ready to support the most flagrant evasions of the very principles on which their power had originally been based —then at length, though most reluctantly, he turned against them, and directed against the corrupted Church of the close of the Middle Ages the very principles he had learned from its best representatives and from its noblest institutions.

Luther, in the course of his spiritual struggles, had found the true deliverance from what we have ventured to call that deadlock to which the grand vision of Divine righteousness had led him. He realised that the strait gate was impassable by any human virtue ; but he had found the solution in the promise of a supernatural deliverance which was offered to faith.

To quote again his words in the preface to his Latin works already referred to: "At length by the mercy of God, meditating days and nights, I observed the connection of the words, namely, 'Therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, The just shall live by faith.' Then I began to understand the justice of God to be that by which the just man lives by the gift of God, namely, by faith, and that the meaning was that the Gospel reveals that justice of God by which He justifies us beggars through faith, as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith.' Here I felt myself absolutely born again; the gates of heaven were opened, and I had entered paradise itself. From thenceforward the face of the whole Scriptures appeared changed to me. I ran through the Scriptures, as my memory would serve me, and observed the same analogy in other words—as, the work of God, that is, the work which God works in us; the strength of God, that with which He makes us strong; the wisdom of God, that with which He makes us wise; the power of God, the salvation of God, the glory of God. And now, as much as I had formerly hated that

word the 'justice of God,' so much did I now love it and extol it as the sweetest of words to me ; and thus that place in Paul was to me truly the gate of paradise." In other words, Luther had realised that the Gospel, while reasserting the inexorable nature of the moral law and deepening its demands, had revealed a supernatural and Divine means of satisfying and fulfilling it. All barriers had thus been removed between God and man, and men had been placed in the position of children living by faith on His grace and bounty. He offers to bestow upon them the very righteousness He requires from them, if they will but accept it at His hands as a free gift. Their true position is no longer that of mere subjects, living under a law which they must obey at their peril. They may, indeed, by their own act remain in that condition, with all its terrible consequences. But God invites them to regard Him as their Father, to live in the light of His countenance, and to receive from Him the daily food of their souls. The most intimate personal relation is thus established between Himself and them ; and the righteousness, which by their own efforts they could

never acquire, He is ready to create in them, if they will but live with Him in faith and trust. That faith, indeed, must needs be the beginning, and the most essential condition, of this Divine life. Faith is the first condition of all fellowship between persons ; and if a man is to live in personal fellowship with God, he must trust Him absolutely, believe His promises, and rest his whole existence here and hereafter upon His word. But let a man do this, and then God's law ceases to be like a flaming sword, turning every way, with too fierce an edge for human hearts to bear. It assumes the benignant glow of a revelation of perfect righteousness which God Himself will bestow on all who ask it at His hands.

This belief is essentially bound up with a distinction on which great stress is laid in the Theses. It touches a point at once of the highest theological import and of the simplest practical experience. This is the distinction between guilt and punishment, or, in other words, between personal forgiveness and the remission of the consequences of sins. In our mutual relations, a son may be forgiven by his father, a wrong-doer by the person whom he

has injured, and yet it may neither be possible nor desirable that the offender should be at once released from the consequences of his offence. But to all generous hearts the personal forgiveness is infinitely more precious than the remission of the penalty, and Luther had learned from the Scriptures to regard our relation to God in a similar light. He realised that he must live, here and hereafter, in personal relationship to God ; and the forgiveness of God, the removal from him, in God's sight, of the imputation and the brand of guilt, his reception into God's unclouded favour—this was the supreme necessity of his spiritual existence. If this were assured to him, not only had he no fear of punishment, but he could welcome it, whatever its severity, as part of the discipline of the Divine and loving hand to which he had trusted himself. His deepest indignation, consequently, was aroused by preaching which, under official sanction, urged men to buy indulgence from punishment, of whatever kind, as practically the greatest spiritual benefit they could obtain ; and he devoted his whole energy to assert the supreme blessing of that remission from guilt, of which

the preachers of indulgences said practically nothing. It is this remission of guilt, this personal forgiveness, which is the primary element in the justification of which he spoke. It involves of course salvation from the final ruin and doom which sin, and the moral corruption of our nature, would naturally entail ; but its chief virtue does not consist in deliverance from punishment, nor does it in any way derogate from the truth that " we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." What it taught men was, to accept all God's judgments and discipline in perfect peace of soul, as being assured of His love and favour.

No divine, in fact, has ever dwelt with more intense conviction on the blessedness of the discipline of suffering and of the Cross. The closing Theses express his deepest feelings in this respect, and a passage in one of his letters, written before the controversy about indulgences had arisen, affords a most interesting illustration of the manner in which the principles he came forward to assert had grown

out of his personal experience. "Away," he says in the Ninety-second and Ninety-third Theses, "with all those prophets who say to the people of Christ, 'Peace, peace,' and there is no peace. Blessed be all those prophets who say to the people of Christ, 'The Cross, the Cross,' and there is no cross." These somewhat enigmatic expressions are at once explained in the letter referred to, written to a prior of the Augustinian order on the 22nd of June, 1516.[1] He says,—

"You are seeking and craving for peace, but in the wrong order. For you are seeking it as the world giveth, not as Christ giveth. Know you not that God is 'wonderful among His saints,' for this reason: that He establishes His peace in the midst of no peace, that is, of all temptations and afflictions? It is said, 'Thou shalt dwell in the midst of thine enemies.' The man who possesses peace is not the man whom no one disturbs—that is the peace of the world; he is the man whom all men and all things disturb, but who bears all patiently, and with joy. You are saying with Israel, 'Peace, peace,' and there is no peace. Learn

[1] *Letters*, edited by De Wette, i. 27.

to say rather with Christ, 'The Cross, the Cross,' and there is no cross. For the Cross at once ceases to be the Cross as soon as you have joyfully exclaimed, in the language of the hymn,—

> "'Blessed Cross, above all other,
> One and only noble tree.'"

One other extract of the same import it may be well to quote from these early letters, as it is similarly the germ of one of the noblest passages in Luther's subsequent explanation of the Ninety-five Theses.[1] The letter was addressed to a brother Augustinian on the 15th of April, 1516. Luther says,—

"The Cross of Christ has been divided throughout the whole world, and every one meets with his own portion of it. Do not

[1] It is a pleasure to be able to refer for this passage to the new Critical Edition of Luther's Works, now in course of publication, in Germany, vol. i, p. 613, line 21. This magnificent edition, prepared under the patronage of the German Emperor, is the best of all contributions to the Commemoration of 1883. It must supersede all other editions, and it ought to find a place in all considerable libraries in England. A translation of the passage in question will be found in the Bampton Lectures of the present writer, p. 186.

you therefore reject it, but rather accept it as the most holy relic, to be kept, not in a gold or silver chest, but in a golden heart, that is, a heart imbued with gentle charity. For if, by contact with the flesh and blood of Christ, the wood of the Cross received such consecration that its relics are deemed supremely precious, how much more should injuries, persecutions, sufferings, and the hatred of men, whether of the just or of the unjust, be regarded as the most sacred of all relics—relics which, not by the mere touch of His flesh, but by the charity of His most bitterly tried heart and of His Divine will, were embraced, kissed, blessed, and abundantly consecrated ; for thus was a curse transformed into a blessing, and injury into justice, and passion into glory, and the Cross into joy."[1]

The few letters, in fact, in our possession, written by Luther before he came forward in 1517, are sufficient to afford the most vivid proof both of the mature thought and experience in which his convictions were rooted, and of their being prompted, not by the spirit of reckless confidence to which they have

[1] *Letters*, edited by De Wette, i. 19.

sometimes been strangely ascribed, but by the deepest sympathy with the lessons of the Cross. The purport of his characteristic doctrine of justification by faith was not to give men the assurance of immunity from suffering and sorrow, as the consequence of sin, but to give them peace of conscience and joy of heart in the midst of such punishments. What it proclaimed was that, if men would but believe it, they could at any moment grasp God's forgiveness, and live henceforth in the assured happiness of His personal favour and love. Of this blessing His promise was the only possible warrant, and, like all other promises, it could only be accepted by faith. Every man is invited to believe it, since it is offered to all for Christ's sake ; but, by the nature of the case, none can enjoy it who do not believe it.

The ground, however, on which this promise was based affords another striking illustration of the way in which Luther's teaching was connected with that of the Middle Ages. Together with that keen apprehension of the Divine judgments and of human sin just mentioned, the awful vision of our Lord's sufferings and of His atonement overshadowed the whole

thought of those times. St. Anselm, in the *Cur Deus Homo*, had aroused deeper meditation on this subject than had before been bestowed upon it ; and in this, as in other matters, he is the type of the grand school of thought which he founded. As in his mind, so throughout the Middle Ages, in proportion to the apprehension of the terrible nature of the Divine justice is the prominence given to the sacrificial means for averting the Divine wrath. The innumerable Masses of the later Middle Ages were so many confessions of the deep-felt need of atonement; and, formal as they ultimately became, they were, in intention, so many cries for forgiveness from the terror-struck consciences of sinful men and women. Luther was a true child of the Church in his keen apprehension of the same need, and it was precisely because he realised it with exceptional truth and depth that he was forced to seek some deeper satisfaction than the offering of Masses could afford. He reasserted the truth that the need had been met and answered once for all by the sacrifice on the Cross ; and by proclaiming the sufficiency of that one eternal offering he swept away all the " sacrifices of masses, " while at the same

time he provided the answer to the craving to which they testified. The doctrine of the Atonement, as asserted at the Reformation, is the true answer to that cry of the human conscience which the Church of the preceding age had vainly endeavoured to satisfy. The Sacrament, of which the Mass was a perversion, was thus restored to its true character as a pledge and an instrument of blessing bestowed by God, instead of a propitiatory offering on the part of men. The cross of Christ, the favourite symbol of the mediæval Church, was thus held aloft by the Reformer in still deeper reality, as the central symbol of the Church's message, and as the one adequate ground for the faith to which he called men.

Now the view of the Christian life involved in this principle of justification by faith found its most complete and beautiful expression in the treatise *On Christian Liberty*, and a brief notice of the teaching of that treatise will best serve to explain the connection between Luther's cardinal doctrine and the other principles which he asserted. As is explained at the close of the introductory letter to Leo X, he designed the treatise as a kind of peace-offering to the Pope,

and as a declaration of the sole objects he had at heart, and to which he desired to devote his life. "It is a small matter," he says, "if you look to its bulk, but unless I mistake, it is a summary of the Christian life in small compass, if you apprehend its meaning." In fact, it presents the dearest view of Luther's theology, alike in its principles and in its practice, almost entirely disembarrassed of the controversial elements by which, under the inevitable pressure of circumstances, his other works, and especially those of a later date, were disturbed. Perhaps the only part of his works to compare with it in this respect is the precious collection of his House-postills, or Exposition of the Gospels for the Sundays of the Christian Year. They were delivered within his domestic circle, and recorded by two of his pupils, and though but imperfectly reported, they are treasures of evangelical exposition, exhibiting in a rare degree the exquisitely childlike character of the Reformer's faith, and marked by all the simplicity and the poetry of feeling by which his mind was distinguished. It is by such works as these, and not simply by his controversial treatises or commentaries, that Luther

must be judged, if we wish either to understand his inner character, or to comprehend the vast personal influence he exerted. But in its essence the Gospel which he preached, the substance of what he had learned from the temptations, the prayers, the meditations—*tentationes*, *orationes*, *meditationes*—of his life as a monk, is sufficiently embodied in the short Treatise on Christian Liberty.

The argument of the treatise is summed up, with the antithetical force so often characteristic of great genius, in the two propositions laid down at the outset : " A Christian man is the most free lord of all and subject to none ; a Christian man is the most dutiful servant of all and subject to every one." The first of these propositions expresses the practical result of the doctrine of justification by faith. The Christian is in possession of a promise of God which in itself, and in the assurance it involves, is a greater blessing to him than all other privileges or enjoyments whatever. Everything sinks into insignificance compared with this Word and Gospel. " Let us," he says, " hold it for certain and firmly established that the soul can do without everything except the

word of God, without which none of its wants are provided for. But, having the word, it is rich and wants for nothing, since it is the word of life, of truth, of light, of peace, of justification, of salvation, of joy, of liberty, of wisdom, of virtue, of grace, of glory, and of every good thing." If it be asked, "What is this word?" he answers that the Apostle Paul explains it, namely, that "it is the Gospel of God concerning His Son, incarnate, suffering, risen, and glorified through the Spirit, the Sanctifier. To preach Christ is to feed the soul, to justify it, to set it free, and to save it, if it believes the preaching. . . . For the word of God cannot be received and honoured by any works, but by faith alone." This is the cardinal point around which not merely Luther's theology, but his whole life, turns. God had descended into the world, had spoken to him by His Son, His Apostles, the Scriptures, and the voice of the Church, and promised him forgiveness in the present, and final deliverance from evil in the future, if he would but trust Him. The mere possession of such a promise outweighed in Luther's view all other considerations whatever, and

absolute faith was due to it. No higher offence could be offered to God than to reject or doubt His promise, and at the same time no higher honour could be rendered Him than to believe it. The importance and value of the virtue of faith is thus determined entirely by the promise on which it rests. These "promises of God are words of holiness, truth, righteousness, liberty, and peace, and are full of universal goodness, and the soul which cleaves to them with a firm faith is so united to them, nay, thoroughly absorbed by them, that it not only partakes in, but is penetrated and saturated by, all their virtue. For if the touch of Christ was health, how much more does that most tender spiritual touch, nay, absorption of the word, communicate to the soul all that belongs to the word! In this way therefore the soul through faith alone, without works, is by the word of God justified, sanctified, endued with truth, peace, and liberty, and filled full with every good thing, and is truly made the child of God. . . . As is the word, such is the soul made by it, just as iron exposed to fire glows like fire on account of its union with the fire." Moreover, just

as it is faith which unites husband and wife, so faith in Christ unites the soul to Him in indissoluble union. For "if a true marriage, nay, by far the most perfect of all marriages, is accomplished between them—for human marriages are but feeble types of this one great marriage—then it follows that all they have becomes theirs in common, as well good things as evil things; so that whatsoever Christ possesses the believing soul may take to itself and boast of as its own, and whatever belongs to the soul Christ claims as His. . . . Thus the believing soul, by the pledge of its faith in Christ, becomes free from all sin, fearless of death, safe from hell, and endowed with the eternal righteousness, life and salvation of its Husband Christ."

It is essential to dwell upon these passages, since the force of the Reformer's great doctrine cannot possibly be apprehended as long as he is supposed to attribute the efficacy of which he speaks to any inherent quality in the human heart itself. It is the word and promise of God which is the creative force. But this summons a man into a sphere above this world, bids him rest upon the Divine love which

speaks to him, and places him on the eternal foundation of a direct covenant with God Himself in Christ. As in the Theses, so in this treatise, Luther reiterates that this in no way implies exemption from the discipline of suffering. "Yea," he says, "the more of a Christian any man is, to so many the more evils, sufferings, and deaths is he subject, as we see in the first place in Christ the first-born, and in all His holy brethren." The power of which he speaks is a spiritual one "which rules in the midst of enemies, in the midst of distresses. It is nothing else than that strength is made perfect in my weakness, and that I can turn all things to the profit of my salvation; so that even the cross and death are compelled to serve me and to work together for my salvation." "It is a lofty and eminent dignity, a true and almighty dominion, a spiritual empire, in which there is nothing so good, nothing so bad, as not to work together for my good, if only I believe."

If we compare this language with those conceptions of spiritual terror by which Luther had been driven into a monastery, and under which, like so many in his age, he had groaned

and struggled in despair, we can appreciate the immense deliverance which he had experienced. The Divine promise had lifted him "out of darkness and out of the shadow of death, and had broken his bonds in sunder." It is this which is the source of the undaunted and joyful faith which marks the whole of the Reformer's public career. "Whose heart," he exclaims, "would not rejoice in its inmost core at hearing these things? Whose heart, on receiving so great a consolation, would not become sweet with the love of Christ, a love to which it can never attain by any laws or works? Who can injure such a heart, or make it afraid? If the consciousness of sin or the horror of death rush in upon it, it is prepared to hope in the Lord, and is fearless of such evils and undisturbed, until it shall look down upon its enemies." Such a conviction, uttered in such burning language, lifted the same cloud of darkness and fear from the hearts of the common people of that day, and was welcomed as good tidings of great joy by multitudes of burdened and terror-stricken hearts. Nothing is more characteristic of Luther's preaching, and of the Reformers who

follow him, than the sense they display that they have before them souls "weary and heavy-laden." Their language presupposes the prevalence of that atmosphere of spiritual apprehension and gloom already described, and their grand aim is to lead men out of it into the joy and peace and liberty of the Gospel. The consequence is that a new confidence, hope, and energy is infused into the moral and spiritual world of that day. The tone of unbounded joy and hope which marks the earliest Christian literature, particularly in the Apostolic Fathers, reappears in such a treatise as we are considering, and in the whole religious thought of the Reformers; and it would almost seem as if the long agony of the Middle Ages had but enhanced the joy of the final deliverance.

It is unnecessary, for our present purpose, to dwell long upon the second point of the treatise, in which Luther illustrates his second proposition: that "a Christian man is the most dutiful servant of all and subject to every one." It will be enough to observe that Luther is just as earnest in insisting upon the application of faith in the duties of charity and self-disci-

pline, as upon the primary importance of faith itself. The spirit of faith, he says, " applies itself with cheerfulness and zeal " to restrain and repress the impulses of the lower nature. " Here works begin ; here a man must not take his ease ; here he must give heed to exercise his body by fastings, watchings, labour, and other reasonable discipline, so that it may be subdued to the spirit, and obey and conform itself to the inner man and to faith. " Similarly he will give himself up to the service of others, and it is partly with a view to rendering them such service that he will discipline his body and keep it in due energy and soundness. He starts from the belief that God, without merit on his part, has of His pure and free mercy bestowed on him, an unworthy creature, all the riches of justification and salvation in Christ, so that he is no longer in want of anything except of faith to believe that this is so. For such a Father then, who has overwhelmed him with these inestimable riches of His, must he not freely, cheerfully, and from voluntary zeal, do all that he knows will be pleasing to Him and acceptable in His sight ? " I will therefore, " he says, " give myself as a

sort of Christ to my neighbour, as Christ has given Himslf to me ; and will do nothing in this life except what I see will be needful, advantageous, and wholesome for my neighbour, since by faith I abound in all good things in Christ." These practical considerations will afford the measure by which a man determines the discipline to which he subjects himself, and the ceremonies which he observes. They will not be observed for their own sake, but as means to an end, and therefore will never be practised in excess, as though there were some merit in the performance of them. They are like the scaffoldings of builders, valuable only as a temporary assistance in the construction of the building itself. " We do not condemn works and ceremonies ; nay, we set the highest value on them. We only condemn that opinion of works which regards them as constituting true righteousness." In asserting these principles, Luther was certainly putting the axe to the root of the portentous growth of ascetic and ceremonial observances which prevailed in his day, and which were too generally regarded as of the very essence of religion. He enabled men, as it were, to look on such ceremonies

from the outside, as a thing external to them, and to reduce or rearrange them with a simple view to practical usefulness. But no more earnest exhortations to due self-discipline, and to true charity could well be found than are contained in the second part of the *De Libertate*.

It will be evident, however, what a powerful instrument of reformation was placed in men's hands by the principles of this treatise. Every Christian man, by virtue of the promise of Christ, was proclaimed free, so far as the eternal necessities of his soul were concerned, from all external and human conditions whatever. Nothing, indeed, was further from Luther's intention or inclination than the overthrow of existing order, or the disparagement of any existing authority which could be reasonably justified. His letter to Pope Leo, prefixed to the treatise we have been considering, shows that, while denouncing unsparingly the abuses of the Court of Rome, he was sincere in his deference to the see of Rome itself. But the principle of Justification by Faith enabled him to proclaim that if that see, or any existing Church authority, misused its power, and refused to reform abuses, then, in

the last resort, the soul of man could do without it. In that day at all events—and perhaps in our own to a greater extent than is sometimes supposed—this conviction supplied the fulcrum which was essential for any effectual reforming movement. As is observed by the Church historian Gieseler, in his admirable account of the early history of the Reformation, the papacy had ever found its strongest support in the people at large. In spite of all the discontent and disgust provoked by the corruption of the Church and the clergy, an enormous, though indefinite, authority was still popularly attributed to the Pope and the ecclesiastical hierarchy. The Pope was believed to be, in some sense or other, the supreme administrator of spiritual powers which were effectual in the next world as well as in the present ; and consequently, when any controversy with the Church came to a crisis, men shrank from direct defiance of the papal authority. They did not feel that they had any firm ground on which they could stand if they incurred its formal condemnation ; and thus it always had at its command, in the strongest possible sense, the *ultima ratio* of rulers. The convictions to which

Luther had been led at once annihilated these pretensions. "One thing, and one alone," he declared, "is necessary for life, justification, and Christian liberty; and that is the most holy Word of God, the Gospel of Christ." As we have seen, he proclaimed it "for certain, and firmly established, that the soul can do without everything except the word of God." It is the mission of the Christian ministry, in its administration of the word and sacraments, to convey this Gospel to the soul, and to arouse a corresponding faith. But the promise is not annexed indissolubly to that administration, and the only invariable rule of salvation is that "the just shall live by faith." By this principle, that vague fear of the spiritual powers of the hierarchy was removed, and men were endowed with real Christian liberty.

But the principle went still further; for it vindicated for the laity the possession of spiritual faculties and powers similar in kind to those of the clergy. All Christian men are admitted to the privilege of priesthood, and are "worthy to appear before God to pray for others, and to teach one another mutually the things which are of God." In case of neces-

sity, as is universally recognised, Baptism can be validly administered by lay hands; and English divines, of the most unimpeachable authority on the subject, have similarly recognised that the valid administration of the Holy Communion is not dependent on the ordination of the minister by episcopal authority.[1] Luther urges accordingly that all Christians possess virtually the capacities which, as a matter of order, are commonly restricted to the clergy. Whether that restriction is properly dependent upon regular devolution from apostolic authority, or whether the ministerial commission can be sufficiently conferred by appointment from the Christian community or congregation as a whole, becomes on this principle a secondary point. Luther pronounced with the utmost decision in favour of the latter alternative; but the essential element of his teaching is independent of this question. By whatever right the exercise of the ministry may be restricted to a particular body of men, what he asserted was that the functions of the clergy are simply ministerial, and that they do but

[1] See, for instance, Bishop Cosin's *Works*, Appendix, vol. i, p. 31, in the Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology.

exercise, on behalf of all, powers which all virtually possess.

This principle Luther proceeded to assert in the momentous treatise translated in the volume under review: the *Address to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation respecting the Reformation of the Christian Estate*. This treatise is perhaps the one which appealed most widely and directly to the German nation at large. Luther completed it at the very moment when the bull of excommunication against him was being prepared; and it contributed, perhaps more than anything, to paralyse the influence of that bull with the mass of the people and their lay leaders. It appeared in August, 1520, and by the 18th of that month more than four thousand copies had been already dispersed—a prodigious circulation, considering the state of literature at that day. The reader, however, will not be surprised at this popularity of the treatise, when he sees with what astonishing vigour, frankness, humour, good sense, and at the same time intense moral indignation, Luther denounces in it the corruptions of the Church, and the injuries inflicted by the Court of Rome on the German people. So tremendous an

indictment, sustained with such intense and concentratred force, could hardly be paralleled in literature. The truth of the charges alleged in it could be amply sustained by reference to Erasmus's works alone, particularly to the *Encomium Moriæ* ; but Erasmus lacked alike the moral energy necessary to rouse the action of the laity, and the spiritual insight necessary to justify that action. Luther possessed both ; and it was the combination of the two which rendered him so mighty a force. It is this perhaps which essentially distinguishes him from previous reformers. They attacked particular errors and abuses, and deserve unbounded honour for the protest they raised ; and Wycliffe, in particular, merits the homage of Englishmen as one of the chief motive powers in the first reforming movement. But they did not assert, at least with sufficient clearness, the central principles without which all reform was impracticable—that of the equal rights of laity and clergy, and that of the soul's independence of all human power, by virtue of the truth of justification by faith. Luther's doctrine of Christian liberty was the emancipation alike of individuals and of the laity at large. It vindi-

cated for the whole lay estate, and for all ranks and conditions of lay life, a spiritual dignity, and a place in the spiritual life of the Church. It restored a sense of independent responsibility to all natural authorities ; and it reasserted the sacredness of all natural relations. Practically, even if not theoretically, the Roman system had disparaged the ordinary relations of life, as compared with the so-called " religious " or ecclesiastical. Luther, by placing all men and women on the same spiritual standing-ground, swept away any such privileges ; and gave men as clear a conscience, and as great a sense of spiritual dignity, in the ordinary duties of marriage, of fatherhood, of government, and in the common offices of life, as in any ecclesiastical order.

The *Address to the Nobility of the German Nation* exhibits these principles, and their application to the practical problems of the day, in the most vigorous and popular form ; and if some expressions appear too sweeping and violent, due allowance must be made for the necessity which Luther must have felt of appealing with the utmost breadth and force to the popular mind. But it remains to

consider a further aspect of these principles which is illustrated by the third treatise translated in this volume: that on the *Babylonish Captivity of the Church*. Luther, as has been seen, was appealing to laity and clergy alike, on the ground of their spiritual freedom, to abolish the abuses of the Roman Church. But it became at once a momentous question by what principles the exercise of that liberty was to be guided, and within what limits it was to be exerted. In a very short time fanatics sprang up, who claimed to exercise such liberty without any restrictions at all, and who refused to recognise any standard but that of their own supposed inspiration. But the service which Luther rendered in repelling such abuses of his great doctrine was only second to that of establishing the doctrine itself. The rule of faith and practice on which he insisted was, indeed, necessarily involved in his primary principle. Faith, as has been seen, was with him no abstract quality, but was simply a response to the word and promise of God. That Word, accordingly, in its various forms, was in Luther's mind the creative power of the Christian life. In the

form of a simple promise, it is the basis of justification and of our whole spiritual vitality; and similarly in its more general form, as recorded in the Holy Scriptures, it contains all truths, alike of belief and of practice, which are essential to salvation here and hereafter. The word of God, in whatever form, whether a simple promise, or a promise embodied in a sacrament, or a series of revelations made by God's Spirit to the soul of man, as recorded in the Bible, is the grand reality which, in Luther's view, dwarfed all other realities on earth. It must needs do so, if it be a reality at all; but scarcely any one has grasped this truth with such intense insight as Luther. Consequently, in his view, the Anabaptist, who held himself emancipated from the authority of God's word on the one side, was as grievously in error as the Romanist on the other, who superseded its authority by that of the Church; and in applying his great principle and working out the Reformation, Luther's task consisted in upholding the due authority of the Scriptures against the extremes on both sides.

Now in the treatise on the *Babylonish*

Captivity of the Church he applies this rule, in connection with his main principle, to the elaborate sacramental system of the Church of Rome. Of the seven sacraments recognised by that Church, he recognises, strictly speaking, only two : Baptism and the Lord's Supper ; and the connection of this conclusion with the central truth he was asserting is a point of deep interest. Here, too, the one consideration which, in his view, overpowers every other is the supreme import of a promise or word of God. But there are two institutions under the Gospel which are distinguished from all others by a visible sign, instituted by Christ Himself, as a pledge of the Divine promise. A sign so instituted, and with such a purpose, constitutes a peculiarly precious form of those Divine promises which are the life of the soul ; and, for the same reason that the Divine word and the Divine promise are supreme in all other instances, so must these be supreme and unique among ceremonies. The distinction, by which the two sacraments acknowledged by the Reformed Churches are separated from the remaining five of the Roman Church, was thus no question of names, but of things. It

was a question whether a ceremony instituted by Christ's own command, and embodying His own promise in a visible pledge, could for a moment be put on the same level with ceremonies, however edifying, which had been established solely by the authority or custom of the Church. It was of the essence of Luther's teaching to assert a paramount distinction between these classes of ceremonies, and to elevate the two Divine pledges of forgiveness and spiritual life to a height immeasurably superior to all other institutions. He hesitates, indeed, whether to allow an exception in favour of absolution, as conveying undoubtedly a direct promise from Christ; but he finally decides against it, on the ground that it is without any visible and Divinely appointed sign, and is after all only an application of the Sacrament of baptism.

If, moreover, the force of his argument on this subject is to be apprehended, due attention must be paid to the efficacy which he thus attributes to the two sacraments. The cardinal point on which he insists in respect to them is that they are direct pledges from God, through Christ, and thus contain the whole virtue of

the most solemn Divine promises. They are, as it were, the sign and seal of those promises. They are messages from God, not mere acts of devotion on the part of man. In baptism the point of chief importance is not that men dedicate themselves or their children to Him, but that He, through His minister, gives them a promise and a pledge of His forgiveness and of His fatherly goodwill. Similarly in the Holy Communion the most important point is not the offering made on the part of man, but the promise and assurance of communion with the Body and Blood of Christ made on the part of God. It is this which constitutes the radical distinction between the Lutheran and the so-called Zwinglian view of the sacraments. Under the latter view they are ceremonies which embody and arouse due feelings on the part of men. On the former principle, they are ceremonies which embody direct messages and promises from God.

It may be worth while to observe in passing the position which Luther assumes towards the doctrine of Transubstantiation. What he is concerned to maintain is that there is a real presence in the Sacrament. All he is concerned

to deny is that transubstantiation is the necessary explanation of that presence. In other words, it is not necessary to believe in transubstantiation in order to believe in the Real Presence. There seems a clear distinction between this view and the formal doctrine of consubstantiation as afterwards elaborated by Lutheran divines ; and Luther's caution, at least in this treatise, in dealing with so difficult a point, is eminently characteristic of the real moderation with which he formed his views, as distinguished from the energy with which he asserted them. Another interesting point in this treatise is the urgency with which he protests against the artificial restraints upon the freedom of marriage which had been imposed by the Roman see. It would have been too much to expect that in applying, single-handed, to so difficult a subject as marriage, the rule of rejecting every restriction not expressly declared in the Scriptures, Luther should have avoided mistakes. But they are at least insignificant in comparison with the value of the principle he asserted that all questions of the marriage relation should be subjected to the authority of Holy Scripture alone. That principle provid-

ed, by its inherent force, a remedy for any errors in particulars which Luther or any individual divine might commit. The Roman principle, on the contrary, admitted of the most scandalous and unlimited elasticity ; and of all the charges brought by Roman controversialists against Luther's conduct, none are marked by such effrontery as their accusations on this point. While there are few dispensations which their Church is not prepared, for what it considers due causes, to allow, Luther recalled men's consciences to the Divine law on the subject. He reasserted the true dignity and sanctity of the marriage relation, and established the rule of Holy Scripture as the standard for its due control.

Such are the main truths asserted in the treatises here reviewed, and it is but recognising a historical fact to designate them "first principles of the Reformation." From them, and by means of them, the whole of the subsequent movement was worked out. They were applied in different countries in different ways ; and we are justly proud in this country of the wisdom and moderation exhibited by our Reformers. But it ought never to be

forgotten that for the assertion of the principles themselves we, like the rest of Europe, are indebted to the genius and the courage of Luther. All of those principles—justification by faith, Christian liberty, the spiritual rights and powers of the laity, the true character of the sacraments, the supremacy of the Holy Scriptures as the standard of belief and practice—were asserted by the Reformer, as these three treatises bear testimony, almost simultaneously, in the latter half of the year 1520. At the time he asserted them, the Roman Church was still in full power ; and in the next year he had to face the whole authority of the papacy and of the empire, and to decide whether, at the risk of a fate like that of Huss, he would stand by these truths. These were the truths—the cardinal principles of the whole subsequent Reformation—which he was called on to abandon at Worms ; and his refusal to act against his conscience at once translated them into vivid action and reality. It was one thing for Englishmen, several decades after 1520, to apply these principles with the wisdom and moderation of which we are proud : it was another thing to be the

Horatius of that vital struggle. These grand facts speak for themselves, and need only to be understood in order to justify the honours now paid to the Reformer's memory.

It may not, however, be out of place to dwell in conclusion upon one essential characteristic of the Reformer's position, which is in danger at the present day of being disregarded. The general effect of this teaching upon the condition of the world is evident. It restored to the people at large, to rulers and to ruled, to clergy and to laity alike, complete independence of the existing ecclesiastical system, within the limits of the revelation contained in the Holy Scriptures. In a word, in Luther's own phrase, it established Christian Liberty. But the qualification is emphatic, and it would be to misunderstand Luther utterly if it were disregarded. Attempts are made at the present day to represent him as a pioneer of absolute liberty, and to treat it as a mere accident of his teaching and his system that he stopped short where he did. But, on the contrary, the limitation is of the very essence of his teaching, because that teaching is based on the supremacy and sufficiency of

the Divine word and the Divine promise. If there were no such word and promise, no such Divine revelation, and no living God to bring it home to men's hearts and to enforce His own laws, Luther felt that his protest against existing authority, usurped and tyrannical as it might be, would have been perilous in the extreme. But when men shrank from the boldness of his proclamation, and urged that he was overthrowing the foundations of society, his reply was that he was recalling them to the true foundations of society, and that God, if they would have faith in Him, would protect His own word and will. The very essence of his teaching is summed up in the lines of his great Psalm,

> " Das Wort sie sollen lassen stahn
> Und kein Dank dazu haben,
> Er ist bei uns wohl auf dem Plan
> Mit seinem Geist und Gaben."

Luther believed that God had laid down the laws which were essential to the due guidance of human nature, that He had prescribed sufficiently the limits within which that nature might range, and had indicated the trees of which it could not safely eat. To erect any

rules beyond these as of general obligation, to restrict the free play of nature by any other limitations, he treated as an unjust violation of liberty, which would provoke a dangerous reaction. But let men be brought face to face with God, and with His reasonable and merciful laws, let them be taught that He is their Father, that all His restrictions are for their benefit, all His punishments for their reformation, all His restraints on liberty for their ultimate good, and you have then established an authority which cannot be shaken, and under which human nature may be safely left to develop. In this faith, but in this alone, he let loose men's natural instincts; he taught men that married life, and lay life, and all lawful occupations, were holy and Divine, provided they were carried on in faith and in obedience to God's will. The result was a burst of new life wherever the Reformation was adopted, alike in national energies, in literature, in all social developments, and in natural science. But while we prize and celebrate the liberty thus won, let us beware of forgetting, or allowing others to forget, that it is essentially a Christian liberty, and

that no other liberty is really free. Luther's whole work, and his whole power, lay in his recognition of our personal relation to God, and of a direct revelation, promise, and command, given to us by God. Any influences, under whatever colour, which tend to obscure the reality of that revelation, which would substitute for it any mere natural laws or forces, are undoing Luther's work, and contradicting his most essential principles. If he was a great Reformer, it was because he was a great divine; if he was a friend of the people, it was because he was the friend of God.

SOME SPECIAL POINTS IN THE REFORMATION CONTROVERSY

I

THE GOSPEL AND THE REMISSION OF SINS

"*And when He had said this He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained.*"—St. John xx. 22, 23.

Upon the interpretation and application of these words depends the decision between two conceptions of the office of the Christian ministry and two ideals of the Christian life. On the one hand they have been so interpreted as to apply only to the Apostles and their successors in the ministry, and as giving them special authority to convey to men the forgiveness of their sins by personal absolution. It is held by those who maintain this view, to

put the claim at the lowest, that, although sins may be and are forgiven without such personal absolution, yet that, if men and women desire to be assured of the forgiveness of their sins, the ordinary course, and the best course, for them to take, is to confess them to one who holds a commission for that purpose derived from the Apostles. But it naturally follows that, if forgiveness is to be conveyed by this personal assurance, the priest who is to pronounce the absolution must be informed, by confession, of the nature of the sins of which he is to declare the forgiveness; and thus the peace of mind of every man and woman is rendered practically dependent upon continual confession of all sins to the priest, and the reception of the priest's absolution.

This system, of course, reaches its full development in the Roman Church, which presents the most complete form of what is described as the sacerdotal system, the system, that is, in which the spiritual welfare of men, for time and for eternity, is rendered dependent in the main on a priestly order, for the purpose of absolution. The history of Europe for the centuries which immediately preceded the

Reformation offers the fullest illustration of the practical working of such a system. The key to that history is that men were under an apprehension, even where it did not amount to a belief, that their ultimate welfare and salvation depended in some manner upon the authoritative action of the Pope and the clergy; and they could not therefore make up their minds to act in defiance of them. Europe was groaning under acknowledged evils, not only in the State but in the Church; the cry for generations had been for reform of the Church "in head and members;" Council after Council was called together to provide an answer to that cry; but whenever the question came to the point of action, when—if anything effectual was to be done—it was necessary to override the authority of the Clergy, the strongest laymen and the ablest kings were checked, in the presence of the mysterious powers which the Pope and his Clergy might be supposed to possess over their spiritual fate. Numbers of men might in their hearts disbelieve those powers; but, to use a memorable phrase, they felt it was "not so certain that there was nothing in it," and

they could not face all that might be meant by a papal excommunication. That menace, moreover, was not merely that of a general censure and denunciation ; but, through the power of absolution believed to reside in every priest, it extended to the daily experience of every man and woman ; and the fear of passing out of this world without that absolution, without the last Sacraments of the Church, maintained for the Church and the clergy an indefinable supremacy over the mass of mankind.

It may be briefly recalled how this supremacy was broken, and how the consciences of men were emancipated. It was in the first instance brought home to Luther, from his experience as a parish priest, how grievously the exercise of this priestly power of absolution obscured to simple souls the deep gravity of sin, and the profound nature of true absolution. He found that in practice it operated, to a grievous extent, to shelter men and women from that direct contact with God Himself, which alone could make them duly sensible of the depth of their evil on the one hand, and of the profound and blessed nature of God's forgiveness, and

God's justification, on the other. Given, perhaps, an ideal priest, this consequence might be avoided, at least in great degree. But taking human nature as it is, and consequently taking any priesthood as it must be on the average, the temptation is to grant absolution too lightly, to be satisfied with imperfect and formal confessions, and thus to give men and women a sense of assurance in a most imperfect state of repentance, and to let them rest in a peace which is not real peace. The remedy was found in directing them beyond the priest, to the great Judge to Whom it was the office of the priest to bear witness, to bid them examine their consciences as in His sight, to seek for the help of His Spirit to convince them of sin, of righteousness and of judgment, to induce them to realize, in solemn prayer and self-examination, the operation of His penetrating eye and His strict judgment ; and it then became necessary for them to go beyond the priest once more, for the assurance of God's forgiveness, and for peace to their consciences. If the Spirit of God brought home to their hearts the conviction of their sin and evil, that Spirit also, acting through the word of Christ

in the Scriptures and in the Sacraments, could alone bring home to their hearts the assurance of God's pardon and the sense of His sanctifying grace. But the moment this was realized, that deep apprehension of the power of the Church and the clergy over the unseen world of their spirits vanished from men's minds like a bad dream. The parts of Europe to which the Gospel of the Reformation spread were sensible of a sudden and blessed emancipation. The Reformer's appeal to "the Christian laity of the German nation" at once received a fearless response. Men and women dared to look the Pope and the clergy in the face, even though they might still retain the power of condemning them to torture and death; and the Protestant countries of Europe entered on a career of freedom and fearless energy, which has created the civilization, the literature, and the science of the last three centuries. At the same time the sense of direct responsibility to God Himself, the more complete realization of direct communion with Him, the abolition of the notion that any human power, any visible human authority, could protect men from His direct judgment,

or take the place of His direct guidance, has had the effect of producing, and maintaining generally in Christian life, a higher individual standard of piety and morality than was generally presented in the period before the Reformation. It has been shown by experience on the largest scale that, subject to the exceptions incidental to any systems and principles, the tendency of a sacerdotal system is at once to weaken the apprehension of sin, and to undermine the sense of individual responsibility, and at the same time to diminish the faith and the courage which are called for in the great struggles of life. As the late Lord Salisbury said on one public occasion, the effect of the general system of Confession is to undermine the virility of any nation which submits to it.

What, then, is the true construction of our text, which is generally relied upon in justification of the system in question? In answer, let it first be clearly realized that, as is pointed out by the most authoritative commentators, the commission it contains was not addressed to the Apostles only, but to all the disciples then assembled, and consequently to the Church as

a body. It is the Saviour's description of the office of His Church in the world. He gave it a commission to proclaim to all the world the forgiveness of sins, with the conditions on which sins could be remitted. He promised the Holy Ghost, at once to teach His Ministers the nature and the means of that remission of sins, and to enable them to bring these truths home to the hearts of those whom they addressed; and He assured them, in this solemn and authoritative form, that their work, in thus remitting the sins of those who believed their message, would be ratified in heaven, that whosesoever sins they thus remitted were remitted to them, and whosesoever sins they retained were retained. It is important we should ever bear in mind the fact that our Saviour, again and again after His Resurrection, insisted on this being the great message which His Church was to bring to the world. It is not perhaps always realized, as it needs to be, what an extraordinary promise it is, and what authoritative assurance it needs. When men think it difficult to believe in miracles, it is strange they should find it easy to believe in the forgiveness of sins. As a mere matter of personal feeling

indeed, that forgiveness may not be so difficult to realize, although the urgency with which our Lord insisted on the duty of forgiveness in this sense, embodying the necessity of it in His short prayer, may indicate that, even in this simple aspect, it is not so easy as is sometimes supposed. But forgiveness in the full sense of the word, forgiveness in the sense in which it is most precious to us, forgiveness in the sense of the blotting out of what is past, the undoing the daily wrongs that have been done, forgiveness in the sense of justification, forgiveness in the sense which renders possible the obliteration of an evil past and the renewal of the soul by regeneration, this is nothing less than a miracle, a supernatural operation, which none but a Divine Hand can effect. The question was profoundly just which the Pharisees raised, "Who can forgive sins but God only?" But, if so, then nothing but an express Divine authority can enable us to believe in the forgiveness of sins, the forgiveness of our own sins, the forgiveness of the sins of all who accept the grace which the Saviour offers. Accordingly, in passage after passage, our Saviour assures His Apostles and His disciples of this supreme and

supernatural blessing ; for this reason He couples the assurance of it with the promise of the gift of the Holy Ghost, to bring it home to the hearts of those who proclaim it, and of those to whom it is proclaimed. For this reason He speaks of it so often after His rising from the dead, as though it were the ultimate result of His death and of His Resurrection, and thus concentrates upon it the thoughts of His Apostles. When He finally " opened their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures, He said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day : and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. "

Accordingly we find that, from the very first, it was upon this great promise that the preaching of the Apostles was concentrated. When, after St. Peter's first sermon, the Jews were pricked in their hearts and said unto Peter and the rest of the Apostles. " Men and brethren, what shall we do " ? then Peter said unto them, " Repent, and be baptised every one of you in

the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." In his address to Cornelius, he summed up the message with which he was commissioned in two things—the proclamation of judgment and the promise of remission. "He commanded us to preach unto the people and to testify that it is He which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His Name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." The same is the conclusion of St. Paul's first sermon. "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." That, according to the Apostles, is the central point, the sum and substance of the Gospel—not philosophical theories about God, not the creation of social Utopias, not temporal benefits—except so far as they are the natural consequences of spiritual blessings—but first and above all the conviction of sin, and next the conviction and the faith of forgiveness. "Re-

pentance and remission of sins." It is well known that the introduction of the words of this text into the commission given to a Priest at his ordination is not of primitive origin, and their use for the purpose is open to misinterpretation. But they cannot be taken to mean anything more than, or anything different from, that which they mean in the Gospel, anything different from that which our Saviour intended by them ; and if understood in this sense, if understood as reminding the priest over whom they are pronounced that his great work is to convince men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, to proclaim repentance and remission of sins to all people committed to his charge—that this is the commission of Christ to His Church, of which he in his turn is a commissioned Minister—they may then be a fitting summary of the duties of his office.

Unhappily in the present day there is an earnest and systematic attempt to revive in the English Church that sacerdotal conception of the function of the Church and of the duties of the priesthood, which I commenced by recalling. It may not be so strongly and

authoritatively formulated as it is in the Roman Church; those who promote it may be formally justified in declaring that they are not introducing the Roman system. But when Clergymen urge people to confession by all the moral influence in their power, when they teach, as is now openly done in the religious Press, that a peace of mind is attainable by confession and priestly absolution which is not attainable otherwise, when we find an experienced and unprejudiced observer like the Bishop of St. Albans saying, as he recently did in his Charge, that it occasions him uneasiness to find that in many cases confession is regarded as almost necessary for the highest form of spiritual life—when this is the case, it is too evident that the principle and the method of Sacerdotalism have acquired a strong hold in our Church, and that the time has come when it must be both vigorously and openly resisted by those who believe that it is inconsistent with the highest form of Christian truth and Christian life, and is fatal in the long run to the welfare of either a Church or a nation. It remains true that the doctrine of justification by faith, of absolute faith in God and God's

Word, as alone sufficient for the salvation, for the daily health and the ultimate safety of the soul, is the attribute of a standing or a falling Christianity ; and that if we would maintain the pure and primitive character of our Church and the virility of our nation, the practice of private Confession and Absolution must be reduced, as our Prayer-Book reduces it, to the position of an exceptional practice, not to be encouraged, but to be superseded by a larger and firmer and more direct faith in the Saviour. The temptations to adopt the other system are, indeed, deeply rooted in human nature ; the system has an attraction for some forms of spiritual weakness : and to some men of earnest spiritual character among the Clergy it presents an ideal of guidance and direction which has a strange and dangerous fascination. But it has never stood the test of time ; there is no trace of it in the practice of the Apostles or in the teaching of the New Testament ; it has no example in those primitive ages when the faith and the practice of the Church were purest, and when her saints were most saintly ; and it is the glory of our Church to have reverted, as the general characteristic of her system, to

those Scriptural and primitive ideals, and thus to encourage her children to come boldly to the Throne of Grace itself, and to kneel at the feet of the One great High Priest, "that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

But let it ever be remembered that it is only by leading men and women to that High Priest that we can enable them to dispense with the secondary priestly aid which is so earnestly pressed upon them. It is only by keeping Christ, and the words of Christ, and the comfort of the Holy Ghost, before the minds of our people that we can meet their daily needs, and enable them to live in the sense of peace with God. In the hearts of the great majority of men and women there is one aching pain and one yearning need—the pain of a sense of sin, of things undone which should have been done, and of things done which should not have been done, and a craving for the forgiveness of those sins, and for deliverance and purification from them. The reason why the Apostles directed all their exhortations, no matter whom they addressed, to the proclamation of repentance and remission

of sins, was because this is the one universal craving of humanity. It has been observed by Professor Monier Williams that all the religions of the East, and all their superstitions, arise from a sense of sin and a craving for deliverance from it. Part of the work of the ministry, the beginning of it, is to deepen and maintain that sense of sin and of repentance; and the craving for forgiveness and guidance thus aroused must needs be satisfied in one way or another. If not in the right way, it will be satisfied in the wrong; if not by direct communion with Christ and the Holy Spirit, then by weak human substitutes, and by mortal and fallible priests. But it is the glory of the Ministry, as the witness to the great Evangelical truths of our faith, to point men and women to Christ Himself, to enable them to rely on His words and assurances, and to trust His Spirit. That can only be done by the full and free preaching of His Word, by throwing our whole energies into the study of the Scriptures, and by so entering into their message and their spirit ourselves, as to be able to impress it on the hearts of our people. In proportion as the Clergy do

that will they fulfil the commission of this text, and shall we help to maintain in our Church and in our nation that true sense of sin, and that manly and womanly faith in Christ's forgiveness and redemption, which were won back for us at such a price at the Reformation.

II

THE SACRIFICIAL ASPECT OF THE HOLY COMMUNION

It may, I think, be observed with thankfulness that, during recent discussions, much approach has been made towards agreement between authorities in the various Schools of thought in the Church. In the Fulham Conference, a statement of the late Mr. Dimock on the subject, somewhat amended in discussion, received the assent of all Members of the Conference, except in respect to four words. That statement was that, "as one aspect of the ordinance, there may be truly said to be a submitting to the Divine view of the Sacrifice of the Death of Christ [in representation, not *re*-presentation], not as making, but as having

made once for all, the perfect propitiation for the sins of the world." The four words in this statement which were not accepted, and which in fact were not practically discussed, are the bracketed words "in representation, not *Re*-presentation." But some subsequent statements by Canon Gore, in his book entitled "The Body of Christ," would seem to show that he is substantially in harmony with Mr. Dimock on the point involved in those words. Thus he says, on p. 175, "We have thus a solemn commemoration before God of the sacrificial death of Christ. But the death, or the humiliation which belongs to the death, is commemorated only, not renewed or repeated. When the Fathers speak of an 'immolation' — *i.e.* a fresh sacrificing of Christ in the Eucharist, they are referring only to the symbolism of the sacrament, not to its inward reality; and this, in the language of the Church taken as a whole, is quite unmistakable, and continues to be so as late as the theology of St. Thomas Aquinas." In illustration, Canon Gore quotes these statements from St. Thomas Aquinas: "It is called a sacrifice with reference to what is past, inasmuch as it is com-

memorative of the Lord's Passion, which was the true Sacrifice;" and again, "It is a representative image of Christ's Passion, as the altar represents the Cross on which he was immolated." We have, therefore, the admission, on the part of the most learned member of the Evangelical School, that one aspect of the Eucharist is that of a representation, to the Divine view, of the sacrifice of the death of Christ, and, on the other hand, a clear statement, by so learned and able a member of the opposite School as Canon Gore, that the representation of our Lord's sacrifice in the Eucharist is not a *re*-presentation. In other words, these two representative Divines agree in the statement of St. Chrysostom, quoted by Canon Gore, that "we offer, but as making for ourselves a memorial of His Death..... We make always the same sacrifice, or rather we effect a memorial of the Sacrifice."

We may also welcome thankfully some further observations of Bishop Gore, in which he says (p. 176), that "the Eucharist is not in the stricter sense of the term propitiatory. It is certainly in accordance with the language of the New Testament to reserve this term for

the initial act by which Christ gave humanity a new standing before God, and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers." He observes that Bishop Jeremy Taylor allows that the Eucharist "is ministerially, by application, an instrument propitiatory;" and says that "the use of the word propitiatory of the Eucharist, or the refusal to use it, may thus be said to be a mere matter of language." But Bishop Gore adds that "there are deep reasons of religion, as well as Scriptural authority, to move us to restrict its application; and of course still deeper reasons for guarding the truth, which the restriction expresses, of the uniqueness and all-sufficiency of the sacrifice of Calvary."

We cannot, I think, but thankfully recognise that these various statements mark a considerable degree of approximation—it might even be said, of practical agreement, between Mr. Dimock and Bishop Gore, as to the view to be taken of the Eucharist as a commemoration and representation of the Sacrifice of our Lord. But another important statement, in the same direction, has been made by a conspicuous representative of the High Church view on

this subject—The late Professor Moberly, of Christ Church. He published an interesting and important article on the Fulham Conference in the *Journal of Theological Studies*. In the outset of that article (p. 322) he says he desires "to acknowledge from the beginning that the position which is thus cardinal to modern Evangelical theology"—as maintained at the Conference—"is in its origin neither new nor partisan. A doctrine," he says, "strenuously maintained as cardinal to Eucharistic truth by Archdeacon Freeman and by Canon Trevor, based by both upon emphatic words of Bishop Andrewes, and by Canon Trevor upon a long catena of passages from distinctive and distinguished Anglican Divines, is no device of modern 'Low Churchmanship.' It has a long history and many-sided support. It is no more partisan than it is new." These are handsome acknowledgments, and in the interesting discussion which follows, Professor Moberly goes still further in his acceptance of the Evangelical position as stated at the Conference. Thus he says (p. 334) "with much of the Evangelical meaning I can heartily concur. When Dr. Wace says that 'The

Holy Communion is a commemoration, as well on the part of God, by whom it was instituted, as on the part of man, of the one-sufficient sacrifice offered by our Lord on the Cross, and a visible means for assuring and conveying to us the benefits of that Sacrifice,' I could accept his saying, not indeed without some added explanation, but without the alteration of a word. When Mr. Dimock urges the extreme importance of 'bearing witness to the truth, that for outcast, lost sinners, there was no access to life in Communion with God, save by the reconciliation which we have by the death of His Son—no way of entering into fellowship with the resurrection life of Christ except by being made partakers of His Body and Blood, as sacrificed for the remission of sins,' I am, so far as those words go, with him entirely. Even when Dr. Moule urges that it is 'involved in the terms of institution that our Lord put forward His Body and Blood as sacrificed—the Body as dead, and the Blood as shed—to be participated in as a sacrifice,' I could still adopt the words, if only I may put my own interpretation on 'dead;' making it clear that I mean the Body which died and is

not dead, not the body in a state of death ; and again, that by the ' Blood as shed,' I mean really the shed Blood, not the blood as now in a state of separation from the Body."

Upon a general review of these statements, we seem to come to this result—that the view of the relation of the Eucharist to the sacrifice of our Lord, maintained by such Evangelical representatives as Mr. Dimock and Bishop Moule, is acknowledged to be that of so representative an Anglican Divine as Bishop Andrews, and that Dr. Moberly himself admits the truth of the modern Evangelical statement of it, subject to the qualification —no doubt an important one—that the Eucharist refers to the Body and Blood of our Lord, not as in the state of death upon the cross, but in their present glorified condition. But it may be observed that this point of difference, though a grave one, does not affect the main point of agreement now in question. Dr. Moberly seems to adopt the view that our Lord's Body and Blood, as represented in the Eucharist, are representative of His Body and Blood as now represented or exhibited by Him in Heaven. He maintains that the essence of

the Sacrifice lies in that present exhibition, and as it were sprinkling, of the Blood of Christ in Heaven. But he acknowledges most fully (p. 332), "that the Eucharist immediately connects us *with the Atoning Sacrifice of Christ*, with the Blood of Atonement, with the body that died. . . . I would say," he adds, "as strongly as Dr. Moule, or Mr. Dimock, or Dr. Wace could say it, that it is with nothing so much as the sacrifice as sacrifice, the atonement as atonement, that the Eucharist was ordained to associate us." It is not practicable, in this Paper, to discuss adequately the distinctive view which Dr. Moberly thus puts forward; and it will be enough, for our immediate purpose, to quote an observation of Bishop Westcott, in his commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews (p. 230), where he says that "The modern conception of Christ pleading in Heaven His Passion, 'offering His Blood,' on behalf of men, has no foundation in the Epistle. His glorified humanity is the eternal pledge of the absolute efficiency of His accomplished work. He pleads, as other writers truly expressed the thought, by His presence on His Father's throne. Meanwhile

men on earth in union with Him enjoy continually through His Blood what was before the privilege of one man on one day in the year." This, however, for the purpose of the point of view to which this Paper is to be addressed, appears to be a side issue. It is a difference as to the manner in which, in the Eucharist, we are made partakers of the sacrifice of Christ. But there is a substantial, if not an entire, agreement between Dr. Moberly, Bishop Gore and Evangelical Divines, as to the momentous fact, that the Eucharist is an appointed means for participation in the Sacrifice of Christ. It is agreed, on both sides, that by partaking of the Consecrated Elements, we are brought into union and communion with the Lamb as slain. Dr. Moberly only objects to saying, with Bishop Andrews, "the Lamb as dead"; but he fully recognises that we are brought into communion with the Lamb as slain. Comparing the two views, it seems striking to reflect that the connexion of the Eucharist with the Sacrifice of Christ is more thoroughly represented by the Evangelical view than by that of Dr. Moberly and his School. In the teaching of Bishop Andrews and Dr. Moule,

it is with Christ, in His actual propitiatory Sacrifice on the Cross, that we are brought into communion in the Eucharist. In the other view, it is rather with the application of that Sacrifice in Heaven that our Communion is maintained. Still, in either case, the Eucharist is not a bare commemoration of the Sacrifice. It makes us in a special manner partakers of it, and we renew and deepen our relation to it in every act of reception.

We seem after all, then, to be brought back by these discussions to the view so clearly explained by Cudworth, and supported by Waterland, that "the true notion of the Lord's Supper" is that of a feast upon a sacrifice. Cudworth's admirable learning has anticipated, in substance, much of what is put forward by Bishop Gore as the result of recent investigation into the meaning of sacrificial rites and sacrificial banquets, not only among Semitic races, but among Pagans generally. A Sacrifice, and a feast upon a Sacrifice, were almost universally associated. As Cudworth states, "having thus shown that both among the Jews under the law, and the Gentiles in their Pagan worship. . . it was ever a solemn rite to join feasting with

sacrificing, and to *EAT* of those things that had been offered up, the very continuity and harmony of the thing itself leads me to conceive, that that Christian Feast under the Gospel, called the Lord's Supper, is the very same thing, and bears the same notion, in respect of the true Christian Sacrifice of Christ upon the Cross, that those did to the Jewish and Heathenish sacrifices, and so is *Epulum Sacrificiale*, a Sacrificial Feast ; I mean a Feast upon Sacrifices ; or *Epulum ex oblatis*, a Feast upon things offered up to God, only this difference arising in the parallel, that because those Legal Sacrifices were but Types and Shadows of the true Christian Sacrifice, they were often repeated and renewed, as well as the Feasts that were made upon them. But now the true Christian Sacrifice being come, and offered up once for all, never to be repeated, we have therefore no more Typical Sacrifices left amongst us, but only the Feasts upon the true Sacrifice still symbolically continued, and often repeated, in reference to that ONE GREAT SACRIFICE, which is always as present in God's sight and as efficacious as if it were but now offered up for us."

It would seem difficult to improve upon this statement of the true notion of the Lord's Supper. Cudworth, in fact, was right in seeing that the true point of departure, for a consideration of the Lord's Supper, is to be taken from the Paschal meal, which our Saviour was sharing with his disciples. In that meal, the body of the Lamb was eaten, as a means and an assurance to the Israelite of his participation in the deliverance and the covenant which ensued upon the sacrifice of the Lamb. The immediate connexion of our Lord's words is with the Lamb so sacrificed and eaten. He says, in effect, to His disciples, with the plainest allusion to the meal of which they had been partaking, "I am the Passover which is about to be sacrificed for you; and this bread shall be to you, to all intents and purposes, my Body; and this wine shall be, to all intents and purposes, the blood of the New Covenant; and by partaking of that bread and drinking of that wine, you shall enjoy participation in the benefits of the Sacrifice I am about to offer." Consequently, in the view intimated by what Dr. Moberly has called Bishop Andrews' "biting phrase," *ad*

cadaver, and in Dr. Moule's statement, that "the occasion, the action, the full words of the institution, all define the Sacred Body, in our Lord's thought, to be the Body as in death;" there is not, as Bishop Gore and Dr. Moberly seem to suppose, any such strange idea as that by "a new and unnecessary miracle" (p. 323, *Journal of Theological Studies*,) "there is postulated in the Eucharist some real presence of the flesh and blood of Christ as they were when he was dying or dead upon the Cross" (The Body of Christ, p. 181-2). The simple idea is that, by virtue of our Saviour's institution, the consecrated bread and the consecrated wine are the means of enabling us "so to eat the flesh of Christ and to drink His blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by His body, and our souls washed through His most precious blood, and that we may evermore dwell in Him and He in us."

It is in this sense, of being a Feast on the one Eternal Sacrifice, that the Holy Communion commemorates that sacrifice; and this consideration, as is pointed out by Bishop Gore, in a manner for which the Church has reason to be grateful to him, is the true safeguard against

the mischievous practice of separating the commemoration of the Sacrifice from the act of Communion. It tends, in his words, to keep "in clear view that our real fellowship in the Sacrifice of Christ is only maintained by Communion." (p. 197). But at the same time, it brings before us in the most profound and touching manner, and represents before God with the deepest solemnity, how, "of His tender mercy He gave His only Son, Jesus Christ, to suffer death upon the Cross, for our redemption," and how our Lord "made there, by His one oblation of Himself once offered, a full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world." I would only add, that the sense thus brought home to us, by participation of the symbols of the Saviour's Body and Blood, of the Sacrifice which he made for us is the most effectual means of evoking, on our part, that sacrifice of "ourselves, our souls and bodies," which our Church teaches us to make immediately after our participation in the Saviour's Sacrifice. In this aspect—to which on the present occasion only a brief reference can be made, there can be no doubt of the sacrificial

character of the Eucharist. We are taught by our Church, in response to the Saviour's Sacrifice, first to desire God's fatherly goodness, "mercifully to accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving," and finally to "offer and present unto Him ourselves, our souls and bodies to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto Him." The sacrificial aspect of the Holy Communion is thus the key to its significance, first as communicating to us the benefits of the Sacrifice of Christ, and secondly as evoking from ourselves an answering sacrifice. Rightly understood, we prize that aspect as of supreme value, and we shall not allow ourselves to be diverted, by the errors and abuses with which it has been overlaid, from asserting and cherishing it.

III

THE TRUE AUTHORITY IN MATTERS OF CHRISTIAN FAITH AND PRACTICE

"When He the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you into all truth."—*John xvi.*, 13.

A question which seems of great practical

consequence at the present moment is that of the authority by which Christian men, and especially Christian ministers, ought to be guided in matters of faith and worship. It is the common impression of thoughtful observers, especially among men experienced in public affairs, that our Church, at the present moment, exhibits a painful aspect of anarchy; and if that be so, the reason probably is, not merely that there is an anarchical spirit abroad, but that there is no general agreement as to the true standard of authority. Men and women seem to be feeling after some such authority with a dim instinctive craving, and it is their very longing for it that, too often, renders them the victims of the first bold authoritative voice which asserts a claim over them. This constitutes, to a large extent, the strength of the Roman Catholic Church, and of that section of our own Church which so nearly approaches the Roman Church in character. In each case, the alleged authority is that of the Church. In the case of the Romanist, that authority is plain, visible and accessible. The Roman Church is now concentrated in the Pope, and every Bishop or Priest represents

and enforces his authority. For the section of our own Church to which I refer, there is no such visible and definite authority to be appealed to; but none the less, the word "Church," and the supposed authority of what is called "The Church," exercises an almost magical influence. Practices are introduced among us, and enforced as matters of moral obligation, on no other ground than that they have the alleged authority of the Church. Other practices, which have seemed to many good men not merely convenient and harmless, but highly conducive to the maintenance of spiritual life among large and laborious classes, are not only discouraged, but vehemently denounced, on no other ground than the alleged authority of the Church. Above all, a certain system of doctrine, and a certain tone and character of worship, are alleged to be "Catholic," or in a special sense characteristic of "The Catholic Church"; and those who do not adopt this system and these customs are treated as defaulters to a recognised ideal. This ideal of the Church, or of the Catholic Church, assumes an imposing shape in the imagination, and Societies are formed, and

religious newspapers conducted, with the definite object of making this ideal supreme in the English Church.

And yet, let me say at once, there exists no reality, and since early times there has existed none, for which this ideal authority can be claimed. For a period, indeed, which has been limited by the present Margaret Professor at Oxford—no harsh judge on such matters—to about four centuries after Christ, concluding with the year 451 A.D.,[1] there was a sufficient unity and continuity in the teaching, practice, and government of the Church to render it possible to recognise that that teaching, practice, and government had the marks of Catholicity. Such Catholicity may reasonably be pleaded for the allowance among us of teaching and practice which can be shown to have prevailed within the period in question; and accordingly our great apologist against the Roman Church, Bishop Jewel, was content to stake the cause of our Church on the issue that none of the doctrines and practices he denounced could be vindicated by the authority

[1] See Dr. Sanday's Letter in the *Report of the Fulham Conference*, 1900, p, 40.

" of any old Catholic orator or father, or out of any old general council, or out of the Holy Scriptures of God, or any one example of the primitive Church... for the space of six hundred years after Christ." At the same time, it cannot for a moment be admitted that the rites and ceremonies then prevailing are, by reason of their Catholicity within that period, binding upon ourselves now. Some of the most conspicuous ceremonies then practised, alike at Baptism and at the Lord's Supper, are by general consent disused, and their reintroduction would never be suggested, even by those who are most urgent in asserting the authority of the Catholic church. Many of the early Canons are quite impracticable for enforcement among ourselves; and on some important doctrines, such as the Atonement and the Resurrection of the body, views were put forward, even by Fathers of high authority, which no English theologian of any school in the present day would support. The utmost that can be justly said, respecting doctrines and practices which prevailed at that period, is that there is, *primâ facie*, a presumption in favour of them. But even

with respect to a peculiarly solemn document, the Creed of Chalcedon, the Western Church has not scrupled, without the authority of any similar council, to introduce momentous words, by which the East has ever since been divided from the West. If it be consistent with due reverence for the Catholic authority of the early Church to modify its definition of the doctrine of the Trinity, what statement or ordinance of that Church can there be, with respect to which a similar modification is not permissible?

But pass beyond this period of substantial unity and Catholicity, and where is the Church, the one visible Church, to whose authority and voice we can appeal? In the words of the Margaret Professor, "from the date 451 A.D. onwards the Christian world came to be so broken up into its several parts that the movement of the whole has practically lost its containing unity. Although the formal separation of East and West was delayed, the development of each was continued on more and more divergent lines." Before long, the East was actually divided from the West, and except from the point of view of the Roman

Catholics, neither can be said to be "The Church." They are divided halves of "the whole congregation of Christian people dispersed throughout the whole world," and neither of them can claim that exclusive guidance of the Spirit of God, which is the necessary basis for any such unquestionable authority as is tacitly assumed. After some six more centuries the whole congregation of Christian people suffered another deep division; and, since the Reformation, half of Christian Europe, and not the least spiritual or least enlightened half, has renounced communion with the other. Amidst these divided communities of Christian men, where, except upon the theory of the Romanist, is that Church, that special Catholic Church, to be found, which is to be recognised as having a right to a predominant authority over all our belief and our practice? Does it not seem as if, in the Providence of God, after the Church had once begun to admit error in doctrine and practice, He had allowed the fair unity of the primitive Church to be shattered into fragments, expressly in order to prevent men falling into the Roman error, and settling on

some one visible community of fallible men as their supreme authority, and so supplanting an ideal by an idol? If, moreover, an appeal is to be made to the general authority of the Christian Church, by what right do you cut out of the continuous life of that Church four whole centuries, since the Reformation, of the history of some of the most vigorous and devoted Communions which the whole history of Christianity can show? The English Church, in particular, has existed in this land for thirteen centuries. By what right do you cut out of the experience and example of that Church nearly one-third of its whole existence, the four hundred years since the Reformation, and say that they shall not be taken into account in determining what Catholic practices and doctrines are? This supposed Catholic Church, to which appeal is made by the extreme High Churchmen of our day, is, except so far as it can be identified with the primitive Church, a phantom of the imagination. In the mouth of the Romanist, the appeal to the Catholic Church has a clear and definite meaning. To adapt Bellarmine's words to the present day, a Romanist appeals to a Com-

munion and an authority which is as visible and tangible as the Republic of France or the Kingdom of Italy. But in the mouth of an English Churchman, an appeal to the Catholic Church is an appeal to an authority which does not exist as a real authority, except so far as it is an appeal to the primitive Church; and even that Church, as we have seen, is not an absolute authority, even in its Creeds.

Where, then, are we to look for that authority for which, as has been said, men and women are so earnestly craving? The answer must be twofold. There are two authorities to which our allegiance is due, and due in different degrees—a proximate and an ultimate authority. The proximate authority is that of the branch of the Church Universal to which we ourselves belong. On any practicable principles of organisation—on the principles which universally prevailed in the early Church—a man's first allegiance is due to the authority immediately placed above him, subject only to an appeal to any lawful superior authority. As an English Churchman, therefore, my obedience is due, in the first instance, to my own Bishop, subject to the laws and

ordinances of the whole Church of England. I have a right to appeal from him to the Archbishop; but, in the present state of the Church as a whole, I have no right, or power, to appeal any further; for there exists no living authority, and there exists no code of Church Law, to which, by the Law of God, the authorities of the Church of England are bound to submit themselves. The ideal, no doubt, of the Christian Church is that the whole congregation of Christian people, dispersed throughout the whole world, should be so united in Christian charity, as to be able to bring their united wisdom and spiritual experience together in council, and thus to guide, under the influence of the Spirit of God, the belief and the practice of the various local Churches. But no such authority has existed since the time of the primitive authority already mentioned. No General Council can possibly be appealed to; and in the absence of such general authority, each Church must exercise its own authority, on its own responsibility. But this being the case, the authority of my own Church is the only one that exists for me; and the only way in which I discharge the

duty of obedience to those who are set over me in the Lord, which is the acknowledged obligation of every Christian man, is by dutifully submitting myself to this authority, so long as it requires nothing of me which I may be persuaded, on my conscience, is absolutely contrary to the Law of God. The only hope for the establishment of order in the Church at large consists in the cultivation of the habit of obedience to the authorities immediately over us. To appeal, from that authority, to some imaginary authority which has now no real existence, and which has had none for at least 1400 years, is simply to shelter the spirit of disobedience under an imaginary and fictitious ideal.

But if we thus, in the true spirit of Evangelical Churchmen, act on the principle of our Articles that our own Church "hath power to decree rites and ceremonies and authority in controversies of faith"; and if, in the present divided state of Christendom, the sole responsibility for the exercise of that power and authority rests with our national Church, acting by itself, it remains to ask, by what ultimate authority is that church itself to

be guided? This is the second point of which I spoke formerly, as that of the ultimate authority to which our allegiance is due. This question, however, is not less clearly decided by our Articles than the other. "It is not lawful" they declare, "for the Church to ordain anything that is contrary to God's word written"; and thus, "although the Church be a witness and keeper of holy Writ, yet, as it ought not to decree anything against the same, so besides the same ought it not to enforce anything to be believed for necessity of salvation"; and again, "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation, so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation." Our Church thus acknowledges that Holy Scripture is the sole authority for the faith which she requires from her members, and that in the practice she imposes on them she may not ordain anything that is contrary to God's word written. Even for the Creeds, as Dr. Hawkins observed in his Bampton Lectures, she appeals, not to any authority

supposed to reside in the Catholic Church, but to Scripture alone. "The three Creeds" she says, "ought thoroughly to be received and believed, for they may be proved by most certain warrant of Holy Scripture".

Is it not then entirely inconsistent with this principle of our Church to say, as is constantly said by many among us, that the Prayer Book and Articles were to be read and interpreted in the light of the belief and practice of the Catholic Church? Her principle demands, on the contrary, that our formularies, and more particularly our Articles, should be interpreted in the light of Holy Scripture, rather than in that of mediæval theology. In defence of this reference to what is called, from the imaginative point of view already spoken of, "the mind of the Church," we are sometimes told that the Church was before the New Testament. In the mere sense that the Church was in existence before the New Testament was written, this is, of course, a mere truism. But in any other than this mere chronological sense, the statement is not true. The men who wrote the New Testament, were the men who made the

Church; and the authors of the New Testament, representing the teaching of the New Testament, were thus anterior to the Church, and superior to it. The Old Testament existed before the birth of the Christian Church; and the New Testament existed in living form, in the persons of its authors, contemporaneously with the birth of the Church. In point of fact, as is acknowledged by a distinguished writer of the High Church school, in a remarkable volume recently published,[1] The New Testament Scriptures "represent the mind of the Church at its best and freshest; they represent the utterance of its highest inspirations." Consequently, whatever value attaches to the authority of the Church "at its best and freshest," attaches to the New Testament, and is to be found only there. But when this writer goes on, in the next sentence, to say, that "none the less the spirit of the Church as a whole is the same spirit which inspired the Apostles"; when he accordingly (p. 241) requires that "the New Testament should be read in the light of this ancient Catholic tradition," he is taking away with one hand

[1] *The Body of Christ*, by Bishop Gore, p. 242.

what he had given with the other. After Apostolic times, though the Spirit of God was still at work in the Church, the Church did not respond to the voice of that Spirit as it did in its "best and freshest" time; and it cannot be said that the degree of inspiration vouchsafed to the Church as a whole was either of the same kind or degree as that vouchsafed to the Apostles.

There is, therefore, a profound fallacy in the "old formula" which this writer, like others of his school, would enforce upon us:— "The Church to teach: the Bible to prove." Teaching, no doubt, is the function specially assigned to the Church by our Lord's commission, "Go ye and teach all nations." But if the Church would fulfil aright her mission of teaching, she must first herself be taught of God; and the only means by which she can receive that teaching is through the Holy Scriptures, under the guidance of the Spirit of God. The Bible is not to be kept in the background, as a document to be referred to for the proof of doctrines, as a witness is called into court for the purpose of some special piece of evidence. It must, on the contrary,

be our constant teacher, the one perpetual source of our knowledge of Divine things, under the guidance of the Spirit who inspired it, and who is ever at hand to illuminate the hearts and minds of those who seek His aid in prayer, and who look up to Him as the guide of every Christian into all the truth. If to be called Low Churchmen means that we look to the Bible as an authority anterior to the Church, and still superior to it, we have no occasion to shrink from the name. But if it be understood to mean that we are indifferent to Church authority and Church organisation, we repudiate it with a clear conscience. We are loyal to the only Church authority which is accessible to us—loyal to the authority of our Prayer Book and our Articles ; loyal to the ecclesiastical authorities to whom the interpretation of those formularies and the administration of our Church are committed ; and loyal also in seeking in the Scriptures, as the supreme source of authority, the spirit and the meaning of those formularies, and of the Church system which we have inherited. It is by steadfast adherence to these principles, by loyal and cheerful obedience to those set over us in the

Lord and to the teaching of the Church to which we belong and by a faithful and prayerful endeavour to live in the light of those Scriptures to which our Church has absolutely submitted herself—it is by such means as these that we hope to remove the anarchy by which we are at present menaced, and to realise, in our own Communion at all events, the unity for which our Saviour prayed.

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