

THE DISTINCTIVE PRINCIPLES OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

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Revd. John Charles Ryle D.D.

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I have chosen this subject for two simple but weighty reasons. Let me explain briefly what they are.

My first reason is the abounding ignorance which prevails among many churchmen about the real principles of the communion to which they belong. Myriads, I am afraid, attend our churches, from year to year, who could not, if their lives depended on it, give an orderly account of the leading doctrines of the Church of England. They have been baptized and confirmed, and perhaps admitted to the Lord's Supper in our pale. They attend our services and use our Prayer Book. They are even zealous for the union of Church and State. But they have never read the Articles or thoroughly investigated the Creeds. Romanists and Dissenters are generally well acquainted with the leading principles of their respective systems. The churchman too often knows nothing of his. To lessen this ignorance, and supply a little light, is one object of this paper.

My other reason is the rise and progress in the land of much unsound teaching under the specious name of "Church principles." That vague, misty, and indefinite phrase seems to turn many people's heads, and attracts adherents who use it without knowing what they mean. There is a kind of fascination about it which appears to rob people of their common sense. They go up and down the world talking incessantly of "sound Church principles" and "true church views" without the slightest clear idea what they mean. Nay, worse than that, if you bring them to book, you find that their favourite expression often covers a whole shoal of weak, foolish, and unscriptural and semi-Romish opinions. To expose the fallacy of these so-called "Church Principles," and to exhibit in contrast the true distinctive principles of the Church of England, is the second object which I have in view in this paper.

It will clear my way at the outset, if I remind you that the "Church Principles" of which I am going to speak to-day are the principles of the Established Church of England. The "Catholic Church" is a favourite expression which is continually used in the present age. But it is one of those great, swelling, high-sounding, vague expressions which mean anything, everything, or nothing, according to the animus of him who uses them, and I shall pass it by. "Primitive" principles, "mediaeval" principles, "ancient" principles, "Catholic" principles I shall not dwell upon, though I could say much. I shall stick to my text. The principles I am here to consider are the principles of that Reformed Church of England, which was emancipated from Rome 300 years ago, — the Church whose foundations were cemented with the blood of Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, and their martyred companions, — the Church which was temporarily overthrown by the semi-Romanism of Laud, — drained of its life-blood by Charles II's Act of Uniformity, — revived by the noble work of Whitfield, Romaine, and Venn in the last century, — and which, in spite of many traitors within and many Liberationists without, is still recognized by Queen, Lords, and Commons as the Established Church of the realm. *Esto perpetua*. The principles of the Church I am here to exhibit and defend.

To the remark I have just made, in order to clear our way, I must add one more, which I fear will startle some churchmen. When I speak today of the "distinctive principles of the Church of England," I do not mean for a moment its distinctive Episcopal government, or its distinctive Liturgical mode of worship. Much as I value Bishops and a Prayer Book, I cannot forget that a

Church may possess them, and yet be in a most corrupt and useless condition. The trumpet of Ecclesiastical history gives no uncertain sound on this point. The African, and Syrian, and Asiatic Churches, whose candlestick has long been taken away, are plain proofs that you want something more than Bishops and Prayer Books in order to keep a Church alive. No! The distinctive principles of the Church of England which I have in view are those mighty doctrinal principles which have been her strength and her stay for 300 years. I mean those distinctive principles on which her walls were built by Cranmer, and Ridley, and Jewell, at the era of the blessed Reformation, — principles which, though sorely jeopardized at some periods of our history, have never been entirely suppressed, and though cast down, have not been destroyed. To the maintenance of those principles, and not to Episcopacy or a Liturgy, I believe our Church owes any measure of power, influence, usefulness, or blessing from God, which it has enjoyed for the last three centuries. Once let those principles be forsaken and repudiated, and our Church will decay and die, like those ancient Churches which I have just named. To state as briefly as possible what those principles are, is my main object in drawing up this paper.

Now, where shall we turn in order to find out these great distinctive principles to which I have just been referring? I answer, unhesitatingly, to the Thirty-nine Articles, which are to be found at the end of every complete and un mutilated copy of the Book of Common Prayer. Those Articles, however little known and read by many, are the Church's authorized Confession of Faith. Their very title calls them "Articles agreed upon by the Archbishops and Bishops of both provinces, and the whole clergy, for the avoiding of diversities of opinions, and for the establishment of consent touching true religion." He that really wants to ascertain what are sound "Church views" and "Church principles," ought certainly to turn first to the Thirty-nine Articles.

Of course I am aware that the Articles find no favour with some, and are thought hard, and narrow, and strict, and obsolete, and ill-adapted to these times. "Give me the Church's Prayer Book," they say, "and do not talk to me about the Articles." But there are several awkward facts, which these people appear to forget. — They forget that the Articles form a part of the Prayer Book itself, and that no copy of our Liturgy is complete which does not contain them. Furthermore, they forget that even in the days of the unhappy Charles the First a declaration was prefixed to the Articles, containing these words: "The Articles of the Church of England do contain the true doctrine of the Church of England agreeable to God's Word." — Last, and worst of all, they forget that the law of the land, which was first passed in Elizabeth's time, and then actually re-enacted in Queen Victoria's reign, requires every clergyman, instituted to any living, when he begins to officiate in his church, "publicly and openly, in the presence of his congregation, to read the whole Thirty-Nine Articles, and immediately after reading to make the declaration of assent to them," and to say, "I believe the doctrine of the Church of England, as therein set forth, to be agreeable to the Word of God." These are indisputable facts, which cannot be explained away. In the face of these facts, I maintain that no loyal churchman has a right to complain if I turn to the Articles in order to ascertain the distinctive principles of the Church of England.

But I shall not leave this subject here. Short memories about everything in religion, from the fourth commandment downward, are so sadly common, and the device of playing off the Prayer Book against the Articles, as if they were contrary one to the other, is so shamefully prevalent, that I shall supply a few more facts about the Articles which are well worth remembering. They all tend to confirm, strengthen, and fortify the authority and value of the Thirty-nine Articles. Let us take the evidence of six well known English divines, who have long passed away from this World.

(1) Let us hear the evidence of "Thomas Rogers," Chaplain to Archbishop Bancroft, who published, in 1607, the first Exposition of the Articles which ever appeared. This book, written within forty years of the time when the Articles were finally ratified, was dedicated to the Archbishop, and was a work of great authority at the time. In the Preface to this work he says:-

“The purpose of our Church is best known by the doctrine which she does profess: the doctrine by the Thirty-nine Articles established by Act of Parliament; the Articles by the words whereby they are expressed: and other doctrine than in the said Articles is contained, our Church neither hath nor holdeth, and other sense they cannot yield than their words do impart.”

(2) Let us next hear what great and good Bishop Hall says, in his work on “The Old Religion:” “The Church of England, in whose motherhood we have all come to pride ourselves, hath in much wisdom and piety delivered her judgment concerning all necessary points of religion, in so complete a body of divinity as all hearts may rest in. These we read, these we write under, as professing not their truth only, but their sufficiency also. The voice of God our Father, in His Scriptures, and, out of them, the voice of the Church our mother, in her Articles, is that which must both guide and settle our resolutions. Whatsoever is beside these, is either private, or unnecessary, or uncertain.” — “Hall’s Works,” Oxford edition, vol. ix., p. 308.)

(3) Let us next hear what Bishop Stillingfleet says, in his Unreasonableness of Separation:” “This we all say, that the doctrine of the Church of England is contained in the Thirty-nine Articles; and whatever the opinions of private persons may be, this is the standard by which the sense of our Church is to be taken.” (London, 4to. edition, p. 95. 1631.)

(4) Let us next hear what Bishop Burnet says: “The Thirty-nine Articles are the sum of our doctrines, and the confession of our faith.” (“Burnet on Articles,” Pref., p. i., Oxford edition. 1831.)

(5) Let us next hear what Bishop Beveridge says, in the Preface to his great work on the Articles: “The Bishops and clergy of both provinces of this nation, in a Council held at London, 1562, agreed upon certain Articles of Religion, to the number of thirty-nine, which to this day remain the constant and settled doctrine of our Church; which, by an Act of Parliament of the 13th of Queen Elizabeth, 1571, all that are entrusted with any ecclesiastical preferments, are bound to subscribe to.” (“Beveridge on Articles,” vol. i., p. 9, Oxford edition. 1840.)

(6) Let us hear, lastly, what Bishop Tomline says: “The Thirty-nine Articles are the criterion of the faith of the members of the “Church of England.” (“Elements of Theol.,” vol. ii., p. 34. 1799.) And in another place he says: “The articles are to be subscribed in their plain and obvious sense, and assent is to be given to them simply and unequivocally. If the candidate for holy orders thinks that he sees reason to dissent from any of the doctrines asserted “in them, no hope of emolument or honour, no dread of inconvenience or disappointment, should induce him to express his solemn assent to propositions which in fact he does not believe. And let it ever be remembered that in a business of this serious and important nature, no species whatever of evasion or subterfuge, or reserve, is to be allowed, or can be, practised, without imminent danger of incurring the wrath of God.” (“Elements of Theol.,” vol. ii., p. 567.)

It would be easy to multiply witnesses, and to overload the subject with evidence. But in these matters enough is as good as a feast. Enough, probably, has been said to satisfy any candid and impartial mind that the ground I have taken up about the Articles has not been taken up in vain. He that desires to go more deeply into the subject would do well to consult Dean Goode’s writings about it, in a controversy which he held with the late Bishop of Exeter. In that remarkable controversy, I am bold to say, the Dean proved himself more than a match for the Bishop. (Goode’s “Defence of Thirty-nine Articles, and Vindication of Defence.” Hatchard. 1848.)

One remark I must make, in self-defence, before leaving this branch of my subject. I particularly request that no one who hears me will misunderstand the grounds I have been taking up. Let no one suppose that I think lightly of the Prayer Book, because I do not regard it as the Church of England’s primary standard and test of truth. Nothing could be more erroneous than such an idea. In loyal love to the Prayer Book, and deep admiration of its contents, I give place to no man. Taken for all in all, as an uninspired work, it is an incomparable book of devotion for the use of a Christian congregation. This is a position I would defend anywhere and everywhere. But the Church of

England's Book of Common Prayer was never intended to be the Church's standard of doctrine in the same way that the Articles were. This was not meant to be its office; this was not the purpose for which it was compiled. It is a manual of public devotion: it is not a confession of faith. Let us love it, honour it, prize it, reverence it, admire it, use it. But let us not exalt it to the place which the Thirty-nine Articles alone can fill, and which common sense, statute law, and the express opinions of eminent divines unanimously agree in assigning to them. The Articles, far more than the Prayer Book, are the Church's standard of sound doctrine, and the real test of true Churchmanship.

And now, with the Thirty-nine Articles in my hand, let me try to point out what are the great distinctive principles of the Church of England. I make the attempt with unfeigned diffidence. I have a painful recollection of "our unhappy divisions." I am well aware that beside disloyal semi-sceptical churchmen, there are hundreds of loyal members of our communion who do not see things as I do. But all this is no reason why I should not give my opinion, and exhibit the subject as it occurs to me. At any rate, I have a very decided opinion, and you shall hear what it is.

I. The first distinctive principle of the Church of England appears to me to be its *unvarying reverence for holy Scripture*. It always recognizes "the supremacy and sufficiency" of God's Word written, as the only rule of faith and practice. (Lambeth Synod, 1878.)

Its theory is that man is required to believe nothing as necessary to salvation which is not in the Bible. It totally denies that there is any other guide for man's soul co-equal or co-ordinate with the Bible. The supreme authority of Scripture, in short, is one of the cornerstones of the Church of England. Here, it would have its members know, is rock: all else is sand.

The Sixth Article declares that "holy Scripture contains all things necessary to salvation, and 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 and necessary to salvation."

The Eighth Article says that "the three creeds ought thoroughly to be believed and received, for they may be proved by most certain warranty of Holy Scripture."

The Twentieth Article says, "It is not lawful for the Church to ordain anything that is contrary to God's Word written, neither may it so expound one place of Scripture that it be repugnant to another."

The Twenty-first Article says that "things ordained by General Councils as necessary to salvation, have neither strength nor authority unless it be declared that they be taken from Holy Scripture."

The Twenty-second Article condemns certain Romish functions, because they are grounded on no warranty of Scripture, but are rather repugnant to the Word of God."

The Twenty-eighth Article condemns Transubstantiation, "because it cannot be proved by Holy Writ, but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture."

The Thirty-fourth Article says that "traditions and ceremonies of the Church may be changed, so long as nothing is ordained against God's Word."

Now I see in all this abundant proof that the Bible, and the Bible only, is the rule of faith in the Church of England, and that no doctrine is "Church doctrine" which cannot be reconciled with God's Word. I see a complete answer to those who tell us that we make an idol of the Bible, and that we ought to go to the voice of the Church and to the Prayer Book for direction. I see that any sense placed on any part of the Prayer Book which is not reconcilable with Scripture, must be a mistake, and ought not to be received. I see, above all, that all who pour contempt on the Bible, as an imperfect, defective Book, which is not complete without "ancient tradition," and ought not to be believed if it contradicts "modern thought," are taking up ground which is at variance with the

Church's own Confession of Faith. They may be devout, zealous, clever, earnest, and confident persons; but they are contradicting the Articles, and they are not sound churchmen.

II The second distinctive principle of the Church of England appears to me to be *its doctrinal Evangelicalism*. I am afraid that in saying this, I use a phrase which some will think offensive and controversial. I am sorry for it, but I can find no other language to convey my meaning. What I do mean is, that our Church's Confession of Faith gives an unmistakable prominence to those doctrines which, rightly or wrongly, are called in this day "Evangelical."

For the proof of this assertion I will simply refer you to the titles, contents, and order of the first eighteen Articles out of the thirty-nine, and then ask any unprejudiced thinking man to give us his opinion. What kind of subjects will he find handled in twelve out of the eighteen? Why, such great doctrinal subjects as the sufficiency of Scripture, in the sixth Article, — everlasting life through Christ offered to mankind in the Old Testament as well as in the New, in the seventh, — original sin, in the ninth — free-will and the need of God's grace, in the tenth, justification by faith, in the eleventh, — good works as the fruits of justification, in the twelfth, — the uselessness of works before justification, in the thirteenth, — the nullity of works of supererogation, in the fourteenth, — Christ alone without sin, in the fifteenth — sin after baptism, in the sixteenth, — election and its evidences, in the seventeenth — and eternal salvation only by Christ, in the eighteenth. And in what position will he find these great subjects? Why, they are placed in the forefront of the whole Confession of the Church! They occupy the post of honour, as the weightiest and most important matters of the faith. And it is not till the mind of the Church has been fully declared about them, that we find anything about the visible Church, the ministry, or the sacraments. To them the second place is unmistakably assigned.

Now what shall we say to these things? I will answer that question by putting before you a hypothetical case. Let us suppose for a moment that one of the leading churches in Derby or Nottingham is vacant by the death of the incumbent, and a new clergyman has to be appointed. Let us suppose that the bias and inclination of the patron are not known, and that no one can tell whom he will select. Let us suppose, furthermore, that the clergyman whom he finally presents is an entire stranger in Derby or Nottingham, and that no one has the least idea what opinions he holds, and to what school of thought in the church he belongs. Let us suppose, furthermore, that this unknown clergyman commences his duties, and for the first three months is continually preaching bold, decided, out-spoken sermons, about such points as the sufficiency of Scripture, original sin, the need of grace, justification by faith, and salvation only by Christ; and though he occasionally refers to other matters, makes the great doctrines I have just referred to the staple of his preaching. Let us just suppose all this and then ask ourselves what conclusion the people of Derby or Nottingham would form? Why I will engage to say that if you picked a jury of the first twelve intelligent hearers of the man the new parson was, their verdict would be decided and unanimous, — "He is thoroughly Evangelical."

I ask any impartial man to apply this hypothetical case to the point which I am now trying to handle. I ask him to study our Church's Confession of Faith, and to notice carefully the contents and order of the first eighteen Articles, and to observe what comes first and what comes second, in the whole thirty-nine. And then I appeal to his common sense, and ask him if it is possible to deny that one distinctive principle of the Church of England in its Evangelicalism.

Before I pass on, let me venture to advise my fellow-churchmen never to be ashamed of holding Evangelical views. Those views, I am quite aware, are not fashionable now-a-days. They are ridiculed as old-fashioned, narrow, defective, and effete. Those who maintain them are regarded as illiberal, impracticable old fossils. Never mind! We have no cause to be ashamed. Evangelicalism is not dead yet. Its wholehearted and thorough adherents live well and die well, and do some good in the world. And, not least, Evangelicalism is one of the distinctive principles of the Thirty-nine Articles, and therefore of the Church of England.

III. The third distinctive principle of the Church of England appears to me to be its *clear and outspoken testimony against the errors of the Church of Rome*.

This is a point, I am sorry to say, about which there is a sad amount of unsoundness among churchmen in the present day. Some seem thoroughly ashamed of the Reformers and the Protestant Reformation, and can talk coolly of the possibility of reunion with the Papacy. Others profess to dislike controversy about Popery, and avoid reference to it as much as possible. The plague is abroad. The old English dislike to Romanism is cooling down most painfully. To hear a Bishop or an Archdeacon charge boldly against Popery, and praise up the martyred Ridley and Latimer, is becoming so rare that it is as refreshing as the discovery of a new pleasure, or an ice-cream in the tropics. But all this time what say the Articles? I assert unhesitatingly that a thoroughly Protestant spirit runs throughout them, and their testimony against Romish error is clear, ringing, and unmistakable.

What says the Nineteenth Article? "The Church of Rome hath erred, not only in living and manner of ceremonies, but also in matters of faith."

What says the Twenty-second Article? "The Romish doctrine concerning purgatory, pardons, worshipping and adoration, as well of images as of reliques, and also of invocation of saints, is a fond thing vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God."

What says the Twenty-fourth Article? It forbids the Romish custom of having public prayers and ministering the sacraments in Latin.

What says the Twenty-fifth Article? It declares that the five Romish sacraments of confirmation, penance, orders, matrimony, and extreme unction, are not to be accounted sacraments of the Gospel.

What says the Twenty-eighth Article? It declares that "transubstantiation, or the change of the substance of bread and wine in the Lord's Supper, cannot be proved by Holy Writ, is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions." It also declares that "the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not by Christ's ordinance reserved, carried about, lilted up, or worshipped."

What says the Thirtieth Article? "The cup of the Lord is not to be denied to the lay-people."

What says the Thirty-first Article? "The sacrifices of masses, in which it was commonly said the priest did offer Christ for the quick and dead, to have remission of pain and guilt, were blasphemous fables, and dangerous deceit."

What says the Thirty-second Article? "Bishops, priests, and deacons are not commanded by God's law to vow the estate of single life, or to abstain from marriage."

What says the Thirty-seventh Article? "The Bishop of Rome hath no jurisdiction in this realm of England."

What shall we say to all this? *Nine times over* the Thirty-nine Articles condemn in plain and explicit language the leading doctrines of the Church of Rome, and declare in favour of what must be called Protestant views. And yet men dare to tell us that we Evangelical clergymen have no right to denounce Popery,—that it is very wrong and very uncharitable to be so hot in favour of Protestantism,—that Romanism is a pretty good sort of thing,—and that by making such a piece of work about Popery, and Protestantism, and Ritualism, and semi-Popery, we are only troubling the country and doing more harm than good. Well, I am content to point to— the Thirty-nine Articles.

There is my apology; There is my defence! I will take up no other ground at present. I will not say, as I might do, that Popery is an unscriptural system which every free nation ought to oppose. I simply point to the Thirty-nine Articles. I ask any one to explain how any English clergyman can be acting consistently, if he does not oppose, denounce, expose, and resist Popery in every shape, either within the Church or without. Other Christians may do as they please, and countenance Popery if they like. But so long as the Articles stand unrepealed and unaltered, Protestantism is a distinctive principle of the Church of England, and it is the bounden duty of every clergyman to oppose Popery.

IV. The fourth distinctive principle of the Church of England appears to me to be *its rejection of any sacerdotal or sacrificial character in the Christian ministry.*

I hope I need hardly remind this meeting that the alleged "sacerdotalism" of ministers is one of the oldest and most mischievous errors which has ever plagued Christendom. Partly from an ignorant hankering after the priesthood of that Judaism which passed away when Christ died, - partly from the love of power and dignity which is natural to ministers as much as to other men, - partly from the preference of unconverted man for a supposed priest and mediator whom he can see, rather than one in heaven whom he cannot see, - partly from the general ignorance of men before the Bible was printed and circulated, - partly from one cause, and partly from another, there has been an incessant tendency through the last eighteen centuries to exalt ministers to an unscriptural position, and to regard them as priests and mediators between God and man. How much the Church of Rome has erred in this direction with its so-called sacrifice of the mass and its organized system of auricular confession, and what enormous evils have resulted from these errors, I have no time to describe now.

The disease. I am sorry to say, has infected our own Church. There are scores of English churches at this moment in which the service is so conducted, that you might think you were in a Popish chapel. The Lord's Supper is administered as a sacrifice far more than as a sacrament, and the clergy are practically acting as sacrificing priests and mediators between God and man. The Lord's table is called an "altar," although it is never so called in the Prayer Book. The consecrated elements are treated with an idolatrous reverence, as if God Himself was present under the forms of bread and wine. The habit of private confession to clergymen, as absolving priests, is encouraged and urged on the people. I speak as to wise men. You know that what I say is true.

Now I have not time to point out fully that there is not a word in the Acts or the Epistles to show that the Apostles ever professed to be sacrificing priests, or to make any material oblation in the Lord's Supper, or to hear private confessions, and confer judicial absolutions. But I do ask you to remember that there is not a sentence in the articles to warrant the idea of a sacerdotal and sacrificial ministry.

In the Twenty-third Article we are simply told that "It is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching, or ministering the Sacraments in the congregation, before he be lawfully called, and sent to execute the same. And those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent which be chosen and called to this work by men who have public authority, given unto them in the congregation, to call and send ministers into the Lord's vineyard."

In the Thirty-first and Thirty-second Articles there is a marked distinction made between the Romish priest in the Thirty-first, who is called in the Latin version of the Article, "*sacerdos*" (a sacrificing priest), and the English priests in the Thirty-second, who are called in the same Latin version "*presbyteri*." Stronger evidence that the word "priest" in our Prayer Book, only means "presbyter," it would be hard to find.

Throughout the whole latter part of the Articles, from the Nineteenth to the Thirty-ninth, there is one uniform marked absence of a single word that could justify the idea of a sacerdotal ministry being sanctioned in the Church of England. In fact, there is a speaking silence, just as remarkable as the

silence on the same subject in the pastoral Epistles to Timothy and Titus. That silence, I believe, was intentional. And the conclusion I draw is most decided, that the compilers of the articles purposely and deliberately rejected the idea of a sacerdotal and sacrificial ministry, and did not leave so much as a peg, in the Articles to hang it upon.

If any man supposes that Evangelical churchmen undervalue the office of the Christian minister, he is totally mistaken. We regard it as an honourable office instituted by Christ Himself, and of general necessity for carrying on the work of Christ's Gospel. We look on ministers as preachers of God's Word, God's ambassadors, God's messengers, God's servants, God's shepherds, God's stewards, God's overseers, and labourers in God's vineyard.

But we steadily refuse to admit that Christian ministers are in any sense sacrificing priests, mediators between God and man, lords of men's consciences, or private confessors. We refuse it, not only because we cannot see it in the Bible, but also because we have read the lessons of Church history, and seen the enormous evils to which it has given rise. We feel that sacerdotalism or priestcraft has often been the curse of Christianity, and the ruin of true religion. We say boldly that the exaltation of the ministerial office to an unscriptural place and extravagant dignity in the Church of England, is likely to alienate the affections of the laity, to ruin the Church, and to be the source of every kind of error and superstition. "Sacerdotalism," said an eminent Liberal statesman (Mr. Foster, of Bradford), not long ago, "if tolerated in the Established Church, "will in my own case turn an honest and fearless supporter of the existing system into an equally honest and determined opponent."

And we say, in addition, though last not least, that it has not the slightest warrant in the Thirty-nine Articles. A non-sacerdotal ministry is a distinctive principle of the Church of England.

V. The fifth and last distinctive principle of the Church of England appears to me to be *its wise, well balanced and moderate estimate of the sacraments.*

I need hardly tell this meeting that extravagant views of the effects of baptism and the Lord's Supper have been in every age of the Church the most fertile source of mischievous superstition. Such is the intensity of man's natural tendency to formalism in religion, that myriads have always clung to the idea that these two sacraments counter grace, independently of faith, in those that receive them, and that they work on the soul physically, like medicines on the body. The high-flown rhetorical language of the Fathers about them did immense harm in the early ages. The Church of Rome has stereotyped and crystallized the error, by the decree of the Council of Trent (7th Sea. 8th Canon. "Cramp's Text-book of "Popery," p. 155): "Whoever shall affirm that grace is not conferred by these sacraments of the new law, by their own power (*ex opere operato*), but that faith in the Divine promises is all that is necessary to obtain grace: let him be accursed. "Thousands of English churchmen, wittingly or unwittingly, seem to maintain practically the same view as the Church of Rome, and to attribute to the mere outward administration of baptism and the Lord's Supper a kind of invariable influence and power, no matter how they are used.

The harm that these extravagant views do to the souls of men is incalculable. Multitudes live and die in the secret belief that they were "born again," and received the grace of the Spirit in baptism, though from their infancy they have known nothing of what the Church Catechism calls, a death unto sin and a new birth unto "righteousness." They are not "dead to sin" but actually live in it: and yet forsooth they think they are born again! Multitudes more are continually receiving the Lord's Supper under the belief that somehow or other it must do them good, though they are utterly destitute of the Catechism standard, and neither "repent of sin, - nor purpose to lead a new life, - nor have a lively faith God's mercy in Christ, nor a thankful remembrance of His death, nor live in charity with all men." They seem, in short, to have imbibed the idea that the Lord's Supper can give grace to the graceless, and is a means of conversion and justification. And all this time the

Scripture says expressly, "He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." (Rom. ii. 29.) And again: "Baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, "but the answer of a good conscience towards God)." (I Peter iii. 21.) And again: "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, "eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." (1 Cor. xi.)

Now, to these extravagant views of the effect of the sacraments, I unhesitatingly assert that the Church of England gives no countenance at all. The Twenty-fifth Article declares plainly that in such *only* as worthily receive the same they have a wholesome effect or operation; but they that receive them unworthily, purchase to themselves damnation." The Twenty-eighth Article says, "To such as rightly, worthily and with faith receive the Lord's Supper, the bread is a communion of the body of Christ." The Twenty-ninth says: "The wicked, and such as be void of a lively faith, although they do carnally and visibly press with their teeth the Sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, yet in no wise are they partakers of Christ: but rather to their condemnation, do eat and drink the sign of the Sacrament of so great a thing."

It is no answer to all this to quote the language of the Service for Infant Baptism, which says of every child baptized, "This child is regenerate." You might just as well say that every child who repeats the words of the Church Catechism is really "elect" and "sanctified." The utmost you can make of the expression is, as Bishop Carleton says, that "it is the charity of the Church;" or, as Bishop Downam, Archbishop Usher, and Dean Durel say, "the judgment of charity." The dictum of Lord-Chancellor Hatherley, in the *Voysey* judgment, must never be forgotten:

"Pious expressions of devotion are not to be taken as binding declarations of doctrine." – "The Articles," said the *Solicitor's Journal*, when that judgment was delivered, "and those alone are " be considered as the code of doctrine of the Church of England." And I repeat my deliberate conviction that the wise and moderate statement of the Articles, that grace is not invariably tied to either baptism or the Lord's Supper, is the true doctrine of our Church, and one of its distinctive principles.

I do hope my fellow-churchmen in this day will stand firm on this subject. There is, I am afraid, a sad disposition to give way and recede from Protestant truth in this direction. Partly from a fear of not honouring the sacraments enough, partly from the pressure of modern Ritualistic teaching, there is a strong tendency to exalt baptism and the Lord's Supper to a place never given to them in Scripture, and specially not in the pastoral Epistles. Let us set our foot down firmly on the wise and moderate principles laid down in our Articles, and refuse to go one inch beyond. Let us honour sacraments as holy ordinances appointed by Christ Himself, and blessed means of grace. But let us steadily refuse to admit that Christ's sacraments convey grace *ex opere operato*, and that in every case where they are administered good must of necessity be done, no matter how or by whom they are received. Let us refuse to admit that they are the only grand media between Christ and the soul, - above faith, above preaching, above prayer, and above the Word. Let us ever protest against the idea that in infant baptism the use of water, in the name of the Trinity, is invariably and necessarily accompanied by the new birth of the inward man. Let us never encourage any one to suppose he will receive any benefit from the Lord's Supper, unless he comes to it with repentance for sin, and lively faith in Christ, and charity toward all men. Acting on these principles no doubt we shall be reviled as Low churchmen, Zwinglians, "unlearned and ignorant men," and half Dissenters. But those who talk against us in this fashion will never satisfy a jury of impartial intelligent men that our views of the sacraments are not the wise, moderate, distinctive principles of the Church of England.

In drawing my paper to a conclusion, I may be allowed to observe that the statements I have made in it might easily be confirmed by a great cloud of witnesses. Our Church's reverence for Scripture as the only rule of faith, - our Church's Evangelicalism, - our Church's Protestantism, - our

Church's repudiation of a sacerdotal ministry, - our Church's rejection of the *ex opere operato* theory of the sacraments, - all these points might be abundantly supported by quotation from the Liturgy, the Homilies, Bishop Jewell's Apology, and the writings of the Reformers and Elizabethan divines. But of course I have no time for this, and it is possible to overload men's minds in a day when people are sadly afflicted with intellectual dyspepsia, and cannot digest much. I have thought it better to stick to the Articles, and draw my argument solely and entirely from them. I only remark that those who have time to investigate the subject further will be abundantly rewarded. Reading in Reformation theology is reading that will pay.

I am aware that the whole subject of my paper is one which, as Sir Roger de Coverley used to say, "There is much to be said on both sides." I shall be told that many loyal members of the Church of England, true-hearted and worthy men, averse alike to papacy and infidelity, spending and being spent daily for the Anglican Communion, do not see times as I do, and would not subscribe to the account of the Church's "distinctive principles" which I have laid before you to-day.

Well, I admit all this, fully and freely. "More's the pity!" It always has been so. It always will be so, I suppose. So long as human nature is what it is, you will never get all men to approach religious subjects from the same standpoint, or to attach precisely the same meaning to theological terms and words. So long as the early training of young English clergymen is so miserably defective as it is, I am not surprised at any amount of detective theology. Moreover, I know that our Church is largely and wisely comprehensive, and has always found room for more than one school in her pale. I frankly allow that those who disagree with the views I have expressed to-day, are just as loyal to the Church of England as myself, and I have not the slightest wish to ostracize them, or drive them out of our communion. Of course I think them mistaken, and they probably think just the same about me. But I do not want to unchurch them, so long as they honestly and *ex animo* subscribe the Thirty-nine Articles. Papists, Socinians, and infidels are certainly in the wrong place in the Church of England, and I cannot tolerate them. But within these limits I can tolerate a great deal, and cultivate hope and charity about others.

But while I admit all this, I cannot withhold my own decided conviction that the statement I have given of the distinctive principles of the Church of England is a true and correct one, that there is no flaw in the argument, and that no churchmen have less cause to be ashamed of their peculiar views than those who are called Evangelical churchmen. Nor is this all. I believe that at this moment no bishops and clergy in England have more influence in their respective dioceses and parishes than those who are thoroughly Evangelical in their doctrine, and consistent with their doctrine in their lives. Last, but not least, I go one step further still. I am persuaded that no religious teaching at this moment is doing so much real good in England, in awakening, convincing, and converting souls, as that old-fashioned despised teaching which we support who are called Evangelical. Other schools, no doubt, wear smarter uniforms, blow louder trumpets, carry more sail, and make much more show before men. Ours, I firmly believe, has the most of the favour and blessing of Almighty God.

And now let me conclude all with a few pieces of advice, which I offer in all brotherly affection to all who hear me. Take them as coming from one who, through evil report and good report, for thirty-seven years has stuck to Evangelical churchmanship, and at the end of these thirty-seven years is not a bit ashamed.

(1) In the first place, I ask every one who hears this paper to read the Thirty-nine Articles regularly, at least once every year, and to make himself thoroughly familiar with their contents.

It is not a reading age, I fear. Newspapers and periodicals and shilling novels absorb the greater part of the time given to reading. I am sorry for it. If I could only reach the ear of all thinking lay churchmen, I should like to say, "Do read your Articles." As for clergymen, if I had my own way I would require them to read the Articles publicly in church once every year.

Ignorance, I am compelled once more to say, is one of the grand dangers of members of the Church of England. The bulk of her people neither know, nor understand, nor seem to care about the inside of any of the great religious questions of the day. Presbyterians know their system. Baptists, Independents, and Methodists know theirs. Papists are all trained controversialists. Churchmen alone, as a body, are too often profoundly ignorant of their own Church, and all its principles, doctrines, and history. Not one in twenty could tell you why he is a churchman.

Let us cast aside this reproach. Let all churchmen awake and rub their eyes, and begin to read up their own Church and its doctrines. And if any man wants to know where to begin, I advise him to begin with the Thirty-nine Articles. And if he wants some book to explain them, I advise him to read Boulton's "Theology of the Church of England."

(2) In the second place, I ask all who hear this paper to teach the Thirty-nine Articles to all young people who are yet of an age to be taught. It is a burning shame that the Articles are not made an essential part of the system of every school connected with the Church of England, whether for high or low, for rich or poor.

I speak from experience. It is a simple fact, that the beginning of any clear doctrinal views I have ever attained myself, was reading up the Articles at Eton, for the Newcastle Scholarship, and attending a lecture at Christ Church, Oxford, on the Articles, by a college tutor. I shall always thank God for what I learned then. Before that time I really knew nothing systematically of Christianity. I knew not what came first or what last. I had a religion in my head without order. What I found good for myself I commend to others: *Experto crede*. If you love young people's souls, and would ground them, and establish them, and arm them against error betimes, take care that you teach them, not only the Catechism, but also the Articles.

(3) In the third place, I advise all who hear this paper to test all churchmanship by the test of the Articles. Be not carried away by those who talk of "nice Church views," "Catholic principles," "Catholic ceremonies," "devoutness," "holy, earnest parish priests," "hard-working clergymen," "work," and the like.

As to *Catholic principles*, hear what the Bishop of Manchester, the most liberal Bishop on the Bench, said about them last January:-

"Year by year out of this undefined, ill-understood, misused word Catholic, new and strange dogmas and usages are evolved. And the plea is, that to some these things are 'a great comfort.' The same plea might be urged for dram-drinking. Etymologically and truly, 'that only *comforts* which *strengthens*. And I have seen nothing to prove to me that the new school of 'Catholic teaching' is producing men and women more imbued with the true spirit of Christianity, which is the spirit of love and of power and of a sound mind, than that old school of English churchmanship, in which I was trained and in which I hope to die." - (*Guardian*. Jan. 16, 1878.)

As to "*devoutness*," hear what the Bishop of Gloucester says: "It is utterly irrelevant to bring forward the goodness and devotion of the Catholic school. Thank God, there are very many good and devoted Roman Catholics in this world: but their goodness and devotion do not make their principles a whit different from what they are, or render their doctrines in the faintest degree more reconcilable with the teachings and principles of the Reformation." - (Charge. *Guardian*, Jan. 16, 1878).

As to *work*, I am afraid, in many *well-worked* parishes, as they are called, it means nothing more than feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, giving alms to the poor, keeping cottages clean, visiting schools, and administering the Sacrament to the sick and dying. Such "work," as it is called, is all very well in its way, takes up time, makes a man look busy, and quite satisfies many people. But is it the chief work for which a clergyman is ordained? Is he really meant to be little more than a relieving officer or a tutor, or sanitary inspector, or manager of schools? Is not his

chief work to preach and teach Christ's Gospel? Does he do so? This is the first and foremost question; and to answer it you have a right to turn to the Bible and the Articles. Try all that clergymen preach and teach, by one simple measure, - Does it or does it not agree with the Articles? You have an undoubted right to do this, and no English clergyman has any right to object to your doing it. Say to him, if he does object, "You publicly read and subscribed to the Articles when you accepted your cure of souls. Do you or do you not abide by your subscription?"

This is the simple ground we want to take up in the various Societies which, - amidst much abuse, obloquy, and opposition, - are labouring, like the Church Association, to maintain the Protestant character of the Church of England. We are not intolerant, whatever some may please to say. We do not want to persecute anybody for trifles, or to magnify petty differences, or to narrow the limits of our Church. But we object to the Popish Mass, the Popish Auricular Confession, and all that heap of Popish practices which so many are trying to introduce among us, to the infinite disgust of the laity and the infinite damage of the Church of England. We do want to maintain the great distinctive principles of the Church of England pure, whole, and undefiled, and to hand them down as such to our children *Nolumus leges ecclesiae mutari*. And we do say that any one who holds preferment in the Church of England ought to be bound to obey the laws of the Church of England, so long as those laws are unrepealed, and that our Bishops ought to insist on his obedience. Repeal the Acts of Parliament called the 13th of Elizabeth, and 28th and 29th of Victoria, and get rid of the Thirty-nine Articles, and we will cease to oppose Ritualism, and will concede that a churchman may be anything or everything in opinion, and may even be a Papist. But so long as things are as they are, we say we have a right to demand that respect should be paid to the Articles.

(4) Finally, let me advise every churchman who values his soul never to be ashamed of the great leading doctrines which are so nobly set forth in the Thirty--nine Articles.

Never mind if people call you extreme, party-spirited, going too far, puritanical, ultra-Methodist, and the like. Ask them if they have ever read the first nineteen Articles of their own Church. Tell them, so long as you are a churchman, you will never be ashamed of holding Church doctrine, and that you know what Church doctrine is, if they do not.

Remember, above all, that nothing but clear, distinct views of doctrine - such views - as you will find in the Articles - will ever give you peace while you live, and comfort when you die.

"Devoutness," and "earnestness," and "catholic" views, and "catholic" principles, and "catholic" ceremonies are fine, specious, high-sounding terms, and very beautiful to look at and talk about, when we are well, and happy, and prosperous. But when the stern realities of life break in upon us, and we are in trouble, - when the valley of death looms in sight, and the cold river must be crossed, - in seasons like those, we want something better than mere "earnestness" and "catholic principles" to support our souls. Oh, no! it is cold comfort then, as our feet touch the chill waters, to be told, "never mind! You hold catholic views, you have been baptized, you have gone to the Lord's Supper constantly. Take comfort! All is well!" - It will never, never do! *Non tali auxilio tempus eget*.

We want then to know and feel that God is our God, that Christ is our Christ, that we have the Spirit within us, that our sins are pardoned, that our souls are justified, that our hearts are changed, that our faith is genuine and real. "Catholic principles" and "catholic ceremonial" alone will not be enough then. Nothing, in short, will do in that solemn hour but clear, distinct doctrine, embraced by our inward man, and made our own by living faith. Doctrines such as those set forth in the Articles are the only doctrines which are life, and health, and strength, and peace. Never be ashamed of laying hold of them, maintaining them, making them your own personal property, and contending for them to the death. Be very sure that those doctrines are the religion of the Bible and of the Church of England!