THE FIRST BOOK
of the
IRENICUM
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of the
IRENICUM
Of John Forbes of Corse
A Contribution to the Theology of Re-union
Translated and Edited with
Introduction, Notes & Appendices
by
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ET

IN • PIAM • MEMORIAM
VIRI • REVERENDISSIMI
JACOBI • COOPER • S.T.P.
HIST. ECCL. IN • ACADEMIA • GLASCUENSI
OLIM • PROFESSORIS
QUI • DUM • SINGULA • MEMBRA • CORPORIS • CHRISTI
DOCTRINA • CURA • PRECIBUS
FOVET • ET • AEDIFICAT
SEMPER • CONSOlationem • ISRAHEL • EXPECTANS
UNAM • SANCTAM
CATHOLICAM • ET • APOSTOLICAM • ECCLESIAM
CONFITEBATUR
PREFACE

In his little book entitled Reunion: A Voice from Scotland, the late Dr Cooper, Professor of Ecclesiastical History in the University of Glasgow, expressed regret that Dr John Forbes's Irenicum had never been given to the public in an English dress. In the early part of 1919 I read this allusion to Forbes and wrote to Dr Cooper for further information; and he responded by sending me his own copy of Forbes's complete works with the request that I would undertake to translate and edit it. During that summer and autumn I had considerable leisure and soon found myself more and more absorbed in the work of the great Aberdeen Doctor. Moreover, the privilege of Dr Cooper's hospitality for a few days in Scotland enabled me to feel at first-hand the warmth of his passion for a re-united Church, to note his strong sense that the way to Re-union must lie in a deepening of the devotional life, and to observe the extent to which he had inspired others with his own enthusiasm. When he died in the opening days of the present year, it seemed that the publication of the First Book of the Irenicum might afford not only a humble token of friendship, but also a small tribute from Anglican scholarship to one who held the English Church—and not least its Catholic heritage—in particular esteem.

I have ventured to style this book 'A Contribution to the Theology of Re-union.' The fact that the Irenicum was written in defence of a Re-union actually achieved, and must certainly be one of the earliest books on such a theme since the Reformation, might be regarded as sufficient reason for such a course. It is not, however, the sole reason. If Re-union is to make headway, it is surely essential that scholars in the different Communions should endeavour to make clear both to themselves and to their neighbours what they mean by the things
that they say and do in the practice of their religion. That was Forbes's object in the *Irenicum* and it has been mine in editing his work. And the value of the book is not lessened by the fact that the horizons of the Re-union problem have been greatly enlarged since the Reformation. To-day we contemplate what Forbes never contemplated—an end which embraces the Roman and Eastern Churches as well as those which are more commonly called 'Evangelical'; and this should be borne in mind, if some of Forbes's phraseology seems open to criticism.

The history and position of the Church of England make it perhaps more sensitive than any other Communion to the manifold issues of the Re-union movement. The *via media* has dangers as well as opportunities: it may easily become a kind of No Man's Land, where people are joined together whose affinities are with the armies behind them on either side and not with one another. We can make no contribution to Re-union unless we know our own minds. This is particularly so to-day in regard to two matters, viz., the authority of the English Church to order its own worship, and the nature and grounds of Eucharistic adoration. In regard to the first of these issues, now so urgent in connexion with Prayer-Book Revision, Forbes seems to me to lay down precisely the spiritual and moral principles to which as Anglicans we are pledged. How far the jurisdiction of a National Church extends in matters of practice is in the abstract a difficult question; but I suppose no one could deny that a priest by his ordination vows recognizes its legitimacy in at least that sphere where it has in fact been exercised in the past. It may be claimed that the moral obligation of obedience within these limits is provisional only, and binds only so long as the Church Catholic is in a state of disunion; but that does not impair the obligation now. What we need to lay hold of is the spirit of submission which alone can foster or maintain unity in the Church or in any part of it; and Forbes's handling
of that subject as a problem of Moral Theology is one of the most valuable, as it is one of the dominant, elements in the First Book of the *Irenicum*.

At the same time to those who reflect that the Book of Common Prayer is a Prayer Book and not a Law Book it must be perfectly plain, not only that it should allow for considerable diversity, but also that it must represent generally understood doctrinal principles. Truth requires that doctrinal and devotional standards should correspond; and that fact alone makes Eucharistic theology a necessity. The Perth Article prescribing kneeling at the Holy Communion brought this issue to the fore in Forbes's time exactly as the revision of the Liturgy is doing in England to-day; and there is much in his treatment of it—as, for example, in Chapter vii—which is of permanent value. At the same time the present position with regard to Reservation in the Church of England makes it desirable to develop certain aspects of Eucharistic theology which were not of primary importance for his purpose; and this I have endeavoured to do in the second Appendix. I should not agree that Forbes was a "receptionist," unless St Augustine was the same. What is true is that the controversy caused by the doctrine of Transubstantiation drove those who rejected it to forms of statement which strike us to-day as out of proportion. An instance is the emphasis so common in Protestant theology upon our Lord's local presence in heaven. Such a phrase strikes the modern ear as in the highest degree paradoxical, and unless accepted with discrimination may entail dangerous reactions upon our conception of the Ascension, making it almost a reversal of the Divine action in the Incarnation instead of its fulfilment. Christ is not incarnate in the Sacrament; but the Sacrament is what it is by virtue of the Incarnation and the Ascension. If the Ascension be regarded as the fact which symbolized the removal of those limitations of time and space conditioning our Lord's presence in the days of His incarnate Life, then
it is also the fact which made possible those other modes of His presence which we distinguish as spiritual, mystical, and sacramental. It is from this point of view that I have endeavoured to criticize and develop Forbes's teaching.

In making the translation, I have endeavoured to be as faithful to the original Latin as possible, and also to follow Forbes's rule of verifying all references, though in a few cases I have been baffled. For convenience sake I have substituted references to Migne where those which Forbes gives are to editions now out of date.

I may add that the translation and analysis of the Second Book of the Irenicum were completed with those of the First some three years ago: but I cannot under existing circumstances finish the work for publication. I only hope that this volume may stimulate others to continue the present study.

My obligations to others will in the main be clear from the foot-notes. But I should like to express my special thanks to Professor Baxter of St Andrews University for his kind encouragement and suggestions; to Professor Sorley and Dr Srawley for the quotations they have allowed me to make from their letters; to Professor Whitney, Professor G. A. Cooke, the Dean of Wells, Mr Athelstan Riley, and Mr Stephen Gaselee, Librarian of the Foreign Office, for help on particular points; to my sister, Miss Lucy Selwyn, for compiling the Index; to the proprietors of the Church Quarterly Review for permission to reprint in the Introduction part of an article I contributed to that Journal in 1920; and finally to the Syndics and Staff of the Cambridge University Press for the accuracy and care bestowed upon the printing.

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Redhill Rectory,
Havant.
August 4, 1923.
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INTRODUCTION

I. HISTORICAL

In a famous passage in the first book of his History, Thucydides adumbrates a doctrine which is a constant justification for all who try to use the past as a help towards the solution of problems in the present.

If he who desires (he says) to have before his eyes the true picture of the events which have happened, and of the like events which may be expected to happen hereafter in the order of human things, shall pronounce what I have written to be useful, then I shall be satisfied.

The historian believed, that is to say, if not that 'history repeats itself,' at least that the march of events presented recurrent resemblances close enough to make the experience of previous ages always valuable. It is on this ground that we may well study afresh a period of Scottish ecclesiastical history which has received but little attention in the English Church.

The First Scottish Episcopacy is the title commonly given in Scotland to the period 1610–1637, when the Church of Scotland passed from being purely presbyterian to acceptance of episcopal government: and it is called the 'First' Episcopacy to distinguish it from the 'Second,' which coincided with the Stuart Restoration (1660–1689). Great names of divines and Churchmen are associated with both periods—Archbishop Leighton would indeed have adorned any age in the annals of the Christian Church: but the First Episcopacy is marked by a characteristic which is absent from the Second. It came, not as a concomitant of violent political reaction, but as the natural resultant of forces largely internal to the Church of Scotland itself. When it came, it came to
stay; everyone looked on it as a settlement; and a settlement it would almost certainly have been, but for the exasperating meddlesomeness of James I and of his son. Its importance for us to-day, therefore, is obvious. Here for a brief period reunion occurred: a non-episcopal Church became episcopal. The causes which led to it, and still more perhaps those which occasioned its failure, should be instructive for us in our present discontents. Further, the Lambeth Conference of 1908 expressly directed attention to 'the precedents of 1610' in connexion with

any project of reunion between any Church of the Anglican Communion and any Presbyterian or other non-Episcopal Church which, while preserving the faith in its integrity and purity has also exhibited care as to the form and intention of ordination to the ministry.

Since that time, the possibility of reunion between the Church of England and the Church of Scotland has been the subject of careful study by The Christian Unity Association of Scotland; and no small part of their researches has been directed to the 'precedents' of the seventeenth century. Much gratitude is due to Professor Cooper and others who have revived not only the memory but also the spirit of that period in the Kirk of our own days.

Two salient dates and two arresting names stand out in the chronicle of the first half-century of the Scottish Reformation. The first is 1560, when the First Book of Discipline was produced under the influence of the great John Knox: the second is 1592, when Presbyterianism was re-established and the more important parts of the Second Book of Discipline made authoritative—an act which marks the zenith of the power of Andrew Melville. It has been said that, while Knox made Scotland Protestant, Melville made it Presbyterian; and with such an epigram we are often content to dismiss the matter. But we are wrong. It is not even quite true that in
their grotesque individuality they have no peer; for the claims of the ‘dear gossip,’ James I, to rival them would be hard to deny. The immortal picture which Stevenson gives of the author of the tirade against The Monstrous Regiment of Women is not more memorable or more true to life than Sir Walter Scott’s characterization of our first Stuart king in The Fortunes of Nigel. All three were the sport of baffling, inexorable circumstance; and we should be inclined to say that Melville, who was the most consistent of them, was the least successful. He saw only one thing—the necessity of presbyterian government in Christ’s Church; and he brought his cause to triumph; but he lived also to see from his exile at Sedan how shallow was the acceptance of his Creed in Scotland. Knox, on the other hand, did make the Church of Scotland irrevocably anti-Roman. Sitting at the Eucharist is still the use in the Kirk: and even the Tulchan bishops, as they were called—the quasi-bishops of 1572, whose emoluments flowed into the pockets of their lordly patrons—whose appointment Knox approved, or at least did not disapprove, were never regarded as part of a compromise with Popery.

Yet of the three it was James who won the day. No King was ever treated as he was. Bearded to his face by any minister who had the gift of eloquence or invective; denounced from the pulpit by Balcanqual, even when present himself; kidnapped by the Earl of Mar in the Raid of Ruthven (1582) and held as a kind of hostage for Melville; besieged at Stirling and captured; a helpless spectator of his mother’s execution across the Tweed—he yet succeeded in fashioning the Church of Scotland after the model he desired. He had in fact the character for the part. In his two dominant convictions he was completely sincere. One was that ministerial parity was unscriptural and that Episcopacy was the true form of Church government; the other was that he must at all costs succeed Queen Elizabeth on the throne of England. But he knew,
not only when to conceal, but when to forget, these convictions. His marriage, for example, was such an occasion. On his return from Denmark in 1590 with his bride, he was present at the General Assembly. He made a speech, and, we are told,
fell forth praising God that he was born in such a time as the time of the light of the Gospel—to such a place as to be king in such a Kirk, the sincerest Kirk in the world.... The Kirk of Geneva keepeth Pasche and Yule: what have they for them? they have no institution. As for our neighbour Kirk in England, it is an evil said mass in English, wanting nothing but the liftings. I charge you, my good people, ministers, doctors, elders, nobles, gentlemen and barons, to stand to your purity, and to exhort the people to do the same; and I, forsooth, so long as I brook my life and crown, shall maintain the same against all deadly.

And yet within ten years the Basilicon Doron was published, and the cat let out of the bag.

But while the King was thus sustaining this strange rôle in Scotland with admirable good humour, affairs both in Church and State were often guided by very wise hands. The old Scottish Catholic Church had been so deeply inwoven with the national life that the Reformation tore the tendons and lacerated the body of society far more grievously than the change of theological formulae and allegiance might have suggested. The overthrow of the sacramental principle of the Ministry let loose passions and avarices which were beyond human curbing. The rapacity of the nobles, who were engaged in appropriating the Kirk's endowments; the seditious spirit of the ministers who regarded themselves as Elijahs called to the pulpit to denounce the Ahabs and Jezebels of their day; the scores of vacant parishes; the widespread growth of immorality among the people, combined with a superstition which expressed itself in an orgy of atrocities upon women accused of witchcraft; the chronic fear of armed invasion or internal treachery in the interests of the Papacy—all these
things conspired to make people very doubtful whether Presbyterianism was the divinely given panacea which it was said to be. It was this that lent support to the advocates of the *Via Media*, which was never wholly obscured during this stormy age.

The King was not the only believer in Episcopacy on theological grounds. John Erskine of Dun and Archbishop Adamson both held it to be *de jure divino*; and the two great statesmen of the period—Lord Maitland of Thirlestane (1587–1595), and Lord Menmuir (1596–1597)—were not slow to see the political advantages of stability and order which followed in its train. Indeed the first decisive step in the movement which resulted in the restoration of a real Episcopacy may be said to have been due to policy rather than changed belief. When in 1597 and 1598 the General Assembly requested that representatives of the clergy might be appointed to Parliament for the purpose of maintaining the Third Estate, the die was cast. The oscillation of forty years now settled into a definite direction of forces: the succession of James to the English throne in 1603 gave them a further impetus along the same line (for the royal power was infinitely stronger at a distance): and the resolutions of the General Assembly in 1610, which mark the beginning of the First Scottish Episcopacy, were in reality only the formal recognition by the Church of what was already, for civil purposes, a *fait accompli*.

On this occasion, however, the Crown took no risks: and shortly after the Assembly three of the Scottish bishops were summoned to London, where they were consecrated to their office by the Bishops of London, Ely (Lancelot Andrewes), Rochester, and Worcester. It is not clear what character this consecration had. Andrewes objected that the Scottish prelates ought first to be ordained presbyters, as they had never been episcopally ordained. Bancroft replied that, where there were no bishops, ordination by presbyters was valid; and that, even
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if it were not, consecration to the Episcopate *per saltum* had good precedent in ancient times. The point, however, was not quite as either Andrewes or Bancroft conceived it. We cannot be certain that the three Scottish bishops had been ordained even by presbyters. Extraordinary laxity had prevailed in the sixteenth century with regard to the form and matter of Ordination. Though the *Second Book of Discipline* (1581) ordered the imposition of hands, it was by no means always observed. Melville was never thus ordained: Robert Bruce exercised his ministry for eleven years before ordination; and as late as 1597 the General Assembly had to reiterate the necessity in all cases of ordination by the laying-on of hands. It must be held to be most doubtful, therefore, whether those who had affected to ordain the three Scottish bishops to the presbyterate were in any real sense presbyters themselves. The point is perhaps academic, in that the Church of Scotland to-day derives its succession from the Second Scottish Episcopacy: but we should certainly be inclined to regard Bancroft’s alternative—consecration *per saltum*—as the most effective part of his rejoinder to Andrewes, and to remember that his plea for the validity of presbyteral ordination requires as a corollary that those who claim thus to ordain should themselves be indisputably presbyters.

The Glasgow Assembly, which finally restored the jurisdiction of the Scottish bishops, was, no doubt, as its opponents then and later affirmed, a packed gathering; but that very fact is all the more eloquent of the general favour which the measure commanded. Ample opportunity for reaction presented itself between the meeting of the Assembly in 1610 and the ratification of its acts by Parliament in 1612: but no reaction occurred. James, in fact, had the bulk of sensible people with him. Presbyterianism had shewn itself unable to make any adequate stand on behalf of the Church’s interests as against the predatory nobles or to cope with the moral
obliquity of the population. Episcopacy meant to all concerned the hope of order and peace. But in fact it brought more than that to the Church of Scotland. One of the most judicious writers on the Scottish Reformation, Dr W. L. Mathieson, has said of the Episcopal party at that time, that “as religious teachers they accomplished what was little short of a revolution in the thought and character of the Church¹.” This change of spirit, the substitution of forbearance and courtesy for fanaticism and violence, and of theological study and discussion for pamphleteering and the invective of the pulpit, was indeed the most permanent gift of the First Episcopate to Scotland. Men like Spottiswoode and Patrick Forbes, Bishop of Aberdeen, tower in stature above all the Melvilles or Calderwoods of the Scottish Reformation. They are men, not of knowledge only—Melville was that; one of the ablest of the pupils of Beza—but in wisdom. They have realized that the art of administration calls for gifts of character which are never the product of noisy faction, and indeed find themselves strangled where the net of orthodoxy is drawn more tightly than Catholic Christianity has drawn it. It is difficult to believe that these qualities could ever have been used in a church of the Melville pattern. The First Episcopacy called them into exercise, because it provided an atmosphere in which they could thrive.

A similar change is to be noted in theology. Men of European reputation for learning now adorn the counsels of the Scottish Church. Dr William Forbes, who was the first holder of the see of Edinburgh (1634), represented a theological position scarcely distinguishable from that of Dr Pusey; and the perusal of his Considerationes Modestae et Pacifcae led Dr Döllinger to say that he had never before realized how strong the case was for a Catholicism which was not Papal. At the same time Aberdeen was the seat of a school which

¹ Politics and Religion in Scotland, 1550-1695, 1. 343.
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has rarely been surpassed for range of learning in the history of British Universities. The Aberdeen Doctors, as they were called, brought to bear upon the Church of their day the full light of antiquity. The abuse which is such a marked feature of the Presbyterian polemic of the earlier period is conspicuously absent from their works; and instead we have the lofty spirit of those whose main desire is to know the truth and to do it. The fact that their leader was John Forbes, son of Bishop Patrick Forbes of Aberdeen, affords a happy symbol of the relation which subsisted at this time between the theological and the administrative functions in the Church; and if the father showed in rare degree the qualities of a bishop, the son may claim with equal right the title of a great Christian divine.

Such are the broad lines of the First Episcopacy of 1610. But there is one point of detail to which inquiry is naturally addressed to-day, when schemes of reunion are not only being discussed, but actually, as in America, in process of accomplishment. What precisely was involved in this re-acceptance of episcopal authority for the normal, day-to-day functioning of the Church? Let us glance at history. The first Presbyteries were established in 1581. They were thirteen in number, corresponding in number to the number of the dioceses; and their immediate object was the provision of better stipends for the clergy. They were what the advocates of modern social theory would call functional organizations representing the interests of the clerical demos. It is significant that their establishment was due to the King's own instance. A higher destiny, however, was in store for them. For when the Tulchan bishops were abolished and Presbyterianism established in 1592, this was the institution to which authority passed. It is thus defined in the Act of that year:

The power of the Presbyteries is to give diligent laboures in the boundes committed to their charge. That the kirkes be keepit
in gude ordour. To enquire diligently of naughty and ungodly persons, and to travail to bring them in the way againe be admonition or threatening of God's judgments, or be correction. It appertains to the Elderschippe to take heede that the word of God be purely preached within their boundes, the sacraments rightly ministred, the discipline interteined, and ecclesiastical guddes uncorruptly distributed.

The same Act assigned to Presbyteries the power of collation to benefices, and granted to all Church Courts jurisdiction "in matters and causes ecclesiastical". And to this should be added the duty of ordaining by imposition of hands those who were to be collated to benefices.

In other words the spiritual authority and oversight of each diocese and visitatorial power was transferred from the bishop to the clergy in that area, acting as a 'college' or chapter. And this arrangement was in theory unaffected by the steps taken to restore the episcopate as a civil estate under the policy inaugurated by Lord Menmuir. When in 1600 the General Assembly agreed to this measure, they provided by way of safeguard that ministers so appointed must continue to have charge of parishes, and must only hold their seats in Parliament for a year. The first real change came in 1606, when the General Assembly at Linlithgow appointed the bishops as perpetual moderators of their respective presbyteries and diocesan synods. A cardinal feature in the Presbyterianism of 1592, as indeed to-day, had been the annual change in the tenure of the presidency. But at the same time it was expressly enjoined that these episcopal moderators should be subjected to the censure of the assemblies over which they presided. A still further step was taken in 1609, when Parliament restored to the bishops their consistorial power —viz. the power to decide cases relating to wills and marriages which belonged to both the ecclesiastical and the civil power:

1 Historical Papers submitted to the Christian Unity Association of Scotland, 1911–1913, pp. 4, 5.
while the appointment of the two Archbishops to the presidency of the Courts of High Commission in the next year relieved the presbyteries of the visitatorial disciplinary authority which they had been unable adequately to exercise. The effect of the Glasgow resolution of the same year was to crown this process by requiring that all presentations to benefices should be made to the Bishop, who should, after due examination, ordain, and that his approval should be necessary to all sentences of excommunication or of absolution.

Yet the old order was very far from being discarded. Much of it had worked well, and still continued to function. Thus the Kirk-Session (which is closely analogous to our new Church Councils) was still the body in which any process of excommunication must originate. Presbyteries had still to meet for the exercise of doctrine: and the bishops must associate the ministers of the bounds with them in the preliminaries, and also in the act, of Ordination, and in the Deposition of ministers. Further they must hold Diocesan Synods at least twice a year; and they were themselves subject to the censures of the General Assembly. It will be seen at once how far the Scottish Church had moved from the princeprelacy of earlier, and indeed of later, ages. In England it is only of recent years that we have been outgrowing it. Traces of a constitutional episcopacy have never been absent from the Church of England: witness the position assigned to the priesthood as co-operators in the sacrament of Ordination, and the tendency towards the revival of Synods. But it is safe to say that we might learn much for the better ordering of our own house from the Scottish Episcopacy of three centuries ago; and that a due gradation of synodical assemblies and courts would do much alike for our efficiency and our peace.

The First Episcopate appears before us, then, as fulfilling a very striking function in the public life of its time. It is the
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keystone of the arch of society, welding together the civil and the religious authority. Both Church and State had found that they could not do without it. Parliament could not dispense with the spirit of disinterested and constructive statesmanship which they imported, or with their discreet consistorial administration; they could moderate the zeal of those of smaller mind whose use of the weapon of excommunication was a real menace to individual freedom; while, if the Courts of High Commission were a temporary expedient, for which little can be said, they did at least enable the Church to bring its moral resources into play. The bishops, that is to say, seemed indispensable, if religion was to help, and not to hinder, the State. At the same time, by its very integration with the free assemblies and courts of the Kirk, the episcopate gave them a balance and stability not known before. The subjection of the bishops to censure rendered their rule considerate and constitutional; and the spontaneous energies of religion were strengthened, not impaired, by being brought under the sway of "fathers in God." The charge which has been levelled at our own modern Episcopate, that each bishop is a little pope in his own diocese, could never have been substantiated in Scotland three hundred years ago. For the bishops were precisely the mainstay of the two kinds of authority which history seems to shew are the safest instruments of liberty at all times—the authority of Parliaments in things secular, and that of Councils in religion.

Why, then, did this admirable system come to grief? The common explanation of the explosion of anger which expressed itself in the National Covenant of 1637 ascribes it to the intolerable and high-handed action of Charles I in foisting upon the Scottish Kirk the so-called 'Laudian' Prayer Book. The book was not in fact Laud's composition, but an adaptation by two Scottish bishops, guided by marginal annotations in the King's own hand, of the English Book
of Common Prayer; and Principal Cunningham, whom none could accuse of lukewarmness in the Presbyterian cause, thinks it probable that the clergy would have accepted it without demur. But the people were of a different mind. This intrusion of the Crown did not stand alone. Four years before Charles had been crowned at Holyrood; and there were many who remembered with disgust the ritual of the ceremony, together with the behaviour and the comments of Laud during this visit. In the same year the King claimed—and Parliament allowed the claim—that the regulation of clerical dress rested with the Crown; and on the strength of it Charles ordered the wearing of the surplice. Yet again, only three years later the royal warrant appeared attached to a Book of Canons, which were to be authoritative for the discipline and order of the Kirk. It is small wonder that the people took alarm, not so much at what was done as at the way in which it was done. And we must remember that Charles was, as his father had not been, suspect of Romanist proclivities: to what might he not lead them, if his authority in spiritual matters were undisputed?

And yet it must be doubted whether this explanation in itself suffices. A similar crisis had arisen twenty years before, but had not terminated in such irretrievable disaster as that now experienced. The cause of the trouble in that case was the famous Five Articles which James I contrived to have passed by the General Assembly at Perth in 1618 and ratified by Parliament three years later. These Articles prescribed the following practices:

1. Kneeling at the reception of the Eucharist.
2. Private Communion in case of need.
3. Private Baptism in similar circumstances.
4. Confirmation, or 'Bishopping.'
The whole Church was thrown into turmoil by these proposals, as was only to be expected. Scenes both painful and scandalous were witnessed at the Easter services of 1619; pamphlets and books poured forth invective against the Popish innovations. Kneeling at the Eucharist was Idolatry; not reductive only, but also participative; not participative only, but also formaliter. ‘Bishopping’ amounted virtually to being a Sacrament, a term which should not be so extended in use. The appointment of ‘Festival Days’ was a direct infringement of the Fourth Commandment, which ordained that men were to work six days in the week. Such were some of the arguments used by the protagonists of the old order. But on the whole they were ineffective. It is significant that the two principal books on this side of the controversy—Gillespie’s *Dispute against the English-Popish Ceremonies* and the anonymous *Re-examination of the Perth Articles*—bear imprint 1636: a date, that is to say, twenty years later than the events referred to and coincident with the encroachments of the royal prerogative under Charles I. The agitation immediately resulting from the Articles themselves was long-lived only in a few districts and in certain circles. Partly this was due to the tact and statesmanship with which Spottiswoode and the other Scottish prelates handled the situation. They shewed that on the constitutional point their sympathies were with their people; and no rigour was shewn in enforcing the observance of the new régime. Partly, too, it was due to the massive and unanswerable learning of the Aberdeen Doctors, who were able to demonstrate beyond denial the primitive authority of the impugned customs. In the north and east of Scotland especially, the Articles seem to have

1 Gillespie, *Dispute against the English-Popish Ceremonies*, Pt III. chs. II–IV.  
2 Ibid. III. v.  
3 Ibid. I. vii.  
4 The Librarian of Aberdeen University Library courteously informs me that in the British Museum Library this work is attributed to the pen of David Calderwood.
been accepted without serious demur. We find this entry, for example, in the Register of the Kirk-Session of Perth:

*Kneeling at the Communion.—*Die Jovis vicesimo quinto Marci 1619.—Present Mr John Malcolm and Mr John Guthry, Ministers, the Elders and other members of the (Kirk) Session present. Proposition being made if they will agree and consent that the Lord’s Supper be celebrate at this burgh conform to the prescription of the Act of the General Assembly made thereanent last holden at Perth or not, viz., that the ministers give the bread and wine with their own hands to the communicants and that they be humbled on their knees and reverently receive it; and being voted, all agreed in one that the celebration thereof be made according to the said Act.  

And this entry occurs in the ordinary course of proceedings and is of the usual length; differing nothing in these respects from those adjacent to it in the Register, viz. entries dealing with *Sleeping in the Church, Bishop Cowpar’s Successor, A Ferocious Executioner, Indecent Conduct in the Street,* and *Disrespect to Mr John Guthry.*

We must then, I suggest, look for the operation of some deeper causes behind the action of the Crown, exasperating as that was: and the importance of the *Irenicum* to-day lies in the fact that it discloses what these causes were. Three issues of the first magnitude, distinct, but not unconnected, stand out on the pages of this book. The first is that of the Eucharist: the second that of Authority: the third that of Orders and the Ministry. The first of these is discussed at some length in an appendix to this volume. Suffice it to say here that the disproportionate amount of space which kneeling at the Communion occupies as compared with the other Perth Articles in the writings of controversialists on both sides points to a sharp cleavage in the Church upon Eucharistic doctrine.

It was not on the point on which Eucharistic controversy commonly turns to-day—that of the relation of the Holy  

1 The *Spottiswoode Miscellany,* II. 289.
Gifts to Christ. The point at issue for Forbes was indeed more fundamental than that. It concerned the essential character of the Eucharist. Was it, or was it not, an act of worship and adoration of God? In saying that the Eucharist was an occasion not of worship, but of meditation, in which (as Gillespie said) we do not pray but meditate on the Passion, the Presbyterian party were advancing a conception of it which ran counter to the whole Catholic tradition. The issue was in fact that between what a modern psychologist has distinguished as objective and subjective worship.

No doubt the battle was embittered by being combined with conflict on another point—that of the Church’s authority in matters of ceremony: but Forbes was right in realizing the magnitude of the Eucharistic issue. It was a question of saving for the Scottish Church the Catholic tradition, not of the form, but of the meaning, of worship. The *Irenicum* is important, because it shews divergence there as one of the cracks that brought the First Episcopacy down, and warns us to face the problem in contemplating future reunion.

The question of Authority was one that dogged the footsteps of all the Reformed Churches. It was one thing to substitute the Bible for the Pope as the fountain of truth in doctrine: it was quite another to prescribe for the day-to-day work and worship of the Church. The various ‘Confessions’ put forth by the national and group Churches of the Continent in the sixteenth century display a very large measure of unanimity on the fundamentals of Christian dogma. It is when they come to practical discipline and order that the lack of a living Authority shews itself most plainly. Here we find a veritable riot of private judgment. Such a situation invites exploitation by strong individuals or fanatical minorities; and in Scotland it received the attention of both. On the one

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hand there was the party of the extremists from Melville and Bruce in the sixteenth century to Gillespie and Row in the seventeenth. On the other there was the royal student of theology, who regarded himself as the great peacemaker of Protestantism, James I.

To have matters ruled as they have been (said he in 1617) in your General Assemblies, I will never agree; for the bishops must rule the ministers, and the king both, in things indifferent, and not repugnant to the Word of God¹.

It is true that the Perth Articles were proposed to, and passed by, the General Assembly; but they sat under the plainest menace of incurring the King’s displeasure, if they refused compliance. When, therefore, Forbes proved, and proved up to the hilt, that the Church had authority to order things indifferent, and that the King had done no more than a Protestant monarch was entitled to do, his unimpeachable theology did not grip the real issue: in practice the question of authority was not settled. It availed little to cry up the authority of the ecclesiastical synods, if in practice the King could override them unless they registered his decisions. And experience warns us that unsettled issues are an unconscionable time a-dying. This one indeed was not to wait long before re-asserting itself: within twenty years Charles had awoken it from slumber, and authority in the Church of Scotland passed to the one other element which was competent to exercise it.

In the introductory chapter to his Divine Right of Kings the late Dr Figgis has summed up concisely the fallacies underlying the old onslaughts of Whig historians upon this theory. Their method, as he points out, is “to isolate the phenomenon, and to observe it in vacuo².” Saner political philosophy insists that such doctrines shall be studied in their

¹ Spottiswoode’s History, Bk vii. p. 531.
² Figgis, The Divine Right of Kings, p. 3.
context; and the context of this was an age in which “all men demanded some form of Divine authority for any theory of government.” He goes on to point out that the theory was in its origin a popular one, evolved to give the civil power an authority independent of, and commensurate with, that of the Pope. The spiritual claim of the English Tudors, as well as of the first two Stuarts, all belong to the family of this doctrine: and one cannot disguise a doubt whether without it a free Catholicism, such as we enjoy, could ever have come into existence. At the same time a great contrast is to be noted between the situation after the Reformation in England, and that in Scotland. In England the Crown was not the only body apart from the Pope for which Divine Right could be claimed. It is probably true that it was not explicitly claimed for the bishops in England, until we come to the seventeenth century. But that it could be claimed there was no doubt. It was the mainstay of the position urged by the Spanish bishops at the Council of Trent, in their magnificent, if unsuccessful, attempt to stay the centralizing tendencies of the Papacy. Where the alliance between the bishops and the Crown was so close as it was under Elizabeth, there was perhaps no stimulus to claim it. But the English episcopate was always there as the residuary legatee of a non-Papal Divine Right, when necessary. The Divine Right of Kings became politically intolerable on both sides of the Tweed not once but twice in the seventeenth century; but whereas in England political revolution did not finally mean religious revolution, in Scotland it did. In England the episcopate not only survived the last of the Stuarts, but was the main instrument in the appointment of their successor: in Scotland bishops and Stuart line fell together. And the cause is plain.

1 Figgis, The Divine Right of Kings, p. 11.
2 It is often ascribed to Bancroft: but see Prof. Usher’s article in Theology, July, 1920.
The English episcopate rested on a theological basis: our divines made good the claim for episcopacy as a system of government appointed for His Church by God. In Scotland, on the other hand, no clear case was ever made out for an episcopacy of divine origin. Popular sentiment, even when favourable to it, regarded it as an appendage of royalty; and the claims advanced in Scotland on its behalf could never have sufficed to secure its position, when the Divine Right of Kings was under foot.

It is this which lends a certain pathos to the masterly disquisition on the Ministry of the Church which occupies a large part of the Second Book of Forbes's *Irenicum*¹. For our present purposes his doctrine may be summed up in the following four propositions:

1. Disparity in the Ministry is consonant with the picture of the Church as given in the New Testament.

2. The unit of authority is the college of presbyters, which possesses territorial jurisdiction over the area served by their ministry.

3. Each such college should be presided over by a permanent moderator or bishop, whose rule must be constitutional, *i.e.* exercised with the consent of his co-presbyters.

4. An orthodox Church without bishops labours under an 'economic' or administrative defect; but does not thereby cease to be a Church: though episcopacy is to be desired and striven for.

Thus episcopacy belongs not to the *esse,* but to the *melius esse* of the Church²—a phrase which recalls the words of Bishop Lightfoot over two hundred years later.

The form which Forbes's doctrine takes is obviously coloured by his experience of the Presbyterian system in the

¹ A scholarly synopsis of Forbes's argument is contributed to *Historical Papers submitted to the Christian Unity Association of Scotland* by Mr F. C. Eeles, entitled 'The Teaching of the Aberdeen Doctors on Ordination.'

² *Irenicum,* II. xi. Prop. 13, Pt 1.
working, not in Scotland only, but in Holland and Germany as well. He was himself ordained by a Dutch presbytery, and never had any doubts as to the validity of his Orders. His treatment of this subject is among the most interesting parts of the *Irenicum*. He appeals not, as one might expect, to antiquity so much as to the Middle Ages. In contrast to the Canonists, who maintained a strict view of Episcopacy, the scholastic theologians, from St Thomas and St Bonaventura onwards, regarded the priesthood as the fundamental order in the Church. In regard to the transmission of Orders, a distinction was made between 'aptitude' and 'execution,' between Order and Jurisdiction. Every priest by virtue of his own ordination had the 'aptitude' for transmitting Orders to another; but the exercise or 'execution' of this power was stayed by the law of the Church which confined it to the bishop only. This was a matter of Jurisdiction. By 'divine law' Jurisdiction lay with the college of the presbyters, which had come under apostolic sanction to function through its moderator or bishop, and through him alone. None the less the 'aptitude' for transmitting Orders was still there; and when a bishop fell into heresy and an orthodox successor could not be found, his authority reverted to the 'college' from which it was really derived.

This is not the place to estimate the truth of this doctrine, which belongs rather to the study of the second book of the *Irenicum*. Moreover, modern historical research has placed at our disposal materials for forming a judgment which were not accessible to the theologians of the Middle Ages. What I am here concerned to emphasize is that this was not a defence of Episcopacy which was calculated to enable it to stand the shock of a great political and ecclesiastical upheaval. Episcopacy of this kind could not constitute an effective makeweight either to the royal prerogative in matters ecclesiastical or to the extravagant claims of the High Presbyterian party. Only something which presented itself as an essential
of the Church's structure could have done that. An otiose expedient, however consonant with Scripture and antiquity, was doomed.

And yet great institutions speak to future ages, even from their ruins; and I do not think we can fail to see that the first Scottish Episcopacy is pregnant with lessons for our own time. We too live in an age of tumultuous unrest and amid the conflict of hard and unyielding interests. Our divisions portend the same perils, and the composing of them might well seem to promise the same safeguards, as those which were in the view of far-sighted men when they furthered, or followed, the policy of James I. This urging of secular forces and events, however, in which the Christian mind discerns the unfolding of the Divine 'judgments,' does not dispense us from the critical task of choosing the soil on which to build the Lord's house. More than ever it is necessary that we should found it upon rock, and not sand; and the conditions we seek are those, not of a transient or patchwork accommodation, but of a stable and enduring order. How far does reflexion on the First Scottish Episcopacy enable us to estimate at least some of those conditions?

First it throws into vivid relief the need of a living authority in the Church, with credentials and limits clearly defined. It is a point rarely mentioned in the reunion literature of our time; and yet history proves that friction, and sometimes schism, as often arise over matters in themselves secondary as over fundamentals; and it is just such matters that the living voice of authority can most readily dispose. We cannot but deplore that the great note of government, which rings out so clearly from the pages of a Hooker or a Butler or a Pusey, should now be so strangely silent in current theology. Society is calling for it on every hand; and we could make no greater mistake than to suppose that religion raises men altogether above the necessity of its exercise. It is the secret of the

1 The works of Dr Gore provide, of course, a striking exception.
strength of Rome; and the very anachronisms of its machinery in that Communion afford only the more significant testimony to the value of the thing itself. Testimony no less striking, though in a converse sense, is to be found in the record of Protestantism; for the lack of government more than any other cause explains its obstinately fissiparous tendencies. True, these tendencies are often cloaked under the specious title of a healthy competition; but it is safe to say that even in secular affairs the Dagon of competition is not likely to recover his throne. We need to confess how strictly ‘scandalous’ a part has been played in the luxuriance of ecclesiastical divisions by motives of jealousy and self-assertion, whether national or personal. Only doctrinaires would deny that these motives operate in a Christian society as in any other; the great difference being that, whereas in the world law can only mitigate their more disastrous results, in the Church they respond very readily to the reproofs or restraints of government. When St John speaks of the love that should bind all Christians together as resting upon a “commandment,” it is because unity cannot be maintained in human life without authority. There can be no reunion except through the readiness to subdue the claims and preferences of the parts to the mind of the whole, to temper freedom by humility, and to subject the traditions of men to the breath of the Spirit of God.

On the other hand, if obscurity on the question of authority was one of the main causes of the First Episcopacy’s failure, it owed the very real success which it commanded while it lasted to the fact that its episcopate was constitutional. We have seen the stress laid by Forbes upon the social and collegiate character of the priesthood and on the mediaeval doctrine of Orders. It is commonly said that the Schoolmen derived the latter from St Jerome—a Father whom they held in particular esteem. This, however, will hardly account for the unanimity with which they revive his views. More convincing is the explanation which finds their exaltation of
presbyteral functions in the fact that the priest said Mass; if he could do that, he could surely celebrate the lesser sacrament of Ordination. But should we not state the case even more broadly, and say that Christian instinct refuses to allow the separation of the ministry of Jurisdiction from the ministry of Grace? In other words, an identical cause underlies the scholastic doctrine of Order and the Presbyterian claims of the Scottish Reformation. What the ministry of the sacraments was to the Schoolmen, the ministry of the Word was to the sixteenth-century Scot: namely, the instrument of their experience of God. It was that which was the vital thing; and anything which derogated from the authority of this organ could only be an artificial and administrative check. Conversely, it would seem to follow that the reconciliation of the non-episcopal bodies will tend to advance only so far as the episcopate is integrated with the religious experience of the people. In the Church of England the increased care and thought bestowed during the last half-century upon Confirmation has tended to bring the bishop as a father in God into an ever closer and more inward relation to the practical religion of Churchmen; and this very fact should make us chary of minimizing the value of this sacrament in the supposed interests of reunion. But what will do more than anything to achieve this integration will be the development of synodical action in the Church as a whole. The constitutional episcopate of the early centuries, of which our Ordinal still contains a significant vestige, is demanded, not because the spirit of the age is in keeping with democratic institutions, but for the far deeper reason that only so can the full measure of grace which resides in the episcopate be made available for the strengthening of the whole Church. It is not unreasonable to suppose—and indeed experience in other countries bears out the view—that such a readjustment in our own interior functioning will do more to reconcile
separated bodies than any of the plausible schemes which are so constantly ventilated in the Press.

Again, the Scottish precedent seems to shew conclusively that progress will be delusive, unless it rests on some explicit agreement as to what we mean when we say in the Creed that we believe in the Church. There is real danger that underneath a common subscription to the Apostles’ and Nicene Creeds there may lie radically different faiths. That was so in the Scottish Church of the First Episcopacy. To Forbes and his colleagues at Aberdeen the Church was a continuous sacramental and doctrinal fellowship: the Reformation had purged it of abuses, but not founded another Church: they regarded themselves on most points as inheriting not direct from St Augustine, still less from Calvin, but from St Thomas Aquinas. To Gillespie, on the other hand, and his brethren of the High Presbyterian party, Geneva was the Church’s second birthplace and Calvin its second founder. To-day the same issue lives. Is the Church something that we receive, as we receive the forgiveness of sins or the resurrection of the body, or something that we create? Is it part of the historic Gospel itself, a vital element in the Divine revelation? The Luciferian controversy is a reminder that this point is anterior to, and in some sense independent of, any particular view as to the early growth of the Ministry. It is a question of the way in which a belief is held, which is the most searching and spiritual of all questions. No doubt under certain circumstances this very faith may itself necessitate schism; but if it remains genuine, there will always be the pull-back to reconciliation, when conditions allow of it; and it is this pull-back which is the ‘acid test’ of the Churchdom¹ (to use Bishop Pearson’s word) of separated bodies. For it is Charity, without which Faith is dead.

Such are some of the considerations which seem to bear

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upon those "terms of union" whose satisfactory adjustment the Lambeth Conference of 1920 regarded as a pre-requisite of a re-united Catholic Church. The actual means which the bishops then recommended for the integration of the separated ministries of the Church are not identical with those adopted in Scotland in 1610. They strike a warmer and more evangelical note, while at the same time making no explicit distinction between ministries which have maintained a presbyteral succession and those which have not. The atmosphere which they portend is cleansed of the elements of political interest which seemed to many to make the consecration of the three Scottish bishops no more than a mechanical act. Rather, the form of reciprocal commission advocated in the Lambeth Appeal approximates to that which the Lord of the Church Himself underwent, when at His baptism He came to "fulfil all righteousness." He needed not to be baptized; but we needed that He should be, that we might learn how to esteem the evidences of God's power. It has been objected to the Lambeth proposals that they were one-sided, in that they differentiated between the commissions given and those received. Those whose ministries were disputed were to receive "a commission through episcopal ordination"; those whose ministries were sure were to "accept...a form of commission or recognition which would commend" their ministry to others. Yet one cannot believe that, if the way of union had been otherwise prepared, there would be a breakdown over a word. If the case would be met by speaking of conditional re-ordination on the part of all, there would seem to be no compromise of principle involved: and we might look forward, not to a somewhat ambiguous service in the seclusion of Lambeth Chapel, but to an open and public rite charged with a symbolic meaning which should carry conviction to all.

Finally, we may ask whether it is permissible to hope that what happened once in the Church of Scotland might yet
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Happen again. The question is one which an Englishman and an Anglican can hardly hope to answer. Much in the formularies of the Kirk leaves the way open for such a process to mature; the bitter memories, which haunt like evil spirits the religious life of England, have long been conquered across the Tweed by those who had most excuse to nourish them; while both the great Presbyterian bodies have experienced of recent years a marked revival of primitive and Catholic standards. On the other hand, it is not yet clear how far the mind of Presbyterianism as a whole is conscious (as we are in the Church of England) of a certain isolation from other parts of the Church Universal; nor again, if this is so, how far a remedy may not be sought along the lines of Protestant concord rather than of Catholic unity. Should the latter goal, however, become the settled object of their aspirations and prayers, we do not see why existing differences between us should be less amenable to settlement to-day than was the case three centuries ago. In view of such possibilities, the formation of sober estimates with regard to the past becomes a paramount duty; and it is hoped that this volume may be a small contribution to that end.

2. BIOGRAPHICAL

Dr John Forbes was born on May 2nd, 1593, being the second son of Bishop Patrick Forbes by his wife Lucretia, daughter of David Spens of Wormiston. His father was one whose character and example were known and honoured throughout Scotland and went far to commend the First Episcopacy to the Scottish people. Appointed much against his will to the see of Aberdeen, he was consecrated on May 17th, 1618, a few months before the fateful Assembly at Perth; and throughout the seventeen years of his episcopate he devoted himself unshrinkingly to the service of his diocese. His administration was marked by a close and fatherly know-
ledge of his clergy, gained through visiting the parishes and through the regular half-yearly synods; and he was indefatigable in preaching. At the same time he used his office as Chancellor of Aberdeen University, to introduce great measures of academic restoration and reform, and was largely responsible for gathering to the university and city the brilliant band of scholars and divines who made Aberdeen famous among centres of learning. It was from him that his son derived those ideals of personal holiness which shine so clearly in the pages of his Diary, where the closing hours of the great and good bishop are told with a tender truthfulness and love. He died on Easter Eve, March 28th, 1635.

John Forbes was sent at an early age to Aberdeen University and thence to Sedan and other continental Universities. In 1619 he was ordained by a Dutch presbytery, and returned to Scotland with a reputation alike for piety and for learning. In the following year he was appointed Professor of Divinity in King’s College, Aberdeen. During the tenure of this office he held from time to time parochial cures in the city.

Forbes was by common consent the ablest and most learned of the School of Aberdeen Doctors which comprised Dr Alexander Scroggie, Dr William Leslie, Dr Robert Baron, Dr Sibbald and Dr Ross. F. C. Baur speaks of him as the second most learned man in Europe in the seventeenth century; and Bishop Burnet, no mean judge, describes his Instructiones Historico-Theologicae as “a work which, if he had finished it ...had been the greatest treasure of theological learning that

1 Cf. Fasti. Presbytery of Aberdeen. Third Charge. “1634. John Forbes, prom. from being Professor of Theology in King’s College, adm. in 1634; which he probably resigned on succeeding to the family estates by his father’s death in the following year.” And again: Grey Friars Church. “1639. John Forbes D.D., trans. from being Professor of Divinity in King’s College, adm. about 1639; but returned again to his former charge in 1641, and died 29th April 1648 in 55th age.”

2 Dr Macmillan’s The Aberdeen Doctors contains useful appendices on the individual members of the School.
perhaps the world has yet seen.” At Aberdeen he took a very lofty view of the opportunities and duties of his professorship, regarding it as essentially a pastoral office; and he laboured not only to instruct his pupils in doctrine and Church history, but also to train them in character and spiritual life. His Diary contains striking instances of the confidence he inspired in them.

Like Erasmus, Forbes was a scholar who was thrown upon days which demanded decision more than learning; but he differed from Erasmus in that he was prepared to decide. He was the protagonist on the Episcopal side in the controversy which broke out after the Perth Articles of 1618; and it was in their defence that he first published the Irenicum in 1629.

When, nine years later, the storm caused by the introduction of the so-called ‘Laudian’ Liturgy came to a head in the National Covenant, Forbes published a short treatise against it entitled A peaceable warning to the subjects in Scotland; and with the rest of the clergy, university and civic authorities of Aberdeen he refused to sign it. When commissioners came to press the claims of the Covenant, the six Doctors took the lead in rebutting them, and the King wrote to thank them for their efforts. In November of the same year (1638) the Glasgow Assembly met and Episcopacy was formally abolished in Scotland; but again Aberdeen stood firm and repudiated the Assembly’s decree. But now it was clear that argument was to yield to force, and an army was sent to reduce the city to obedience. In the last week of March, 1639, a few days before the city surrendered, the brilliant band of scholars at the University dispersed, three of them to England, and Forbes to his ancestral home at Corse.

In the summer of 1640 Forbes was cited to appear before

1 Cf. Dr Johnson’s allusion in Boswell’s Tour, Boswell’s Life of Johnson, iii. 371 (Sonnenschein, 1891). Forbes’s elder brother had died in 1625, leaving him the heir.
the Assembly at Aberdeen, and the cause he had espoused in the *Irenicum* was among the charges brought against him. His case was remitted to the Presbytery at Edinburgh where he was bidden to present himself on pain of deposition. He intended at first to obey, but, fearing later that he might be led into making concessions against his conscience, he wrote to the Presbytery signifying his refusal to sign the Covenant and his readiness to abide by their sentence. This they were reluctant to pronounce; but, as he declined to yield, he was definitely deprived of his Professorship and also of his house at Aberdeen on April 20th, 1641.

And now (says the contemporary historian) the Assembly's work was thoroughly done: these eminent divines of Aberdeen either dead, deposed, or banished, in whom fell more learning than was left behind in all Scotland beside at that time. Nor has that city nor any city in Scotland ever since, seen so many learned divines and scholars at one time together, as were immediately before this in Aberdeen.

Forbes himself bore this bitter blow with his customary spirit of forbearance and resignation. As a modern student of Forbes says,

He is the same stedfast but meek man, who has no thought of rendering evil for evil, but in meekness and Christian charity commends his opponents to God in his prayers, thanking Him for the love of his brethren which had been manifested on the occasion, and praising his Saviour for having been counted worthy to suffer for His name.

And the temper of his mind is well expressed in the quatrain which he composed at this time:

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Hunc mihi quis miseror tantum speraret honorem
Nomine pro Christi quantulacumque pati?
O quam dulce mihi Divini hoc pignus amoris!
Quam leve Christi onus est, quam mihi suave jugum!
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2 Dr Low, *John Forbes of Corse and his Eucharistic Teaching*, pp. 26, 27.
Driven from Aberdeen Forbes retired to Corse, and it
would have been his wish to live there in peace as a humble
scholar of the Church of Scotland. But it was not to be. In
August, 1643, the Solemn League and Covenant was san-
tioned by the General Assembly at Edinburgh, and sub-
scription was required of all. Rather than be enmeshed again
in controversy, Forbes decided to leave the country, and on
April 5th, 1644, he sought refuge in voluntary exile. He found
in the Netherlands a kindly welcome, and at Amsterdam,
which was his home for the greater part of his exile (though
he preached to English congregations in other Dutch towns),
he produced his monumental work already alluded to, *In-
structiones Historico-Theologicae*. In July, 1646, he returned
to Scotland and to Corse, where he died on April 29th, 1648.
The malignity of his opponents pursued him even after his
death; for he was refused permission by the Presbytery of
Aberdeen for his remains to be laid beside those of his father
and wife in the Cathedral Church. He was buried in the
churchyard at Leochel near Corse: and no monument marks
his tomb.

But Forbes had left a monument more enduring than
bronze; not only in the theological works of which some
account will be given directly, but also in the *Diary* or
*Spiritual Exercises*, as he called it, which are a mirror of his
soul. If those other works show in him the mind of an
Olympian, this, the record of his interior life, reveals the
heart of a child. Here are recorded not only the incidents of
his public career, but also the successive sorrows which were
the milestones of his family life. His wife was of Dutch family
and named Soete Roosboom, and he seems to have married
her before coming to Aberdeen in 1619. By her he had nine
children, but only one of them, his son George, survived
either him or her. She died in January, 1640, after he had
nursed her with the tenderest affection.
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And upon the 19 day of January, it being the Lord’s Day, my beloved wife having most earnestlie and frequentlie and comfort ablelie recommended and committed her spirit into the merciful and saving hands of God, her Heavenlie Father in Christ, did verie piouslie, patiently, willinglie, faithfullie and calmelie end her course of this mortal life with joy.

In personal intercourse John Forbes must have been a man of great charm. His portrait, with its broad forehead, long nose, and firm, quiet mouth, all the features well cut and well proportioned, betrays a man of race and intellect; and his eyes are full of the understanding which comes when knowledge is subject to charity. From his Diary we know that he was sociable and loved to show hospitality; and he was no stranger to golf. But there was no incident in his life—no feeling even—that was not brought within the scope of his devotions. His Diary recalls nothing so much as the Preces Privatae of Lancelot Andrewes. It reveals a conscience of extraordinary sensitiveness, such as is not often found with minds of so intellectualist a trend as his. Thanksgiving, penitence, and prayer flow from this soul with a child-like simplicity and genuineness, and he shows the keenest sense of sin. Living at a time when men were specially tempted to let policy determine belief, we can see that with him the currency of his faith and knowledge was never debased: he stood or fell to God, not to men. We can well believe that Spalding’s tribute was not at all beside the mark:

Surely this was an excellent, religious man, who fearit God, charitable to the poor, and ane singular scholar; yet he was put fra his calling, his country and his friends, and all for not subserving our Covenant, to the grudge and grief of the best.

1 Quoted by Dr Low, op. cit. pp. 40, 41. I am grateful to Dr Low for this and other citations from the vernacular Diary, as I have only been able to read Garden’s Latin version.

2 Cf. the entry for Tuesday, Sept. 20th, 1636.

3 Spalding’s Troubles, II. 190, quoted in Cunningham, The Church History of Scotland, II. 47.
3. LITERARY

(a) The Irenicum.

The Irenicum was first published in 1629, its purpose being to allay the strife caused by the Perth Articles of 1618. The occasion of it was a friendly request for advice on eight ‘Aporiae’ or problems submitted to Forbes by Alexander Lunan, presbyter of Kintore¹. Forbes wrote a short reply to Lunan which so set his mind at rest that he circulated to his fellow clergy in the presbytery a letter urging them to be equally persuaded. But Forbes realized that the situation required a more thorough handling, and encouraged by his father and others set himself to go to the roots of the matters in dispute. The result was the publication of the two books of the Irenicum.

Nothing need be said here of the contents of the treatise: the present volume is a complete translation of the First Book, while the Second is too long to analyze in this place. Some account of its main contentions has been already given above². A word should be said, however, about the style, for it shows the author at his best. All Forbes’s published works were written in Latin, and we have to read a master of the language like Forbes to realize how much was lost when Latin ceased to be the lingua franca of scholarship. Not only did it enable scholars to come to close quarters with one another in wrestling with their disagreements; but it lent itself to, and seemed to exact, close and compact thought. Let anyone translate as

¹ Cf. Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanae, III. 189.
² Introd. p. 18.
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shortly as he can one of Forbes’s periods, and he will realize how much the terser Latin is, and what power is gained by the terseness. And Forbes makes the best of his material. His style is of the best classical type, unmarred by the solecisms common in the Middle Age. If “sublimity is the echo of a great soul,” Forbes affords a striking example of the sublime in literature. And this elevation of thought is combined with a ring of genuine passion, which yet never mars the nobility of phrasing and diction. He is a master of all those technicalities of style—arrangement of words, adjuration, rhetorical question, metaphor and simile—which betokens the great writer; yet keeps them always in strict subordination to the logical sequence of his argument. And the result is a literary production which recalls at once the terseness of Tacitus and the richness of Cicero.

The Irenicum was first published in 1629, and quickly attracted the notice of scholars, among whom was Archbishop Ussher of Armagh. A letter of his to Forbes, dated 1632, is extant in which he expresses warm appreciation of the treatise and congratulates Scotland on having produced “a new Irenaeus.” A second edition—or rather a second impression, with a slightly altered title-page—appeared in 1636. By that time the support which the book had rallied to the cause of moderation had aroused the opponents of the Perth Articles to active criticism and hostility. They inveighed against its Latin dress as being a convenient disguise for personal attack upon themselves, and coined the line:

Εἰρήνην voluit cudere, cudit ἔρων.

The same year saw the publication of two rejoinders of a vehement and polemical character. One was Gillespie’s Dispute against the English-Popish Ceremonies, the other the anonymous

1 Dr Low, I think, confuses this edition with that which he left ready for press at his death, op. cit. 21.
Re-examination of the Perth Articles. On the other hand, the old-fashioned upholders of prelacy were far from pleased at a defence of Episcopacy which involved so much concession to the dignity of the presbyterate.

Forbes's response to these criticisms was typical of the man. During and after his exile he set himself to revise the Irenicum; and we learn from Garden's Life that he left the revision ready for press when he died. This was eventually discovered by chance at Leyden by Wetstein half a century later, and was published with his complete works, edited by Dr George Garden at Amsterdam in 1703. It occupies 140 folio pages. Comparison of this edition of the Irenicum with the earlier ones reveals not only the copious learning which enabled him to add yet further illustration to his argument, but also a character of rare charity and self-restraint. One might have expected that in its final form the Irenicum would have betrayed traces of the injustices he had suffered. It does, but in an unusual way. So far from inserting any reproach against the Presbyterian party, we find that he has deliberately excised from the text all those passages which might have rankled in the minds of his adversaries, or have caused them to stumble. The result is a piece of controversial writing which does indeed deserve the title which the author gave it.

The edition from which the translation here given has been made is that of 1703; but the portions published in 1629 and 1636 and excised in the final revision are so few in respect of Book I that they can be shortly stated.

1. xi. 4. After the last sentence but one the 1636 ed. contained a passage of some length, saying:

Some are mad and extreme enough to affirm that moderation in the middle party springs from a bad conscience. Their real purpose is to lay their narrow yoke on the whole Church, after throwing everything into confusion. This challenges us to defend the truth
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and liberty. St Paul’s condemnations of the Judaizers (Rom. xvi. 17–19; Gal. ii. 3–5; Col. ii. 18; Tit. i. 10, 11) are in point here.

1. xiii. 14. After the reference to Mk vii. 22, the 1636 ed. contained the following words:

Pollutis autem et Infidelibus nihil est purum, sed polluta est eorum, tum mens, tum conscientia, Deum profitentur se scire, sed factis negant: cum sint abominandi, et immorgeri [ἀμειβεῖσ] et ad omne opus bonum reprob[ίδοκιμολ] (ad Titum i. 15, 16).

1. xiv. 6, at the end followed in 1636:

Rom. xvi. 27. Soli sapienti Deo Gloria, per Iesum Christum, in saecula. Amen.

The many additions to the earlier text which appeared in 1703 are noted in the translation as they come by asterisks. An asterisk attached to the number of a section indicates that the whole section was added in 1703: where shorter passages are concerned, asterisks are inserted both at the beginning and at the end.

(b) Forbes’s other works.

Instructiones Historico-Theologicae. A Summa on Protestant scholastic lines in 735 folio pages, divided into sixteen books: first published at Amsterdam in 1645, and dedicated to Charles I. A second edition was published at Geneva in 1680; and an abbreviated edition, under the title of Forbesius contractus. Sive compend. Instruct. Histor.-Theol., was prepared by Arnoldus Montanus at Amsterdam in 1663.

De Cura et Residentia Pastorali. A treatise based on his lectures at Aberdeen, and published by request in 1646.

Sermo in Psalmum cx. Based on the actual sermon which Forbes preached after his father’s death in 1635, and published later.

Dissertatio de Visione Beatifica. First delivered on an academic occasion at Aberdeen. Its date is roughly determined by the fact, stated in the Preface, that Bishop Patrick
Forbes, then suffering from paralysis, was carried in to hear it and was much strengthened by it. It was published after the bishop's death, but I cannot discover in what year.

[Concio in Joh. xiv. 27. It is not clear why this is bound up with Forbes's works, unless he translated it into Latin. The title-page states that the address was delivered by William Forbes, afterwards Bishop of Edinburgh, on June 25th, 1633, in Charles I's presence at Edinburgh.]

Theologiae Moralis Libri Decem. A treatise on the Decalogue in 359 pages. First published 1632. This is a fine work, and deserves the attention of all who are interested in the development of the Thomist Moral Theology in the Reformed Churches.

As already mentioned, Forbes also wrote a work entitled A Peaceable Warning to the Subjects in Scotland: Given in the Yeare of God, 1638, Aberdene, Imprinted by Edw. Raban, the Yeare above written. But this is not in Garden's edition.

Dr Low's recent work has already been alluded to. It contains an admirable reproduction of Forbes's portrait, a biographical introduction, and a careful analysis, without comment, of part of the 11th Book of the Instructiones.

4. FORBES'S OPPONENTS

The opposition to the Perth Articles closely resembled that aroused in Elizabethan England by the Advertisements of 1566, though its issue was different; for whereas of the Puritans some remained within the Church but disobeyed the ceremonial injunctions, while others seceded, in Scotland the recalcitrant party eventually carried the bulk of the Church with them. In both cases kneeling at Communion, the observance of Holy Days, Confirmation, Private Baptism and

1 "The King was so pleased that he declared the preacher to be worthy having a bishopric created for him." Macmillan, op. cit. p. 265.

2 Cf. supra, p. 27, Macmillan, op. cit. p. 239.
Communion are objected to, and Ministerial Parity claimed. This last was indeed the first plank in the platform of the *Second Admonition*, drawn up by Thomas Cartwright, which was in such vogue in 1572. And what Hooker was to the English Puritans, that Forbes was to the High Presbyterians of his day. It would indeed be interesting, did space permit, to institute a comparison between these two divines, whose theological rôle was so similar. Curiously enough, I cannot find that Forbes anywhere alludes to Hooker. There were perhaps good reasons for this. He did not wish to identify himself too closely with things English nor to accuse his Presbyterian critics of English Puritanism. Moreover, they differ in certain matters. Hooker’s view that Episcopacy was *de jure divino* in its inception but not necessarily invariable goes further than Forbes’s defence of it in *Irenicum*, Book II; though he reproduces Hooker’s judgment that a purely Presbyterian Church suffers from a “defect and imperfection.” But Hooker asserts definitely that a bishop’s superiority to a presbyter is in respect both of Order and of Jurisdiction—a point which cuts right across one of Forbes’s main contentions. Again, Hooker goes further than Forbes in regard to Festival Days, when he says that God has chosen and hallowed some days, as also places and people, for special association with acts of His goodness, and that we can only co-operate with Him here by assigning certain actions—*e.g.* religious observances—to those days or rather to their anniversaries. But in the main Hooker and Forbes have the same things to say on the controversial issues of their times.

(a) *Dispute against the English-Popish Ceremonies.*

John Forbes’s two principal literary opponents were George Gillespie and the anonymous author of *The Re-examination*

2 *L.E.P. vii*. vi. i.  
3 Hooker’s *Ecclesiastical Polity*, Book V (Paget), p. 189.
of the Perth Articles, who was probably David Calderwood. Gillespie was living in the family of the Earl of Cassillis when he published in 1636, through a Dutch firm, his Dispute against the English-Popish Ceremonies. This book was prohibited by the King and Council at Edinburgh on October 17th, 1637, and ordered to be publicly burnt. Its arid pages leave one wondering why it should have been considered so important. Yet it is not without learning and ability; and a brief account of it will show the character of the Presbyterian party.

Part I is devoted to disproving the necessity of the ceremonies enjoined by the Articles of Perth. As against Forbes’s defence of ecclesiastical decrees, he contends that it is not the Church’s decrees themselves but the ground of them which obliges the Christian conscience. In non-essentials men can be bound only by the conjunction of ecclesiastical authority with the intrinsic lawfulness and expediency of the thing enjoined. Contempt of the Church is caused not by non obedire but by nolle obedire. The Perth ceremonies are thus “substantial Tyrannies over the consciences of God’s people” (ii–v). The observance of Holy Days, for example, deprives us of our divine right, secured to us by the Fourth Commandment, of working six days in the week; and they can only be defended by “a weak and easily penetrable hedg of quidditative Cautions.” They came “by custom,” and were abolished in the Reformed Churches of Geneva, Strassburg, Zurich and Scotland (vi–ix).

Part II is directed against the expediency of the ceremonies. They are regarded as the thin edge of the wedge of heresies already afoot, such as “that Christ died for all alike...that Rome is not Babylon the Whore...that we should not run so far away from Papists, but come as near to them as we can”; and he adds, with obvious allusion to Forbes and his friends, “among the Sect of Formalists is swarming a Sect of Reconcilers” (iii). The ceremonies hinder edification by
distracting people’s minds, encourage the Papists, and for the sake of worldly advantage disturb the peace (iv–vii). In other words they cause ‘scandal’ or offence, since adherence to a cause which occasions ‘passive scandal’ is equivalent to ‘active scandal.’ Even if, as Forbes asserts (Iren. I. x. 2, II. xx. 17), the offence is taken through malice on our part, its existence should cause the ceremonies to be dropped. To Paybody’s rejoinder that “where one is offended with our practice of kneeling, twenty, I may say ten thousand are offended with your refusal,” Gillespie replies: “O adventurous Arithmetick! Ohuge hyperbole! O desultorious Declaration! O roving Rethorick! O prodigal Paradox!” (viii, ix).

In Part III Gillespie assails the lawfulness of the ceremonies. They are superstitious, because they exceed what the Church has power to do: “aliquid mysterii alunt, and so aliquid monstri too” (I). And they are idolatrous: first inferentially, as monuments of past idolatry (II); secondly, by association, because they involve our consorting with idolaters like those Christians of St Paul’s day who observed pagan feasts (2 Cor. vi. 14–17) (III); and thirdly, formally (iv). Gillespie’s treatment of this third head is important, as indicating his positive Eucharistic standpoint, and his arguments are effective as against the minimizing defence of kneeling at the Holy Communion which some of the Episcopalians urged. Thus, he says that Dr Burgess “is to be ignominiously exsibilat, for making the Sacred Sacramental Signs to be no otherwise present than the walls of the Church...or anything else accidentally before the Communicant”; and he detects a similar error in the parallels—raising the eyes to heaven, kneeling at the bed-side, kneeling at Ordination—urged by Forbes in the first chapter of the Irenicum. Similarly he criticizes Forbes for saying that at the reception of the Eucharist we worship God directly, begging Him “to make us worthy guests”; for (he says) we are either that, or not,
beforehand, while at the service itself we do not pray, but meditate on the Passion; and "Meditation is a communing with our own souls, Prayer a communing with God."

The chief objection, however, to kneeling at the Communion is that it is a form of image-worship. Its defenders say that the adoration so involved is "relative from the sign to Christ"; which is much the same as what Bellarmine says, when he allows latria to be offered not to the sacred species, but to Christ in the Sacrament. At bottom, therefore, the 'Papists' and the 'Formalists' agree, differing only as to the mode of the relation, which the former define as Transubstantiation.

Two other pleas on the side of kneeling are discussed. To the plea that the consecrated elements are adored only as "active objects, motives, and occasions which stirre up the mind of the kneeler to worship Christ," Gillespie replies that they are "images, standing in Christ's stead" and therefore must not be adored. The outward adoration of kneeling "can be no more occasioned by the blessed Sacrament, in the act of receiving it, than by a graven Image in the act of beholding it": indeed, the very use of the elements as foci of our attention should make us beware of adoring them. The truth is that the whole Eucharistic action is charged with solemnity as resting upon Christ's command: nihil hic humanum, sed Divina omnia; and we therefore show our special reverence by sitting throughout the service with heads uncovered, as we do not when listening to a sermon. To the plea, again, that the object of adoration is Christ's flesh and blood, Gillespie replies that His humanity is not adorable, since it has not the properties of His Godhead. And particularly it is not adorable in the Sacrament; because we believe that "the Presence of Christ's Body in the Lord's Supper depends not on His being everywhere but on His express words." It is not, that is to say, a real or bodily Presence.
Gillespie’s argument is an illustration of the extraordinary power of the doctrine of Transubstantiation to divide men of strong sacramental tendencies. He has a deep sense of the mystery of the Eucharist and of the living authority of Christ’s words in regard to it; but the Roman definition of the Divine *modus operandi* in making the sacred species effectual symbols foreclosed the possibility of a satisfactory sacramental theology. Gillespie was very near the mark when he said that ‘Formalists’ and ‘Papists’ were agreed, except as to the mode of Christ’s relation to the elements; and if he could have followed up the line he there opened, much of his polemic might have been spared. It is to be hoped that modern developments of the Roman doctrine (which are said to have travelled far) may once again unbar the doors once closed.

The Perth Ceremonies, continues the *Dispute*, are also unlawful because they are of “a mystical and significant nature,” and are not grounded on Scripture or ecclesiastical law. Who is to judge what are, and what are not, these “indifferent things” about which it is claimed that the Church has authority? This claim involves making superfluous and superstitious additions to God’s Word (v–vii). Moreover, no civil Magistrate can make them lawful; for that would involve the usurpation of spiritual authority, which not even the Crown possesses. The King’s personal powers are limited; his commands with regard to the externals of religion must be lawful in their nature and expedient in their use; and both princes and subjects should examine all that authority enjoins. For example, princes may not introduce innovations into the Church *proprio motu*, though they may command a Synod to take order about matters ecclesiastical and may then order ministers to observe its findings\(^1\). Moreover, all civil laws

\(^1\) This is the position in England with regard to “Letters of Business,” issued by the Crown to the Convocations. Forbes claims that this is what James I did.
bind only conditionally, not absolutely in foro conscientiae, and must give way before the Law of Charity. In spiritual matters ministers are responsible to the presbytery, who alone can excommunicate or depose. The claim of the High Commission of 1610 to exercise this power was intolerable¹. Finally, the ceremonies were not lawful by any law of nature, seeing that nature cannot direct men to a supernatural end (viii).

Finally, in Part IV, Gillespie assails the indifferency of the ceremonies. No act, he says, is allowed, which is not also necessary; and all acts, since they are either expedient or not, are thus either obligatory, necessary and good, or the reverse. Forbes’s distinctions (Iren. i. xiii) between remunerable and other good, and between the specific and the general goodness of actions, are beside the point, seeing that we have to deal simply with individual acts, and these will all be judged at the last. Again, he is wrong in saying that circumstances may determine the goodness of an act; for the expediency of an action is always determined by Scripture. Even the stock example of picking up a straw from the ground is no exception. Forbes cites the case of a widow’s second marriage as an example of an individual indifferent action (Iren. i. xiii. 7, 10); but the original choice and its result are either good or evil, and we are not comparing possible, but actual, alternative courses. We must distinguish between the nature of a thing and its use, and the latter is never indifferent. When St Paul speaks of an act being done ‘in faith’ or otherwise, he means that it is either expedient or not, i.e. either necessary or not².

¹ He describes it as “a certain Amphibian brood, sprung out of the stem of Neronian Tyranny, and in manners like to his nearest kinsman, the Spanish Inquisition. It is armed with a transcendent power, and called by the dreadful name of the High Commission.” Cf. Grub, op. cit. II. 291, 292.

² Hooker’s masterly exegesis of Rom. xiv. 23 will be recalled here, where he defines ‘faith’ in the sentence “whatsoever is not of faith is sin” as being “a full persuasion that that which we do is well done.” Cartwright
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In point of fact the upshot of Forbes’s argument is not that the ceremonies are indifferent, but that all are expedient and some necessary (i–iii).

In the case before us, viz. kneeling at the Communion, we are bound to follow the example of Christ and His Apostles. Our Lord’s choice of the reclining posture was not, like the number of guests, place, time, etc., an accident of the Last Supper, but was deliberate; and to adopt any other attitude is blasphemy¹ (iv–vii).

Moreover, the ceremonies are all opposed to the Oath which James I took in swearing to the Confession of Faith in 1581, and which was again ratified by the Church in its Assemblies in 1596. Forbes says (Iren. i. ix. 2) that this Oath, if it bound the Church for all time in the matter of ceremonies, was not binding, since it engaged the parties to do something in itself wrong; and he refuses to admit the oath of Joshua and the Israelitish princes to the Gibeonites (Josh. ix) as a parallel case, on the ground that in that case God dispensed Joshua from His general command to extirpate the surrounding tribes and allowed him to keep his oath, though with a special condition attached. But how does Forbes know that the parties to this oath repented of their rashness in swearing it? Besides, the oath did bind; and it was not contrary to the Divine command, which was restricted to tribes that attacked Israel. King James’s Oath bound him and us to uphold the Doctrine and Discipline of the Church, and obliges us to a practice, viz. sitting at the Communion, which is de jure divino (viii).

had taken up precisely the attitude of Gillespie on this subject. L.E.P. II. iv. 1–7.

It is clear from Lunan’s 9th Aporia that the arguments here advanced by Gillespie were in circulation before 1629.

¹ Cf. Hooker, L.E.P. v. lxviii. 3. “Our Lord Himself did that which custome and long usage had made fit: we, that which fitnesse and great decency hath made usual.”
Finally, Gillespie sums up his case as follows:

I have proven that many and weighty inconveniences doe follow upon the Ceremonies; as namely, that they make way and are the Ushers for greater evils; that they hinder edification; and in their fleshly shew and outward splendour, obscure and prejudice the life and power of Godlinesse; that they are the unhappy occasions of much injury and cruelty against the Faithful Servants of Christ; that they were bellows to blow up, and are still fewel to encrease the Church-consuming fire of woful dissentions amongst us... Religion is now by their means busked with the vain trumpery of Babylonish trinkets, and her face covered with the whorish and eye-bewitching farding, of fleshly shew and splendour (ix).

(b) Re-examination of the Perth Articles.

The Preface opens by attributing the scarcity of treatises against the Articles to the fact that the press was muzzled—a complaint which at least suggests the possibility of another interpretation. The Perth Assembly was, in point of fact, an irregular gathering. Notice of it had been inadequate, and many presbyteries were unrepresented. Contrary to the decisions made at Montrose in 1600 and at Linlithgow in 1606, ordering the Moderator to be elected, Spottiswoode usurped that office. The bishops were there without previous commission from the presbyteries, as were several moderators of presbyteries and others who were known to be favourable to the Articles: the barons also were over-represented. Some ministers were bribed, others threatened, into voting; some voted twice, others were never given a chance to vote; and all the Articles were passed in one omnibus vote.

The state of the Church, indeed, cried out for reform. Parliament was usurping spiritual prerogatives, and ministers were immersed in civil affairs. The bishops—"idoll pastours and loytering lorde"—claimed oversight of the churches and disregarded the presbyteries, packed their meetings, overawed opponents by means of the High Commission, imposed
their own conditions on ordination candidates, and encouraged Popery by their exercise of patronage. At the Glasgow Assembly in 1610 the prelates had acknowledged that annual meetings of the General Assembly were desirable and that they themselves were subject to its censure: but what good was that, if the Assembly never met?

The author then proceeds to discuss the posture at Holy Communion. Sitting, he says, was ordered by the Confession of Faith; also, by the First Book of Discipline (1560). It was contained in the Book of Common Order which the General Assembly had made obligatory in 1562, and again in 1564, 1567 and 1572. Moreover, the Act concerning the King's Oath had been ratified by Parliament in 1581 and again in 1592. The sitting posture was not only "lawfull and warrantable" as resting upon the example of Christ, but "necessary" by the same token. It is symbolic of a social meal, and is implied in St Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians.

Further, it has good authority. The Benedictine rite prescribes it on the three days before Easter; Gratian (Decr. III. ii. 17) shows that the Communion was administered after supper on Maundy Thursday; and there is the case of 2000 soldiers of the Emperor Maurice communicating seated in a.d. 590. So, too, did the Scottish after Bannockburn. Kneeling, moreover, on Sundays was expressly forbidden by the 90th canon of the Council of Trullo.

Contrariwise, kneeling is unlawful. It does not rest on Christ's example, which gives no place for adoration, nor is it agreeable with the form of a feast or supper: and it is incompatible with the mutual distribution of the chalice which is implied in our Lord's words, διαμερίσατε εἰς ἑαυτοὺς. The reference to the Eucharist in Acts ii. 42, and xx. 7 ff., and St Paul's words in 1 Cor. x. 16, when rightly interpreted, show sitting to have been the apostolic practice; and the old word σύναξις means a social gathering. Further,
the English rite is objectionable as it obscures the significance of the fraction.

The *Re-examination* contains many of the arguments already described in connexion with Gillespie’s *Dispute*. Thus, the ceremonies are unlawful because they make us conform to the Papists in their abuses. Kneeling is a monument of idolatry, which, like the brazen serpent shattered by Hezekiah, causes ‘passive scandal’ to godly people. No magistrate is entitled to do that, and teaching on the subject, as recommended by Forbes and others, is no certain remedy. Moreover, kneeling is without authority for the first thousand years of the Church’s history; perhaps, indeed, it is not to be found before Honorius III (1220 A.D.). When Theodoret says that the sacred elements προσκυνεῖται, he means “held in reverence, reverently treated.” Tertullian shows that standing at the Eucharist was the rule in antiquity, and it is universal in the East to this day in receiving.

In his charge against kneeling of being idolatrous, the author shows himself to be a strict Receptionist. What, he asks, does the Perth decree mean, when it enjoins kneeling “in due regard of so divine a mystery”? If the whole sacramental action is meant, why should we not kneel when the Scripture is read or the sermon preached? Besides, kneeling is not a posture proper to meditation. But meditation is not what the supporters of the Articles have in mind. “Now the Formalist presupposeth that the Sacrament is made already, before hee come to deliver the elements, and therefore, hee sayeth, hee uttereth other words at the deliverie.” It is in keeping with this that the English Prayer Book makes the words of consecration part of a prayer to God, instead of addressing them “demonstratively and enunciatively,” as Christ did, to the people. The author might have added other equally clear implications of doctrine in the English formularies, such as the statement that “the Body and Blood of
Christ...are verily and indeed taken and received” or the rubric directing reconsecration.

Our author insists, like Gillespie, that there is no difference between images and the sacred elements in regard to adoration, which in either case is “relatively from the sign to Christ.” It is thus analogous to that mediate worship which we recognize and use in relation to civil dignities: only it has not the same justification, for, whereas this latter is done to uphold men’s sense of the majesty of human society, God does not need such *adminicula*. Though Hooker and others may try to rule out of the discussion the manner of Christ’s presence in the Eucharist, the doctrine of the Real Presence is in fact implied in the defence of kneeling; as for instance by Bishop Lindsey, when he writes: “No error to worship Christ’s flesh and blood there, in respect of the personal presence of Christ’s body.”

We need not dwell on the treatment accorded to the other Perth Articles in the *Re-examination*, which proceeds on the familiar lines. The observance of Holy Days is objected to on the ground that the Sabbath only is of Divine law, and that men may not make other days holy; and there follows a long discourse on the Sabbath. Confirmation is repudiated as having for its purpose the exaltation of the bishop’s office; and the administration of the sacraments in private places is regarded as being contrary to their institution. They were instituted by God as public rites, and we are not entitled to plead private necessity against such an ordinance.
ANALYSIS OF THE IRENICUM

BOOK I.

This book takes the form of a detailed examination and criticism of nine Aporiae or Problems, dealing with the Five Articles of Perth and submitted by the Rev. Alexander Lunan. These Problems, which may be regarded as a compendious summary of a large number of conflicting objections to the Articles felt and expressed in the Scottish Church at that time, approached the questions at issue along four main lines. It is noteworthy that the First Article, which prescribed kneeling at the Holy Communion, was far the most repugnant of the five to national prejudice; and all Lunan's Problems have, in fact, reference to this one alone.

I. It was urged that kneeling at the Holy Communion, being a gesture of adoration, involved Idolatry. Aporiae i–iv.

II. Further, it was said that the First Article violated the conditions of a valid Eucharist. Aporiae v–vii.

III. Theological principle apart, it was claimed that the Articles were inexpedient, and ought therefore to be resisted, and could not, on the assumption that they were theologically indifferent, be imposed as necessary. Aporia viii. (It is noticeable that in connexion with this Problem appeal is made to the feelings of the laity.)

IV. Finally, the paradox is propounded, on grounds derived from Moral Theology, that the gesture at Holy Communion could not be a morally indifferent matter; because no morally 'indifferent' acts exist. Aporia ix.

With the first of the above points Forbes deals in Chapter i; with the second in Chapters ii–iv; with the third in Chapters v–xi; and with the fourth in Chapters xii xiv.
I. Adoration and Idolatry at the Holy Communion.

Chapter i.

Reply to Lunan's 1st Problem.

Chapter i. §§ 1-9.

Your major premiss contains a distinction between consecrated and unconsecrated objects, which is superfluous, where idolatry is concerned; and a qualification ('saving a special ordinance of Christ') likewise pointless, since God could never ordain an act which was idolatrous. There are two kinds of acts on which no ordinance of God is to be expected, viz. (1) acts so intrinsically wicked, e.g. those forbidden in the Decalogue, that they could never be allowed; (2) mean or indifferent acts, which are neither forbidden nor commanded. There is a third kind of acts normally forbidden, but occasionally commanded by special precept—e.g. the Israelites spoiling the Egyptians. § 1.

Your major premiss, therefore, comes to this: 'to offer religious adoration before any mere creature appears to be idolatry.' Or, rather, it is idolatry, if religious adoration is transferred to a mere creature. And that is what your proof implies. §§ 2, 3.

Should it be objected that your Problem deals with what appears to be, not with what is, idolatry, I reply that we are presumably dealing with sensible, right-thinking, people, who would not think a thing idolatry, if it were not. § 4.

If, on the other hand, what you have in mind is the scandal given to the weak, you are in a dilemma. For the matter in question is either of essential obligation or not: if essential, no allowance for the weak can excuse us from non-compliance; if non-essential, then the Church is entitled to legislate about it, and no offence given to the weak is comparable to the harm done by schism. § 5.

Your proof of your major premiss we have seen to imply that, when religious adoration is offered before a mere creature, there is a transference of religious adoration to that creature. But Scripture presents many examples to the contrary—the altar of God, etc.; David worshipping before the people, St Paul before his fellow-passengers: and in our own Church in Public Penance, at Ordinations, at Baptisms, worship is offered before the Minister. In all these cases, it is God who is adored. §§ 6, 7.

So your major premiss will have to be re-stated in a form which confines it to such religious adoration only as makes the creature the object and term of the adoration. § 8.

For a statement of the syllogism see below, pp. 70 f.
And the result of that is to empty your minor premiss of all force. For the adoration in the Holy Communion is directed to God, and the gesture is analogous to that at Ordinations or civic ceremonies when the king bestows some gift on a subject. § 9.

*Reply to Lunan’s 2nd, 3rd and 4th Problems.*

Chapter i. §§10–14.

That principle once asserted disposes likewise of your second, third, and fourth Problems; it is God whom we adore; and the analogy with the heathen worship of wood and stone, or with the Popish cult of images, does not apply. §§10–12.

To sum up, whatever posture is adopted at Holy Communion—whether sitting or kneeling—is directed, not to the Bread, but to God; and the assertion of some, who say that we offer God a mediated adoration, interposing the Bread between ourselves and Him, is a monstrous and unjustifiable slander. §§13, 14.

II. **Gesture as a Condition of a Valid Eucharist.**

**Chapters ii–iv.**

*(a) Reply to Lunan’s 5th Problem—the use of the Table.*

Chapter ii.

You argue that the First Article stultifies the use of the Table at Holy Communion. But the Table is a convenience, not a necessity. When St Paul speaks of our partaking of the Lord’s Table, he uses the word figuratively for the Meal which is placed on the Table. Again, the Table makes for order and dignity—points which our Lord was careful of, e.g. at the Feeding of the Five Thousand. Further, at secular meals, some courses are served on the Table, others by hand of the servants, the usage being dictated by what is most convenient for each course; and convenience, especially at a large Communion, certainly prescribes the separation from the Table involved in the present changes.

*(b) Reply to Lunan’s 6th Problem— mutual administration.*

Chapter iii.

The Holy Communion does not consist in any particular manner of administering it, so long as all partake of one Bread. The essential sacramental actions are those recorded at the institution—blessing,
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breaking, giving—which belong to the Minister celebrating; and
the taking, eating, drinking—which belong also to the com-
municants.

If it be urged that our Lord used the words: “Divide it among
yourselves,” I reply that (1) many authorities refer these words to
the Paschal, not the Eucharistic, cup; (2) even if they refer to the
Eucharistic cup, they do not concern the Bread, and mean no more
than the words in St Matthew’s account: “Drink ye all of it.”

(c) Reply to Lunar’s 7th Problem—the example of Christ
and the Apostles.

Chapter iv.

Forbes leads up to the assertion of his governing principle in
§ 3; deals with five objections or rival assertions of principle in
§§ 4-12; and sums up in §§ 13, 14.

1. The governing principle.

St Paul and the Gospels are our authorities for what Christ and
the Apostles did, and they make no mention of the gesture adopted
at the reception. They ate the Passover reclining, but may have
changed their posture to receive. Probably, however, they retained
the recumbent posture, which was customary at Jewish meals. The
gesture was prescribed by social custom; and just as society varies
its custom at secular meals, so may the Church vary its custom at
this sacred Meal. Indeed, the posture adopted in our Lord’s time
at the Passover differed from that adopted at the first Passover;
but our Lord did not revert to that. You say that, if kneeling be
adopted, it will not look like a supper. But the common meal is the
essence of a supper, whatever the posture. Besides, if symbolism
be what is sought, then something symbolic of humiliation before
God, as Irenaeus pointed out, is clearly prescribed. § 1.

Further, the connexion which St Paul emphasizes between the
Passover and the Eucharist bears, not upon the gesture, but upon
the time of the institution—viz. on the night of His Agony. And
yet we do not regard the time as binding on us to-day. § 2.

In fact, the matter is governed by a principle, found to apply to
all the Sacraments of Scripture; viz. that everything essential to
a valid Sacrament is expressly stated in the Scriptural account of
the institution of that Sacrament, or elsewhere in Scripture where
that Sacrament is undoubtedly treated of. It follows that gesture
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cannot be reckoned in the number of essential conditions of the Eucharist. § 3.

2. Five objections answered.

(1) "This will give room for any kind of improper behaviour at the Eucharist." No, there are other quite plain rules of Scripture which enjoin order and decency at public worship as of obligation. § 4.

(2) "But a definite posture, though not stated, can be inferred from Scripture—viz. a recumbent posture." In other words, you imply that any thing expressly mentioned of the Passover, and not expressly recorded to have been changed for the institution of the Lord's Supper, is essential to the Eucharist. But that would mean that we should always celebrate with thirteen present, in an upper room, in the evening etc. If you reply that these matters are not on the same footing as the bodily posture, that should be stated in your argument. But perhaps you will re-state your argument otherwise, confining it to features which were not Jewish or of Mosaic ordinance. Why should a thing, however, be essential to the Christian Sacrament, when it was, by your hypothesis, neither essential to the Passover nor sanctioned by Jewish custom? The details alluded to above—number of guests, time, place, etc.—would answer to that test. The fact is that there were inevitably some circumstances of the institution of the Lord's Supper which were occasional and concomitant only, and not intended for imitation; and the gesture was one of them. §§ 5–9.

(3) "We ought to imitate what Christ did at least in those features of the Passover which He might easily have altered, such as the bodily posture, but chose in fact to retain." That argument, if it proves anything, proves too much. § 10.

(4) "The bodily posture was symbolic, in a sense in which the details of time and place were not." But the Fathers of the Church have found abundant symbolism in our Lord's choice of time and place. § 11.

(5) "We should imitate the action of Christ and His Apostles, wherever it is not clear that they were actuated by special reasons." Hence it is argued that the Lord's institution is violated, when the Minister hands to each communicant his portion of the elements or when they receive the Sacrament kneeling. Antiquity and the Reformed Churches alike, however, are opposed to such a conclusion. Further we do not know all the special reasons which actuated Christ and His Apostles. It is enough for us to know that
many of the features of the institution of the Eucharist were occasional only, and that only those are permanently binding which are expressly enjoined in Scripture. § 12.

3. Conclusion.

Necessity, for the purposes of our present discussion, is of three kinds;—(a) Sacramental—i.e. attaching to a Sacrament by divine institution, and of itself demanding no particular gesture at Holy Communion; (b) Natural—i.e. attaching to the natural circumstances of the Sacrament, requiring e.g. some gesture, but prescribing none and admitting of any; (c) Moral—i.e. attaching to the duties e.g. of seeking peace, order, edification, and enjoining such gesture as is conducive to peace and order, while forbidding the contrary.

Accordingly, the rites which have been the subject of our discussion must be reckoned as per se indifferent, and the keeping or omission of them determined by the requirements of peace, order, edification etc. §§ 13, 14.

III. The Expediency of the Articles and their Consequent Authority. Chapters v–xi.

(i) Reply to the first thesis of Lunan's 8th Problem.

Chapter v.

Your 8th Problem, after conceding the indifference of gesture as such, maintained three theses:—(i) that no benefit could be shown to accrue from the Perth Articles adequate to counter-balance the harm they had caused; (ii) that, for the sake of the weak, and on the point of principle, it was still a duty to resist them; (iii) that, where a thing is ex hypothesi indifferent, full liberty of opinion and practice should be allowed. § 1.

But the duty of obedience is absolute for the subject, except where the thing ordered is actually contrary to God’s revealed will. The functions and duties of those in authority and those under authority are distinct; and (with the exception stated) no error by the former justifies the latter in refusing their duty of obedience. § 2.

In point of fact, however, the Perth Articles rest on solid grounds of advantage, whether regarded from the point of view (A.) of the king who initiated, (B.) of the proposals themselves, or (C.) of the good faith and freedom of the Church. § 3.
A. The King’s point of view.

At the outset His Majesty’s well-known wisdom, religious zeal, and patient handling of difficulties arrest attention and compel respect. § 4.

These qualities he exhibited particularly in the way he proceeded on this occasion—i.e. not by fiat, but by laying his reasons before the Assembly in a letter. They were ten;—(1) loyalty to the Throne; (2) the expediency of the changes proposed; (3) the gratitude due to himself for patience in the past; (4) the danger of provoking him too far; (5) the danger of disobeying God’s law and incurring suspicion of Popery; (6) the advantage of common consent, such as the Assembly’s adhesion would ensure; (7) the hollowness of the plea that the laity would be shocked; (8) the examples of obedience shown by the other kingdoms of the State; (9) the integrity of the king’s motive; (10) the need for a like motive in the Assembly. § 5.

These reasons were corroborated by eight others, urged in person by the Dean of Winchester, who attended the Assembly as the king’s envoy: (1) the value of Synodical action, if wisely conducted; (2) the duty of submission to lawful Magistrates; (3) the bad impression which disobedience to the Crown would cause; (4) the slur which resistance would cast on the king’s orthodoxy; (5) the need of removing scandal already afoot in other Reformed Churches; (6) the danger of incurring sterner treatment by refusal; (7) the plea of shocking the laity was not only hollow, but redounded on the Ministers, who should have taught the laity the meaning of the Articles; (8) the king was not asking much, but little. § 6.

Most men of judgment would hold that His Majesty’s reasonableness was sufficient of itself to silence the voice of objection. § 7.

The main objection, viz. that the laity would be shocked, reflects discredit on those Ministers who, so far from explaining the Articles to their parishioners, had given erroneous and disloyal teaching about them. Indeed, the very nature of such objections as the laity urge shows that the source of them is the teaching which Ministers have given and the example they have set. § 8.

You are, therefore, in a dilemma, and must either prove the above arguments unsound, or else admit the validity of the king’s standpoint. § 9.

Chapter vi.

Before, however, passing to the merits of the proposals themselves, I will anticipate an objection of a constitutional character, viz. that the convening of the Assembly and the procedure adopted
at it were not in regular form. But in point of fact all formalities were complied with in both regards. § 1.

Even graver charges, e.g. of yielding to intimidation or to promises, have been made against the members of the Assembly; charges which are contrary to the plain exhortations and warnings of Christ and His Apostles. § 2.

Further, the Scottish Parliament in 1621 recognized the lawfulness of the Assembly, of its procedure, and of its decisions, which it endorsed by Act of Parliament. § 3.

True, this does not guarantee the wisdom of the Assembly's decisions, though we have already seen strong reasons in their favour and shall see more; but it amply vouches for its regularity. §§ 4, 5.

Meanwhile, I beg all lovers of Christ's truth and peace to realize the gravity of what the minority have done in disturbing the Church's unity by Schism and rebellion, and teaching false doctrine, to the sorrow of our friends and the delight of our enemies. § 6.

[N.B. It must be pointed out that this chapter and other similar passages in the book were written in 1628, when the Five Articles were still the law both of Church and Realm. They ceased to be so after they had been repealed in 1637.] § 7.

B. The merits of the proposals.

Chapter vii.

Examination of the proposals themselves will show that they are not only lawful, but also under the circumstances necessary. § 1.

1. Kneeling at Holy Communion.

The language of our Lord and His Apostles, and of the Fathers, shows that the service is one of thanksgiving; and our own devotional practice at the reception shows it to be one of prayer: in other words, it is a service in which Christ is adored. The more humble the gesture, therefore, the more appropriate it will be to the service: but in any case it is a service of adoration, thanksgiving, and prayer. § 2.

If this be once granted, kneeling may be justified on five grounds:—(a) the arrangement of the service, where there is little listening, and every call for attention and speed in administration, gives every opportunity, for the outward expression of adoration; and kneeling has Scriptural authority in such a connexion. A change coming now (b) gives occasion for instruction on such matters; and (c) tends to
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remove our isolation from the other Reformed Churches. (d) Further, Scripture shows that adoration may just as much be implied by the old custom of uncovering the head and of sitting. (e) As to the appropriateness of kneeling at Table, we should remember that the Lord’s Table is no ordinary table, and the Meal no ordinary Meal. § 3.

2. The observance of Festivals.

The Festivals we are asked to keep are those which commemorate the capital events of our Creed—our Lord’s Nativity, Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension, and Pentecost. The annual celebration of these events may be justified on five grounds, viz.:

(1) the universal practice of Antiquity;
(2) they form a kind of annual course of Christian instruction, reminding, warning, and uniting Christian people;
(3) Scripture, while it forbids a Jewish or Gentile observance of days (Gal. iv. 10, 11), does not prohibit a common commemoration of holy events, free from all superstition, and directed to the good order of the Church;
(4) the common practice of the Reformed Churches;
(5) there are obvious advantages in following the choice of days which has come down to us from Antiquity. Wantonly to select others argues arrogance, if not indeed superstition. § 4.

3. Confirmation after Catechism.

The Laying on of Hands was instituted by the Apostles, and was evidently familiar to the Church when Heb. vi. 2 was written. An explanation of the rite was commonly inserted in the ancient catechetical summaries of the Church. § 5.

It is objected that the Papists have abused it by making it, like Matrimony or Penance, a Sacrament. But will you on that ground, i.e. of abuse by the Papists, proceed to abolish the Lord’s Prayer, the Holy Communion, and the Invocation of the Trinity? Sometimes, I grant, abolition may be necessary owing to abuse; but not as a permanent measure, or in every case; and sometimes abolition is definitely wrong. § 6.

4. Private Baptism.

The governing principle is in our Lord’s words—Go, teach, baptize; so that wherever it is right to teach it is right also to baptize, in case of necessity. Thus, St Philip baptized the Ethiopian eunuch, and St Paul the gaoler at Philippi. Christ’s command is
bound to be carried out as much towards those who are sick or in prison as to any others. Pastors are bound to minister them such spiritual food as they need. And wherever two or three are gathered together in Christ's name, there is He in the midst of them. § 7.

5. Private administration of the Holy Communion.

This is governed by the same principle as the above. § 8.

We conclude, therefore, on an examination of the Perth Articles themselves, that some of them are necessary and of obligation always, while all are lawful and laudable. § 9.

C. The Church's standpoint.

Chapter viii.

Consideration of the Church's (1) good faith, (2) honour, (3) liberty, supports the adoption of the Five Articles. § 1.

(1) Good Faith.

The king had promised opportunity for free discussion and instruction of the people; and this the assembled Pastors promised to do. § 2.

(2) Honour.

If dislike of change could not justify the Church in rejecting the Articles, the denial of their propriety could only argue us ignorant and unfit to have the settling of such matters; and disobedience to the decision incurs the guilt of schism. §§ 3, 4.

The only answer you can make is to point to the consequent harm which resulted from the adoption of the Articles, i.e. the Schism: but that only happened per accidens, and contrary to the legitimate expectation of obedience to Synodical decisions. And the example of Christ and the Apostles shows that the risk of schism must sometimes be taken. § 5.

(3) Liberty.

In fact the schism has a lesson for us, as showing how necessary it was to assert the Church's liberty. It has caused us to clear our minds as to the distinction between things lawful and unlawful, essential and non-essential, and to emancipate our consciences from the error of thinking that things in fact lawful and free are forbidden by God's Word. § 6.
The Scottish king's oath of 1581.

Chapter ix.

It is objected that in 1581 James VI and his family and others swore to continue in the Doctrine and Discipline of this Reformed Church of Scotland and defend it all their lives. § 1.

I reply on two grounds. Theologically, an oath to do something in itself forbidden is not binding, except to exact repentance for rash swearing. But to swear to a rule which infringed the Church's status and liberty, e.g. by making non-essential things of perpetual obligation, or which offended against brotherly love, would be such an oath. Such, for instance, was Joshua's oath to the Gibeonites, which was contrary to God's will, but which He allowed Joshua to keep only by special dispensation and with a condition attached. It is not, therefore, an example for us. Further, an oath only binds him that takes it, unless otherwise stated. § 2.

Historically, however, the oath of 1581 was not wrong. For the mind of the Scottish Church was declared in the Scottish Confession inserted in the Acts of the First Parliament of James VI, held 15th Dec., 1567, to the effect that all ceremonies invented by men are variable and temporary, and can and should be altered, when advisable. So, too, the Lesser Confession, which contains the oath in question. § 3.

Again, the Lesser Confession contains another oath of lifelong adhesion to the Reformed Scottish Church in Faith, Discipline, etc. —an oath which is broken by those who separate themselves from it in anger at a perfectly lawful decision. § 4.

Finally, I will add some ad hominem arguments:

(a) the very opponents of the Perth Articles yet themselves introduce innovations into the Catechism;

(β) and John Knox and other Reformers established governance by Superintendants, which are equivalent to Bishops according to the Fathers; Ambrose calls them superinspectores. Further, the public liturgical books of Rites contain rules for the election of bishops. How, then, can those who plead for no change justify disobedience to bishops?

(γ) and those same objectors to change yet agreed with the re-introduction of public warning and prayer before sentences of excommunication were passed. § 5.

In fact, the oath is really broken by those who, in defiance of what the Greater Confession lays down in Art. 20 about the duty of change in non-essentials, resist this lawful change to-day. § 6.
Chapter x.

In saying that the Articles ought still to be resisted, you set at nought the clearest rules of Scripture. § 1.

"But we offend the weak." It is a far graver thing to offend the whole Church and the king. And the offence of the weak could have been easily avoided, had not the Pastors led their people astray instead of instructing them. § 2.

"We incur the scorn of our enemies"—and indeed we should have deserved it, had we shown ourselves so ignorant as to condemn such lawful and necessary changes as were proposed. § 3.

"Who charge us with levity"—yet, as Augustine shows, change and development are right and necessary with changing circumstances; and Innocent III, Clement V and John XXII justify their various reforms on this ground. § 4.

"And idolatry." But even our enemies know that we adore God only, not bread or the consecrated host, and address all our prayers and thanks to Him. Clearness of teaching and the evidence of a pure mind are the best correctives of calumny. § 5.

"And we encourage the Papists, by reverting to their practices." Be sure they need no encouragement from us. Besides, their use, or even abuse, of a thing is no reason for our abandoning it—instance the Scriptures, the Creeds, the Lord’s Prayer. Change of custom has often been dictated by the necessity of opposing heresy;—e.g. the introduction of triple immersion was occasioned by Sabellianism, of single by Arianism, while later on either was allowed. So now in our Church the first revulsion against Popery has done its work, and the truth been proclaimed; and we can kneel without danger. § 6

(iii) Reply to the third thesis of Lunan’s 8th Problem.

Chapter xi.

"Gesture," you say, "qua non-essential, cannot be pressed upon us as necessary; but admits of tolerance and liberty, both of opinion and of practice." § 1

1. Necessity. Your argument tells equally against sitting. Necessity is of two kinds—(a) of the object—e.g. Ten Commandments, which are unalterable by man’s decree; (b) of practice or omission—when the necessity arises from the duty of obedience to Church or king. § 2.

2. Tolerance. Simplicity and liberty are tolerable, when not com-
bined with pride and insubordination. Tolerance in non-essentials means, not only diversity of use, but the absence of disturbing arrogance. §§ 3, 4.

3. Liberty is of two kinds:

(a) of judgment;—e.g. when a thing is not imposed as necessary for belief or worship, which is in fact non-essential. The Scottish Church never said that either sitting or kneeling was necessary in this sense;

(b) of practice;—e.g. when 'right-thinking judgment' decides that a practice is desirable for peace, order, etc.; then practice must conform thereto.

The safeguard is that Christ's light yoke must never be made heavy by harshness or multiplicity of rules; and that liberty of judgment must be left. The Perth Articles answer to these criteria. §§ 5, 6.

It may be objected that this argument in fact annuls all liberty of practice. But (a) the Church still leaves many things free; (b) it can alter its decisions; (c) even when ordered, a practice is carried out, not as necessary, but owing to the duty of obedience; (d) and ample liberty remains as to the spirit in which the Church's mind is carried out; (e) Christians going to other churches are still free, and indeed bound (in order to avoid offence), to comply with the practices they find there. § 7.

IV. A QUESTION OF MORAL THEOLOGY. CHAPTERS xii–xiv.

The question is, "Are there any morally indifferent acts?" This part of the book falls into five divisions, as follows:

A. Full definition of Lunan's paradox, contained in his 9th Problem, that no indifferent acts exist. Chapter xii, §§ 1–10.

B. Examination of this paradox, (1) in principle, (2) in the particular, leading to a statement of conclusion. Chapter xii, §§ 11–18.

C. Objections suggested by St Thomas's treatment of the subject met (1) from other scholastic authorities, (2) on general principles, (3) on Thomist principles themselves, and the conclusion re-established, with its practical moral. Chapter xiii, §§ 1–12.
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E. Refutation of the grounds of Lunan's paradox. Chapter xiv.

A note by Dr Baron is subjoined to the discussion.

A. Full definition of the paradox in Lunan's 9th Problem.

Chapter xii.

You propound the paradox that no acts are indifferent, presumably in order to draw a full statement of opinion from me. §§1, 2.

The thesis needs clarification, and distinction must be made between different kinds of action and different kinds of agent. An affirmative and a negative proposition are involved in it; but an explanation of the former will determine the meaning of the latter too. §3.

The affirmative statement (every action is good or evil) must be examined as to (a) its subject, (b) its predicate. §4.

Examination of the subject.

(a) Distinction between agents:

St Thomas (whom you quote) distinguished between those in grace, all of whose actions were meritorious or otherwise, and those not in grace, some of whose actions might be indifferent as regards merit; though all a rational man's actions were either good or evil. Let us confine ourselves to men who are (1) rational, (2) Christian. §5.

(b) Distinction between actions:

Some actions, e.g. eating, sleeping, are purely physical, and belong to man in common with plants or beasts. Quâ physical, they cannot be good or evil, not being human; though they afford the raw material of human, i.e. rational and voluntary action. We confine ourselves to human actions. §6.

(c) Further distinction between actions:

Yet not every kind of human action is in point: e.g. the recognition of mathematical axioms is rational and human, but not voluntary. Voluntary actions, further, may be either deliberate or not deliberate: losing one's temper, for instance, is not deliberate, but nevertheless is voluntary. For the time being let us confine ourselves to deliberate ones only. §7.
Examination of the predicate.

There are various classifications of good and evil; but it is clear that your Predicate deals only with Moral Good or Right, and Moral Wrong or Evil. § 8.

Not all Moral Good or Evil is involved—e.g. court etiquette, or Pharisaic punctiliousness. Theology knows Moral Good and Evil only as that which God commands or forbids. § 9.

Peter Lombard’s analysis of Good leads us to a further restriction to Good which is remunerable unto life; and the whole affirmative statement must be re-stated thus: every voluntary action is either commanded by God, and so is morally good and commends a man to God for reward, or is forbidden by Him, and so morally evil and involves the agent in guilt. § 10.

B. Examination of Lunan’s paradox.

St Thomas makes an important distinction between the act in relation to its species, which may be morally indifferent, and the act in its particular relations, which must be either good or evil. § 11.

Thus your question contains two:—(1) whether every voluntary action is as regards its species good or evil; (2) whether every act in its individual relations is either good or evil. § 12.

I. Are all acts in species good or evil?

The answer is negative, not only in secular things, but in religious, —e.g. attitude of private prayer. Good or evil in species is determined simply by whether a thing is commanded or forbidden by God: and things not so commanded or forbidden are in species indifferent. Among such is the attitude at Holy Communion. § 13.

The objection may be made that all actions are in species right or wrong, judged by this theological criterion. § 14.

I reply, there are two kinds of “right”:—(a) that which is necessary, as enjoined by God; earns reward; and is laudable, e.g. chastity and continence; (b) that which is allowed, but not necessary, and so is free; it gains no reward, but is irreprehensible, e.g. marriage. The former is said to be right formally and positively or inclusively; the latter exclusively, and through its possible compatibility with the former. The latter, accordingly, constitute a class of ‘mean right actions.’ Such actions can be regarded in two relations: (a) to other mean right actions, e.g. marriage is contrasted with celibacy as regards their species, though without moral contrast; (b) to wrong actions e.g. both marriage and celibacy are contrasted with fornication as regards their morality.
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In the first relation the mean right is a matter of choice, in the second necessary; it being understood, of course, that it is exercised in a right way.

In short, an action may be right in one way, which in another is neither right nor wrong. Such right actions, not commanded but allowed, are in species mean or indifferent. § 15.

2. Are all acts in the individual good or evil?

Certainly, indifference in species does not guarantee indifference in the individual; where special circumstances or diverse usage may operate to make an individual action good or evil. § 16.

There are two kinds of species, however; a higher (discussed in § 15), and a lower, the latter covering such circumstances as subject, object, place, means, ground, manner, time. The moral regulations in Scripture deal with this kind of species, and come at the individual only through that. Common law handles these species, which are found to admit of the particulars related to them being good, evil, or indifferent. § 17.

To the claim that kneeling at Holy Communion, though in species indifferent, is sometimes in the individual act necessarily wrong, I reply that the converse is true: the necessity of obedience to the Church—which is a law of God—renders this individual act necessarily right, though it is in species free. § 18.

C. Reply to objections suggested by St Thomas's treatment of the subject.

Chapter xiii.

You remind me that Aquinas concludes that every individual deliberate act is either good or evil, according as it is or is not directed to the due end. § 1.

1. Testimony of other scholastic writers.

Bonaventura says that to define an individual act immediately as either remunerable or punishable on this basis either narrows or broadens the way of salvation excessively. For the relation of an act to God's pleasure is either actual and particular, to require which in every action narrows the way; or it is habitual and general—e.g. by a resolution at the beginning of the day, week, month, etc.—which makes it too broad: both errors being contrary to the authority of the Saints. § 2.
Durandus, too, says that many deliberate acts are indifferent. § 3. Scotus distinguishes three ways in which an act can be related to its end (i.e. charity):

(a) actually—e.g. if the agent thinks and loves the end consciously;

(b) virtually—e.g. penitence, when the agent in his higher self thinks and loves the end, but in his lower only wills it, without further reference;

(c) habitually—e.g. every act which is compatible with charity may be said to be habitually related to it.

The last-named acts are lawful, but not ‘meritorious,’ and so indifferent. § 4.

Again, Bonaventura gives three reasons why an act may be not ordered towards God as its end:

(a) because ordered towards some creature as its end; which is a sin of commission;

(b) owing to the agent’s carelessness; which is a sin of omission;

(c) owing to the agent’s weakness or misery; when the act is indifferent. § 5.

2. Consideration of general principles.

In all acts, there is a distinction between the act itself and the direction of it or agent’s faith: e.g. almsgiving is in species good; but as done by a hypocrite is directed to an evil end and is without faith. § 6.

The author of the Dispute has advanced two arguments:

(a) that no act is allowed, which is not also necessary. St Thomas, however, gets at the truth by the notion of ‘habitual’ relation to God. This right direction, and faith in the agent, are always necessary; but that necessity does not make the acts necessary, e.g. a widow may, or may not, marry; but she must do either in the Lord;

(b) that an act is either expedient or not, and so either obligatory, necessary, and good, or not.

But expediency is on a different and lower plane than moral or theological necessity, and does not involve it.

We therefore conclude that there are many indifferent or free actions, in the sense that we can do many things without sin which we could equally omit without sin, and vice versa. § 7.

And St Thomas does not really disagree; for he finds the good or evil of an act in its direction and the agent’s faith. § 8.
3. Re-examination of St Thomas's principle.

You may object, on the basis of the foregoing statement of St Thomas's doctrine, that if every act is good or evil in regard to direction and faith, then every action commends a man to God or the reverse, and so is 'necessary,' i.e. either to be done or omitted. § 9.

I reply that we must distinguish between two kinds of goodness:—

(a) special or specific goodness, which necessitates the act being done—as cause propter quam—e.g. loving truth and peace;

(b) general goodness, which is necessary to the action as sine quâ non, but does not necessitate it—e.g. direction and faith in picking up a straw.

An action under the first head commends a man to God; an action under the second does not, though its concomitants do. § 10.

A rule, therefore, emerges: no act is necessary, whose goodness can be had if the act be omitted: such an act is free and indifferent: but if the goodness cannot be had without the definite act, then it must necessarily be done: e.g. now, we must kneel at Communion, that we may have the goodness necessitated by obedience to the Church etc. § 11.

Or, to put it in another way, the goodness attaching to faith and direction is necessary, but in the case of an indifferent act only hypothetically necessary: the decision as to whether the act shall be done or no is indifferent. § 12.

D. Twofold analysis of Evil.

Evil is of two kinds:

(a) that which, by moral law, impedes as well as defiles the act—as e.g. in case of adultery etc.;

(b) that which defiles, but does not impede, the act—e.g. when pride accompanies almsgiving, unbelief faith, wrong motive or invincible ignorance, obedience.

The former, only, renders abstinence from the act essential. § 13.

To the objection that it is wrong to do anything against conscience, because it is against faith (Rom. 14:23, Heb. 11:6), I reply that error of conscience does not make a good conscience, and is what our Lord described as folly (ἀφροσυνή). § 14.
E. *Refutation of the grounds of Lunan’s paradox.*

Chapter xiv.

Your argument from the notion that every act has either all or none of the circumstances of goodness has been sufficiently refuted on scholastic principles, when properly understood, already. §§ 1, 2.

But you subjoin four proofs, to which I will do you the courtesy of replying, as follows:

1. The only necessary circumstance of the goodness which necessitates an act is divine command; but this does not attach to every act which is not evil. § 3.

2. Reason, prudence, faith etc. may govern an indifferent act, without making it necessary. § 4.

3. The goodness of every proximate end, which you assert, must be judged by rule like every kind of goodness: otherwise you will be led to deny the existence of evil actions. § 5.

4. You appeal to “God’s highest will.” If you mean by that divine commandment, then the argument will not help you; for there are many acts which are neither commanded nor forbidden. If, on the other hand, you mean by it His will as shown e.g. in the natural order, then no doubt every act has a kind of natural goodness. But that is not moral goodness: and God’s order of nature has so disposed that for men some acts should be necessary, others again indifferent or free.

**Subjoined Extract from Dr Baron.**

The upshot of Dr Baron’s note is to express agreement with the foregoing argument. But he emphasizes the distinction made between the doing of an act and the way in which it should be done—the latter being always governed by necessity, as the former is not—and he urges that that distinction is as vital and primary as the common distinction between the act in species and the act in the individual. This would involve revising the judgment by which we rejected the view that acts could be indifferent in the sense of being morally neither good nor evil.
PROBLEMS
PUT FORWARD BY
THE REV. ALEXANDER LUNAN,
PRESBYTER.

I. To offer religious adoration before a creature, after prayers said and due consecration, without a special ordinance of Christ, appears to be idolatry. But to kneel before bread and wine is obviously to offer such religious worship. Therefore to kneel before bread etc. is idolatry.

Proof of the Major Premiss is that religious adoration before a brazen serpent, cross, images, relics etc. is idolatrous; and therefore it is before any object. Or else an instance must be adduced other than one of those cited.

You will say: the adoration is offered before the Bread etc., but not to it.

II. A pretext on which any kind of idolatry could be excused appears to be no defence of this act we are discussing. But this pretext is obviously such an one; for the idolater can always plead that he offers his adoration before, not to, the image or the cross. Therefore this pretext will not serve in this case.

III. Everything is in reality such as it is in God’s judgment. But in His judgment an outward act before a creature of this kind involves a corresponding intention of mind, and

1 Problems (Aporiae). For the use of this originally Socratic instrument of thought by Aristotle, and then by the schoolmen, see De Wulf, Scholastic Philosophy, pp. 126, 7. Forbes is here a true scholastic: as Aquinas says (Comm. in Evang. Johann. iii. 1): “Consuetudo Aristotelis fuit, fere in omnibus libris suis, ut inquisitioni veritatis vel determinationi praetermitteret dubitationes emergentes.”

we must form our opinion of the latter from the former, not vice versa: with the resulting conclusion that the intention of the mind (whatever the subterfuge with which the worshipper deludes himself) is directed simply to that before which outward and bodily veneration is shown. God does not allow that the words, Thou art my father (Is. xliiv. 17), are addressed to Himself, but to the actual image: therefore, we must conclude, in God’s eyes, adoration is offered not merely before the Bread etc. but by that very fact to it.

IV. If it is possible for idolatry to be committed in some way or other in regard to bread (bread, I mean, in the abstract and by itself etc.); and yet no other way than this is possible, or at any rate more obvious; then it is apparently committed in this way. But both those conditions are true; or else some other way in which idolatry is committed in regard to bread must be shown. The conclusion is that idolatry in regard to bread is committed in this way.

V. Kneeling at Holy Communion absolutely does away with the point of the Table: it is quite useless, while the Minister, one of the so-called Elders, takes round the Bread and the Wine, and might as well be removed in the meantime and taken away. Therefore either kneeling should be given up, or the Table is not wanted for this Supper.

VI. So far as concerns the species of Bread, the result is to do away with a communion between people seated at the same table: if really no one puts his hand into the same patten, no one gives anything to his neighbour. Therefore etc.

VII. I pass over the example of Christ and of the Apostles following their traditional custom etc. But the Argument holds good there too.

VIII. But let us suppose that the posture in question is
a matter of indifference. Then (1) either the change ought not to have been made and the innovation introduced, or some benefit must be shown to accrue adequate to outweigh, or at least to compensate for, the evil entailed by the change: but this cannot be pointed to. (2) Though the change has now been made, resistance to it is still rightly accounted a duty, because otherwise we give offence\textsuperscript{1} to the weak, and deservedly incur the ridicule of enemies, who twit us with levity and idolatry; and we encourage them by reverting to their rites. (3) By the very fact that the indifference of the posture is granted, it cannot be obtruded and pressed upon us, as necessary; since what things of that kind require rather is mutual tolerance, and complete liberty, whether as regards opinion or the usage which opinion at any time dictates.

IX. I may as well add what some folk mutter—for it is a muttering rather than a genuine conviction of the mind (if indeed they have brains)—that no act is indifferent. The grounds of this paradox are these:—

(1) Every action is either good or evil: therefore none is indifferent. The proof of the premiss is this. Every action which has all the circumstances of goodness, or is destitute of any such circumstance, is correspondingly either good or evil. But every action either has all the circumstances of goodness, or is destitute of any such circumstance. Therefore, every action is either good or evil. This was the argument into which Ambrosius Catharinus fell at the Council of Trent, resting on the authority of St Thomas.

(2) An action which is governed by reason, prudence, and deliberation or is not so governed, is thereby correspondingly either good or evil. But every action of a rational, prudent, Christian man is governed by reason etc., or is not. Therefore every action is either good or evil.

\textsuperscript{1} infirmiores ostendimus (Garden); but a reference to I. x. 2 shows that this is a misprint for offendimus.
(3) The quality of an action corresponds to that of its proximate end, the latter being its chief determinant. Every end is in a summary sense good. Therefore every action is good.

(4) Every action capable of goodness or badness, so to speak, is good, if it be done according to God's highest will; and, if it be not good, at any rate it is more suitable and expedient that it should be good. But every action is capable of goodness or badness. Therefore every action is good, or at least would be improved by being so.
AN IRENICUM

BOOK I.

A CONCILIATORY REPLY TO THE FOREGOING PROBLEMS, WITH OTHER OBSERVATIONS PERTINENT TO THE SUBJECT.

CHAPTER I.

Kneeling at the Holy Communion.

[Reply to the major premiss of the first Problem, §§ 1–8; reply to the minor premiss of the same, § 9; reply to the second Problem, § 10; to the third, § 11; to the fourth, § 12; note on the first four Problems, § 13; a calumny refuted, § 14.]

1. The qualification implied in your distinction between things consecrated and things not consecrated is superfluous and pointless: for it makes no difference to the idolatrous

1 The Title. The anglicized form as given in The Oxford Dictionary is Irenicon, and the meaning is said to be “A proposal designed to promote peace, esp. in a church or between churches; a message of peace.”

2 Book I. References to the Irenicum in this volume will usually not contain the title: the number of the book will be designated in Roman uncials, of the chapter in cursive Roman figures, and of the section in Arabic numerals. The Instructiones will be referred to as I.H.T. and the Theologia Moralis as T.M.

3 Chap. i, §§ 1–8 of this chapter contain so admirable an example of syllogistic reasoning—a form of reasoning, moreover, with which we are not to-day very familiar—that they are worth tabular analysis.

Lunan’s original syllogism ran as follows:

Major Premiss: to offer religious adoration before a creature, after prayers said and due consecration, saving a special ordinance of Christ, appears to be idolatry.

Minor Premiss: to kneel before bread and wine is to offer such religious adoration before a creature.

Syllogism: therefore, to kneel before bread and wine appears to be idolatry.

Forbes begins by subjecting the Major Premiss to two processes:

(a) clearing it of its qualifications, §§ 1, 2;
nature of an act whether the creature\(^1\) adored is or is not consecrated, whether it has or has not a sacred significance. The transference to any object whatever which has not the nature of God of the honour due to God alone (even if it be only a work of art) is idolatry. There is no point either in the second restriction viz. the saving clause about “a special ordinance.” For idolatry, or the transference, whether partial or total, to some other object of the honour due to God alone, is an act so intrinsically wicked, inseparable from moral obliquity, and necessarily repugnant to eternal law\(^2\), that God,

\(b\) further strengthening it by making it the conclusion of a Prosyllogism, which is then substituted for Lunan’s proof, § 3.

[N.B. This Prosyllogism is necessary, because the Major Premiss, as cleared of its qualifications, is not a self-evident proposition.]

The Prosyllogism is:

- **Major premiss**: to transfer religious adoration to a mere creature is Idolatry.
- **Minor premiss**: to offer religious adoration before a mere creature is to transfer religious adoration to a mere creature.
- **Prosyllogism**: therefore, to offer religious adoration before a mere creature is idolatry.

Forbes then deals with this Prosyllogism, into which Lunan’s proof of his Major Premiss has been transformed, and

- \((a)\) rebuts two objections which may be urged against it, §§ 4, 5;
- \((b)\) himself criticizes its minor premiss, and shows how it must be corrected, §§ 6, 7.

[N.B. This minor premiss, though introduced by Forbes himself, was only introduced as necessary to Lunan’s argument. He criticizes it, but constructively, showing how it must be altered and qualified so as to hold good: and most skilfully, seeing that it is these alterations and qualifications which give immediate force to his reply to Lunan’s original Minor Premiss in § 9.]

Lunan’s original Major Premiss is then finally re-stated in unimpeachable form, with the limitations found to be necessary as a result of the Prosyllogism, § 8.

[N.B. The illustrations, which figured as a detached proof of the Major Premiss in Lunan’s First Problem, are here drawn by Forbes into the statement of the Major Premiss itself.]

\(^1\) For this sense of ‘creature’ as any created thing, cf. the prayer of Consecration in the English liturgy, “these thy creatures of bread and wine.”

\(^2\) *eternal law*. Cf. Appendix 1, pp. 195 f.
while it is true He forbids it, yet can never ordain it, because He cannot deny Himself. And He has testified (Is. xlii. 8) that He will not yield His honour to another. As, therefore, there would be no point in the qualification, “without a special ordinance,” if applied to blasphemy or taking God’s name in vain, or adultery, or lying, because God can never by any ordinance enjoin any of these things; so is there not either in the case of any act in itself idolatrous. There are two classes of acts in reference to which we must not ask nor expect an ordinance of God: viz. (a) acts so intrinsically wicked that they simply admit of no exceptions whatever,

1 *He cannot deny Himself.* The passages adduced from the writings of leading Reformers by Möhler, *Symbolik*, Bk i, Part i, § 4, show that this point of view was not universally accepted. Cf., for example, Melanchthon’s “Constat enim Deum omnia facere, non permissive, sed potenter, i.e. ut sit ejus proprium opus Judae proditio, sicut Pauli vocatio.”

2 Is. xlii. 8, “I am the Lord: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images” (A.V.).

3 simply admit of no exceptions (indispensables). Forbes treats of dispensation in connexion with simony (T.M. viii, Pt ii. xiv). Distinguishing between (1) abrogation or modification of a law, (2) toleration, and (3) dispensation, he says that the first two are applicable both to divine and to human laws, the third to human laws only. An example of the abrogation of a divine law, which can only be done by God Himself, is seen in the case of the Jewish ceremonial law (T.M. i. x). *Toleration,* on the other hand, which is a non-legal form of dispensation, is “not to relax a law or to remit any of its rigour, but merely to hold back from its execution,” and so is applicable to divine law. As examples of toleration Forbes cites David’s attitude towards Joab and Shimei, and our Lord’s towards Judas. Augustine’s judgment in a letter to the Bishop of Carthage is well known: “The abuses you speak of [drunkenness at the festivals in honour of martyrs] are not to be got rid of, in my opinion, by harshness or severity or by any official action; teaching is more effective than ordering, warning than threats. That is how we must deal with sin in the mass; severity must be exercised towards the sins of the few” (Aug. Ep. xxii; cf. also Ep. lv. 19, and xci). Elsewhere this toleration is what we call tact, the discreet power of not seeing things on occasion. Thus, Gregory the Great writes to Augustine of Canterbury: “At this time holy Church graciously corrects some things, gently tolerates others, considerately hides its eyes from yet others: and yet so bears, while disguising the evil it abhors, as often by that very bearing or disguising of it to draw its sting” (Bede, *H.E.* i. 27).

Dispensation cannot be granted in regard to divine law, on the principle,
and in this class is idolatry; (b) intermediate acts, which are neither commanded nor forbidden, in which class are certain ecclesiastical rites which are subject to change with change of which Forbes lays down in agreement with Innocent III and Bellarmine, that “an inferior cannot grant a dispensation from a law of a superior.” He defines it as “a kind of legal exception from common law—a special relaxation of it, but without prejudice to common law.” Whereas abrogation or modification makes common law, dispensation makes particular law.

Forbes bases his objection to Papal dispensations, not on the ground of objection to papal authority as such—for, he says, we claim a kindred authority for our bishops in their dioceses and for primates in their provinces—but on general grounds of moral theology. Yet the examples of dispensation which he gives are alluded to without disapproval, and indeed as though they had adequate warrant. Thus, he quotes the cases of Ambrose’s consecration to the episcopate per saltum, on the score of “the Church’s advantage,” and of Pelagius’s sanction of similar steps when compelled by stress of circumstances. Gratian gives Gelasius’s statesman-like exposition of the principles governing such exercise of authority, as follows (Decr. II. caus. I, qu. VII, can. Necessaria): “We are constrained (says Gelasius) by the dispensation of circumstances, and it behoves us in our governance of the Apostolic see, so to weigh the decrees of the canons of the Fathers, as to arrange with diligent care (so far as we may) those things which the present troublous times require should be relaxed in the reconstruction of the Church.” But such dispensation does not prejudice the law itself: the canons are still to “retain their proper force; and when the necessity ceases, the exceptional measures taken to meet it are to cease too” (Decr. II. caus. IX, qu. I, can. 5 (Ordinationes), quoted in II. XI. 2; and cf. Decr. II. caus. I, qu. VII, can. 7).

The line between toleration and dispensation is not too finely drawn in canon law; for dispensation includes not only cases of particular law, but also cases of toleration sufficiently marked and expressed as to “liberate the conscience” (T.M. VIII. Pt II. xiv. 20). Pope Gelasius states the grounds and the safeguards applying to both in Ep. I. XI: “Though those things should sometimes be allowed which, provided everything else is maintained whole and sound, can do no harm by themselves, yet the greatest precautions should be taken against the admission of things which cannot be received without evident loss of colour (manifesta decoloratione). And if regard for time and circumstances, or the felt need of making speedy provision in a particular case, excuses those measures which it is believed should be sometimes allowed without any harm, all the greater is the obligation not to tamper in any way with those things which no necessity and no advantage of the Church actually render imperative.”

In the construction of the word, in or circa is used to express the sphere of law in which the dispensation operates, while the usual construction for the person dispensed is cum with the ablative.
circumstances. There is also a kind of third class of acts which are forbidden by law as a whole, yet on such terms that, if wicked intent be absent, the act can be enjoined by special precept. Such was evidently the case with the Levirate law, with the ordinance commanding Abraham to sacrifice his son, and with that ordering the Israelites to spoil the Egyptians.

2. The whole force of your major premiss therefore comes to this: To offer religious adoration before any mere creature appears to be idolatry.

3. Undoubtedly it not only appears to be, but actually is, idolatry to transfer religious adoration to a mere creature. The argument therefore will have to be stated in stronger form, thus: The transference of religious adoration to a mere creature is idolatry: but to offer religious adoration before a mere creature is to transfer religious adoration to a mere creature: Therefore, to offer religious adoration before a mere creature is idolatry.

4. Should anyone interject that no assertion is made in the original argument that it is idolatry, but only that it appears to be so, the objection is easily met; for, if it appears to right thinking people to be idolatry, idolatry it undoubtedly is. If on the other hand mistaken people merely think a thing idolatry, when in point of fact it is not, the mistake must be corrected and abandoned, and the minds of the people in

2 mere creature. There is force in the 'mere,' because the Fathers taught that 'the creature' was to be worshipped in the Humanity taken up by our Lord in the Incarnation. Cf. Aug. super Joh. cxxii, "Dicunt Ariani: quare carnem, quam creaturam non negas, cum divinitate adoras? Propterea ego adoro eam, quia divinitati ita est unita ut Deus filius Deus sit et homo.” So, too, Serm. App. 246. In other words, worship is due to the Head of the καιρός (2 Cor. v. 17). Aug. compares human nature to royal robes, which, when not being worn by the king, are not ‘adored’; whereas, "when the king has put them on, he who thinks it beneath him to adore them together with the king incurs danger."
KNEELING AT HOLY COMMUNION

question better informed. The original argument, therefore, if it be of any force at all, must be understood as an absolute assertion to the effect that it 'is idolatry.'

5. Perhaps, though, you may say: "It often happens that things which in themselves are not wicked are yet, because they appear to be so, better avoided and let alone, for fear that offence\(^1\) be occasioned to the weak." That is a point which in non-essentials I will concede, if the offence be really, as they say, given and not merely taken. But idolatry is not a non-essential; it is absolutely forbidden: indeed the point of your argument against kneeling at the Holy Communion is that it is a form of idolatry, and far from being a non-essential. For if it is a non-essential, why should we hesitate to show the reverence due to the Church when it prescribes it? In that case no superstition whatever would be involved; Christian liberty would be in no way compromised by it; nor would any offence be entailed in it comparable to that of despising the Church and making a schism over a non-essential matter of this kind, and setting up altar against altar; of separating yourself from communion with the orthodox Church, under whose authority you live; of thus making yourself an outlaw from the Church and in this way passing a sentence of excommunication against yourself, or, if you prefer to put it so—though it argues an even grosser insolence and pride—of excommunicating the orthodox Church to which you owe obedience:—and all over a non-essential point. If on the contrary the thing is in itself wrong, not even

\(^1\) offence...given...taken. Cf. ii. xx. Aquinas (ii-ii, q. xliii, Art i, 2) distinguishes between active scandal, when offence is deliberately 'given' to another, and passive scandal, when “apart from the intention of the doer, and apart from the quality of the work, one man’s word or deed is an occasion of sin to another; and in this case the doer of the good and proper act gives no occasion, so far as in him lies, but the other takes occasion to sin.” For biblical ref. cf. 1 Thess. v. 22 (speciem mali) and Rom. xiv. Our Lord’s sternest denunciations are directed against ‘active scandal,’ cf. Mark ix. 42, etc.
an angel from heaven should be listened to, if he recommended the practice of it.

6. I return, therefore, to the prosyllogism of the thesis, as I have stated it above (§ 3), and of which I freely grant the major premiss. The minor premiss, however, needs explanation:—but to offer religious adoration before a mere creature is to transfer religious adoration to a mere creature. Certainly to transfer religious worship to a mere creature is to offer religious worship to a mere creature; nor can there be said to be a transference of religious worship to a creature, unless the creature itself is the object of such worship.

7. This, then, must be the sense of your thesis: To offer religious adoration before a mere creature is to make the mere creature itself the object of religious adoration. But that proposition is not universally true: instance the altar of the Lord (1 Kings viii. 54), the Lord’s footstool¹ (Ps. xcix. 5, cxxxii. 7), the Ark of the Covenant (1 Sam. vi. 14, 15, 2 Sam vi. 13, 17), the House of God or Temple at Jerusalem (Ezra x. 1). Similarly we too to-day, wherever we may be, now that those types and shadows² are done away, lift up our eyes and

¹ *footstool* (scabellum), cf. Augustine, quoted in note 2, p. 74. Ambrosius Autpertus, in *Apoc. iii.* interprets the footstool allegorically of “ipsa incarnatio redemtoris... etc.; aeternitas inesse probatur.”

² *types and shadows.* The Jewish dispensation was commonly regarded as in all its details a type or adumbration of the Christian, cf. Heb. vii–ix, and Augustine’s “Novum Testamentum in vetere latet; vetus Testamentum in novo patet.” The Catacomb paintings abundantly illustrate the belief. So, too, B.C.P. *Of Ceremonies:* “And, besides this, Christ’s Gospel is not a Ceremonial Law (as much of Moses’ Law was), but it is a religion to serve God, not in bondage of the figure or shadow, but in the freedom of the spirit.” Forbes discusses the O.T. Ceremonial Law in *T.M.* i. x, where he says that its precepts are abrogated as to their use, but fulfilled as to their significance; and he quotes with approval St Thomas’s observation that this was a gradual process; they were not thrown aside, but ‘decently buried.’ There were three stages, (1) before Christ’s death, when they were sick but still alive; (2) after His death, when they were dead but not yet deadly; (3) still later, after His teaching about defilement was fully understood, when they became dangerous and deadly, if pursued in.
hands to heaven and worship\textsuperscript{1} God, who dwells there, in spirit and truth, as the Holy Writ teaches us; and yet we do not worship heaven. Likewise, though in a different sense, David paid his vows to God, offering Eucharistic sacrifices “in the sight of all His people” (Ps. cxvi. 13, 14, 17) and the Apostle Paul “took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of all” his fellow-passengers (Acts xxvii. 35); and yet David did not worship the people, nor Paul the passengers. So, in yet different senses, the prophet Elijah prayed before the people, before the altar, before the sacrifice, and before God, but adored only God (1 Kings xviii). The Children of Israel worshipped with religious adoration before Moses and Aaron (Ex. iv. 31). To-day it often happens\textsuperscript{2} that people, by way of public penance, fall on their knees and offer religious worship before the Minister standing in the Chancel; and yet they do not adore the Minister or the Chancel, but only God. The candidate who accepts the Laying-on of Hands\textsuperscript{3} for the Pastoral Office remains on his knees, while the congregation stands or sits, until the ordination is over: and yet he does not

\textsuperscript{1} worship. ‘Adoratio’ is related to ‘cultus’ as the action of worship to worship generally, cf. Second Commandment (Vulg.), “non adoratis ea, neque coles ea.” I have observed the distinction in the translation of formal statements of the argument; but elsewhere have used ‘adoration’ and ‘worship’ indifferently, as euphony seemed to require. In English usage ‘worship’ is quite properly used of the outward act, cf. Jeremy Taylor, \textit{Works}, v. 318 (On the Reverence due to the Altar): “adoration (for that’s God’s worship Corporall).”

\textsuperscript{2} Cf. the following entry in the \textit{Extracts from the Kirk-Session Register of Perth}, published in \textit{The Spottiswoode Miscellany}, ii. 282: “Dec. 21, 1601.—Compears John Scott, flesher, and with humility upon his knees confessed his offences, first, that he offended God by profaning the Lord’s Sabbath; secondly, that he offended the Session by his disobedience, being often charged, and by injuring the officiar; for the which offences he desired God to be merciful unto him, and submitted himself to the Session.”

worship the man who ordains him, or his hands, or any mere creature. One who comes to be baptized or presents a candidate for Baptism humbles himself and prays God to make that Baptism fruitful of salvation unto eternal life; and yet he does not adore either the water or the font, before which he bows. A man before sleep falls on his knees and prays at his bedside, or before meat says grace in front of the table and the food set there; and yet neither the bed, nor the table with its viands, are made the object of worship. Or suppose a man in the throes of a wasting disease: he sees that none but a drastic remedy is left, which will either cure him or else make him worse; in an agony of hope and fear the patient falls on his knees, when the doctor brings the medicine, and implores the blessing of God, and without changing his bodily posture or inward devotion takes the glass in his hands and drinks the draught, and still, after he has drunk it up, stays for some time praying and worshipping: surely no one in his senses will say that this patient worships either the doctor or the glass? Obviously he worships only God; though in one sense he offers his adoration before the doctor, and he can be just as much said to offer it before the glass as a communicant can before bread. So in the Holy Communion the communicants not only fall on their knees at the beginning before the Table and the Elements set there, worshipping God and humbly imploring His mercy and blessing, as taught by the Pastor of the Church; but mindful of God's great goodness and their great danger, they remain in the same state of inward devotion and humble bodily posture even while partaking, and indeed for some time after the service. And at this Meal that can be the more suitably and properly done, because it is wholly directed towards

1 in an agony of hope and fear (idque metuens aeger cupidus sanitatis). The translation is taken from Jowett's translation of ἵππος ἐλπίδι πενίδεως in Thuc. vii. 71.
spiritual refreshment, and is over in a short time; nor is the enjoyment of the banquet or the converse of the guests in any way impeded by that posture.

8. The argument, therefore, to be true, will have to be still further qualified, as follows: To offer religious adoration before any mere creature in such a way as to make that creature an object of adoration in and for itself, so that the act of adoration finds its end in that creature—whether you adore it on its own account or on account of something else (as an ambassador receives adoration on the king’s account etc.): to offer adoration so, I say, before a mere creature is to offer religious adoration to a mere creature, and so is idolatry; as was the burning of incense to the brazen serpent, as indeed is the pagan and Popish adoration of images, of the Cross, and of relics. (See the Decrees of the Seventh General Council.)

1 Pagan and Popish adoration of images. Forbes does not deal fairly with the Roman position, which had recently been stated in the Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent. The subject was dealt with at the 25th Session, held in December, 1563 (Libri Symbolici Ecclesiae Catholicae, Tom. I, Streitwolf and Klener. Göttingen, 1838). I quote from Waterworth’s translation (1848): “Moreover that the images of Christ, of the Virgin Mother of God, and of the other saints, are to be had and retained particularly in temples, and that due honour and veneration (debitum honorem et venerationem) are to be given them; not that any divinity, or virtue, is believed to be in them, on account of which they are to be worshipped (propter quam sint colendae); or that anything is to be asked of them; or that trust is to be reposed in images, as was of old done by the Gentiles who placed their hope in idols; but because the honour which is shown them is referred to the prototypes which those images represent; in such wise that by (per) the images which we kiss, and before (coram) which we uncover the head and prostrate ourselves, we adore Christ; and we venerate the saints, whose similitude they bear: as, by the decrees of Councils, and especially of the second Synod of Nicaea, has been defined against the opponents of images.”

The Nicene decree in question, which is still the norm of doctrine on this subject in the Eastern Church, makes the same distinction between τιμητικὴ προσκύνησις and λατρεία, and emphasizes the didactic and mnemonic use of ikons. Cf. Birkbeck and the Russian Church, 200 f., where Sir Thomas Browne’s words are quoted: “at the sight of a cross or crucifix he could dispense with his hat, but scarce with the thought or memory of his Saviour.” A thorough study of the iconoclastic controversy in its
9. So much for the major premiss of the first Problem. I pass now to the minor. The minor rests on a false hypothesis. For the Bread is not set before us either that it may be itself adored or that adoration may be so offered before it as to constitute it an object of adoration etc., as is the case in the examples you adduce. Throughout the whole action—before the Bread is brought to anyone, as after it has been consumed and while it is being received—the posture of humble adoration is maintained unchanged, and is never in any sense, even that of outward act, directed to the Bread. And the same is true of the Cup. But that humble attitude of kneeling is a token of devotion and reverence towards God, as He now in a wonderful manner draws nearer with that most precious gift which He bestows on us: it is indeed the natural attitude of a man praying and earnestly crying to God to make him a worthy guest. Similarly, too, at ordinations, when the candidate receives the sacred volume kneeling from the hand of the ordaining minister, he does not adore either the minister or the sacred volume: he looks to God, in whose bearing on the doctrine of the Incarnation is a task which still waits to be done.

Forbes's considered judgment on the use of images is given in a thorough discussion on the Second Commandment, *Theol. Mor.* Bk II, and may be summed up in three propositions:

1. All visible representations of the Godhead are forbidden, and to attempt them is morally wrong; cf. Ex. xx.; Deut. iv.; Is. xl.; Second Nicene Council (Seventh General), Act. iv.; St John Damasc., *Orth. Fid.* iv. 16; St Thom. Aq. *S.T.* III, q. xxv. 3. r.

2. Painted or sculptured representations of sacred stories may be allowed for historical, ethical, political, and aesthetic purposes; but, owing to the danger of superstition, their use in churches is unwise, in the present state of Christendom. [N.B. This seems to conflict with Forbes's attitude on a similar question in *Iren.* i. x. 6.]

3. All representations whatever are subject to the canons of sobriety and chastity. (Cf. Conc. Trid. *Can. et Decr. Sess.* xxv. par. 6.)

Name he is ordained, and whom he knows to be present in a special way, governing the action and bestowing the office. So, again, at a civic ceremony, a man who accepts a goblet or some little present from the King’s hand, does so on bended knee. Yet this betokens no homage to the goblet or present, or even before them in the sense of their being its object, for he does not direct it in any way towards them: he offers it to the king alone. But in the Communion our King gives Himself spiritually to us. Therefore, though no sort of adoration is directed towards the outward minister or the outward sign, we offer it rightly to Him who is both the Giver and the spiritual Gift, namely, God and our Redeemer, Jesus Christ. There is no affinity here with the worship of images or worship before an image, with the burning of incense to the Brazen Serpent, or with the worship of relics etc. etc.

10. It follows from the above that the second Problem is devoid of force, as being beside the point. Who among us ever resorted to the defence you mention there? Our reply is not: “We offer our worship before the bread, not to it”; but: “We offer our worship to God throughout the action, before, while, and after receiving those sacred and awful Mysteries; praying God that our reception may prove to be for our salvation, and not our damnation; and giving thanks to Him with all our hearts for His infinite goodness towards us, and remembering and proclaiming with thanksgiving the Lord’s Death.”

11. Likewise with the third Problem: for no sort of adoration is offered to the sacramental symbols; nor does anyone address them either by voice or gesture, saying, Thou art my Father or Saviour. That was the address of the idolaters to their wood in Isaiah xliv. 17: Thou art my god. Augustine\(^1\) says truly: In our prayers and praises we direct significant words to Him, while offering to Him in spirit those

\(^1\) De Civ. Dei, x. xix.
things which we signify. Every orthodox believer does the same with his attitude of adoration, well aware that all religious worship, whether inward or outward, must be paid to God alone.

12. The fourth point too is a result of that false hypothesis, as is also clear from the reply to the third Problem, where a mode of idolatry is adumbrated unknown in this celebration of the Lord's Supper. Further, so far from our adoring bread in the Communion as the Papists adore images or relics, we do not adore it at all.

13*. Although I have gone out of my way to discuss my brother presbyter's first four Problems at such length, I might without prejudice to the rules of controversy have simply brushed them aside. For they are beside the point, and rest on a false foundation, viz. the assumption that a sitting, standing, or kneeling posture cannot be adopted by communicants, without such posture being offered to, or before, the Sacrament: whereas the case is in point of fact far otherwise. When we draw near and receive, we eat and drink of the Bread and Cup of the Lord, in memory of the Lord Himself; hence, if we stand or kneel or sit, it is before Him. For David is said to have even sat before the Lord, when he prayed (2 Sam. vii. 18). And a sitting posture is claimed by our brethren, who condemn kneeling, to be necessary and instituted by God in the reception of the Lord's Supper. In that case they must admit that it has a sacred and religious significance. But where will they stand, then, if those Problems of yours are reversed and made to apply to the sitting posture? Moreover, even though you adopt the sitting posture and do not thus plead necessity for it, the question will still remain, "Before what do you sit?" And you will not reply, I think, that you sit before bread, even though that Bread is there and is received as God ordained.

14*. One party to the controversy lays a charge against us
which is particularly slanderous and unfair. He alleges that we offer Christ a kind of mediated adoration in the Bread, which is thereby interposed between us and God. As a matter of fact we always have been, and are consistently, utterly opposed to any idea, practice, or teaching of that kind; adoration of that sort has never entered our heads as a thing which could be possibly approved; and no language of ours has ever given occasion for so false and iniquitous a gloss. It is a matter for profound sorrow that brethren should attack one another—or attack anyone—with such foul calumnies. I, certainly, openly and from my heart assert, and always have asserted, that all religious adoration should be offered, and offered direct, to God alone; while that doctrine so iniquitously imputed to us is one that I hate and abhor. I count confidently, therefore, on the fair-mindedness of my readers, and trust that, since it is open to them to consult my published books, they will attach no credence to anyone who casts an ugly slur on the doctrine contained in them, without first insisting on the case being pleaded and the other party heard, before the accusation be allowed to stand.

Chapter ii.

The Lord's Table.

[Reply to the Fifth Problem, in which the objection is urged that the point of the Table is absolutely done away with, through the custom in vogue in Scotland to-day, A.D. 1628.]

The Table is for the Supper, not the Supper for the Table. And so we need the Supper simply as such; but we have the Table there not for its own sake, but for the sake of the Supper; and we use it in so far as convenience and dignity in the distribution and reception of the Supper make it necessary or expedient. Hence, the Supper itself, by a change
of names, is sometimes called the Table (1 Cor. x. 21). Certainly it is not of the Table, but of the Supper, that we are, properly speaking, made partakers. But everything on to which the Supper is put down admits of being called a Table, be it a board or a man’s knee or the palm of the hand itself; you remember Virgil’s phrase, “See, now we eat our very tables.” If the Supper has to be administered to a sick man, who cannot stretch his hand out to any ordinary table, but the elements have to be put into his hand or perhaps into his mouth, are we to say that he loses anything that belongs to the completeness or essence of the Sacrament? The Supper makes the Table, not vice versa. In ancient times at Egyptian suppers, no tables would be set, but the dishes were handed round (so at least Athenaeus relates on the authority of Protagorides, according to Henry Stephanus, in the Appendix to his Herodotus dealing with Egyptian laws and institutions). A man partakes of your Supper who dines at your charges: accordingly the point of a table is not only to carry the supper, but also to ensure the guests sitting and dining decently and in order: though the host may perhaps set the viands before his guests singly standing up, or hand them to them. Accordingly in the sacred gathering the Tables are there partly to carry the elements provided, whenever they have to be put

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1 metonymie. Jeremy Taylor (Works, v. 334, 5) instances our Lord’s words, “When you goe into a house, ἀνασύζηθε αὐτήν,” as a metonymical expression, meaning, “Salute, or worship it, not the walls, but the inhabitants.”


3 Protagoride [Garden erroneously Protagorice]. The allusion is to Athenaeus, iv. 33, τίνα δ’ ἢν τὰ Ἀλευπτια δείπνα, Πρωταγορίδης ἐν τῷ πρώτῳ Περὶ Δαφνικῶν Ἀγώνων διδάσκει ἡμᾶς, λέγων οὕτως: Τρίτη δ’ ἐστίν ἡδα δείπνων, Ἀλευπτιακή τραπεζῶν μὲν οὐ παρατιθεμένων, πινάκων δὲ περιφερεμένων. Protagorides was a writer of κωμικαὶ ἱστορίαι. And the citation is from the Apologie pour Hérodote of Henricus Stephanus (Henri Etienne), a discursive work of general scholarship containing many quotations from the Reformation preachers. Hallam (Literature of Europe, i. 499) describes his press as “the central point of illumination to Europe” between 1555 and 1575.
down, partly to enable the guests to arrange themselves decently and in order; a point which our Lord was careful of even when He wished those guests of His, whom He fed with a few loaves and fishes (Mark vi. 39 ff.), to sit down on the green grass. At human banquets, too, some of the dishes are not laid on the table, but are distributed to each guest separately by the president; and in many places the glasses are not put on the table at all, but only passed round by hand: yet all share in the meal. The fact is that things are done as the nature and propriety of each course seem to suggest. But the Lord's Supper entails no lavish outward appurtenances and is not meant for the refreshment of the tired flesh (for the man who is bodily hungry or thirsty is bidden to eat and drink at home, 1 Cor. xi. 22); and therefore there is nothing undignified in what the Deacons do: indeed it is far more in keeping that the vessels containing the elements should be handed along or carried round by them, than that they should be stuck to the Table and drawn or pushed about on it so quickly: for that is what will have to be done when there is a large Communion.

Chapter iii.

Reply to the Sixth Problem.

[About Communion among the people, especially in the matter of the patten and the distribution of the Bread.]

The Sixth Problem rests on a false definition of Communion, which does not consist in several people putting their hands into the same patten, or any one of the communicants putting his hand into any patten, nor in the people handing the Bread to one another: for none of those points occurs in the account of the divine institution. What it does consist in is our all being partakers of one Bread, as the Apostle teaches (1 Cor. x. 17). Indeed, the breaking and the giving of the Bread are
sacramental actions, belonging to the minister or pastor alone, as is clear from the institution: while on the guests nothing else is enjoined but that they should *take and eat in remembrance of the Lord*. And the Lord is said to have *given* the Bread at any rate to the disciples, not to have set it before them or to have passed it round.

*Further, from the record of the Lord’s Supper, David Pareus infers that the Lord at the Supper handed the bread, after He had blessed and broken it, to the disciples singly, and that they took it singly in their hands, and ate. Again, those words of the Lord which St Luke records (Luke xxii. 17), “Divide it among yourselves,” are interpreted by Calvin, in his commentary on the Harmony of the Gospels, of the Paschal cup; and they are taken in the same sense in the Leiden *Synopsis of Reformed Theology*, Disp. 45, Thes. 13. But the identical words, referred to the Eucharistic cup, meant the same as the words in St Matthew (xxvi. 27), “Drink ye all of it.” The words, “Divide it among yourselves,” if spoken of the cup of the old Passover, are not in point here: while if anyone contends that they were uttered of the cup of the Lord’s Supper (as David Chamier took them, in his *Panstratia*, iv. viii. 3), he must admit that it was after the Bread had been blessed, broken, given, taken, and eaten, that they were uttered, and so do not apply to the taking of the Bread. Not that those who, though they “all drink of it,” do not hand the Cup from one to another, are disloyal to the Lord’s ordinance: nor did Chamier so interpret. Thus, the opinion that it is necessary for the Eucharistic Symbols to be handed round among all the communicants is not consonant with the judgment and practice of Catholic antiquity and the Reformed Churches.
Chapter iv.

[Reply to the Seventh Problem, about the example of Christ and the Apostles, etc., §§ 1, 2. It is shown that no special attitude is essential to this Sacrament, § 3. Rules of bodily posture, § 4. Examination and discussion of the argument from the posture which our Lord is said to have adopted at the celebration of the Passover, §§ 5-9. The Argument from those words of our Lord, “Do this,” §§ 10, 11. From His example, § 12. Necessity and liberty in regard to bodily posture, §§ 13, 14.]

1. As regards the example of Christ and the Apostles, we shall learn better from the Apostle Paul than from any conjectures of men, what there was in what they did which was in principle necessarily to be imitated. St Paul, in recalling the story of the institution and commending its careful observance to the Corinthians, does not mention any of those things about which men who are “fervent in zeal,” no doubt, “but not according to knowledge,” are making such disturbances to-day. True, there is no express mention by him of the broken bread being given to the disciples; but the fact is expressly recorded in the Gospel narratives, and the action was so well known to all that it could easily be inferred from what the Apostle wrote. Yet not even in the Gospel record is there any plain and particular mention of the disciples’ bodily attitude when receiving the Sacrament from the Lord’s hand. It is certain that they ate the Passover lying down or reclining (Luke xxii. 14, John xiii. 23). But how are you to tell whether they did not change their posture before receiving the Eucharist? Especially as the giving of thanks, too, and the solemn blessing came in between. But suppose that they remained in the same posture (as seems probable from John xiii.); it does not follow that Christians of other races are bound to alter their common custom at supper. Nor, again, is it any reason why, if they think it expedient, they should not change their posture in the case of ordinary secular meals; and so too in the case of this sacred Meal. What is
there, then, to prevent¹ any Church using in the case of the Lord’s Supper alone the same liberty to change the bodily posture, which our opponents admit in the case of ordinary meals and correspondingly of this sacred Meal? Besides, later generations seem to have changed the posture which was adopted at the first celebration² of the Passover; and yet Christ did not go back on the custom of those later generations. It was not men’s attitudes, but their acts, that were His thought and care. It will not look, you say, like a supper. Indeed it will not only look like one, but will be one in the fullest and completest sense; for it is not the bodily posture, but the common meal, which constitutes a supper, as one can see when sick people have supper, or people sup while walking, and in many other cases. And what, pray you, does it look like, if not like a supper? Certainly not like a sacrifice, nor a drunken orgy; nor does it suggest anything but the Lord’s Supper and the Lord’s guests, at the Lord’s Table. But if in the matter even of bodily posture it is symbolism that we are seeking, the attitude of our Lord and His disciples, according to Irenaeus, commends to us a humble one³.

¹ The argument is a little obscure. Forbes appears to mean that (a) the custom at Holy Communion may follow the ordinary secular custom of society; (b) society claims the right to alter its customs at meals, which would involve corresponding change in the custom at Communion—and this his opponents admit; (c) nothing, therefore, prevents the Church, the Divine society, altering its custom in the case of Holy Communion alone, independently of what secular society may do about secular meals.

² Ex. xii. 11. “And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand: and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the Lord’s passover.” This point is the more telling, as Lunan had expressly mentioned the example of Christ and His Apostles in “keeping the traditional custom.”

³ humilitatem. Cf. Lancelot Andrewes, Pattern of Catechistical Doctrine, Part III, The Second Commandment, § 2 (Of our behaviour in God’s worship). He says that “the signs of outward worship are two:—1. to empty ourselves, and deponere magnificientiam; 2. humiliari, ‘to make ourselves near the ground,’ to bow down; that which the devil desired of Christ; and is a sign of God’s worship, 1 Kings xix. 18.” Anyone who has seen
"Wherefore, too," he says, "it was to them reclining that He ministered the Food to them in a recumbent posture, signifying those who were lying beneath the soil, to whom He came to minister life. As Jeremiah says: 'The Lord the Holy One of Israel hath remembered His dead, which aforetime fell asleep in the dust of the earth: and he went down unto them, to preach the gospel of His salvation to deliver them.'" (Iren. adv. Haer. iv. xxii. 1.) He assumes that the disciples adopted the same bodily gesture or attitude at the Supper as they did at the Passover.

2. Further, the fact, recorded by the Evangelists, that the Lord began to institute the Supper as the disciples were eating the Passover, is not given any bearing by the Apostle Paul on the question of bodily posture or of the retention of the patten on the Table. He uses it to emphasize the time, wishing us to realize that the Supper was instituted on the very same night on which the Lord suffered, and in fact between the celebration of the Passover (which the Supper immediately succeeded) and the Lord's Agony. And yet it is not essential to this Sacrament, that we should celebrate the Eucharist either on that night only as it comes round each year, or even at all on that night.

3. I urge this following point, moreover. Whatever is essential to any sacrament is expressly stated either in the institution itself of that Sacrament, or elsewhere in Holy Scripture, where that Sacrament is indisputably the subject of the text. But neither in the institution of the Holy Supper of the Lord, nor anywhere else in Holy Scripture, where this

the English soldier at Holy Communion in the Field knows what humilitas means.

The passage alleged as Jeremiah's in the quotation from Irenaeus is elsewhere assigned by him to Isaiah (adv. Haer. iii. xx. 4). It is not in our O.T., and is one of those passages which Justin declared the Jews had erased from their Scriptures. Cf. J. Armitage Robinson, The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching, p. 136 n.
Sacrament is indisputably the subject of the text, is any definite bodily posture expressly stated. Therefore, no definite bodily posture is essential to this Sacrament. But where no posture is essential to a rite, no posture can take away its essence, nor is any posture essentially at variance with it.

The proof of the major premiss lies in a comparison with other Sacraments, viz. Circumcision, the Passover, Baptism. The minor is clear from a comparison of the passages in Scripture in which this Sacrament is indisputably the subject of the text, viz. Matt. xxvi. 26 f., Mark xiv. 22 f., Luke xxii. 19, 20 f. and 1 Cor. xi. 23 f., or any other passage, in which this Sacrament is clearly and indisputably the subject of the text.

The conclusion, therefore, stands firm.

4. But the result of this, you will say, will be to allow a man to enjoy the Eucharist laughing, or naked, or making grimaces, or dancing.

I reply, that does not follow from our conclusion. For we always bear in mind, and are bound to remember, that there are laid down in the Holy Scriptures certain general rules, never to be neglected, for behaviour in indifferent things: to wit, 1st, that we should pursue the things that make for peace; 2nd, that we should pursue the things that make for mutual edification; 3rd, that everything should be done decently; 4th, that everything should be done in an orderly fashion. When these rules have been observed, everything else in matters non-essential is matter of choice.

5. But you will say that, although no bodily posture is expressly mentioned in the institution of the holy Supper, yet a definite posture, and one essential to the Supper can be inferred from Holy Writ; that is to say, from the Gospel record of the celebration of the Passover. For the institution of the Supper followed upon that directly, without any change
of posture recorded in Holy Writ; and it is expressly said that at the celebration of the Passover the Lord sat down (ἀνείπωσε) and the twelve Apostles with Him (Luke xxii. 14), that He reclined (ἀνέκειτο) with the Twelve (Matt. xxvi. 20). So your argument will resolve itself into a syllogism. Anything expressly mentioned in the description of the Lord's celebration of the Passover, and not expressly recorded to have been changed in the description of the institution of the Supper, is essential to the Supper. But there is express mention of sitting down or reclining, and none of that being changed. Therefore etc.

6. I reply, I deny the major premiss, which cannot be proved by any reasonable argument: indeed, it introduces several absurdities—for instance, that it is essential to the Supper that only men should be the guests, and they too thirteen in number; and that it should be held in some upper room, and in the evening, and in some city etc.

7. You will say that points like those are not on the same footing as the bodily posture.

I reply, If it be true that they are not on the same footing, account ought to be taken of the fact in the major premiss, so that it may be able to be a universal proposition. Otherwise you get a paralogism of all the particulars in the first figure, thus: anything expressly stated in the celebration of the Passover, which we do not read of as having been changed in the institution of the Supper, is essential to the Supper. But a certain definite reclining posture is something so stated expressly, which etc. Therefore, etc. Which is absurd.

8. But, you will say, I will form a universal major premiss like this: everything expressly stated in the celebration of the Passover, which is not Jewish or laid down in the Law, and which we do not read of as having been changed in the institution of the Supper, everything such, even though not found expressly stated in the records of the latter, is essential to the Supper. But a reclining posture fulfils these conditions. Therefore etc.
9. I reply as follows:—

(1) Suppose I deny your major premiss, what shift can you make? I deny it, then.

(2) Your argument leads to the acknowledgement that the posture adopted in the celebration of the Passover was not essential to that Sacrament, inasmuch as it was not part of Judaism or instituted by divine law.

(3) What renders anything which fulfils the conditions described in the major premiss of your syllogism essential to the Christian Sacrament? Not its mention in the celebration of the legal Sacrament, because it is not essential even to the legal Sacrament, in the celebration of which it is mentioned; nor its not being Jewish, for heathen rites too are not Jewish; nor the double fact of its (a) not being Jewish, (b) being related in the celebration of the legal Sacrament, for the combination of those two conditions is not enough to make a thing essential to the Christian Sacrament. No, its direct institution in the Gospels is absolutely required for your argument; and that we have not yet been able to find in this matter of bodily posture.

(4) The point about there being thirteen guests, all men, in an upper room etc. These features are not Jewish or instituted in the Old Law, yet they are expressly mentioned in this celebration of the Passover; nor are they said to have been changed in the institution of the Supper—in fact it is certain that they were not changed; though we have no certain information about the bodily posture. Yet these things are not essential to the Christian Sacrament, and, indeed, not even to the Mosaic one either.

(5) A thing is not essential to the Supper simply because it is expressly mentioned at the point where the narrative comes to deal with the institution of the Supper itself: much less therefore will a thing be essential to the Supper simply because it is expressly mentioned in the celebration of the
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Passover. Proof of the former statement lies in those words in St Matthew and St Mark, "as they were eating"; for it is not essential to the Supper that anyone should be found eating when about to receive the Eucharistic Symbols. And what a clamour your friends would raise, if the reading were, "and as they were sitting, He took bread etc.!" Yet it would be an empty clamour obviously. No, indeed: everyone knows that at the first celebration of the Supper there were certain circumstances which no doubt served the purpose of that action at the moment, but were not of the essence either of the Sacrament or of the institution: nor did their emergence bind the Church to imitate them. Such were the day of the week, the evening hour, the unleavened bread, the wine (apparently) unmixed, the upper room, the number thirteen, and they all men—no woman, so far as we know, being present—and other details of that sort. And the result is certainly to convict of childish thoughtlessness those who try to prove the bodily posture to be essential from those words of our Lord, "Do this."

10*. You will recall Cyprian's advice (Epistle lxii. 10) and say, "At any rate we ought to obey and do what Christ did and charged should be done." But those circumstances of place, time, number of persons present, bodily posture, unleavened bread etc. were not among those things which He did and charged to be done: so much we know simply from the records of the institution in the Gospels and St Paul, which contain no mention of the Lord having done those things and charged that they should be done. To this, however, they allege that a distinction must be made between the things which were necessarily retained and could not very well have been changed (such as the circumstance of the evening hour, and the upper room etc.) and that on the other hand which Christ might have changed without any miracles, like the sitting posture; which, however,
according to their view, He did not change in order to show that He was instituting that posture for adoption thenceforward at the Holy Supper. But anyone can see that there were other things as well which He might have changed without miracle, and yet which were not instituted by the fact of not having been changed.

II*. Time and place, says another, were merely bare circumstances, but the bodily posture was also symbolic. Yet Cyprian (Ep. lxii. 16), Augustine (Ep. liv. 6), Victor of Antioch (Comment. on St Mark xiv. 25), and Isidore of Spain (De Eccles. Offic. i. xviii) all adduce spiritual reasons for the choice of that particular time; and yet they do not deem it necessary or suitable for us that we should keep the same time. So too a spiritual significance is found in the place, namely the upper chamber, by Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch (Comment. on St Matthew), Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria (Exposition of the Parables of the Holy Gospel, quaest. i), Origen (In S. Matt., Comm. Ser. 79), and Ambrose and Theophylact (on Luke xxii). "If you ask," says the commentator on the canon Liquido (Decr. iii. ii. 54), "why it was after supper that Christ gave His Body and Blood; I reply, The reason why

1 commentator. Of these there were many. "The classical gloss on the Decretum, called Glossa ordinaria, is the work of Johannes Teutonicus before the year 1215, and of Bartholomew of Brescia who flourished about 1235" (R. S. Mylne, The Canon Law, p. 32).

2 Consecratione—an error for Consecratione, the subject of the Third Part of Gratian's Decretum or Corpus Decretorum, entitled by the author himself Concordia Discordantium Canonum. The Third Part is a treatise on Consecration, comprising five Distinctiones or 'divisions,' each division being sub-divided into chapters. The subject of the Canon here cited is the duty of Fasting Communion (Sacramentum corporis Christi non nisi jejuni debemus accipere); and the words, on which the comment which Forbes quotes was passed, were probably the sentence: "Neque enim, quia post cibos dedit Dominus, propterea pransi aut coenati fratres ad illud sacramentum accipiendum convenire debent, aut sicut faciebant quos Apostolus arguit et emendat, mensis suis ista miscere." It may be observed that Gratian gives a different reason for the moment of the institution from his commentator.
the Lord waited until after He and His disciples had supped before giving them His Body was that He might show the fulfilment in this Sacrament of all the Sacraments of the Old Testament, including the Paschal lamb, which they had just eaten.” Yet that same canon expresses approval of the custom of the Church, by which this Sacrament is received fasting. Irenaeus’s view of the symbolism involved in the attitude or bodily posture in the case of the Apostles is stated in the quotation from him given above (§ 1).

Another of our brethren maintains that “it is necessary that we should imitate Christ and the praiseworthy examples of His Apostles in all cases where it is not clear that they had special reasons actuating them, which do not concern us.” Having laid down this principle, he proceeds to infer that the Lord’s institution is violated, (a) when the minister hands to each communicant his portion of the elements, (b) when they receive the Sacrament kneeling or filing by. And arguing from the same principle the writer quoted in the last section says (I quote his ipsissima verba):—

“We can not communicat, where the gesture is changed, and distribution of the communicants is wanting” (Re-exam. p. 136).

How far such views are from the judgment of Catholic antiquity and of all the Reformed Churches will be shown later (II. xvi). Nor will that principle, on which they take their stand, hold good. For, apart from the fact that the special reasons actuating Christ and His Apostles are not all known to us, we find in their case certain actions or circumstances of actions, for which we should seek no other reason beyond their own liberty and free choice, exercised at the particular time and in an indifferent matter, without any intention of thereby introducing a perpetual obligation incumbent either on themselves or on others. On the other hand, only those actions of Christ and His Apostles are set before us in Scripture as requiring our imitation, which are
clearly reducible to some commandment given us by God and are entailed in its plain exposition or execution. In the celebration of the Eucharist, only those things answer this criterion which in the story of the institution Christ is said to have distinctly done, and so to have charged should be done—*He took bread, He blessed, He brake etc.*: it does not cover occasional circumstances, however certain they may be—and still less if they are conjectural—which are not recorded in the institution itself, even though something may be known about them from the events that preceded or followed it.

13. True, it is necessary that communicants should adopt some posture. But careful attention must be paid to the different kinds of necessity, of which for the purposes of our present argument three should be noted. One is sacramental necessity, another natural necessity, and the third moral. Sacramental necessity attaches to those things which belong to the Sacrament by divine institution, and so are essential to the Sacrament; for a thing is essential to the Sacrament precisely because God has instituted it to be of the Sacrament—always supposing that the essence of a Sacrament depends entirely on divine institution. Natural necessity attaches to those circumstances which owing to the nature of men and of the elements themselves and of human actions are naturally required, such as some place, some time, some bodily attitude, etc. Moral necessity attaches to such duties as the pursuit of things that are peaceable and make for edification, or doing everything decently and in order.

14. Necessity of the first kind is imposed by divine institution, of the second by nature itself, of the third by the moral law. The first kind demands no particular posture at the Holy Communion: the second requires some posture, but does not bind us to any particular sort, while admitting of any: the third prescribes specific rules for bodily posture, and rules out all gesture which is contrary to peace and edification,
forbids all undignified gesture, and does not allow us to disregard order. All else relating to gesture at the Holy Communion is free. I conclude, therefore, that whoever has been made partaker of the Sacrament and of the matter of the Sacrament has communicated not unworthily: while those Rites, which are the subject of discussion to-day, are, I assert, indifferent\(^1\), and can be either omitted or adopted, as order, dignity, peace, charity and edification shall demand.

**Chapter v.**

[Opening of the reply to the Eighth Problem with a proof of the expediency and necessity of obedience, sometimes even to an inexpedient decree, §§ 1, 2. Three groups of strong grounds advanced to demonstrate the expediency and justice of the Perth Synod’s decree about the Five Articles, § 3. Exposition of the first group representing the standpoint of the King in making the proposals; it contains, firstly, a description of the King himself, § 4; secondly, an enumeration of the ten grounds, inserted by the King himself in his Letter, § 5; and, thirdly, the eight grounds advanced by the Dean of Winchester in his address to the Assembly, § 6. These are compared with the objection raised to them, and it is made clear (a) who are to blame for the schism which ensued, (b) that the Perth Assembly decreed rightly, §§ 7–9.]

1. *But let us suppose,* you say, *that the attitude in question is a matter of indifference.* Certainly, qua indifferent, it could have been changed without any wrong. But because every change of that sort, even in non-essential things, ought to be avoided, if the advantage of adopting it does not counterbalance the disturbance arising from innovation, you demand to have shown you a sufficient reason for this change. This

\(^1\) So the Preface to *B.C.P.*: “The particular forms of Divine worship, and the Rites and Ceremonies appointed to be used therein, being things in their own nature indifferent, and alterable, and so acknowledged; it is but reasonable, that upon weighty and important considerations, according to the various exigency of times and occasions, such changes and alterations should be made therein as to those that are in place of Authority should from time to time seem either necessary or expedient.”
you define as some benefit adequate to outweigh, or at least to compensate for, the evil entailed by the change; and this, you say, cannot be pointed to. Next, you assert that, though the change has now been made, resistance to it is still rightly accounted a duty, both for the sake of the weak, and also in view of our adversaries. Thirdly, from the very fact that the indifference of the attitude is granted, you infer that it ought not to be imposed as necessary, but that each should be left complete liberty, whether as regards opinion or practice.

2. I reply as follows. In the first place, even though those in authority decree something which it were expedient rather should not be decreed, that does not make it expedient or allowable for subjects to despise the decrees of their superiors and rebel against them, or to refuse obedience to them, as long as what is enjoined is such in itself as may be done by the subjects without sin. But they would have done more rightly, you will say, had they not passed such a decree. Granted: but does it follow that you do rightly in resisting the higher powers, when they order you to do what is not wrong? Suppose that they in executing their duty behaved

1 Garden, in the margin, refers the reader to Augustine, contra Faustum, xxii. 75; and to the Decretum, Part II, caus. xi, qu. 3, c. 4, and caus. xxiii, qu. 1, c. 99. The first-named Canon lays down that a man may not do a wrong action, but may leave a good action undone, in obeying orders; and the second, which comes from the above-mentioned passage of St Augustine, deals with the legitimacy of the profession of arms. Good men are often compelled “in the order of human affairs” to go to war, either because it is their duty to declare it or because they must obey the summons, once it is declared. The faithful may serve in the armies even of sacrilegious kings, provided they do not incur personal guilt by the way they carry out any order. It might appear at first sight that modern views as to greater security for peace afforded by democratic as compared with autocratic institutions are diametrically opposed to the view of the Decretum, where we read: “Ordo tamen ille naturalis mortalium paci accommodatus hoc poscit, ut susciendi belli auctoritas atque consilium apud principes sit.” But that antithesis was not present to Gratian’s mind. If the right to declare war were confined to recognized sovereigns, some safeguard was provided against the dangerous issues in which popular movements of religious zeal often terminated.
unwisely: does that relieve you of the duty of submission? Their duty is to make laws, and yours to obey, and error on their part will not excuse arrogance on yours. You must keep the rules of due obedience, and you will be safe. They, if they failed to keep the rules of the proper exercise of authority, will give account to God for abusing their power; but you may not despise that power for any abuse whatever. It might have been expedient, perhaps, that this or that canon should not have been passed; but, once passed, it is certainly not expedient that a subject should contemnuously break it; so long, that is, as what is enjoined by the canon is not contrary to God’s law as revealed in Holy Scripture. In such a case the subject\(^1\) incurs greater sin by despising the Church and refusing the obedience due to those set over him than the Synod by passing an inexpedient canon on a matter within its competence. But, you will say, we ought to do what is expedient and what is edifying, and to leave undone what is not expedient and what does not edify, even though it be in other ways allowable (1 Cor. x. 23). To that I have already replied; it follows from the Apostolic rule you quote that, if it was expedient that the assembly should have decreed otherwise, it ought to have decreed otherwise; and, by the same token, that you, in the case mentioned, owe obedience to the assembly’s decree. For in all allowable things reverent and dutiful obedience to the Church is expedient and edifying; while the causing of disturbances and schism over such things is not expedient and not edifying, but the very antithesis of edification, order, peace and dignity. So much I lay down by way of assertion.

3. Secondly, I proceed to put my case. And I claim that

\(^1\) Cf. B.C.P. Of Ceremonies: “The appointment of the which order pertaineth not to private men; therefore no man ought to take in hand, nor presume to appoint or alter any publick or common order in Christ’s Church, except he be lawfully called and authorized thereunto.”
there were not wanting to the Scottish Church sound and adequate grounds for passing those Canons, at the Perth Assembly, about the Five Articles put forward by King James of Blessed Memory: grounds, too, of sufficient moment to outweigh easily all the mischievous consequences of the change; whether we have regard to the King who put them forward, to the actual merits of the proposals themselves, or to the faith, honour, and liberty of this Church, to which the proposals were made.

4. Our King was one who surpassed all the Christian princes of the world’s history in knowledge of, and devotion to, true and pure Christianity; in the earnestness with which he propagated the truly Apostolic and Catholic faith of the Reformed Religion far and wide and the constancy with which he defended it; and in the fatherly love which, despite innumerable trials and frequent treachery aimed at his throne and life by insensate enemies, he showed towards his country. By God’s grace, his wisdom in government combined with the prosperous issues of his reign to enable our people to “sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree,” praising the Lord God for all the blessings of a holy tranquillity. In foreign countries, too, the Reformed Churches rejoiced exceedingly in the wise and godly nourishment which Heaven thus vouchsafed alike to them and to us, and gladly embraced him as an Angel of God: for to them, too, he extended his godly solicitude and help. His very enemies were astonished and marvelled at him. The primary object of all his care and all his counsels was that religion might ever flourish in pureness and in peace. The honour of God’s house he loved with all his heart, and took sedulous pains to ensure that in our

1 *Regem proponentem*—see remaining sections of this chapter.

*res ipsas*, discussed in chap. vii, following the determination of the question of the Assembly’s authority in chap. vi.

*Ecclesiae hujus*, cf. chaps. viii, ix.

2 Micah iv. 4.
churches everything should be done agreeably to God's written word, decently, in order, and with a view to edification. He was a peacemaker; and if ever mortal deserved that highest praise which princes can win—the praise for showing mercy, without prejudice to justice—it was he. Often provoked as he was by the wanton impatience and ill-temper (to use no graver terms) of our fellow-countrymen, he yet preferred to pardon them spontaneously rather than take notice of them, to conceal by fatherly sympathy the weaknesses of his people, and to cure those infirmities, if possible, by gentle and statesmanlike treatment rather than use judicial sternness to allay them. Only sometimes did a just grief and a patience too sorely tried draw from him expressions of complaint.

5. Such was the King, who proposed to our people, his subjects, those Five Articles, and that not by mere *fiat*, but with the recommendation of most weighty reasons for their adoption, which he embodied in his Royal letter to the fathers of Perth. They were as follows:

(1) He was King: by what right, therefore, could his subjects refuse obedience to demands not only in themselves allowable, but such as tended to promote piety and general convenience, without manifest contempt of the ordinances of God?

(2) The proposals themselves were not only allowable, but also incontestably suitable and useful for the promotion of piety and religion in our Church, so much so that it would have rather become the pastors of the Church to ask for them than to hinder them.

(3) For some time the King had put up with the most unworthy abuse from Scottish ministers, such as might well have alienated the mind of any prince altogether from the form of religion we profess, had he not been sustained, through God's grace, by the love of God and of truth. This
patience of his, and his constant defence of the truth, in face of many dangers, against the most desperate enemies, deserved a better return on our part than arrogant resistance and perpetual opposition to his well-considered counsels.

(4) They must be careful, therefore—and this was the King’s own personal wish—lest he be still further irritated.

(5) They must beware, too, lest that divine truth, which they themselves profess, of the duty of showing obedience to princes and those in authority, be any longer neglected and exposed to ridicule through the mad policy of a few who walked disorderly under the specious cloak of a pretended sanctity; making themselves in thus despising authority and obedience¹ the sworn friends and allies, as it were, of the leading firebrands of Popery.

(6) Even if the King by virtue of his royal office, to which he was called by God, had the power of himself, without waiting for the consent of the National Assembly, to deal with externals in the Church, and to enjoin them on his subjects as he judged convenient and useful for the promotion of true religion among his subjects; yet he preferred to try the path of synodical action, in order that everything might go by common consent, which was his most earnest wish and desire.

(7) The minds of the laity were not troubled by any scruples against the obedience demanded, except where such scruples were suggested or fostered, in defiance of their duty, by ministers of the Church: there was nothing whatever, therefore, in the pretext urged by some ministers about not giving offence to the laity.

(8) “As we,” said King James, “never fail you in charity and solicitude on your behalf, so we desire from our heart that you too, by showing humble obedience to our so just

¹ obedientia. Either we must read obedientiae (gen.) or take it, by way of irony, as meaning ‘disobedience.’ But this second alternative is very strained.
demands, may be found in no way inferior to our other subjects in any of our kingdoms."

(9) At the same time King James called God to witness that his principal motive in pushing these Articles was his zeal for God's house and his sincere desire to promote and propagate piety and truth.

(10) Then the King urged the fathers of the Assembly, and with earnest prayer humbly begged of God, that they too should be led by zeal for God's house and the sincere desire to promote and propagate piety and truth, and that they should do those things which conduced most to the setting forward of the Gospel of Christ.

6. These are the principal reasons contained in the Royal Letter. At the close of it, however, he gives notice that the Dean of Winchester\(^1\) is on his way, at the King's own command, accredited with his Royal Majesty's injunctions, and charges them therefore to show him due and loyal respect. Accordingly, it seems right to subjoin here those reasons too which the said Dean advanced in his address to the Assembly.

(1) Synodical action has proved itself in the experience of all ages the one true and best means to the uprooting of errors and heresies, the elucidation of the truth, and the establishment of order in the Church; but there was need of earnest watchfulness and prayer that, by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Assembly might conduct itself wisely.

(2) The fathers of the Assembly should remember that they owed submission to principalities and powers and ought to be obedient to them and "ready to every good work" (Tit. iii. 1). Let them, therefore, take care lest through the animosity of certain turbulent elements they suffered our

\(^1\) Dr Young had been chosen with the Bishops of London and Durham to represent the Anglican side in the colloquy with the Archbishop of Spalato on the English liturgy. He subsequently took part in the revision of the Scottish Prayer Book of 1637.
Church to be stained with the indelible disgrace of trying to escape from the authority of the lawful Magistrate and thereby conspiring with the pillars of the Papacy.

(3) They must beware of bringing ignominy upon our most religious King. The authority and wise prudence he had shown in composing both civil and ecclesiastical dissensions had been intensely valued, honoured, and admired, not only by all his other subjects, but also by Catholic Christians in all foreign countries. It would be most ignominious, therefore, if he were apparently flouted by his subjects in his own native Scotland, especially if they were Ministers of the Gospel, bound to set others an example of godly obedience.

(4) They must beware, too, of casting yet another slur upon a King who had shown himself so wise as theirs, so sincere and consistent a defender of the true Religion, and such a loving father to his country; as though he were attempting to force his subjects into superstition or idolatry simply by demanding that, in the performance of the highest act of devotion, they should humbly bend the knee before God. Such an imputation, too, would give a handle to all who were enemies to the truth and to the King for his defence of the truth, and would set them slandering and blaspheming. A scandal so dangerous, notorious, and far-reaching as that was to be most carefully avoided.

(5) Steps must further be taken to dispel the scandal given to other Reformed and flourishing Churches by the arguments on which they based their refusal hitherto to admit the Five Articles.

(6) They might well tremble again and again at the thought of how this repeated trying of the wise King's patience might terminate; and care was necessary, lest by their blind obstinacy they provoked the wrath of God against this Church. If they still declined to recognize this happy time of their visitation, and chose to despise the long-suffering and infinite
goodness of God and of a Prince so kind and merciful, they
might find themselves compelled, by God’s just judgment,
to submit to much sterner commands.

(7) Nor was there any longer anything in their pretended
fear of giving offence to certain of the people of Scotland.
Apart from the fact that the arguments adduced above ought
easily to outweigh any such apprehension, it was the duty of
pastors to lead their sheep into the right way, not to be led
astray by their sheep; and besides it was indisputable that
no ground for such apprehension any longer existed, if the
Pastors had done their duty and taught their flocks wisely and
faithfully of what nature these matters were, why they were
liable to change, and how the question stood at the moment.
They had pledged themselves in the King’s presence to do
that; and on a later occasion had confirmed their pledges at
the National Assembly at St Andrews.

(8) Finally, let the fathers of our country reflect upon the
answer of Naaman’s servants to their Lord. Would they not
likewise, if our excellent King had been asking some greater
thing than this, provided it were consistent with God’s
revealed will and in no way contrary to it—otherwise, no
doubt, according to the Apostolic rule, duty prescribes

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1 Three of the Perth Articles were contained in substance in the articles
drawn up by Spottiswoode in 1615 for the reform of the Church. The
whole five were put forward by James soon after the Aberdeen Assembly
of 1616, but withdrawn at the instance of the Archbishop of St Andrews.
In 1617 he arranged for a General Assembly to be called to consider these,
and this met in November, 1617, at St Andrews. The majority resolved
to defer a decision, which was in fact taken at the Perth Assembly in 1618.

2 "So he turned and went away in a rage. And his servants came near,
and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do
some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then,
when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?" (2 Kings v). Cf. B.C.P.
Of Ceremonies: "And although the keeping or omitting of a Ceremony, in
itself considered, is but a small thing, yet the wilfull and contemptuous
transgression of a common order and discipline is no small offence before
God. Let all things be done among you, saith St Paul, in a seemly and due
order."
obedience to God rather than men—would they not likewise have shown themselves most ready to obey, and have influenced others by their teaching and example to offer a prompt submission? Much more, then, was such deference due, when he asked of them these few\(^1\) necessary\(^2\) things, so expedient to God’s glory and the promotion of piety among the Scottish people, so fruitful of satisfaction to their Prince to whose legitimate demands they would show the honour due, and so well calculated to secure the happy establishment of Order, Peace, Unity and Charity in our Churches.

Those are the principal arguments advanced by the King’s Chaplain.

7. There, then, you have Royal Majesty, not merely wearing the splendid \textit{insignia} of the Sword, but also strongly armed with the weapons of reason and surrounded by a serried bodyguard of arguments; and regard for it should have led the Fathers of the Assembly to adopt those Five Articles, seeing that they had no objections to urge against them but what are dwarfed into insignificance in such a conjunction, in the judgment of all fair-minded men, by the spectacle of Majesty at once so gentle\(^3\) and so great.

8. That primary objection about giving offence to the simple-minded was overtaken, and its hollowness exposed, both by the King (in his 7th ground) and by the Dean (also in his 7th). Certainly that offence could, and should, have

\(^1\) \textit{these few}. Dr Cooper notes that some writers have spoken of the Five Articles as a set of “wretched trifles” (\textit{Re-union}, p. 51).

\(^2\) \textit{necessary things}. Gillespie takes up Forbes’s use of the word ‘necessary’ in \textit{Dispute}, iv. iii. 10 and i. i. See also \textit{Iren.} i. vii. 1, 9; ix. 6. Introd. p. 37 f.

\(^3\) \textit{so gentle}. It is difficult to acquit Forbes here of disingenuousness. The banishment of Calderwood in 1617 for signing the protest against the King’s proposition which would have in effect abolished General Assemblies, and his remarks to the bishops and leading ministers at St Andrews in the same year, were fresh in popular memory. See Cunningham, i. 484 ff.
been altogether avoided in some more suitable way than through the inevitable occasioning of many graver scandals. None of the people would be offended at the adoption of these Articles, if Pastors were doing their duty, and, instead of sowing and fostering erroneous notions in the minds of the simple, were genuinely and seriously instructing their flocks by honest preaching, teaching them out of the sacred Word of God about the nature of those proposals, the authority both of Church and King, the duty and obligation of obedience for people quâ individuals and subjects, and the wickedness of rebellion, arrogance, and Schism. That this is so; that the guilt of this Schism lies at the door of certain intransigent Ministers, and that none of the people were offended except by their fault;—this is clearly testified by daily experience, and circumstances themselves proclaim it loudly. And the excuses of the laity who resist tell the same tale. They allege one of two things: either some notions about the proposals themselves, as that they are in themselves forbidden and contrary to God’s Law and so to be simply detested; or that it is utterly wrong, and beyond the competence of the Church, to change established custom; notions, mark you, entirely erroneous and plainly contrary to Holy Scripture, of which their Pastors ought to have rid their minds, instead of suggesting them to them: or else they point to the confident contradiction and disobedience of certain Pastors, whom they personally consider pious and learned.

9. But I must close this section about the point of view of the King in making the proposals; and I leave to you the necessity of either showing the futility of the arguments adduced above and solidly refuting them (and that you will find a vain task), or else honestly acknowledging with me that the venerable Assembly of Perth, having regard to the King’s point of view in making the proposals, had strong and adequate grounds for admitting those Articles which the King proposed.
Chapter vi.

The lawfulness and authority of that National Assembly of the Scottish Church, held at Perth in August, A.D. 1618.

[Proof that the meeting and proceedings of the Perth Assembly were lawful, § 1. Reply to abuse, § 2. Assertion of the Assembly's authority, § 3. The objection that even a lawful Assembly may err, § 4. Reply to the same, § 5. Appeal to godly folk, § 6. Note, § 7.]

1. Before passing, however, to the consideration of the proposals themselves, I feel the Assembly itself lay its hand, as it were, on my arm, and remind me that there are some who say that that Assembly was not lawful1. Tell me, pray, what formality essential for constituting a lawful or regular Assembly was wanting to this Assembly? It was convened with the consent, and by the authority, of a most religious Prince and of the whole National Church, and it met lawfully in the Name of the Lord2. Its members were convened and met for one purpose above all and with one end in view, viz. to give, in God's presence, a sincere and Synodical reply, in such terms as might be most agreeable to God's Word and in keeping with the interests at that time of the Scottish Church, to the royal proposal about the adoption of those Five Articles. With this end in view, after the customary prayers and sacred homilies3, the King's proposal was heard,

1 See Introd. p. 43.
2 The Five Articles stood referred to diocesan synods by the St Andrews General Assembly. The synods were not unfavourable, and the bishops obtained the King's license to summon another General Assembly for the purpose of passing them. This was held at Perth, on August 25th, 1618. The royal commissioners were Lord Binning, Lord Scone, and Lord Carnegie, with four assessors.
3 The sermon in the afternoon of the first day was preached by the Archbishop of St Andrews, and is well summarized in Grub, op. cit. II. 314 ff. He cited with special emphasis and approval St Augustine's words, "Nemo carnem illam manducat, nisi adoraverit." The morning sermon had been preached by the Bishop of Aberdeen.
together with the grounds subjoined both in the King's Letter and in the Dean of Winchester's address: the proposal formed the subject of earnest and sincere deliberation; arguments were listened to on this side and on that; and the royal letter was re-read two or three times, in order that, by a process of careful collation, all might attain a greater clarity and certainty as to the state of the question and the weight, or unimportance, of the arguments adduced on either side. And at last by a majority of votes it was decided that the Articles proposed by the King ought to be adopted.

2. Some members of the opposition, finding themselves in this pass, have resort to recrimination and try to get out of it by backstairs methods. They say that several members of the Assembly yielded to intimidation or to promises of advancement and voted against their own consciences. The result is that, in humouring their love of opposition, these people have put themselves outside the pale of discussion; like certain talkative persons, mentioned by Jerome in his Dialogue against the Luciferians, who, though they cannot argue, yet never cease to quarrel. Let the Apostle Paul reply to them: "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?" (Rom. xiv. 4); "Every one of us shall give account of himself to God; let us not therefore judge one another any more" (Ib. vv. 12, 13). Let them listen to the Lord, saying, "Judge not, that ye be not judged" (Matt. vii. 1). Let them listen again to the Apostle Paul: "Judge nothing before the time" (1 Cor. iv. 5); and to James the Apostle: "Speak not evil one

1 A motion to vote on each Article separately was proposed, but defeated. Some of the discussion took place in a committee of the Assembly: cf. the similar procedure in the case of the Assembly of Clergy in France convened to define the Gallican position in 1681. [Jacques Bénigne Bossuet, by Miss Sanders, chap. xiii.] On two counts the procedure at Perth does appear to have been open to objection: (a) the primate assumed the moderator's chair without election; (b) many barons were there with King's missives, but without ecclesiastical commission. The first point is unimportant, but the second may well have affected the issue materially.
of another” (Jas. iv. 11); “Who art thou that judgest another?” (Ib. iv. 12). Who has appointed those men to search hearts and judge consciences? Your business is to see what the Fathers of the Assembly have decreed; their inward disposition of mind you must leave to God, the searcher of all hearts, for examination and judgment.

3. Again, at that solemn and supreme meeting of the Orders or Parliament, held at Edinburgh in August, A.D. 1621, all the Orders of the realm concurred with the Prince in recognizing the lawfulness of the Perth Assembly and of its whole formal procedure. At that Parliament all the Orders of the realm consented to the adoption of the Assembly’s decrees about the Five Articles, as being godly, helpful, and lawfully passed by a lawful National Assembly; and a civil law was passed requiring all subjects to show prompt obedience to these decrees of the Assembly. That is sufficient voucher for their authority, and the necessity of obeying them, unless you can find fair ground of exception in the matter of the decrees themselves.

4. Surely, you will say, even an Assembly which is formally regular and lawful may prescribe something wrong; and therefore the decrees of such an Assembly are not absolutely binding.

5. I reply: it is possible, I grant, that such an Assembly may prescribe something which is not right; but emphatically in such a case no exception can be justly taken to its regularity, as though the Assembly were not lawful. Exception could only be taken to the wrongfulness of the obedience demanded, and that on the ground that, when men bid us do something which God forbids, we must obey God rather than men, notwithstanding we owe submission to those men in all things. But nothing of that sort was enjoined upon us by the decree of the Perth Assembly. On the contrary, it is already partly clear from what has been said, and will soon be still more
apparent from the observations I will add, that the Assembly decided rightly, and had strong and adequate grounds for its decision.

6. In the meantime I beg all fair-minded men, all godly and gentle souls, all who show, by their love of the truth and peace which Christ so earnestly commended to us, that they are truly His disciples, to consider seriously and before God whether, after the solemn consent of both Church and Commonwealth, it be any longer right for any subject, but especially for a Minister of the Gospel, to offer further opposition. Is it fitting that, by an ingenious perversity of self-deception, people should still go ransacking their memory or hunting in every direction for trifling little objections, and, armed with these, should set about violating their own and their neighbours' quiet, disturbing the peace of the Church, breaking its unity, fomenting the minds of citizens to Schism, resisting the ordinance of God and refusing to listen to His Church, filling the minds of godly folk with sorrow, introducing erroneous doctrine, shocking all the Reformed Churches, and provoking the Papists to ridicule? And all the time nothing can be pointed to in the actual matter of the Perth Assembly's decrees, which is inconsistent with Holy Writ or Catholic Antiquity, with the doctrine of the Reformed Churches, or with right reason; or which is not fully in keeping with every one of these.


The statements in this chapter, and elsewhere in this *Irenicum*, about the Perth Assembly and its subsequent ratification by Parliament, belong to the time at which this work was first written. At that time those formularies, both the ecclesiastical and the civil, relating to the Five Articles were known to be in force, not having yet been abrogated or
rescinded. They were, however, repealed later by public authority, both of the Assembly and of Parliament. Accordingly, I admit that no one is now bound by those earlier formularies. For, as I have shown from Augustine in the tenth book of my *Instructiones Historico-Theologicae*, ch. iii. § 34, later ecclesiastical councils supersede earlier ones. And of civil formularies the common law says, "αἱ μεταγενέστεραι διατάξεις ἱσχύστεραι τῶν πρὸ αὐτῶν"—i.e. "formularies later in time are to be preferred to those which preceded them" (*Digest*, I. 4 *(de Constit. Princ.*)).

**Chapter vii.**

[Vindication of the Assembly’s decision simply on the merits of the proposals, § 1; by means of an induction and consideration of the Five Articles themselves, viz. (1) Kneeling, §§ 2, 3; (2) Festivals, § 4; (3) Catechetical instruction and the Blessing of young people with the imposition of hands, § 5; [reply to an objection about Popish abuse of the rite, § 6;] [(4) Baptism in private places, § 7; (5) Communion of the sick and prisoners, § 8. Conclusion, § 9.]

1. I have spoken about the point of view of the King in making the proposals: I come now to the proposals themselves; and I assert that from that point of view too the Assembly decided rightly. For all things are lawful, I grant, and suitable to our Church; but some things are necessary as well. This will become clear from an induction and brief consideration of the Articles themselves.

2. The due partaking of the Lord’s Supper is in itself commemorative of the Lord’s death, as is clear from the words of the Lord Himself and of St Paul; and this commemorative partaking, or memorial in which all take part, is no thankless or stupid commemoration, but indissolubly and intrinsically Eucharistic. Hence, the name *Eucharist* attaches to this Sacrament. *(καὶ ἡ τροφὴ αὐτῆ καλεῖται παρ' ἡμῖν εὐχαριστία*, says Justin Martyr towards the end of his second Apology; that is, “now this meal is called
among us Eucharist."] Further, this action is precatory. Consider: at the moment of receiving the Element from the Pastor's hand, you hear those words, Take, eat, drink; this is my Body; this is my Blood; do this in remembrance of me—words which require of you to do this with faith and a thankful remembrance of Christ: does not your heart at that sentence make response to God (certainly it should): Lord, I believe that this is Thy Body, broken for me; that this is Thy Blood, shed for me; dwell, O Lord, in my heart; Lord, I believe, help Thou my unbelief; Oh, how great is Thy love, Lord God, for my salvation? And this is the point of that exhortation used by the ancients, Sursum Corda, which Cyprian applies to the function of prayer, Augustine to that of thanksgiving. Now all the action in public worship, being addressed to God and eucharistic in character, involves adoration of God and is part of that religious worship due to God alone. No one, therefore, properly partakes of the Lord's Supper, unless, while partaking, he adores our Lord Jesus Christ and so the Most Holy and undivided Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. So you see what great and careful devotion is necessary in the partaking of this sacred Supper; and the more humble the bodily posture, the better adapted it will be to this service; so far, that is to say, as laudable zeal for stirring the people's imagination and exciting the requisite devotion, combined with the public order of the Church, convenience in administering, and other circumstances, shall demand or allow. But whatever be the outward bodily posture adopted by the faithful at Communion, they still proclaim the Lord's death with giving of thanks and supplication, or rather with adoration, at least so far as concerns the inward man:—no, indeed, but with such outward profession of the same, too, as may be customary in that Church where they are offering this worship. Rightly, therefore, may one say of this Sacrament what Nicholas
Cabasilas writes in his *Exposition of the Liturgy*, chap. lii: \( \kappa αλ \chi αριστήριος \varepsilon ατι \varepsilon τελετή, \kappa αλ \iota κέσιος \) that is to say, this Sacrament is a rite both of thanksgiving and of prayer.

3. You know the common objection, viz. that kneeling is not right in partaking of the Holy Communion, precisely because that is a posture of adoration; and adoration, it is urged, is forbidden. But this last statement is false: indeed we are bound to adore\(^1\). The action is part of public worship, and, as we have shown, is a public act of adoration. The element of listening at this service is small, as is not the case with sermons. The bodily refreshment is slight, as was not the case at the Passover. What is necessary is a trembling devotion, a devout giving of thanks. Finally, the attitude of adoration has the advantage of neither disturbing attention during the action nor impeding the administration or the reception: rather it helps and quickens the necessary attention and devotion, and fits in well with the seriousness of an action like this; and it does no harm to bodily health. On all these grounds it is indisputable that the adoption of some gesture of adoration in this action is allowable. But kneeling is a gesture of adoration commended in Holy Writ as very suitable to adoration, though not always necessary. It may be that the lukewarmness and slackness of our people demanded the step at the moment; while the more fervent spirits will gain by the withdrawal of a restraint on their devotional ardour and by the freer scope and ampler latitude given to their zeal by this act of outward humiliation. Furthermore it was a good thing at that moment in Scotland that, by a change of the customary posture and the approval of the one in question, the minds of the ignorant should be instructed and the liberty, won by Christ’s Blood, claimed for their consciences. They would be taught, too, not to shrink from communion with other Reformed Churches, where standing or kneeling or filing

\(^1\) Cf. Augustine: *nemo carnem illam manducat, nisi adoraverit.*
by is adopted; but would come to realize that they could with a good conscience communicate with them, and that diversity of posture, being in itself indifferent, was no reason for abstaining from communion with them. The Bishop of Brechin rightly points out that the fact of the guests sitting with heads uncovered at the Lord’s Supper constitutes a gesture of adoration: yet it is a gesture which none of the brethren who oppose kneeling dares to disregard or neglect. Even sitting itself is sometimes a posture of adoration, as is clear from David’s sitting before the Lord (2 Sam. vii. 18). *And the author of the “Dispute against the English-Popish Ceremonies” affirms that our Lord Jesus Christ, when He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to the Disciples, at the first celebration of this Sacrament, maintained one and the same bodily posture or attitude throughout. It follows that the Lord and His Apostles used the same posture in prayer as when communicating or receiving this Sacrament. The foregoing observations also make it clear that there is no force in that petty objection which some urge against kneeling, viz. that it is not a posture belonging, or suitable, to the Table. The fact is that for the purposes of this action this attitude is perfectly suitable to the Table, as has been already pointed out; and there is no need for the same attitude to be adopted at this Table as is in vogue at secular tables. The meaning and object of the two are widely distinct. (See above, i. i. 7 and ii. xvi. Pt 4. 1.)*

4. Again, it was fitting that a solemn annual commemoration should be held in our Church on definite days of those sublimely excellent and never to be forgotten benefits of God conferred on us through the Nativity, Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension of Christ, and by the sending of the Holy Spirit. First, because from the oldest times of which the fathers of antiquity have memory or record such laudable observance was in practice throughout the universal Church,
wherever it was spread in the whole world. Secondly, because the annual and careful treatment of these five fundamentals of our creed, and recurrent meditation on them, is, so to speak, a kind of annual instruction in the Christian Catechism, ever fruitful both to clergy and people alike. For, although these facts may be usefully commemorated at any time, yet the fixing of a definite time imposes an obligation on those who are inclined to be remiss, guards uniformity in the different Churches, and makes the people more disposed to learn; and nothing prevents commemorations being held at other times as well. In like manner the duty of constant prayer is not hindered but helped by the fixing of definite times of prayer—a practice which has won golden opinions and borne much fruit in the Churches. Thirdly, there is nothing in the practice inconsistent with Holy Scripture, which forbids Christians to observe days and times in Jewish or heathen fashion, but does not forbid the appointment of definite times at which Christians should make opportune and timely memorial, with thankful hearts and lips, of divine benefits. There is no superstition in this, no will-worship (ἐθελοθρησκεία); we attach no mystical sanctity to the date, but simply as a helpful discipline set apart certain days every year for the celebration and recollection of the holiest mysteries of our religion. In that recollection, it is true, and in the giving of thanks, God is worshipped; but the designation of a definite day for that purpose is not part of the worship of God, but belongs to the good order (ἐὐταιγία) of the Church and the interests of discipline. *The object is, as Paulinus of Nola has it,

ut pigra diurnis
Ingenia obsequiis, saltem discrimine facto,
Post intervallum reduci sollennia voto
Sancta libenter agant, residesque per annua mentes

For the best Jewish doctrine, see Ecclus. xxxiii. 7–9.
Festa parent Domino, quia jugiter interemeratos Justitiae servire piget.\footnote{De S. Felice Natal. Carm. ix. 109ff. (That souls made sluggish by daily duties may just through the breaking of the monotony find pleasure in religious observances that come round in due course from time to time, and so by means of annual festivals make ready their idle minds for the Lord: for those who are continually without fault grow weary of serving righteousness.)}

Jerome’s remark\footnote{in Epist. ad Galatas, iv. 10, 11.} is in point here: “To prevent the undisciplined mass of people growing cold in their faith in Christ, some days have been set apart on which we may all alike come together: not that the day on which we assemble may be more distinguished; but that, on whatever day we come together, greater joy may arise from our seeing one another.” Augustine, too, says: “It is not the times that we observe but the things which those times speak of.”\footnote{Contra Adimantum Manichaeum, xvi. 3.}

Ambrose contrasts the apostle’s words not only with the Jewish, but also with the heathen, manner of observing days, when he says\footnote{Serm. 7 (De Tempore).}: “I have a serious complaint, my brethren, to make against a large number of you; to wit, those, who, when celebrating with us the Lord’s birthday, indulged in a Gentiles’ holiday. . . . That is why the apostle says: ‘Ye observe days and months and times and years: I am afraid of you lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain’. . . . we ought, however, to avoid not only the indulgences of the Gentiles, but also those of the Jews.”\footnote{* Fourthly, the same annual celebrations are carefully kept by almost all other reformed churches.}

Fifthly, even though it is not absolutely certain in what month or on what day of the month Christ was born, yet it is certain that he was born on some definite day of some month recurring every year. As to the rest of the capital events of our creed, the days themselves are known. But we do not celebrate these divine benefits for the sake of the days: rather for the sake of the benefits we devote ourselves on certain
fixed days to annual meditation on them and careful and solemn commemoration of them. The agreement of the whole of antiquity and of all the reformed churches which kept these solemnities as to the choice of days is constant and unanimous, and is consonant both with truth and godliness; so that to reject it might perhaps seem a foolish and arrogant proceeding, not to say even superstitious: while to choose other days in their stead argues a kind of itching after singularity; a very singular sort of wisdom.

5. The Catechetical instruction of young people and their blessing with the Laying on of Hands was not only practised by the primitive Church of later times, but even approved and instituted by the apostles themselves. Furthermore, in order that young folk and uninstructed people might understand the use and object of the Laying on of Hands, there was inserted along with the other heads of the Catechism a short explanation under this head, which used to be given to the young and to uninstructed people in the ordinary process of catechising. Its principal features are enumerated by the Apostle in the 6th chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews\(^1\), that posterity too may have a pattern on which to model their Catechetical summaries. For it does not seem probable that the Apostle was adding something extraordinary to the ordinary catechism, or was alluding to that Laying on of Hands which was practised at the ordination of Pastors. And the constant practice of the primitive Church confirms the view that that passage was taken to apply to an ordinary Laying on of Hands, which was to be permanent in the Church.

6. It is objected that the Papists have abused this right by transforming it into a Sacrament. I reply, “Let the abuse be done away with and the proper use restored.” Marriage and Penitence are not to be rejected because the Papists have

\(^1\) Heb. vi. 2.
made Sacraments of them. Emphatically things which have been divinely instituted are not to be abolished or rejected on account of some supervening abuse. (I speak of course of those things which are in perpetual use in ordinary worship and which were instituted for this use; in case anyone raises an objection about the brazen serpent.) The Papists have abused the repetition of the Lord’s Prayer in the Invocation of Saints and in their superstitious ‘vain repetitions’; they have abused the Lord’s Supper by turning it into an idolatrous action; they have abused the use of the keys; and fortune-tellers and sorcerers abuse the name of the Father and the Son and Holy Spirit in their incantations: and yet Christians are not entitled to abstain from these things. But I will go further: not even indifferent things\(^1\) which men have wisely introduced should always be abolished on account of their subsequent abuse. The Papists have abused churches and oratories and cathedrals and sacred vessels and bells and the blessing upon marriage; yet our wise reformers did not therefore think that these things ought to be discarded; they preferred to get rid of the abuse and to retain the things themselves. Not but what the use of this or that place for your church or oratory or of this or those vessels and bells is an indifferent matter; while the blessing of Marriage was introduced by the laudable custom of the Church, and nothing is laid down in Holy Scripture about its being done by a Pastor. There is, accordingly, no force in the type of argument which proceeds from the abuse of a thing to infer the necessity of its abolition. Even though some things may or should sometimes be abolished or suspended for a period on account of their abuse, yet this is not necessary as a permanent measure or in every case; and in certain cases it is definitely wrong.

\(^1\) Gillespie criticizes F. here on four grounds: (1) that the instances F. cites are all necessary by divine institution, (2) the Reformed Church does not use vessels, bells, etc. as themselves sacred, (3) the Reformers did rightly destroy some churches, (4) Calvin took the opposite view (Dispute, III. ii).
7. The Lord said to his disciples: "Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things which I have commanded you" (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20). Therefore, wherever it is right to teach it is right also to baptize—I mean, in case of necessity: for we admit that the administration of the sacraments must be combined with public teaching or with such teaching as is virtually public, i.e. as public as the circumstances of the moment allow. It was on this principle that Philip the evangelist baptized the Ethiopian eunuch by the wayside, though no larger gathering of believers was present, as we may gather from St Luke’s narrative (Acts viii). And Paul and Silas baptized the keeper of the prison at Philippi with all his family in his own private house. For, even though the necessity of order and dignity demands that the administration of the Sacraments shall be public and at a public gathering, where such can conveniently be had, yet pastors are not allowed to refuse the Sacraments to the faithful or to their children when so circumscribed that, owing to sickness or to imprisonment, they cannot come to a public place of meeting. In that case the pastor is bound to carry out that commandment (Go, teach, baptize) towards those sick or imprisoned people as well as to the rest; since Christ added no exception to His command, either by His own words or through His disciples, but merely laid down certain general rules of dignity, order etc. But, as a matter of fact, it is a highly proper and orderly thing to visit the sick and bound, and to minister to them what is necessary. If the courtesy which is paid to such people even in the giving of a glass of cold water is pleasing to God, how it must displease Him, nay what a cruel and abominable wrong it is,

1 Gillespie objects that (a) the eunuch doubtless had followers, and St Philip acted under an extraordinary monition from the Spirit, (b) worship, except privately, was impossible for Christians at Philippi (Dispute, iii. vi. 5).
to refuse spiritual food to Christ's sheep, or to withhold from any of Christ's household the due portion which the Lord has destined for them! Are you bound to teach a man? By the same token you are bound to baptise him. What account will you render your Lord for the lamb you have neglected and the contempt of His command? These ministerial actions are not assigned to any particular times or places; but, wherever two or three are gathered together in the name of the Lord, there is He in the midst of them (Matt. xviii. 20). And we must beware lest we offend or despise the least of Christ's lambs (Matt. xviii. 6). There is joy in heaven over one sinner who repents (Luke xv. 7). It is not the will of our Heavenly Father that one of His little ones should perish (Matt. xviii. 14). We do not by this confine the grace of God to Sacraments, but merely point out that Ministers are bound to their duty of teaching and baptizing those to whom they are sent.

8. What we have said about the Baptism of the sick and of prisoners applies also to administering the Holy Communion to them. Its administration is not limited to any particular place or particular number of communicants: and although every effort should be made to ensure that it takes place at a public gathering of Christ's people, that does not mean that we should think that this living bread and drink should be refused to hungry and thirsty souls who may be sick or in prison. For this is part of that portion which Christ, the Head of the household, has left to His servants for distribution. Only let there be present at the sick man's bed, or in the prison with the man who is bound or detained there, two or three gathered together in the name of the Lord; that the mysteries may be celebrated at that gathering, small as it is, with Christ Himself present.

9. Thus it is now clear that, judging on the merits of the proposals themselves, the grounds on which the Fathers of
Perth found themselves partly able and partly bound to adopt the Articles proposed by the King were adequate and sound. Some of the things proposed are necessary, while all are lawful and laudable: the former cannot be rejected without sin; the latter are lawfully and laudably adopted. *It is therefore all the more astonishing that a certain brother in his published Dispute should cast ridicule on all those Five Articles, which he calls "controverted ceremonies," as being useless and absolutely unlawful and incapable of any lawful use whatever in the Church at any time.*

CHAPTER viii.

[Justice and propriety of the grounds of the Assembly’s decision from the point of view of the Scottish Church, § 1. First ground—the pledge given, § 2. Second ground—the Church’s dignity, § 3. Its bearing upon those who disobey, § 4. The disastrous consequence of the change, i.e. the Schism, § 5. Third ground—the Church’s liberty, § 6.]

1. Finally, if you have regard to the good faith, honour, and freedom, of this Church of Scotland, you will see that the introduction of these Articles was appropriate.

2. The Pastors had promised the King that they would carefully instruct their people about the nature of these changes, as is clear from the grounds advanced from the King’s standpoint (cf. above, v. 6 (7)). And the King in his earnest desire that nothing should be done suddenly or in the heat of passion gave them time for giving that instruction; in order that, when men’s minds had been prepared and illuminated by the light of the truth, everything might go smoothly. If all Pastors had acquitted themselves of this promise which they gave, there would be no room now for petty scruples. Those who were teachable would have no difficulty in understanding the appropriateness and expediency of the proposals: nor ought they to have been waived, because a few chose to be arrogant and obstinate.
3. The honour of our Church would be compromised if these avowedly lawful, and for the most part practically necessary, proposals, all of them certainly at that time expedient for our Church, had been rejected as unlawful and repugnant to the word of God, or even as inappropriate on no other ground than that custom in old days had it otherwise. That would imply that all ecclesiastical custom is immutable, and that the Scottish divines had not the knowledge of theology which would enable them to judge of the nature of proposals of this kind, of the liability of custom to change, or of the distinction between essentials and non-essentials. Certainly if the Assembly had rejected the proposals as unlawful and such as no Church could adopt, and no subjects accept if their Church prescribed them, we should have incurred the ridicule of our enemies, while our friends would be ashamed and disgusted at our ignorance. If on the other hand the Assembly, recognizing that the things were lawful in themselves, had been so obstinately conservative as to turn a deaf ear to all the grounds which have been enumerated, there is no doubt that it would have won for itself a disagreeable reputation for unwisdom.

4. Since, however, as matters now stand, the Assembly showed itself wise and prudent enough to pass these proposals, how can those subjects, and especially Pastors, who both condemn the proposals themselves and refuse to listen to the Assembly, acquit themselves of the charge of schism?

5. To all this you have no answer to offer except the plea of the harm consequent on change; which however is far outweighed by the reasons which have been adduced. Further, if we must argue from what happened, then, even from that point of view, and even if we were still approaching the matter quite afresh, the adoption of the articles would be right. It is true, schism was the result, but who could have expected
this of our brethren? Was it not rather to be expected that, although they disagreed at the time, nevertheless they would dutifully submit their judgment in a matter of this sort to synodical authority? Because the Lord bade us listen to the Church, and that too on pain of excommunication. And the spirits of the prophets are bidden to be subject to the prophets; —to the prophets I say, not muttering in this or that separate corner what they choose to think, but assembled ecclesiastically or synodically in the name of the Lord (Matt. xviii. 17; 1 Cor. xiv. 26–33). Because our God is not a God of confusion but of peace (1 Cor. xiv. 33). When, therefore, harm resulted from the change it arose, not spontaneously from the Assembly’s decree or by any fault of the fathers of the Assembly in decreeing the change, but as a bye-product and as a result of the disobedience of a few. No doubt trouble should be taken to prevent as far as possible the Church being torn, and a schism arising, through the impatience of even its most irresponsible elements: but that does not mean that a schism must always be avoided at any cost, nor must a measure be condemned because, as a bye-product from it and through the irresponsible behaviour, if you please, of some persons, a schism ensued. Christ’s words caused a schism among the Jews (John vii. 43, x. 19). And the Apostle Paul says that there needs must be schisms and heresies (1 Cor. xi. 19). Each one of us, therefore, ought to take care to do his own duty, and so not share the guilt of any schism or heresy which may supervene. It would have been easier and more conducive to our Church’s interests, and more suitable to its office, to instruct those who resisted the proposals, if they were teachable, and not, because some perhaps were unteachable, to bring down upon itself those far graver evils which were unavoidable if the adoption of the Articles were refused.

6. In fact I will go further and say that, even if we had still to discuss the whole matter, this schism has a lesson for
us;—viz. that the adoption of the Articles is more right than their rejection; *or, at any rate, that it must be recognised and publicly made clear that the Articles are not in themselves unlawful, but that the things they treat of are partly non-essential or indifferent, like kneeling and the solemn annual commemoration of the great benefits of God mentioned above, and partly necessary, like the administration of Baptism and the Eucharist in private places. By private places I mean places in which these sacraments can be administered to the persons spoken of in the Articles, and outside which it is either quite certain or at any rate exceedingly probable that they cannot be administered to those persons. At the same time we must say that, though they should not think of these things as wrong in themselves, they must be prepared, if it should be necessary for avoiding a still greater inconvenience, to put up with the temporary abeyance not only of those things which are non-essential or indifferent, but even of the things which are otherwise necessary.* This *orthodox doctrine* is demanded by the freedom of the Scottish Church. Not but what certain men who are destitute at least in this respect of truth are anxious to impose upon it the yoke of necessity. For either the things are lawful and not forbidden by the word of God—and that they are shy of acknowledging, because they foresee that we shall easily draw the conclusion, and, indeed it will inevitably follow, that the obligation of obedience is incumbent upon them: or else they are unlawful and forbidden by the word of God—and that is the only excuse they have with which to cover the rent which they have made in the Church. But here indeed is an error repugnant to the word of God and to the Primitive Church and contrary to the judgment of all the Reformed Churches. Here is an error from the yoke of which the consciences of Christians must be absolutely emancipated. That it is an error repugnant to Holy Writ is abundantly clear from what has
been said above: that it is likewise contrary to the judgment of the Catholic Church will be clear from the second book of this Irenicum.

Chapter ix.

The oath taken by the Scots in 1581 A.D.

[Objection based on the oath, § 1. First part of the Reply, § 2. Second part, § 3. Third part, § 4. Fourth part, § 5. Verdict against those who were untrue to their oath, § 6.]

1. There are some who, finding themselves overwhelmed by the weight of argument against them on the actual point in dispute, take refuge in a plea about the sanctity of an oath, in order to terrify weaker consciences. James the 1st, they say, and his family and various other persons in the year 1581 swore that they would continue in the doctrine and discipline of this Reformed Church of Scotland, and, so far as in them lay, would defend it all the days of their life.

2. I reply to this objection as follows:—I need hardly say that they swore, not on behalf of others, but to set others an example; following the written rule, always binding in principle, and in this case sealed by the royal command, that not even the parties to the oath themselves were bound by any oath about an unlawful thing, which could not be promised or done without sin. For a man who has promised

1 The allusion is to the King's Confession. As a result of the capture of certain Papal documents in January, 1581, this document was subscribed by James, and by the Duke of Lennox and others of his council and household, and was ordered by royal proclamation to be signed by all the people. The document, after a violent repudiation of Papal authority and customs, asserts the adhesion of the signatories to the Reformed Church, "promising and swearing, by the great name of the Lord our God, that we shall continue in the obedience of the doctrine and discipline of this Church, and shall defend the same, according to our vocation and power, all the days of our lives, under the pains contained in the law, and danger both of body and soul in the day of God's fearful judgment." For the whole Confession see Grub, op. cit. ii. 213–216. The argument of the recalcitrant party here would have applied equally against, e.g., the institution of presbyteries, which were only established a few months after the Confession was signed.
by oath something unlawful has sinned by swearing unjustly: while, if he goes on to carry it out on the plea of the sanctity of an oath, he then sins a second time, since he fulfils his unlawful oath by a criminal act and uses the name of God profanely to cloak his sin. A man therefore who has contracted any such oath ought to exercise penitence for his profane rashness rather than add crime to crime. But perjury of this kind is committed by any who, on matters otherwise in themselves not unlawful but free and non-essential, lay down for themselves a perpetual rule from which they promise on oath that they will never under any circumstances depart;—if, that is to say, such rule conflicts with the nature of the things themselves, with the position and liberty of the church militant, with brotherly love and consequently with the word of God. The oath given to the Gibeonites was given in defiance of God's command\(^1\) and without His permission, and Joshua and the Israelites could not have carried it into execution, had not God specially dispensed them from His commandment, as he did out of compassion for the penitent people of Gibeon and for the honour of His name; that He might not appear either to countenance those who broke treaties or to despise the prayers of the penitent; and for other reasons known to His Divine Majesty. Nevertheless we are not justified on that account in regarding as an example for ordinary use what Joshua and the Israelites did, either when they made or when they kept an oath which was contrary to the express and manifest teaching of God. Nor are we entitled, apart from further revelation, to leave the path of ordinary duty, as God has enjoined it upon us. *That that oath which was given by the chieftains of the Israelites to the Gibeonites was contrary to God's demand is the teaching of Augustine (Comm. on Joshua, chaps. xiii, xviii, xxi and on Judges, chap. xii), Theodoret (Quaest. 13 on Joshua,\(^1\) Sc. as recorded in Deut. xx. 16–18.
son of Nun), Thomas (in 3 Sent Dist. xxxix. 3') and John Calvin (Comm. on Joshua, chap. ix). But, having received a divine dispensation, Joshua, being a prophet and a prince and so having legislative power, ratified the treaty which he had sworn with the Gibeonites; adding however this condition and perpetual law, which he then laid down, that the Gibeonites, they and their posterity, should be bound to hew wood and draw water for the use of the Israelites and the altar of the Lord; while the Israelites were to allow them and their posterity to live. Both nations were bound by this perpetual law, which by his prophetic and political authority Joshua and his princes had made, and which he left in writing. Otherwise, a bare oath, as such, only binds him who swears it in person, or binds him to observe it by his own consent. Hence the warning attached to the third commandment is that God will not hold him guiltless, who taketh His name in vain: it does not say, whose forefathers have taken God's name in vain. And the son does not commit perjury in respect of a father's oath, if he has not bound himself to observe it by any act of his own; as, on entering on an inheritance, heirs do bind themselves by that very fact to the civil contracts of their fathers. But to God's commandments we owe obedience, whether our forefathers promised it or not. And we should have now no controversy about this oath, if our brethren who talk so much about the oath could show that the thing itself which they demand that we shall do was

1 in 3 Sent. Dist. xxxix, i.e. (Notes) on the 3rd Book of the Sentences, Distinctio, xxxix, Question 3. The allusion is to a comment of St Thomas on the celebrated Sententiarum Distinctiones of Peter Lombard, which all the scholastic writers used as a text-book of theology, and on which many wrote and published notes. It is in four Books, and gained for its author the title of 'Master of the Sentences.' A pupil of Abelard, he flourished in the twelfth century (c. 1140), and was reckoned one of "the four labyrinths of France." For his debt to Abelard's Sic et Non, see Prof. C. C. J. Webb's Studies in the History of Natural Theology, p. 205. In his Prologue, Peter Lombard says that his object is to set forth the truth as against heresy by collecting in compendious form the witness of the Fathers to it.
commanded by God, or that the doctrine which they maintain about the obligation of an oath was agreeable to God’s word.*

3. But what our people swore, if rightly interpreted, as it should be, was not unlawful, but can and should be rightly performed by all of us. The Scottish Church never thought of maintaining the opinion that all rites and external ceremonies which are lawfully and laudably used in the worship of God were absolutely unchangeable. Indeed the contrary is stated in the Scottish public Confession of Faith, which is found inserted in the Acts of the first parliament held at Edinburgh under James VI on the 15th December, A.D. 1567. This is confirmed by the decrees of many other parliaments and has been published in Latin in the Summary of Confessions. In that Confession, I say, in the twentieth Article, these explicit words are contained:—*‘The reason why general Councils were convened was not that they might pass some permanent law which had not previously been enacted by God.” Similarly:—*“Another reason for general councils was the desire to establish and maintain good government in the Church; in which it is proper, seeing that it is God’s house, that everything should be done decently and in order. Not that we should think that the same government can be established in all cases, or identically the same order maintained in regard to each ceremony without regard to changes of age, time, or place; for, as ceremonies which men have invented are only temporal, so they can and ought to be changed when they are found to allow of, or even to foster, superstition rather than to edify the Church of God by being used.” But in that lesser Confession which was published later, and which also contained the oath, the Scottish people “assent in their

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* This parliament confirmed the ecclesiastical acts of the Convention of 1560, including the establishment of the “Confession of Faith.” Cf. Lord Balfour of Burleigh, *Presbyterianism in Scotland*, pp. 55, 56.

* I.e. the “King’s Confession” of 1581.
consciences to the greater Confession and form of religion, freely and in all its articles, as being the undoubted truth of God, resting solely upon His written word: and therefore they hate all contrary religion and doctrine and utterly detest it." But, in the present case, this new doctrine which has been hatched recently in the brains of some of our brethren, about the necessity and immutability of gesture and all similar rites and circumstances in the celebration of the sacrament, is diametrically opposed to that Confession; so that, if they are influenced by scruples about their oath, they must remember that they cannot profess this new error without manifest transgression of the same, but ought to hate this error and utterly detest it, as being evidently contrary to the Scottish confession.

4. Furthermore, in that lesser Confession the Scottish people solemnly profess that "they join themselves to the Reformed Scottish Church in doctrine, faith, religion, discipline, and the use of the sacraments, as living members of the same body under Christ as its head; promising and solemnly swearing by that great Name of our Lord God that they will continue in the doctrine and discipline of this Church and, so far as in them lies, will defend the same all the days of their life." Of what contempt, then, and careless violation of that oath are they guilty, who, while professing that they are bound by its obligation, nevertheless separate themselves from the reformed Scottish Church whether in doctrine, or in faith, or in religion, or in discipline, or in the use of the Sacraments! And they have no excuse to offer for their separation except their indignation that the Church should have used, in settling and changing non-essential matters, that liberty which it has always professed was bequeathed to it by Christ, and which it has always promised to guard unimpaired. And that profession was sealed by the Scottish people with a solemn oath.
5. I will add, too, some *ad hominem* arguments.

(1) If the force of that oath was such as to bind them to continue in the doctrine of this Church, by what right were they entitled to neglect the public catechism which had been received in our Church, and to produce in its stead in many parishes new catechisms fashioned at their own sweet will and containing moreover verbal differences? They will reply perhaps that they do continue in the doctrine of the Church and preserve the spirit of the Church’s catechism, but that they have changed some words, it is true, and also the manner and method of presenting them, arguing that these are not of the essence of doctrine or contrary to the received religion, but merely non-obligatory concomitants of it, and that their oath did not bind them to observe any settled and fixed rule in respect of them. Then let those who in concomitant matters allow themselves so much liberty without public authority, and indeed at the cost of great confusion, say by what right they refuse to the Church, which has public authority, that liberty in handling such matters which the Church’s Lord and Advocate bequeathed to it.

(2) In accordance with the public and synodical decrees approved by John Knox of blessed memory and the other Fathers, this reformed Church of Scotland was governed by means of Superintendents, that is, Bishops: for that Superintendents are Bishops, and that both terms, the one Greek, the other Latin, connote an identical office, is the teaching of many authorities, such as Augustine (*de Civ. Dei*, xix. xix: and on *Psalm* cxxvi), Jerome (*Ep. cxlvi*), *Isidore of Spain* (*Origines*, or *Etymologies*, vii. xii, i, 12 and *de Off. Eccl. ii. v, 8), Hugh of St Victor (*de Off. Eccl., i. xl*); while Ambrose uses the word “overseers,” and says, “For what else does Bishop mean but overseer?” (*de Dignit. Sacerdot. vi*).*

1 “overseers” (superinspectores). Thus Peter Lombard (*Sent. Dist. xxiv. 11*) says that a bishop was called *speculator*, “eo quod speculetur et
And there are extant to-day in our public liturgical books of rites rules put out by public authority, and prefixed to the metrical Psalter, about the election and ordination of Superintendents, that is, Bishops. How, then, can those who dream about the immutability of ecclesiastical decrees and even wrap this dream of theirs round with the sanctity of an oath;—how, I say, can they honestly dare to oppose Episcopal government?

(3) Further, the discipline of the Scottish Church, as synodically laid down, enacted that notorious homicides, adulterers, and incestuous persons, and people guilty or lawfully convicted of similar terrible offences, should be summarily ejected from the Church by public excommunication without previous warnings or public prayers: and on that matter, too, the enactments are published in the liturgical book. And yet the Scottish Church did not involve itself in perjury by abolishing that summary excommunication, as it is called; nor is the practice followed by those brethren, who, though by an extraordinary thoughtlessness they shelter their arrogance behind the sanctity of an oath, yet in practice obey the Church’s later decree to the effect that three public admonitions and after that three acts of prayer should precede sentence. But, surely, if that continuance in the doctrine and discipline of this Church to which they swore must be taken to mean that it is not right either for the Church or for any member of this Church ever to go back upon any feature, whether of doctrine, or of discipline, which has been once adopted in lawful Assembly, then those brethren who make perspiciat populum infra se positorum mores et viam." The explanation is apparently taken from Isidore, Etymol. vii. xii, quoted in Gratian, Decretum, i. xxi. 1 (Cleros).

1 The allusion is presumably to the “Form for the Election of a Superintendent” contained in “John Knox’s Liturgy” or The Book of Common Order (1560); cf. Christian Unity Association Papers, Series iii. Paper 7 (Dr. Cooper), “Superintendents and Bishops in the Church of Scotland, 1560–1610.”
such loud boasts about the sanctity of an oath have in the
three examples just mentioned made themselves guilty of
perjury. I might also adduce other instances.

6. If, on the other hand, that continuance is to be taken
to mean—as all fair-minded judges can easily see that it should
be—that the members of this Church of Scotland join them-
selves freely to this Church in its doctrine so agreeable to
the word of God, and in such discipline as, in loyalty to the
same word, the Scottish Church, having regard to place, time,
and other circumstances, may judge expedient; and if that
judgment be applied to the retention or alteration of customary
rites, as the Church claims in Article 20 of its greater Con-
fession to be able, and indeed sometimes bound, to apply it;
—then certainly any brethren, who reject rites which the
Church of Scotland has prescribed agreeably to the word
of God, cannot escape the guilt of being untrue to the oath
which they swore: and they are not adhering to this Church
in this part of Religion and Discipline. And yet all those rites
are lawful and expedient at this time; while some of them
also are permanently necessary, as we have shown above. This
disposes not only of the question of the oath, but also generally
of the objection which has been brought on the score of
change and innovation.

Chapter x.

On the Second Part of the Eighth Problem—i.e. whether
it is lawful to resist the change once it is made.

[Resistance wrong, § 1; the “offence given to the weak,” § 2; the
“ridicule of our enemies,” § 3; the charge of levity, § 4; and idolatry,
§ 5; reply to the charge of reverting to Popish rites, § 6.]

1. Your second point is that, although the change has been
already made, it is still a duty to resist it. I can hardly believe
my ears. Away, then, with that warning of Holy Writ that,
if a man will not hear the Church, he is to be to thee as a
heathen and a publican (Matt. xviii. 17)! Away, too, with the injunction that the spirits of the Prophets are to be subject to the prophets, with the reason added that our God is not a God of disorder, but of peace (1 Cor. xiv. 32, 33)! Away with the words, "Obey those who are set over you and be subject to them" (Heb. xiii. 17)!

2. But you say, "Otherwise we offend the weaker brethren¹, and incur the ridicule of enemies, who twit us with levity and idolatry, and encourage them by reverting to their rites." I reply, If giving offence be in question, since it is not right to give offence to any of the least of God’s people, what are we to say of giving offence to our Church and to neighbouring Churches? What of the offence given to our most religious and powerful King? And in these cases offence, as has been pointed out above, was unavoidable and would certainly have been given: but the offending of the so-called weak brethren which you speak of was avoidable, had the Pastors done their duty: and in fact, offence was not, as we have shown above, given, but, through the wicked resistance of certain Ministers, inexcusably taken. The people would readily be taught; for the Scots claim to recognise the written word of God as the one perfect and also quite clear rule of Christian faith and conduct. Had not therefore certain Pastors (to their shame be it spoken) thrust upon the people their own opinions—the result of men’s thoughts and not of Holy Scripture, though with a kind of veneer of ill-understood and miserably distorted scriptural allusions—and had they not hawked these about among the uninstructed as divine oracles, thereby making them unteachable and fostering their error; but for that, I say, the way would be clear for leading back the wandering flock into the pastures of salvation. Blessed Augustine thus complains (con. epistol.

¹ So B.C.P., The Preface, speaks of "the ease of tender consciences."
Parmen. i. viii) about the unreasonable arrogance of the Donatists: “Though they could not prove what they said they still fall to with sacrilegious fury at criticising Holy Church. They publicly insult us, and do not deign, even for the sake of elucidating truth, to enter into discussion with us. They speak against us, their wickedness not allowing them to be silent, though truth compel them to be dumb.” We have the same complaint to make about certain brethren and their retinue, who, wilfully blinding themselves, hang like wretched little papists entirely on the lips of their masters, with such brutish stupidity that they are neither prepared to give an answer to anyone who asks them a reason for the hope which is in them, nor willing to put up with being taught better things. As Augustine wrote of the Pelagians long ago (Epist. cxciv. 43), “Having no means of escape, they plunge headlong into folly, rather than alter their opinion” (cf. Irenicum, II. ii. 5, 6, 7; viii. 8; xi. 19; xx).

3. “But we incur the ridicule,” you say, “of our enemies, who twit us with levity and idolatry, and we encourage them by reverting to their rites.” I reply, Reflect what ridicule we should have rightly incurred, if we had condemned as unlawful, or even rashly rejected, things in themselves partly useful and partly necessary.

4. Your fear of the charge of levity is without foundation; for to adapt statutes passed about things in themselves changeable to the requirements of place and time is not levity but wisdom. God himself superseded the laws which he laid down about the Mosaic ceremonies. About that change St Augustine (con. Faust. Manich. xxxii. xiv) writes as follows: —“As a sick man has no business to blame the principles of medicine, if they prescribe for him one thing one day, another.

1 So Hooker: “Whether God or man be the maker of them, alteration they so far forth admit as the matter doth exact.” L.E.P. i. xv. i. Cf. Ib. iii. x. 5; Serm. iii. pp. 618, 619.
thing to-morrow, forbidding, too, the use of the medicine which had been prescribed before, because that is the way in which the body is to be cured; so the human race from Adam to the end of the world, resembling, as it does, a sick and wounded man, so long as the corruptible body weighs down the soul, has no business to blame the divine principles of physic, if they lay down that in certain cases a rule is to be observed unchanged, while in certain others one thing is to be done at one time, and something different later; especially as the same principles contained the promise that a different prescription of this kind would some day be given." *Similarly, Augustine also says (Epist. cxxxviii. 4, ad Marcellinum):—"And so what is often said, viz., that a thing once done rightly must in no circumstances be changed, is not true: for, if the occasion which created the governing conditions be changed, true reason generally demands a corresponding change in what had been quite rightly done before; so that when they say that wrong is done, if a change is made, truth on the other hand cries out that wrong is done, if a change is not made. Because either course will be right at the time, if it be altered to suit the variety of circumstances."* Let the Papists, too, hear what the Roman Pontiffs, Innocent III, Clement V and John XXII, say about the mutability of ecclesiastical constitutions. "It ought not," says Innocent, "to be considered blameworthy, if human statutes are sometimes varied to suit the variety of circumstance; especially when change is demanded by urgent necessity or obvious advantage" (Extra¹, de consanguin. et affinit. cap. Non debet).

¹ Extra, i.e. Extravagantes, the name given to additions made to the Canon Law by the various Popes. De consanguin. etc. is the title or subject of the addition in question. The full description of these additional constitutions was Decretales extra Decretum Gratiani vagantes, contracted into Decretales Extravagantes. The most noteworthy collection of these, the Breviarium Extravagantium, known as Compilatio Prima, was the work of Bishop Bernard of Pavia.
Innocent is there, with the approval of the Council, revoking the Papal and synodical constitution passed by Pope Gregory at the Council of Meaux; also that of Pope Julius on the forbidden degrees of affinity in marriage. *And Clement V, in his letter to the Archbishop of Nicosia and his Suffragans about postponing the end of a Council which had been convened says: “Our kindly mother the Church often makes reasonable order about some things, which afterwards, as variety of circumstances and the character of the problems which arise for settlement render advisable, she deliberates upon to better purpose and alters.”* Pope John, too, in his Addition to Canon Law entitled “Concerning Tournaments,” says: “Sometimes what is deliberately laid down is still more deliberately repealed as wiser judgment may suggest.” (Under the above title John revoked the enactment of his predecessor, Clement V, about Tournaments and Jousts.)

5. “But our enemies,” you say, “will twit us with idolatry.” And quite rightly too, if we adored the bread itself as they do the consecrated Host¹: but we loudly assert, and those of our adversaries who know nothing at all about our religion are well aware, that we profess just the opposite and offer our adoration to God alone. You will never by any shift whatever satisfy ignorant enemies, unless the darkness be first driven from their minds. Wanton detractors will not rest, whatever gesture you may use: if you sit, they will throw Arianism in your teeth, or at least a profane contempt of Christ; while, if you kneel, you allege that they charge you with idolatry. The safest remedy against all calumnies is clearness of teaching and the confidence of integrity of conduct. *Prosper² says in the Preface to the second book of his Contemplative Life: “A sound mind is incomparably more bound to seek the fruit of obedience than to avoid the obloquy of unfair

¹ See Appendix II, pp. 240 ff.
² This work is ascribed in Migne to Julianus Pomerius.
criticism."* In the celebration of the Holy Communion we adore Him alone to whom we ascribe the blessing of our redemption through Christ; to whom we render thanks for this great gift; to Him, like the Apostle, we bend the knee, beseeching Him to vouchsafe according to the riches of His glory that we may be mightily strengthened through His spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith etc. But it is to God alone, not to consecrated Bread or Chalice, that we ascribe these benefits; to Him alone we render thanks for this great gift; to Him alone we bow the knee, beseeching Him to vouchsafe etc. Therefore it is God alone, not consecrated Bread or Chalice, whom we adore.

6. "But we encourage them," you say, "by reverting to their rites." You can be sure they do not come to us to find rules for their superstition: rather they snatch the handle we give them for abuse when we affect differences from them, even in lawful things, over nothing. Genuflexion in the giving of thanks or the invocation of the divine Name is not a piece of ritual invented by Papists or contrary to God's Word, but is actually approved in the Word of God as appropriate to a religious act of that kind. Nor do we allow that all practices which have been in vogue among the Papists should be regarded as Popish and the peculiar property¹ of Popery. Think of the sacred Scriptures, the Sacraments, the invocation of the Holy Trinity, the recitation of the Lord's Prayer, the singing of the Psalm;—these things, and many others, some of which they have even abused, have been in vogue among them: and yet the things themselves are not on that account to be reckoned as Popish or marks of Antichrist. We must make up our minds what is lawful for us, and not think something unlawful for us, simply because the Papists have used it, or perhaps even abused it. How many things are

¹ peculiar property. Cf. Hooker's defence of the B.C.P. in L.E.P. v. xxviii. 1; and of the use of the Cross in Baptism, ib. v. lxv. 20.
there, do you think, which heathen or heretics abuse, and which nevertheless are rightly practised by Catholics? Long ago in the primitive Church triple immersion was thought, on the authority of Tertullian (De Corona Militis, iii), to have come down from Apostolic tradition. Later on, however, owing to the Arian error\(^1\), Gregory I, Bishop of Rome, and the Fourth Council of Toledo, decided to adopt single immersion. This we read in Gregory, Book I, Letter xliii, and in the Acts of the Fourth Council of Toledo, Canon 5; where, nevertheless, both authorities admit that either practice at infant baptisms is unexceptionable. And now that the scandal of Arianism has been removed, the adoption of either single or triple immersion is a matter of choice and local usage. In the three immersions, says Gregory, the Trinity of Persons may be denoted, in the single immersion the Unity of the Godhead. Hence it seems probable that the Sabellians, and before Sabellius the followers of Praxeas and Hermogenes, who maintained the same error as he, practised single immersion, because they denied the Trinity of Persons; and it was to testify their abhorrence of this heresy that the Catholics adopted triple immersion at Baptism. On the other hand, when later the Arians made the number of the immersions symbolic of the division of the substance, the Catholics decided to adopt single immersion, to signify the unity of the Godhead; while later still, when the orthodox truth had been firmly established as against the Arians (although some relics of Arianism still exist), it was, and is, a matter of choice whether one or three immersions should be employed.

\(^1\) errorem Arianorum. A similar plea, pro varietate temporum, is advanced in The Preface to B.C.P. on behalf of the Office for the Baptism of such as are of Riper Years: “which, although not so necessary when the former Book was compiled, yet by the growth of Anabaptism, through the licentiousness of the late times crept in amongst us, is now become necessary, and may be always useful for the baptizing of natives in our plantations, and others converted to the faith.”
So, too, the Scottish Church (and similarly the Church of 
the Belgian confederation) decided at the beginning of the 
Reformation that the sacred Supper should be administered 
to the people sitting, owing to the still fresh memory of Popish 
bread-worship; not, however, from any dislike of genu-
flexion in itself. But to-day, when the truth has been 
manifested, and the Popish abuses detected and driven out, 
so that, by God’s grace, no traces of that superstition remain 
in the minds of our friends of the Reformed Religion, it has 
become a matter of choice whether to adopt kneeling or some 
other posture in this action. The rule of Canon Law is not 
to be despised: “when the cause ceases to operate, the 
constitution to which that cause gave rise is annulled.” But 
it seemed to our Church that at the present juncture genu-
flexion was the most suitable gesture; and it cannot be any 
more reprehensible than was triple or single immersion in 
the time of Gregory, who, though himself adopting the former, 
admits that single immersion cannot be in any way regarded 
as reprehensible, *and indeed urges it, when occasion arises, 
on the Spanish. If we may not genuflect in the worship of 
God at the celebration of the Sacrament simply because the 
Papists genuflect to the Sacrament itself, does it not follow 
that it is equally wrong to bow the knee to God outside the 
celebration of the Sacrament? For the heathen do this to 
their idols and false gods, and the Papists employ religious 
genuflexion in their adoration of images and other created 
things. Nor, for that matter, could communicants adopt a 
recumbent or sitting posture, because that posture, too, was 
abused by idolaters who reclined in their shrines (ἐν εἰδωλείοις 
προσκύνεται).

1 artolatriae. Cf. B.C.P. Of Ceremonies: “Furthermore, the most 
weighty cause of the abolishment of certain Ceremonies was, that they 
were so far abused...that the abuses could not well be taken away, the 
thing remaining still.”

2 Regula. Forbes alludes to the rule given by Gratian, II. i.7, c.7, Cessante 
necessitate, debet cessare, quod urgebatis.
NECESSITY, TOLERANCE AND FREEDOM

κατακεῖμενοι, 1 Cor. viii. 10), when they were made partakers of the table of devils (μετέχοντες τραπέζης δαιμονίων, 1 Cor. x. 20, 21). But perhaps you will take refuge in the plea that sitting at the Eucharist is on a special footing, not being something indifferent, but necessary by the Lord's institution, and so not to be abandoned owing to its abuse by others. That way of escape, however, has been closed to you above in Chapter iv. (Cf. also ii. xvi. Pts 4 and 5.)*

CHAPTER XI.

On the Third Part of the Eighth Problem; i.e. concerning Necessity, Tolerance and Freedom.

[The objection stated, § 1; first reply, concerning necessity, § 2; second, concerning mutual tolerance, §§ 3, 4; third, concerning (a) liberty of opinion, § 5; (b) freedom of practice and conduct, § 6; freedom even of practice not prejudiced by ecclesiastical order, § 7.]

1. “By the very fact,” you say, “that the indifference of the gesture is granted, it cannot be obtruded and pressed upon us as necessary; since what things of this kind require rather is mutual tolerance and complete liberty, whether as regards opinion or the usage which opinion at any time dictates.”

2. I reply as follows;—first, by turning the argument back upon you: by the very fact that the posture of sitting is indifferent, it cannot be obtruded and thrust upon us as necessary by necessity of the thing and not changeable by any human authority. Necessity is of two kinds1, either intrinsic of the thing, or exterior of the execution of the act or its practice. Those things are necessary of which the doing or leaving them undone is immediately necessary by prescription of divine law, even though no human decree should come into the case; nor can this necessity of doing or leaving undone be abolished or modified by any human decree. Such, for instance, are the duties of loving God and one's neighbour,

1 Cf. notes on xii. 9 and 11.
not blaspheming, not committing adultery etc., and these we call necessary by the necessity of the thing; but there are other things of which the doing or leaving them undone is not immediately necessary by God's law, but sometimes becomes necessary through the medium of an ecclesiastical or political decree, the same ecclesiastical or civil authority having the power to abolish or modify their necessity: so that if the church or the Prince command us to do the thing it must be done; if to leave it undone, it must necessarily be left undone; the necessity being not that of the object, but that of the obedience due to superiors. Sometimes, again, complete liberty of doing those things or leaving them undone is allowed, and then neither the doing of them nor the leaving them undone is necessary. Such things are called, and in fact are, mean or indifferent.

3. Secondly, a mutual tolerance\(^1\) takes place in indifferent things always on condition that the tolerance is extended, not to the wantonness of those who love to create disturbance, but only to variety in observance. For contempt of the Church when joined with an otherwise even quite mild offence is not tolerable: if such tolerance is introduced, all ecclesiastical authority will perish, order will be subverted, and no heed will be paid to those precepts we have adverted to above about listening to the Church, and about the spirits of the prophets being subject to the prophets, and about the obedience and submission to be shown to those set over us.

4. Of course a wise and kind tolerance must be shown to the weakness of simple people—a weakness which instruction can remove—and to the temperate liberty of those brethren, who, in their conduct in regard to indifferent things, either so eat so that they do not despise him that eateth not, or so do not eat that they do not judge him that eateth (as the

\(^1\) Cf. B.C.P. Of Ceremonies: "And whereas...them both."
Apostle warns us in Romans xiv); when neither party despises the Church of God which Christ bids us hear (Matt. xviii. 17). On the other hand, no toleration should be shown to the unspeakable arrogance and licentious wantonness of those men, who cunningly creep in to exploit our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, with the object of reducing us to servitude, and who dogmatically assert that the Church has no power to modify or repeal earlier ecclesiastical enactments or customs about gesture at the Lord’s Supper and similar things in themselves indifferent and mutable; nay, who go so far as to say that even to the change when once made resistance is still a duty; and who set to work with such pertinacity to rob the Church of that liberty which it has in Christ Jesus, as the gift of the Lord Himself\(^1\). *Nay, even these, too, the Church would tolerate, if they could take it into their heads to tolerate the Church and moderated their feelings to rather more tranquillity and peace. As Augustine says (con. sec. Gaudent. Epist. II. xxviii, and cf. Irenicum, II. iii. 5, 6, 7): “We are the servants of weakness, lest charity should lose any of its due.”* 

5. In all indifferent things complete liberty is left in the matter of opinion, when subjects are not bidden to believe\(^2\)

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\(^1\) A passage of some length occurred here in the two earlier editions, cf. Introd. p. 33 f.

\(^2\) This distinction is implied in the Preface to B.C.P.: “Such alterations as were tendered to us...we have willingly, and of our own accord assented unto: not enforced so to do by any strength of argument, convincing us of the necessity of making the said alterations: for, etc.” Gillespie objects to the distinction (Dispute, I. iii), and says that St Paul (Col. ii. 21) knew nothing of it.

Bishop Paget points out (Introd. p. 97) that Hooker’s aim in regard to ecclesiastical ordinance is to show “probable ground for the law and no necessary reason against it”; in which case, given that the law is promulgled by a body with proper authority, it must be obeyed, always saving cases of (1) clear revelation, as e.g. to St Paul, (2) demonstrative and necessary proof to the contrary. Those two conditions alone entitle conscience to match its probable inference against the probability constituted by the judgment of society.
that what is only indifferent is in itself necessary, nor are they bidden to find the worship of God in that which is not part of God's worship; and generally, when what is false is not obtruded upon men's judgment in place of what is true; and this liberty, to be sure, must always be left to Christians. Yet the papists with their manifold forms of will-worship are not the only people who are anxious to take it away: it is threatened, too, by those brethren who wish to impose upon the necks of Christians the yoke of obligatory sitting as having been commanded by Christ; though Christ did not impose it upon them. They sin, therefore, in striving to rob Christians of the liberty with which Christ endowed them. The Scottish Church, however, never decided that either sitting, or kneeling, or any other gesture adopted by any reformed church, was in itself necessary and comprised in itself the worship of God: like all other reformed churches, it always recognised the indifference and variability of things of that kind.

6. As regards conduct or practice in indifferent things, that ought, of course, to correspond with right judgment. Just as it judges a thing to be in itself indifferent, and so able to be done or left undone without sin, with the consequence that the practice of it, as looked at from an absolute standpoint, is a matter of choice; so, too, it maintains that the exercise of this liberty is subject to rules of order, dignity, peace, and edification, and to the principles of that submission by which Christians are bidden to hear the Church, and to obey those set over them, and the spirits of the prophets are bidden to be subject to the prophets. For these are the laws handed down in Holy Scripture about the exercise of this liberty (Matt. xviii; Rom. xiv; 1 Cor. xiv; Heb. xiii). No one is entitled to abuse his liberty by going against these rules. But further, in the practice of such things, that edifies, which is peaceable; and that is peaceable, which is ordered, and ordered, too, in dignified fashion; while dignity and
order, as constituted by Christ Himself in the Church, require that in such things, instead of each behaving at his own sweet will, the Church should be heard, obedience should be shown to those set over us, and the spirits of the prophets should be subject to the prophets, that is to say, to a lawful gathering or assembly of the prophets; so long, of course, as that necessary liberty in regard to opinion, of which we have spoken, is not taken away, but only rules for practical conduct are laid down, in accordance with that authority which the Lord bestowed on His Church, who is a God not of sedition or confusion, but of Peace. Moreover, in regard to practice itself, such liberty must be left to Christians that the easy yoke of Christ is not changed by any ritual rigidity into a difficult one; lest, instead of Christ's burden which is light, there is not imposed by an unbearable multiplication of ceremonies a heavy human burden: which would mean the Christian people reverting to the practical servitude of ancient Judaism. But, in the present case of the Perth decrees, Christian liberty is not taken away or impaired in any of these three ways. No absolute necessity is attached to things in themselves indifferent, nor is the worship of God made to consist in them; and the observance of the practice they prescribe is not burdensome or hard: rather those decrees square well with the rules we have mentioned above about following those things which make for peace, edification,

1 Thus the Revisers of 1549 (B.C.P. Of Ceremonies) state: "Some (Ceremonies) are put away, because the great excess and multitude of them hath so increased in these latter days, that the burden of them was intolerable; whereof St Augustine in his time complained, that they were grown to such a number, that the estate of Christian people was in worse case concerning that matter, than were the Jews....But what would St Augustine have said, if he had seen the Ceremonies of late days used among us?" Again, in Concerning the Service of the Church: "the number and hardness of the rules called the Pie...was the cause, that to turn the book only was so hard and intricate a matter, that many times there was more business to find out what should be read, than to read it when it was found out."
order, and dignity, and about showing due obedience to those in authority.

7. It may be objected that no liberty of practice seems left to Christians, if practice is to be carried on by the Church’s ordinance. I reply, First, the Church does not lay down rules about all indifferent things, but leaves the practice or omission of many things to private judgment. Secondly, liberty is seen in the very fact that the Church has the power of deciding either way in such matters; and again of varying its decisions, as circumstances may suggest. The liberty of Christians in regard to such matters is also guaranteed by the fact that, even when prescribed by the Church, they are observed by Christians, not because of any necessity inherent in the things considered in themselves, but owing to the necessity of order and obedience; therefore they are free not to do them, and to do what they had formerly given up, if the Church changes its enactments. Fourthly, when in doing or not doing a thing the Church is not despised, and there is no defiance of the mind of the Church, but rather what the Church piously and prudently intends is done, there is plenty of liberty even in the actual special case of a thing being done or not done. Fifthly, indifferent things prescribed by some church admit of liberty of observance in this respect too, that, when a Christian goes to another church where the practice is

1 Cf. B.C.P. Of Ceremonies: “(those that remain) are retained for a discipline and order, which (upon just causes) may be altered and changed, and therefore are not to be esteemed equal with God’s law.”

2 The meaning is not clear; but presumably Forbes is thinking of the different ways in which a prescribed gesture can be carried out. Kneeling, e.g., is interpreted with various degrees of latitude in an ordinary English congregation during Litany.

3 Cf. B.C.P. Of Ceremonies: “And in these our doings we condemn no other nations, nor prescribe any thing but to our own people only: for we think it convenient that every country should use such ceremonies as they shall think best to the setting forth of God’s honour and glory... and that they should put away other things, which from time to time they perceive to be most abused, as in men’s ordinances it often chanceth diversely in divers countries.”
different and where that diversity rests on the public authority of that church, he may freely adopt the practice and custom of that church to which he goes. For in one faith diversity of custom does not harm Holy Church; and we must use indifferent things in accordance with the etiquette of those among whom we live, that we may not cause offence to the churches of God. A man therefore who in the Scottish Church contemptuously and arrogantly abstained from sitting, when that was the custom which it adopted and prescribed, would have sinned against the rules we have mentioned of order, dignity, peace, edification, and obedience; and, by a like token, they are guilty of sin against the same rules, who to-day in the same Church, when it adopts and prescribes the gesture of kneeling, contemptuously and arrogantly refuse to adopt it. The same rules, too, would have been transgressed by a man who went to other churches of the same communion and faith as ourselves, and, instead of adapting himself to their custom in indifferent matters of this kind, was so obstinate as to look down upon their communion, owing to their diversity of outward ritual in such respects.

Chapter xii.2

On the Ninth Problem; i.e. the indifference of certain acts.

[Statement of the Problem or Paradox, §§ 1–4; development of the subject of the affirmative part, §§ 5–7; development of the predicate, §§ 8, 9; clearer statement of the question, § 10; a distinction introduced, § 11; the two parts of the question, § 12; reply to the first part, § 13; solution of the objection about right and wrong, §§ 14, 15; reply to the second part, §§ 16, 17; some useful distinctions in the meaning of necessity, § 18.]

1. "It may be as well," you say, "to subjoin what some persons mutter rather than genuinely think (if indeed they

1 So B.C.P. Of Ceremonies, alludes to "the wilful and contemptuous transgression and breaking of a common order."

2 For a discussion of chaps. xii–xiv see Appendix I.
have any brains), viz. that no act is indifferent; the grounds of this paradox are as follows, etc."

2. I reply, Since you admit that this is such a paradox that no one\(^1\), unless he were destitute of brains, would undertake its serious defence, I cannot see why you should propound it to us, buttressed up too for appearance’ sake with a number of reasons, unless it is that you regard those same subjoined reasons as, if not particularly strong, still probable and not to be despised; or else, as I think more likely, that you want me to express my opinion on this subject and to say what replies seem to me adequate; a task which I for my part will (D.V.) sincerely perform. Before coming, however, to your reasons, I will first examine the thesis itself, and will point out that the argument from the necessity of acts tells against those who make light of ecclesiastical decrees.

3. The Thesis itself must be propounded more clearly, if its meaning is to be discovered. Now an indifferent act you interpret later as “an act which is neither good nor bad,” and you assert that “no act is indifferent\(^2\), but every action is either good or bad.” If I ask you to say of what class of actions you make this assertion, the reasons you adduce do not provide a sufficiently clear answer. At one time you seem

\(^1\) The discussion in Hooker, *L.E.P.* ii. iv shows that, brains or no brains, champions of this paradox were both numerous and insistent in the century following the Reformation. The form in which Lunan alludes to them (*mussitationem*, etc.) suggests that the party was not strong in Scotland as in England, where Cartwright was their leader.

\(^2\) *nullum esse actum indifferentem.* For Forbes, as for the scholastic writers whom he quotes later, the seed-plot of the controversy concerning the indifference of action lay in Peter Lombard, *2 Sent. Dist.* xl, where acts are considered in relation to their end. To the question whether all men’s works derived their moral quality from their end, he replies that some maintain all acts to be *per se* indifferent, before their direction to an end gives them moral quality. He mentions this point of view, however, only to dismiss it. The proposition referred presumably to “actions ... considered in their physical or natural capacity,” which “are all negatively indifferent” (Jeremy Taylor, *Ductor Dubitantium*, iv i. 14), and so contributed nothing to Christian ethics.
to speak only of the actions of a wise Christian man, at another
of the actions of any man whatever\(^1\): nor do you distinguish
between the actions of a Christian and those of a man
alienated from the Christian Faith; nor do you explain of
what kind of good and evil things your question is to be
understood. We will, therefore, analyse your affirmative pro-
position, from which the meaning of the negative part will
become immediately clear.

4. The affirmation is:—"Every action is good or evil": and
from this you infer the negative part, "Therefore no action
is indifferent." We must explain more fully in the first place

\(^1\) This distinction between the acts of those living in faith and those
who are not runs through Moral Theology from the time of Augustine
onwards. The moral quality of an act is determined by its intention, and
the intention is guided by faith. Thus, St Augustine (on Ps. xxxi, quoted
in 2 Sent. Dist. xli) compares 'good' acts done prior to faith to athletic
strength and speed employed off the track. *Ita enim videntur mihi esse ut
magnae vires, et cursus celerrimus praeter viam*; or, as we should say, they
are good raw material. For the various ways in which this distinction is
developed see § 10 of this chapter and the note there on the distinctions
of good; and the note on Hooker's interpretation of 'faith' in this context
in § 17.

Jeremy Taylor has an eloquent passage bearing on the point in *Ductor
Dubitantium* (Works, x. pp. 565 ff.), where he discusses the two 'proverbial
sayings,' "He that is not with me is against me" (Matt. xii. 30), and "He
that is not against us is for us" (Luke ix. 50). The first he interprets of
those who have "entered into the covenant of grace...when our Lord
hath gotten the first victories, when He hath acquired possession as well
as right to a soul, and hath a title to rule alone, then...Christ will not be
satisfied with neutrality and an indifferent undetermined will, but He will
have our love and active choice, and He will be honoured by all our
services." The second, on the other hand, is rather for those who are
"strangers and aliens, persons not admitted into the strictures of the
covenant evangelical," such *e.g.* as Gamaliel; those who obey the Church,
but in ignorance; those who use the light they have, *e.g.* Cornelius
(Acts x), or show some great virtue, like "the chastity of Lucretia, the
honesty of Decianus, the truth of Rutilius, the repentance of Ahab, the
zeal of Jehu," which things (he adds) "are considered by God, and have
their portion of reward"; and those who secretly believe, but are restrained
from profession by doubts or prejudices, like Nicodemus. Such persons
are "with Christ in covenant and desire, in title and adoption, because
they are not against Him in profession and voluntary hostility: but they
must go further, or they die."
the subject of the affirmative proposition and then its attribute; the subject is “Every action,” the attribute, “Good or Evil.”

5. Action must be understood as the action, not of anyone, but only of a rational or intellectual creature;—that is to say, of a man or an angel. And—to confine our present discussion to men—since some actions of any man endued with the use of reason are necessarily good or evil, such as an oath, a sacrifice, wanton hurt to a neighbour, etc.; it is not unreasonably asked whether the same holds good of all other actions of any man whatever who is endued with the use of reason. That is how St Thomas, whose authority you quote later on in your argument, understands this question (in 2 Sent. Dist. xl. qu. 5, and S.T. i.–ii. xviii. 8, 9), only laying down this principle of distinction, viz., that, while there cannot be any act proceeding from deliberate virtue in a man who is living in grace which is not meritorious or the reverse, yet in one who is not living in grace there can be a deliberate act which is neither meritorious nor the reverse but indifferent as regards merit or demerit; though every act of any man whatever who is endued with the use of reason is good or evil. But to limit the discussion let us speak of Christian men: though indeed the proofs which you subjoin can be made to apply to the actions of any man endued with the use of reason. I use the phrase “endued with the use of reason,” because even an infant is homo rationalis, though he has not yet attained to the use of his reason.

6. Again, not every action of a man in the exercise of his rational faculties is in point here; for there are physical actions

1 *rationis usum habentis.* I have used Hooker’s phrase (L.E.P. ii. viii. i) in translating this.

2 *Actiones Physicae.* Forbes follows Aquinas in his treatment of these actions. Thus Aquinas, S.T. i–ii. i. i, says: “Of the actions done by man, those alone are properly called human, which are proper to man as man. Now man differs from irrational creatures in this, that he is master of his own acts. Wherefore those acts alone are properly called human, whereof
which are naturally determined, like being hungry\(^1\), being thirsty, desiring happiness, etc. There are actions which man has in common with plants and with beasts, which, as such, although they are the actions of a man, are yet not properly human actions; like taking nourishment, getting hot, keeping awake, sleeping, etc. All which actions, as such—i.e. as common to man with plants or beasts—are vegetable or animal actions, not human. Because only those actions are human which are proper to man and not common to man with man is master.” St Thomas extends this definition to the exclusion of acts which “proceed from working of the imagination,” such as “when a man moves foot or hand, while thinking of other things, or strokes his beard” (S.T. i–ii. i, § 3; xviii. 9). They would now, presumably, be assigned, not to the imagination, but to motor automatism. Jeremy Taylor comprises such actions as Forbes cites (being hungry, sleeping, etc.) and those which St Thomas assigns to the imagination in one category: “All acts that pass without any consent of the will are indifferent; that is, they are natural, or unavoidable, or the production of fancy, or some other unchoosing faculty, or they are the first motions of a passion, or the emotions of some exterior violence; as the sudden motion of an eye, the head or heart, the hands or feet. Now that these are as indifferent as to grow, or to yawn, to cough or to sneeze, appears because they are of the same nature, and partake equally of the same reason.” But he goes on to distinguish them into (1) those actions “which are so natural that the whole effect also is natural, and cannot pass on to morality or be subject to a command,” like winking in the face of the sun, digesting, etc.; and (2) those “which are at first only natural, and afterwards are nursed by the will and discourse” (Works, x. 558). The distinction is more practical and concise than Forbes’s.

Hooker’s handling of the subject is different (L.E.P. ii. viii. 1). He omits all mention of acts of motor automatism; and claims the simple physical acts which man shares with animals—e.g. eating, sleeping, etc.—for the class of voluntary actions: “because even those things are done voluntarily by us which other creatures do naturally, inasmuch as we might stay our doing of them, if we would. Beasts naturally do take their food and rest when it offereth itself unto them. If men did so, too, and could not do otherwise of themselves, there were no place for any such reproof as that of our Saviour Christ unto his disciples, ‘Could ye not watch with me one hour?’” But Hooker had freed himself to an extent which Forbes had not from the thought-forms of scholasticism.

\(^1\) Appetites, like hunger, thirst, or desire may be called actions as belonging to feeling, which is an “immanent action,” i–ii. iii. 2, § 3. This is a point borne out by modern psychology in its close connexion of affect and conation.
plants and beasts, i.e. which are rational or voluntary. Accordingly, although eating, drinking, sleeping, etc., in so far as they are ruled by reason, are human actions, and so are either good or evil; yet in themselves, in so far as they are vegetable or animal, they are not deemed morally good or evil: though from the circumstances which reason dictates they turn out in a kind of way rational and voluntary actions, and so either good or evil. The determination of these circumstances is the proper business of prudence; and it is in moderating our actions according to the dictates of prudence that moral virtue finds its exercise.

7. We are dealing here, therefore, not with every action of a man, but only with human action. And not with all human action, for all rational action is human. But our present question embraces only voluntary actions: while there are some human or rational actions which are not subject to the will; such as believing in first principles through the intellect, realising the conclusion of a process of demonstration, etc. Such actions, since they are not under the will, but are inevitable for the intellect or mind, are not deemed morally good or evil. We are dealing therefore with voluntary actions.

1 Cf. Scaliger, de subtil. exerc. 307, dict. 27, who speaks of moral goodness as perfectio actus cum recta ratione.

2 Jeremy Taylor (Works, x. 560, 561) thus says that, though "whatever is natural is not considerable in morality," yet "because this which first enters by nature is commanded by God, and can be confirmed and improved by the will, therefore it can become spiritual"; and "to walk, to eat, to drink, to rest, to take physic for the procuring health, or the ease of our labours, or any end of charity to ourselves or others, to talk, to tell stories, or any other thing that is good or can minister good to nature or society, is good, not only naturally, but morally, and may also be spiritually so." Peter Lombard touches on acts of this kind, quae ad naturae subsidium fiunt, in 2 Sent. Dist. xli. 3, and admits their goodness, preparatory to distinguishing the various kinds of good. For a refinement on the example of taking physic for health's sake, see S.T. i–ii. xiii. 3, citing 2 Cor. xii. 10.

only; and by voluntary actions\(^1\) I mean not only those which proceed from deliberate will, but also those which proceed

\(^1\) *voluntaria*. The origin of this insistence on voluntariness is to be traced to Aristotle’s *Ethics*, who, in building up his definition of happiness, devotes several chapters to it. Happiness, which is man’s ethical end, is \(\psi υχής \; \varepsilonνέργεια \; κατ’ \; \alphaρετήν \; \alphaριστήν\), and \(\alphaρετή\) is a \(\varepsilon\;\varepsilonις\; \piροαρετική\). In the processes of the will Aristotle distinguishes between \(\betaολήσις\), wish or intention, and \(\piροάρεσις\), choice or election. For Augustine’s view of acts done under compulsion cf. 2 *Sent. Dist.* xl. 2.

Throughout Catholic Moral Theology the will appears as the efficient cause of all human actions. Peter Lombard (2 *Sent. Dist.* xli. 4–6) cites several passages from St Augustine to the effect that (1) acts done even under compulsion are voluntary, in the sense that they cannot be done without the will; (2) sin resides only in the will; and thus, when St Paul says, *quod nolo, hoc facio*, it is as a man who sins in ignorance may be said to do so both *nolens* and *volens*, i.e. he wills the act, but not the sin; (3) the will is *prima causa peccandi*, as also that *quâ recte vivitur*. St Augustine defines the will as *animi motus, cogente nullo, ad aliquid vel non admittendum vel adipiscendum*. St Thomas endorses and amplifies this definition in *S.T.* i–ii. vi. i f., where he adds that a voluntary act must also be “with knowledge,” i.e. knowledge of an end before them. Even animals are guided to their end by “a sort of knowledge” (a statement which a modern school of biology would strongly endorse), and therefore voluntariness may be extended to their actions. Things done through fear or under compulsion are voluntary, but in different ways; in the case of fear, because the motion of the will is carried towards it, though not for its own sake, but for the avoidance of greater harm; in the case of compulsion, because the will can consent or not to the act which it is compelled to do. As regards the bearing of ignorance on voluntariness, St Thomas says that it “has in it to cause involuntariness, as robbing the mind of knowledge, the necessary preliminary to a voluntary act.” But when the ignorance is due to wilfulness or negligence and so is itself voluntary, it does not make the act involuntary, except in a restricted sense. Ignorance causes absolute involuntariness, only when a man is ignorant of something he is not bound to know, and thence does something, which he would not have done, if he had known.

These principles, which sprang from the good sense of Catholic Christendom and have passed on into the theology of the English Church, were a storm-centre of controversy at the Reformation. Möhler’s *Symbolik*, Part I, §§ iv–xii, brings out clearly how both Luther and Calvin denied all voluntariness whatsoever to human action by their doctrines, on the one hand of Original Sin, on the other of irresistible grace and Predestination. Catholic Christianity had then, and still has, the task of holding, in just balance, to the twin truths of man’s free-will and Divine grace.

The Continental Reformers did much to remove the tyranny of men; but they replaced it by a far more disastrous tyranny of God, a tyranny
from the will without purpose; for even rash anger, and saying to one's brother, 'Raca,' or taunting him with folly without meaning to be insulting, is moral sin, as the Lord tells us (Matt. v. 22); while conversely to feel at once on hearing of a brother's calamity or success the proper compassion or pleasure, even without a deliberate act of will, is moral good. Nevertheless, I call such things voluntary as are subject to the will and the power of choice, because, even though corrupt motions carry us away, so to speak, against our will, yet it was not so in the beginning; but it was in the power of the uncorrupt will of man before the Fall to prevent even those primary motions, if not from existing, at any rate from existing in a form which involved him in

which has not yet died out of Protestantism. Mr Edmund Gosse's *Father and Son* gives, for example, a recent picture of it. It was the result, no doubt, of the overwhelming spiritual experiences through which the leaders of the Reformation passed, and from them it passed into the theological tradition, if not the Confessions, of their followers (cf. Möhler, *Symbolik*, § iv, end). The Catholic Church, whether abroad or in England, before or since the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, has been the home of many spiritual experiences of equal power and efficacy, and has treasured them as most salient verifications of her faith and discipline. But they have never been allowed to disturb "the proportion of faith" (Rom. xii. 6), as that is set forth in Scripture, and interpreted by the Fathers and Doctors of the Church and the *consensus fidelium*, and justified by right reason.

For Jeremy Taylor's treatment of the will as the efficient cause of action, see *Ductor Dubitantium*, Book iv. chap. i.

1 *ex indeliberata*. Cf. Hooker, *L.E.P.* i. vii. 3. "Affections, as joy, and grief, and fear, and anger, with such like, being as it were the sundry fashions and forms of Appetite, can neither rise at the conceit of a thing indifferent, nor yet choose but rise at the sight of some things. Wherefore it is not altogether in our power, whether we will be stirred with affections or no: whereas actions which issue from the disposition of the will are in the power thereof to be performed or stayed." But he adds a little later: "voluntarily we are said to do that also, which the Will if it listed might hinder from being done, although about the doing thereof we do not expressly use our reason or understanding, and so immediately apply our wills thereunto."

2 *pravī motus...existerent*. Forbes here follows St Augustine, quoted in 2* Sent. Dist.* xli. 5, where those 'motions' are referred to Adam's sin as their source.
guilt. Besides, whatever is done by the will, whether deliberate or not, is in some way voluntary. But let us for the time being treat of actions of the deliberate will regarded as deliberative; for that is the scholastic procedure (*in 2 Sent. Dist. xli*).

8. So much on the subject of your proposition: next follows the development of the attribute. Good is manifold, even as attributed to actions. I will note two distinctions:—(1) Good is metaphysical or physical or moral, (2) Good is what is pleasing or what is useful or what is right. Evil is classified in the same way, although metaphysical evil is nothing. But since we are enquiring at the present moment whether there exists some mean between good and evil, we understand only moral good and right and its opposite moral evil and wrong.

9. Again, not all moral goodness is in point here; for there is a kind of morality in etiquette, which is often disregarded without hurt to the conscience: there is also a morality of superstition, like that of the Pharisees about not taking food with unwashen hands (Matt. xv. 1, 2). But neither in Court etiquette, nor in the falsehoods of the superstitious, must we look for that rule of morality which becomes the law of conscience:—“You shall not add to the word which I teach you nor shall you take aught from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God” (Deut. iv. 2). “For in vain is God worshipped according to the commandments of man” (Is. xxix; Matt. xv. 9). In theology, therefore, that is good which God has commanded: for the perfect law of

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1 *Bonum multiplex*. Cf. passage quoted by Forbes from Peter Lombard below, § 10.

2 *aliquod medium*. Forbes uses the word *medium* as equivalent to ‘indifferent,’ *i.e.* that which is between good and evil, being neither. It has no connexion with the Aristotelian τὸ μέσον, which is a ‘mean’ between two extremes, each of which is a moral defect. St Thomas treats of the golden mean in I—II. lxiv. ‘Indifference’ as applied to actions which are neither good nor evil in themselves seems first noticed by the Stoics: cf. Sext. Empir. P. 3. 177 ff., Cic. *de Fin.* iii. 16.
God\textsuperscript{1} is, in theology, the rule of moral goodness, and divine prohibition is for the theologian the perfect index of moral evil: that, therefore, is morally evil for theology which is hateful to God and which defiles the doer; like those evil things which the Lord speaks of as coming out of the heart (Matt. xv. 19); while, on the other hand, that is good which commends a man to God, not, indeed, for merit but for

\textit{1 lex enim Dei perfecta.} Forbes discusses the relation of the Divine Law to human conduct in the first book of his \textit{Theologia Moralis}. Distinguishing sharply between Eternal Law and Temporal Law, he says that Temporal Law is either \textit{(a)} improperly so-called, \textit{e.g.} Natural Law, Praeternatural Law (such as the law of sin and death), and Supernatural Law (like that law of the Spirit, when effecting obedience); or \textit{(b)} properly so-called, when it is either divine \textit{(fas)} or human \textit{(jus)}. (Cf. Gratian, \textit{Decr. 1. i. i}, whom Forbes follows closely in his analysis of human law.) Divine Law, properly so-called, is \textit{doctrinalis quaedam regula operationum et dispositionum}, and is of two kinds: \textit{(1)} that which has moral conduct as its immediate and proximate object—\textit{e.g.} the Decalogue, the Golden Rule—and laws of this kind are necessary by necessity both of means and of precept; \textit{(2)} practical rules, such as those for the building of the tabernacle, etc. which are necessary by necessity of precept only. The first kind, the Moral Law, is Temporal only in the sense that it had a beginning in time; it cannot be changed: while the Ceremonial Law of the O.T., which belongs to the second kind, has been abrogated in the sense of being fulfilled.

The two kinds of necessity here mentioned are considered more fully by Forbes in \textit{I.H.T.} viii. xxvi. 12 and x. viii. 1, 2. \textit{Necessitas medii}, or of the means, may be called natural necessity, and was implanted by God Himself in the original condition of Nature; it attaches to the dictates of natural reason and conscience, and no ignorance or impossibility can exempt one from it. \textit{Necessitas precepti} was called by St Bernard ‘voluntary necessity,’ and derives from positive precept: it attaches to those things, \textit{e.g.} the Sacraments of the Gospel, which could be dispensed with in the attainment of an end, were it not for the positive precept being there. Thus, to adopt a familiar distinction, we may say that \textit{necessitas medii} belongs to Natural as well as to Revealed Religion, \textit{necessitas praecepti} to Revealed Religion only. Aquinas gives reasons why things which were necessary \textit{necessitate medii} were also made the subject of Divine precept, in i–ii. c. 11; and cf. \textit{ib.} xci. 4, where he says that a Divine law was necessary for the guidance of human life, owing to man having a super-natural end, and being imperfect in judgment, knowledge, and power. Hooker, as usual, concludes the truth in a sentence (\textit{Serm. iii}): “Under the name of the Law, we must comprehend not only that which God hath written in tables and leaves, but that which nature hath engraved in the hearts of men.”
reward\(^1\); as the Lord has promised even in the case of a cup of cold water given to one of the least of His people in the

\(^1\) *non ad meritum, tamen ad mercedem*. And thus throughout Forbes speaks of good as 'remunerable' rather than meritorious. He discusses the question fully in *I.H.T.* viii. vi–viii, showing that even the semi-Pelagian views of Cassian—viz. that the initial faith whereby a man asks, knocks, seeks, and which *e.g.* our Lord commended in the Centurion (Matt. vii. 7, viii. 10) merited God's grace as reward—were opposed to Scripture and to the Catholic Fathers. For them, *meritum bonum* was simply "the performance of that duty, to which of God's generous and gratuitous ordinance and promise there succeeds some grace and glory," not, however, in the order of strict quantitative justice (except in the case of our Lord), but as a gift of Divine mercy. This doctrine prevails as late as St Bernard of Clairvaux (*Serm. in Cant.* lxviii. 6, 7), Durandus (*in 2 Sent. Dist.* xxviii) and Scotus (*in 1 Sent. Dist.* xvii), who reject the notion of *meritum condignum*: and St Thomas guards the doctrine most carefully in i–ii. cxiv. i.

Forbes states that the Council of Trent departed from this doctrine in *Sess.* vi. xvi and Can. 32, though he quotes with approval the orthodox phrase in the Canon of the Mass, *non asestitmer meriti, sed ventae largitor*. It is not easy to see where the Tridentine decree goes beyond the Patristic doctrine, but the language of the subjoined Canon would undoubtedly have shocked a Prosper or an Ambrose. The lengths to which the doctrine (let alone the accompanying practices) was carried in the sixteenth century may be seen in Hooker's quotation from the Rhemish Bible in *Serm. III* (Works, iii. 608, ed. Keble); and he does not overstate current belief, when he writes: "In meriting, our actions do work with two hands: with the one, they get their morning stipend, the increase of grace; with the other, their evening hire, the everlasting crown of glory" (*Serm. II.* 33, where the Roman position is handled with admirable force and charity).

Article XIII of the Church of England seems of little value to-day, sufficient stress being laid on the power of prevenient grace, which was the substantive truth upheld by the Catholic Fathers against the Pelagians and semi-Pelagians, in Article X. The *gravamen* of our charge against the Roman doctrine of merit is that it is contrary to "the proportion of faith," and fosters a false and dangerous interest; because any emphasis upon our own deserving—even though that be held to be only of God's free promise—tends to the introduction of a haggling spirit in man towards God, and forgets St Paul's passionate words: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen" (Rom. xi. 34–36).

Forbes, no doubt, prefers 'remunerable' to 'meritorious' as being a more Scriptural word and more assertive of the Divine mercy; though it has been pointed out that the Greek μακάριος, and Latin merces, are properly
name of a disciple (Matt. x. 42). But only those things which
God has forbidden or commanded in His law answer to these
principles.

10. Peter Lombard says (2 Sent. Dist. xli. 3): "Good is
taken in many senses\(^1\), as, for example, what is useful, what
is remunerable, what signifies good, what appears good, what
is lawful, and perhaps in other senses too: and only that
intention is remunerable unto life which is directed by faith:
but that is not the only intention which is what people call
good, for if a Jew\(^2\) or a bad Christian under the influence of
natural piety has relieved a brother's necessity, he has done
good and the will by which he did it was good." We are
speaking now of good which is remunerable unto life. This,
then, must be the sense of your proposition:—"Every
voluntary action is either commanded by God or forbidden
by Him, and so is either morally good or evil and either
commends a man to God for reward or defiles him so that he
incurs guilt and even (unless God spares him) damnation."

11. Your question however is not yet sufficiently pro-
pounded: we must add that distinction observed by St Thomas
used of "the very stipend that the hired workman or journeyman cove-
nanteth to have of him whose work he doth, and is a thing equally and
justly answering to the time and weight of his travels and works rather
than a free gift" (Annot. Rhem. in 1 Cor. iii. 8, cited by Keble on Hooker,
Serm. iii). For a defence of the Christian's "intuition of the reward" see
Jeremy Taylor, Works, x. 655.

\(^1\) Similarly Hooker (L.E.P. ii. viii. 2-4) distinguishes good into (1) what
is approved of God, though with various degrees of approbation, and to
know this the light of Nature suffices (cf. Matt. v. 46; 1 Tim. v. 8); (2) what
is not only allowed, but required "as necessary unto salvation, by way of
direct immediate and proper necessity final," wherein, the light of Nature
being insufficient to instruct us, Scripture is our chief guide; (3) what is
not required for salvation, yet has special reward in heaven—i.e. counsels
of perfection, upon which "dependeth whatsoever difference there is
between the states of saints in glory." The "remunerable good" of Peter
Lombard and Forbes corresponds to these last two of Hooker's divisions,
and is the one form of good which is in point in the Augustinian and
scholastic teaching mentioned in the note on § 3.

\(^2\) \textit{si quis Judaeus}. Cf. passage from Jeremy Taylor cited in note 1, p. 149.
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Aquinas (S.T. i–II. xviii. 8, 9). An action is either considered in the act defined\(^1\), i.e. in its kind or according to its species; or it is considered in the act as done, i.e. in actual practice or in the individual. St Thomas accordingly devotes two distinct articles in the passage quoted to this subject, and he concludes that there are found acts which as to their species are indifferent, i.e. which are neither good nor evil; though he denies that in the case of individual acts proceeding from deliberate reason.

12. This question therefore contains two parts:—viz. whether every voluntary action is (1) in species, (2) in the individual act, good or evil.

13. To the first part of the question I give a negative answer. For there are many voluntary things, things, that is, which are subject to man’s choice, which, considered as to their species, are neither good nor evil, i.e. neither defile a man in God’s sight, nor commend him to God for reward. St Thomas gives an example—lifting a straw from the

\(^1\) *actu signato*. *Species* and *individuum* are used throughout this passage as technical terms, and I have therefore translated them by ‘species’ and ‘individual’ respectively; though I have sometimes used ‘particular’ for the latter, as it is not exposed to ambiguity. For *signatus* I have used ‘defined,’ as Schütz in his *Thomas-Lexicon* translates it by *bezeichnet*, *bestimmt*. [Prof. Sorley, in recommending this translation to me, writes: “I am suggesting ‘act defined,’ because ‘definition’ would not reach the individuality of the particular.”]

Jeremy Taylor agrees with St Thomas here both in the conclusion and in the grounds of it (*Ductor Dubitantium*, iv. 1. 18 [Works, x. 559]): “No action of the will is indifferent, but is either lawful or unlawful, and therefore good or bad. For although there is in many actions that which the schools call *indifferentiam secundum speciem*, ‘an indifference in the kind’ of action, or in respect of the object, yet when such actions come under deliberation and to be invested with circumstances, they cannot be considered at all, but that first they must be considered to be lawful or unlawful; for that very objective or specific indifference supposes the action lawful: and he that does a thing though but with that deliberation and precaution, does do well, unless there be something else also to be considered, and then it may be he does better, or it may be ill; but when it is come as far as to be chosen and considered, it must be good or bad.”
ground\(^1\). And such things are found not only in ordinary life, but also even in the worship of God. For instance, if a man is going to say his private prayers in the morning, it makes no difference whether he does it in bed or after he has dressed, in his bedroom or library, or out of doors in his garden or in the fields, provided in each case he prays to God with equal earnestness and reverence; nor does it make any difference whether anyone preaches the gospel in a gown or a surplice; or, similarly, whether one takes a service with or without gold in his purse, under a roof or under the open sky; whether one listens to a sermon with hat on or with head uncovered, etc. That is good in species which has been so commanded by the law of God, that it is not right for a man to disregard it or do anything contrary to it; and that is evil in species which has been so forbidden by the law of God, that it is not right for a man to allow or prescribe it on any pretext whatever. An example of the former is love of God and one’s neighbour; of the latter, blasphemy, adultery, etc. And the good or evil quality of things of this kind is not to be gauged from any authority of man, or any change of place or time or other circumstances of that sort; but it is always and everywhere constant, so long as the law of God remains. That, therefore, which, in accordance with changes of place or time, or with human authority and other circumstances of that kind, without any change of the divine law, can or ought to be done or left undone without sin, because there exists no divine command or prohibition about doing it or not doing it, if it be considered as to its species—that is, for theology, neither good nor evil in its species, and so is indifferent or mean. For, if it were good, nobody could do the opposite without sin; while, if it were evil, nobody

\(^1\) festucam. Forbes adopts this illustration, which had become classical (Hooker, *L.E.P.* ii. i. 2 and Keble’s note), and extends it to the analogous cases of the attitude, time, place, and ritual of prayer, considered specifically—*i.e.* according to the revelation of God’s will in Scripture.
could do it without sin. And it is in this category, as is clear from earlier chapters, that we must place the gesture of sitting\(^1\), standing, or kneeling, at the Lord’s Supper. Likewise, the place, time, and other circumstances of that first Supper are not enjoined upon us nor forbidden; and many similar examples could be added.

14. A possible objection seems to be that every action is as to its species either right\(^2\) or wrong, and therefore either morally good or evil. For we are speaking of the theological rightness of those things which are right morally and in God’s eyes. But every voluntary human action is either right or not right; if it is not right, it is wrong; and, if it is not wrong, it is right; and the result is that every action is either right or wrong: but everything that is right is good, and everything that is wrong is evil. For we are bidden to follow those things that are right, \(\tau\'\alpha\ \kappa\alpha\lambda\alpha, \ \tau\alpha\ \\acute{\alpha} \gamma\nu\alpha, \ \tau\alpha\ \epsilon\upsilon\phi\eta\mu\alpha\), and to shun those things that are wrong or base, \(\tau\alpha\ \alpha\iota\sigma\chi\rho\alpha\ \kappa\alpha\\lambda\ \sigma\upsilon\ \kappa\eta\ \\acute{\alpha} \nu\kappa\ \acute{n}\gamma\kappa\omicron\nu\tau\alpha\) (\(1\) Pet. ii. 12; Eph. v. 3, 4; Phil. iv. 8; Tit. iii. 8).

15. I reply, Right is of two kinds: (1) necessary right\(^3\), if I may use the phrase, such as the duties which are commanded by the law of God; (2) right which is lawful, indeed, but not necessary\(^4\), being morally free. The former commends

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\(^1\) gestus sedendi. So Bishop Jewell, in Art. III, Div. 29 a of his reply to Harding: “Kneeling, ‘bowing’, standing up, and other like are commendable gestures and tokens of devotion, so long as the people understandeth what they mean, and applyeth them to God, to whom they are due.”

\(^2\) honesta. Forbes here introduces into the discussion the typically Anglo-Saxon categories of right and wrong, and fits them on to the scholastic classifications, representing, as they do, good and evil not in the abstract, but after they have entered into the moral consciousness and become the subject of choice and action.

\(^3\) honestum necessarium is equivalent to bonum remunerabile, and is necessary necessitate rei, ‘by objective necessity,’ because commanded by Divine Law.

\(^4\) licitum quidem, at non necessarium. Forbes’s second division of right would cover the specifically indifferent things mentioned by St Thomas in 1–11. xviii. 9, at least in so far as they were capable of being done from a good motive.
a man to God for reward, and its opposite defiles a man in God's eyes; an example of which is chastity or continence, which is commanded by the law of God. The latter, on the other hand, does not commend a man to God for reward, nor does its opposite defile him in God's sight. An example of this kind of right is marriage, as the Apostle testifies (I Cor. vii. 38; Heb. xiii. 4). The former may be called Laudable Right, for glory, honour, and praise are promised to those who do it (Rom. ii. 10; I Cor. iv. 5). The latter may be called Unexceptionable Right, because it is not wrong or sin, but is done without sin. The former is right formally and positively or in an inclusive sense, because it includes in itself formally moral rightness; while the latter is right in an exclusive sense and through its possible consistency or compatibility, so to speak, with formal and positive right: for right which is only in itself unexceptionable is none the less quite right, because it is done without sin. Thus the Apostle says that marriage may be contracted without sin, and this is its exclusive consideration, whereby baseness is excluded: likewise, because it can be done without detriment to laudable rightness and is consistent with that; for marriage is consistent with chastity or continence, which is commanded by God's law; and this is its social consideration, when it is regarded from the point of view of its consistency with formal right. Not every action therefore is, in the formal sense, right or wrong; for there is found an intervening class of actions which, while not in the formal manner right or wrong, are in their own way right, because unexceptionable: and these actions are as to their species mean or indifferent. And they can be considered in two distinct relations. A mean right

1 Cf. St Thomas, i-ii. xviii. 5: "For that is good for every being which suits it in regard of its form; and that is evil for every being which is in conflict with its form"—the form being that constitutive principle of a thing by which it is what it is: the ἐλὸς or τὸ τῇ ἐξουσία of Aristotle.

bifariam. So Aquinas, i-ii. xviii. 5: "But we must observe that a
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action can be contrasted either with another mean right action or with a wrong action. The first contrast arises from the species of the actions themselves; the second contrast arises from the nature of rightness. For example: marriage regarded as to the species of the action and apart from moral considerations can be contrasted with celibacy: while, from the point of view of moral rightness, both of them are in contrast with fornication. Regarded in the first of these two ways the mean right in question is not necessary but free, because it can be chosen or left alone without sin. But, regarded in the second way, it has a kind of moral necessity, that is to say, a conditional necessity, so that, provided it be done at all, it must be done without sin; and this necessity does not touch the act itself, but the manner in which it is done. For a man is free to do or not to do the act itself; but, granting that the act be done or not done, it must be done or not done without sin and without detriment to laudable rightness. This was what the Apostle meant when he said that a widow was free to marry whom she would, but added as a necessary condition that, if she married, she must marry only in the Lord (1 Cor. vii. 39). This added conditional necessity does not make the act of marrying in itself necessary or even abstinence from marriage necessary; the question of marrying or not it leaves free. To the objection, therefore, that every action is right or wrong, and that, if it is not right, it is wrong, I reply:—if it is not right in any way, it is wrong; but it may happen that an action is right in one way, which is not right in another way, and yet not for that reason wrong; this is the case with difference of object makes a difference of species in acts when they are referred to one active principle, whereas, if they were referred to another active principle, the same difference of object would make no difference of species”—a point which he illustrates in § 3. In Forbes’s example, if the generative power be taken as the active principle, marriage and celibacy having different objects belong also to different species; but, if the moral reason be taken as the active principle, the difference of object makes no difference of species.
all right actions which are free and lawful, not being commanded or necessary; and such actions are as to their species mean or indifferent.

16. But although things that are mean when regarded as to their species are neither good nor evil, yet it sometimes happens that in the particular case, owing to circumstances which constitute a kind of secondary and specialized group of species, they take on the character of good or evil; according, that is to say, as the necessity of the concomitant good, or the wickedness of the concomitant evil, demands that they should be done or not done, practised or not practised. Hence it sometimes happens that what it was best to do yesterday, it may be best not to do to-day; while later on again you will be able to do it or not to do it as you choose. Take, for example, triple immersion or affusion in baptism; there was a time before the appearance of Arius when practically nobody could omit the practice without offence; while later on owing to the Arians there were places where it could not be adopted without offence; until at last its adoption or otherwise began to be a matter of choice, and that too without any offence. We have explained this above (x. 6). Nor are differences due to differences of time the only ones in point; there are often cases of different customs found in different churches even at the same time, so that the same thing in one church cannot be done without offence, while

1 See Appendix 1, pp. 197 ff.
2 accipiant rationem boni aut mali. In other words, the specific indifference of an act does not guarantee individual indifference in all cases. This caveat is expressly mentioned by St Thomas, 1-II. xviii. 9 § 1: “For an act to be indifferent in its species is conceivable in more ways than one. One way would be, if it were due to the act in virtue of its species that it should be indifferent, and at that rate the objection holds, that there is no species but what contains, or is capable of containing, under itself some individual: only no object is indifferent in virtue of its species in that way; for there is no object of human action but what may be directed either to evil or else to some good through the end in view or some circumstance of the case.”
in another it cannot be left undone, and in yet a third it can be done or left undone at will. Where there is one faith, diversity of custom does no harm.

17*. "It happens sometimes," says St Thomas, "that an act is as to its species indifferent, which however is good or evil when considered in the individual or particular" (S.T. i–ii. xviii. 9). The allusion here is to the primary species, apart from any consideration of circumstances which constitute a specialized species; and it is with this specialized species that all the individuals comprised under it, or to which that specialized species applies, agree in their moral quality of good, evil, or indifference. Circumstances of this kind are:—subject, object, place, auxiliaries, grounds, manner, time. And these are, in a way, differences of species. St Thomas speaks of them as, "in the process of reason which orders them, the principal condition of the object determining the species" (S.T. i–ii. xviii. 10). The moral rules, which are handed down in Holy Writ with regard to actions from the point of view of these circumstances, do not look immediately to the particular action, but to its species, and it is through the medium of that species that they apply to all the individuals which it covers. We have therefore for the purposes of syllogism one universal proposition thus: \[\pi\alpha\nu\ \delta\ \omicron\upsilon\kappa\ \epsilon\kappa\ \pi\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\omega\sigma\varsigma,\ \alpha\mu\alpha\rho\tau\iota\alpha\ \epsilon\sigma\tau\iota\nu\] i.e. every action which is not of faith is sin: but this individual action is not of faith: therefore, etc. Similarly, every action which as to its species (I mean primary species) is mean or indifferent, when the necessity of piety or charity demands its exercise, is good and must

1 Forbes packs into this powerful section a large amount of material which passed through St Thomas's hands in the Prima Secundae. i–ii. vii and xviii are especially in his mind.

2 Forbes quotes the line, Quis, quid, ubi, quibus auxiliis, cur, quomodo, quando.

3 \[\pi\alpha\nu\ \delta\ \omicron\upsilon\kappa\ \epsilon\kappa\ \pi\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\omega\sigma\varsigma;\ where\ faith\ means\ "a\ full\ persuasion\ that\ that which\ we\ do\ is\ well\ done"\] (Hooker, L.E.P. ii. iv. 2).
necessarily be done: but this individual action is an action which in regard to its primary species is mean or indifferent, and the necessity of piety or charity demands its exercise at this time: therefore this individual action is good and must necessarily be done. The author of the Dispute therefore was very wide of the mark (as the saying is), when he wrote\textsuperscript{1} that these circumstances (subject, object, place, etc.) are a principle of particularization of moral action, and that therefore, although many actions are found which are indifferent as to species or in the act defined, yet there is no action which is indifferent in the individual or in the act done: and so an action in the individual is good or evil, though in species it may be not good or evil, but indifferent. For the fact is that these circumstances are conditions of the object which determines the species, and so are specific differences; a fact which is clear even from the very examples which the Author of the Dispute adduces in his book. He says:—"Subject; If a magistrate puts a criminal to death, the action is good; but if a private person does it, the action is evil. Object; If a man takes his own property, the action is good; if he takes somebody else’s, the action is evil." Anyone can see that these are examples of species, and it is from their moral quality of good or evil that we get the good or evil quality of the individuals comprised under those species. For no action is good in the individual, or in the act done, which is not good according to some species or in the act defined. And the quality which an action has in its moral class, in the act defined, and according to its specialized species, it has also in the act done and regarded in the individual, whether good, evil, or indifferent. Nor have we any other ordinary means of judging about individual actions as to whether they are morally good, evil, or indifferent, except by referring them to common laws passed about species, so that the good, evil, or indifferent,

\textsuperscript{1} Dispute, iv. ii. 3.
quality of the species enables us to know the good, evil, or indifferent, quality of the individuals comprised under those species. But the principle of particularization of moral action belongs to metaphysics, and does not affect the good, evil, or indifferent, quality of the action; it merely gives to an action an actual singular existence, and places it in the number of individual existent things under its proper species.

18. So if anybody argues, with a view to inferring the necessity of not kneeling at Holy Communion in the Scottish Church, from the fact that the thing is as to its species indifferent, while it is necessary when it is found in the individual, I will reverse the argument and prove from it the necessity of kneeling at the present time; because, in a matter which is in respect of its primary species free, the necessity of practising it (without prejudice to liberty of opinion) is imposed upon us by the necessity of obeying the Church\(^1\) and of order, dignity, peace, and edification. And this necessity of obedience in such cases is imposed upon us by the law of God; so that although kneeling in the celebration of this sacrament is not antecedently and immediately necessary by divine law (as the taking and consuming of the sacrament are necessary) but is free in this respect; yet, on the other hand, it becomes necessary for us now by consequence and through the medium of the lawful authority of the Church; not, that is to say, by necessity itself, but by the necessity of obedience, order, peace, etc. And when due regard is had to this obedience and order, as matters stand, kneeling,

\(^1\) in re secundum...obediendi Ecclesiae—cf. Jeremy Taylor (Works, x. 22):—"Now if they mean that they are not bound to those things by any law of God under the Gospel, it is very true; that is, Christ gave us no commandment concerning them; but if it be meant that these things are left so free that there can be no accidental and temporal obligation, rule, or limit made concerning them, this is that I am now disputing against."
though otherwise indifferent in itself, has turned out to be at the moment, so far as practice is concerned, in a way necessary even by divine law; so that it cannot be left undone through disobedience and contempt without sin, i.e. without violation of divine law. John Calvin has an admirable passage on necessity of this kind in his Institutes (iv.x.5, 30, 31). You will find his words quoted by us in the second book of this Irenicum (ii. iii. 2, 3; xi. 17; iv. 3).

CHAPTER xiii.

[The question of “the necessity and indifference of particular acts” propounded with St Thomas’s argument, § 1; contrary passages from St Bonaventura, Scotus, Durandus, and St Thomas himself, §§ 2–5; another reply based on common principles, e.g. the distinction between an act itself, and its direction and the agent’s faith; together with a clearer statement of the position of our dispute, §§ 6, 7; the reply harmonized with St Thomas’s doctrine, § 8; objection, § 9; and its solution, § 10; principle laid down, § 11; the decision to do an act in itself free adds nothing to it in point of moral goodness, § 12; analysis of the quality of evil, § 13; wretchedness of those who persist in error, § 14.]

1. But you will ask me what we are to think about that opinion of St Thomas Aquinas, whereby he concludes that it is necessary that every act of a man proceeding from deliberate reason when considered in the particular is good or evil; and that for this reason every act proceeding from deliberate reason is either ordered to a due end—say, the glory of God—(since it is the part of reason to order actions) and so agrees with the order of reason and therefore bears the character of good; or else is not ordered to a due end, and by that very fact is at variance with reason and bears the character of evil (S.T. i–ii. xviii. 9).

2. I reply, We could set against St Thomas¹ St Bonaventura

¹ Thomae, cf. I.H.T. ix. v. 27. Floruerunt Bonaventura et Thomas circa annum Dom. millesimum ducentesimum sexagesimum (1260).
and Scotus, who say that there are many indifferent acts of that sort, even in respect of their existence quâ moral\(^1\) (in 2 Sent. Dist. xli). The same teaching is given by Durandus (in 2 Sent. Dist. xl. 2) and by St Thomas himself (in 2 Sent. Dist. xl. qu. 5–7) where St Thomas speaks of some actions as indifferent. "To speak," says St Bonaventura, "as though good and evil constitute an immediate classification of deliberate action, because a man does nothing deliberately which God does not either reckon to him for reward or impute to him for demerit, has the effect of making the way of salvation either too broad or too narrow. For that an act may be meritorious—(the schoolmen use the word 'meritorious' of what should rather be called 'remunerable before God with eternal reward')—they will either say that an actual relation of that act to God in the particular case\(^2\) is

\textit{Scotus} florebat anno Dom. millesimo trecentesimo (1300). \textit{Durandus} circa annum Domini millesimum trecentesimum vigesimum (1320).

\(^1\) secundum esse quod habent in esse morali. "A quæstiones differunt esse from essentia..." 'Esse' is just 'being'; the Dominican translators of Aquinas render it by 'existence,' and perhaps that is the clearest term. Aquinas has 'esse naturale,' 'esse intentionale,' 'esse substantiale,' 'esse accidentale,' etc., but apparently not 'esse morale.' The essence, on the other hand, will be the properties connoted by the definition of the species. If I were to try to construe the words 'etiam secundum esse quod habent in esse morali,' I might fall into the awful phrase, 'even in respect of the existence which they have in their moral existence,' which might mean much the same as 'even in respect of their existence quâ moral.'" [Prof. W. R. Sorley.] In one sense indifferent acts are by definition outside morality altogether; but in another they are not, if morality is the conduct, rather than the rules of conduct, of rational man. St Thomas had asserted that no particular acts could be indifferent, because all were either directed or not directed to a due end. Forbes replies by quoting the authority of other scholastics for the existence of a mode of relation of an act to the end of action, which did not remove its indifference: see § 4. 'Esse morale' is presumably the phrase which Forbes gives to the relation of an act to its due end.

\(^2\) relatio in particulari. Jeremy Taylor, Works, x. 647: "This is not so to be understood as if we were to make actual directions and dedications of every single word, or little minute action we do, to the glory of God: this is a snare to conscience, and an hypochondriacal devotion which some friars have invented, and attributed to St Gertrude..."
required: or they will say that a relation which is one of habit and in general is enough. If they say that a relation in the particular case is required, the way of salvation is made too narrow, because then in every act which a man does not refer actually to God he earns demerit and sins; which is a very severe thing to say. If, on the other hand, habitual intention in general were enough, then, when anybody had resolved in his heart to serve God at the beginning of a year or month or week or day, all the works which he did after that, even though he never thought about God, would be meritorious for him. But, if this be said, the way of salvation is made too broad and easy: and that is contrary to the authority of the Saints, who say that it is very narrow."

3. Durandus, too, says (in 2 Sent. Dist. xl. 2, § 11): "We must maintain that not every act proceeding from deliberation wins merit or incurs demerit for eternal life; but there are several actions which are indifferent, even in those who are living in grace."

4. Scotus (in 2 Sent. Dist. xli) suggests three distinct ways in which an act of charity may be related to the ultimate end:— "An act of charity," he says, "may be referred to its ultimate end in three ways: (1) Actually;—when, thinking actually of the end, the agent loves it and wills something because of it; (2) Virtually;—as when from knowing and loving the end the mind has passed to willing this particular thing to that end; when, for instance, from the knowledge and love of God, which belongs to the higher part of our nature, the lower part passes to the consideration that such and such an act—say, of penitence—must be undertaken, and afterwards carries it out; willing it, but not now referring it to its end, because it is not now actually known or loved: (3) Habitually1; as,

1 Habitualiter. Jeremy Taylor (Ductor Dubitantium, iv. ii. 3–6: Works, x. 648, 9) does not allow this distinction between virtual and habitual relation, "Although our intentions by how much the more they are
for example, any act referable to an end, so long as it is done in charity\(^1\) which is the principle of such reference, may be said to be habitually referred to that end.” Scotus concludes in that passage that a man is not bound always to refer his act to God actually or virtually; for God has not laid this obligation on us. “And so,” he continues, “there are many indifferent acts in which there is neither such lack of direction as suffices to give them the character of sin, nor have they the character of goodness sufficiently to earn merit; because habitual relation by itself does not appear sufficient to earn merit, nor indeed does that belong to any relation below virtual relation.” There exist, though, many human actions freely prompted, which are related to the ultimate end neither actually nor virtually, although they are not without habitual relation to it.

5. St Bonaventura says on the same passage:—“Not every action which is not ordered to God as its end is evil. For some actions are not so ordered owing to the mind being inordinately absorbed with creatures: some are not so ordered owing to the carelessness of the agent: others, again, are not so ordered actual, by so much they are the better, yet it is not necessary that they be always actual; but they are right if they be virtually and habitually directed unto God: that is, that by some general designation of our actions, by the renewing of our intentions actually in certain periods of time, as in the morning of every day, or at evening, or both, or in every change of employment, we have an actual intuition on God and God’s glory; and then, though we only attend to the work without any more actual consideration of the end, the intention may be right, and the action signified.” To this mode and to the mode of actual relation of an act to God, Jeremy Taylor adds two others; an interpretative relation, “by equivalence and interpretation,” which is akin to the ‘virtual’ relation of Scotus; and a consecutive relation, by way of consequence and acceptation.

\(^1\) charitate, quae est.... Cf. Peter Lombard, 2 Sent. Dist. xxxviii. 1: “Charitas ergo cujus latum mandatum est, finis omnis consummationis est, id est, omnis bonae voluntatis et actionis, ad quam omne praeceptum referendum est.... Omnia praecepta divina referentur ad charitatem. De quâ dicit Apostolus, 1 Tim. 1: Finis praecepti est charitas de corde puro, et conscientiâ bonâ, et fide non fictâ. Omnis itaque praecepti finis charitas est, id est, ad charitatem refertur omne praeceptum.”
owing to the agent’s weakness and misery\(^1\). Actions of the first kind are distinguished as sins of commission; actions of the second kind as sins of omission; but actions of the third kind are not evil in either way, but are indifferent. It must be granted, therefore, that the division of action into good and evil does not rest on immediate differences, inasmuch as a mean between these differences is sometimes found; whether the action be considered from the point of view of the kind of act or in respect of the agent.” The effect of this admission is to overthrow the immediate distinction implied by St Thomas.

6. But because it makes no odds to our present discussion whether you embrace the opinion of St Thomas or of St Bonaventura and Scotus, we will reply along the lines of common principles. We say, therefore, that a distinction must be made between the act itself, and the direction of the act and the agent’s faith. For it may happen that an act, which is in its higher species good, is not directed to a right end and does not proceed from faith, as when hypocrites give alms; and likewise that an act evil in itself is undertaken apparently with a good end, and yet the act is not made thereby in itself lawful, because we are not entitled to do evil that good may come.

7. To apply this to the question of mean indifferent acts;—when we defend indifferent acts even in the particular, we do not deny that a relation of the act to God, at least in the habitual sense, is necessary; but we deny the necessity of the act itself, and that its goodness is remunerable to life

\(^1\) So Jeremy Taylor, *op. cit.* iv. i. 15: “Omissions of acts are oftentimes indifferent, even always when the omission is not of a thing commanded or morally good from some law or sufficient principle of morality, as perfection, counsel, praise and fame, worthiness and charity. The reason is, because omissions may come in upon a dead stock, and proceed from a negative principle, from sleep and forgetfulness, from a lethargy or dulness, from differing business and diversements.”
eternal. And in this question, which we are now debating with our brethren, that is good, which is necessary or to which God obliges us; while that is mean, which is free. *Although, indeed, this is denied by the author of the Dispute who says¹:—"By no means: nay, we call those actions morally good and not indifferent, which agree with right reason, whether they are necessary or not." But soon after he forgets this and in the following chapter contradicts himself; for he says:—"Further, we contend that a thing is never lawfully to be done, unless it is also necessary, not indeed by absolute or metaphysical necessity, but by logical or inferential necessity². For the thing is either expedient or not expedient. If it is expedient, it ought to be done and must necessarily be done, nor is it right to leave it undone: while, if it is not expedient, it is not lawful to do it. And so it is never a matter of indifference or choice for us to do or not to do it, as we please." In these words the author of the Dispute acknowledges that the question stands as I have put it; for we are treating now of actions of deliberate will quâ deliberate—see above, Chapter xii, § 7*: nor are we disputing now about the hypothetical necessity of the relation or direction of all our acts to God, so that they may be in a sense good or not evil, if they are done. Although St Thomas, too, admits that "it is not the case that actual intention ordering to the ultimate end

¹ *Dispute*, iv. ii. 4, iii. 9.
² *consequentis...consequentiae*. "'Necessitas consequentiae' is the logical necessity that a certain conclusion follows from given premisses. 'Necessitas consequentis' is the metaphysical necessity of a certain result following from something else. It is also a *conditional* necessity as the ground is extrinsic to the consequence. It is thus distinguished from (the other kind of metaphysical necessity called) *absolute* necessity, in which the ground is intrinsic (*e.g.*, necessity of three angles of a triangle being equal to two right angles). So Aquinas." [Prof. W. R. Sorley.] What Gillespie means is that, given the premiss that a thing is expedient, it follows by logical necessity that it is therefore necessary to do it. The difficult Latin phrase is in Gillespie's text and is not Forbes's translation, cf. *Dispute*, iv. iii. 9.
should always be conjoined to any action; but it is enough
that sometimes all the ends of our acts should be actually
referred to the ultimate end. So it is when anyone thinks of
directing his whole self to the love of God: for then whatever
a man orders towards himself will be ordered towards God:
it will be enough, that is to say, that a man should habitually
constitute the end of his will in God, and that this habitual
ordering should sometimes issue in action” (in 1 Sent. Dist.
i. qu. 3\(^1\), and in 2 Sent. Dist. xl. qu. 5, 6). We know from the
Apostle’s precept that whether we eat or drink, whensoever
and wheresoever and with whomsoever we eat or drink or do
anything at all, it must all be done to the glory of God
(1 Cor. x. 31). As to this necessity of direction, at least in an
habitual sense, if the act be once granted, there is no dispute
between us; but the question at issue is about the necessity
of the act defined itself or of the doing of that act, *or, as
the author of the Dispute puts the matter, whether there is
such a thing as indifference in the act done.* And we say that
a particular act is often done by us even with deliberate will
without sin which we could equally well deliberately leave un-
done, or do its mean opposite even without sin; although whether
we do neither, or do this act or its opposite, everything must be
done in the fear of God and be referred to God’s glory. And such
actions or abstentions from action we call indifferent or free, in

\(^1\) in 1 Sent. Dist. i. qu. 3. This Distinctio deals with the Mystery of the
Trinity; the main problem discussed being the difference between enjoy-
ment and use. Thus, according to Augustine, to use is to take something
into the power of the will; while to enjoy is to use with joy—but with
enjoyment of the thing used, not of the anticipation of some further end.
From which a dilemma seems to arise. For, in our relation to God, we
rejoice in this life only in anticipation; and yet many people seem even
here to enjoy Him for His own sake. Two solutions are offered. One is
that we enjoy God both in this life and in the next—here in a riddle,
through a glass, dimly; there in fulness and perfection. Others, again,
say that we enjoy God in this life, in the sense that we can constantly
and habitually make the delight of God’s presence the end and term of our
enjoyment.
the sense in which what is indifferent or free is contrasted with what is morally necessary, which must be necessarily done or necessarily left undone by necessity of divine law, that being the supreme rule of the morality of our actions. Thus it is that whatever is not of faith is sin (Rom. xiv. 23). That does not mean, however, that for avoiding sin I must have, in the case of every action, the belief that it is necessary for me to do this: in many cases it is enough¹ that I should believe truly and on adequate grounds that it is lawful for me to do this; even though I believe and am quite sure at the same time that it is lawful for me to leave that act undone or even to do the opposite indifferent action. For that quality of goodness, which accrues to indifferent actions from faith or from their direction to the ultimate end, does not entail the necessity of the acts themselves, but only the necessity of faith in the agent and of the act’s direction to the ultimate end. And thus faith and direction are not indifferent things, but necessary, even when the things which are done or not done are mean; though the freedom and indifference of doing or not doing the acts themselves are not prejudiced. And it is intolerable that such a yoke should be imposed on the consciences of Christians, subjecting them to perpetual alarm, as is involved in their thinking that every individual act is necessary; — that is, that it must necessarily be done or necessarily left undone. For when men are thinking of doing or not doing something about which they find nothing laid down in Holy Writ, where will men’s consciences turn, and where will they find any security, unless they understand that freedom has been left them in such matters, and that they must use that freedom without transgressing those general rules about order, peace, dignity, edification, etc.? A widow marrying either marries in the Lord or does not. If the latter, she sins; if the former, she does right; for those who marry

¹ So exactly Hooker, *L.E.P.* ii. iv. 2.
are commanded to marry in the Lord. And so this action, regarded in the light of the way in which it is done, is good or evil; although in itself it is indifferent and free, even as considered in the individual. For, although it is necessary for a woman who marries to marry in the Lord, yet for a widow to marry is not necessary: it is indifferent and free. And therefore a widow may marry or not marry without sin. If Sempronia, a widow, marries Titius, she must marry him in the Lord: if, refusing Titius, she marries Caius, she must marry him in the Lord: if, rejecting both, she marries Pomponius, she must marry him in the Lord; if she avoids the entanglements of wedlock and remains a spinster, she must live as a spinster in the Lord: and yet it is a matter of choice for the widow, Sempronia, whether she will marry or live as a spinster; and, if she chooses to marry, she is free at her discretion to marry whom she will, whether Titius, or Caius, or Pomponius. From this example it is clear that that general goodness, which is necessary to everything we do or leave undone, does not impose necessity on the actions themselves, so that we must necessarily do them or leave them undone: but, notwithstanding that general rule, there remain many actions which are mean, that is, free, even as regards their particular exercise *or in the particular case; that is to say, that there are even many individual actions which are indifferent. Moreover, to the argument mentioned above, which the author of the Dispute advanced, based on the expediency or otherwise of any deliberate action, I reply;—Moral necessity in theology i.e. in foro conscientiae, depends

1 This instance nettled Gillespie considerably (op. cit. iv. iii. 5–9). He replies that, (1) the original choice and its effect are either good or evil, (2) we are not comparing possible courses, but any one course separately, (3) Forbes does not distinguish between the nature of a thing and its use, the use never being indifferent. Thus ‘the strong’ at Rome (Rom. xiv) were not free to choose, but must seek charity, though the things in themselves were indifferent. The widow is subject to the same obligation.
not on the expediency or otherwise of a thing, but on whether it is commanded or forbidden in God’s law: for where there is no law, neither is there transgression. And sin is lawlessness i.e. transgression of the law. William Ames, therefore, was right when he said, quoting Phil. iv. 8, that every evil work is forbidden and every good work is commanded. And to this we might apply that principle, “Everything would be lawful, unless the law forbade it” (Decret. Greg. i. vii. 2): and we might add St Augustine’s remark: “Not as much pains should be bestowed on preventing men doing lawful things, even though they are not expedient, as are bestowed on preventing them doing what is unlawful.” A marriage, for example, is not unlawful, because it is not expedient; and likewise celibacy is not necessary, because it is expedient, as is clear from the Apostle’s doctrine (1 Cor. vii); nor is it sin, as the Apostle tells us in the same passage (1 Cor. vii. 28, 35, 38–40), to leave undone a thing which is not necessary, but merely expedient, the reason being that it is not a transgression of any divine commandment. Moreover, there are also some actions as to which it makes little or no odds, so far as concerns even their expediency or otherwise, whether they are done or not done: though, as we have already shown, expediency or its opposite does not entail necessity. There remain, therefore, as we have said, many individual actions even, which are indifferent or free, in the sense that we can do many things without sin, which we could leave undone without sin or even do the opposite of them; and many things which we can leave undone without sin, which we could equally well do without sin.*

8. Nor is St Thomas in disagreement, when he maintains that every individual act proceeding from deliberate reason is either good or evil, and that there is no act of that kind which is not good or evil, because (in his opinion) it will be good or evil according to its intention and direction to the
end. But St Thomas does not say that every act which will thus be good, if it is done, must necessarily be done; and that its opposite, if the first alternative be left undone, cannot be done without sin, and that therefore there is no individual act which is free, in the sense that it can be done without sin, or left undone and its opposite done without sin. St Thomas did not say that, nor did it ever occur to any sane person to say so.

9. But, you will say, if every individual action is either good or evil, at least by reason of its direction to the ultimate end, it will follow that every action either commends a man to God for reward or defiles a man in God's eyes. But what commends a man to God for reward ought to be done and so is necessarily to be done: and what defiles a man in God's eyes ought not to be done and so it is necessary not to do it. Every individual voluntary action, therefore, is legally\(^1\) necessary, nor is there any indifferent or free action, which can be freely done or not done without sin.

10. I reply, The goodness of a particular action is of two kinds, one necessary, indeed, to the action, but not making the action itself necessary; while the other is, so to speak, a necessitating goodness, making the action itself necessary. Similarly, the goodness on account of which an action is done is one thing; while the goodness without which\(^2\) the action cannot be well done, even though the action is not done for its sake, is another thing. For example, to love and follow truth and peace is a good action, the goodness being legal

\(^1\) _legaliter_, by Scriptural or Divine law.

\(^2\) _sine qua non bene fit actio_. Cf. 2 Sent. Dist. xl. 2: "Quod enim quis invitus vel necessitate facit, non bene facit; quia non bonâ facit intentione, ut ait Augustinus tom. 8, tract. 8, super 1 Jn. Servilis, inquit, timor non est in charitate; in quo quamvis credatur Deo, non tamen in Deum; et si bonum fiat, non tamen bene. Nemo enim invitus bene facit etiam si bonum est quod facit.” Readers of Mrs H. B. Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* will remember, however, the charitable spirit with which the slave, acting _invitus vel necessitate_, left wife and home.
and necessitating this action, because the action itself is commanded: but to lift a straw from the ground, which you might quite well leave there without sin, is a good action, it is true, in so far as its direction to the ultimate end and its origin (i.e. the faith and certain knowledge by which you believe and know that it is lawful for you to do this) are good; —and this goodness is necessary to this and every human action, nor does it prevent the action itself being indifferent: but the action in that case is not good because of any goodness which necessitates the action. Similarly, in indifferent things, when I deliberately do or leave undone any action, which is in its species indifferent, with a view to avoiding giving offence which would be otherwise inevitable, or owing to the necessity of legitimate obedience, that action is good in the sense of moral or legal goodness, \textit{for the sake of which} the action itself is done: but when the action which I do is not as to species or individual commanded by God's law, and no special moral or theological goodness is the cause of the special action, the action being merely accompanied by the general goodness which consists in its being originated in faith and directed to the ultimate end; —then that action, while good indeed \textit{in the general sense of goodness and of being accompanied by the indispensable conditions of goodness}, yet has not that \textit{specific goodness for the sake of which as its specific cause it is done}. When these distinctions have been premised, the solution of the objection before us is easy: —an action which is good \textit{by necessitating goodness, for the sake of which it is done}, commends a man to God for reward in accordance with divine promise. But an action which has only \textit{concomitant goodness, necessary to the action only in the sense that without it the action is not well done}, does not commend the man to God for reward. Although the general goodness accompanying an action commends a man to God for reward —for it is necessary —yet the act is not necessary: and that general goodness can be had in
equal measure if the act itself is left undone, or even if a different act or the actual opposite of the act is done. Therefore that a man can be commended to God for reward through this general goodness does not mean this individual act being necessary; but a man retains with regard to the individual act full moral freedom of judgment, both the freedom which is said to belong to the actual doing or refusing to do the act, as also that which is called liberty of opinion in assenting or objecting to the definition of the act. That point we have illustrated above by the plain example of a widow's marriage.

11. And in general no action is necessary, if its whole goodness which commends a man to God for reward can be equally well had, if that act is left undone or another done; such an act, even considered in the particular, is free and indifferent. But if the goodness which is inherently necessary cannot be had without the act defined itself, according to its specialized species, and without the doing of the act, then that act must necessarily be done, and it is necessary even in the individual or in the act done, although, perhaps, in its primary species it may be indifferent. For example, it is now necessary for us to kneel at the Lord's Supper, in order that we may have the necessary good of due obedience and decent uniformity in the Scottish Church, and that the evil of despising ecclesiastical authority and of causing wicked schism and confusion may be avoided.

12. The goodness which is inherently necessary for a man is that, whatever he does, he should do from faith and to God's glory. On the other hand, that he should do this free act from faith and to God's glory is not inherently, but only hypothetically, necessary;—that is to say, if he does this act, it is necessary that he should do it from faith and to God's glory: but the actual determination to do it adds nothing to
that goodness which commends a man to God for reward; for it can equally well be had without that decision.

13. We must give some attention too to the analysis of evil. Evil is of two kinds;—(1) That which not only defiles, but also impedes an act by moral or legal impediment; when, that is to say, evil is so inherent in the act that the act cannot be done without that evil: such, for example, is the evil of idolatry, or of giving offence, or of wicked disobedience even in things specifically indifferent. And for avoiding this evil it is necessary to leave the act undone. (2) The second kind of evil is that which defiles the act, indeed, if it attaches to it, but does not impede it, because the act can or should be done without that evil; nor on account of that evil must the act be left undone, but, so far as possible, the evil itself must be got rid of. Such is the evil of pride which makes a hypocrite feed a poor man; for, in order to avoid that evil, it is not necessary to leave the act of feeding the poor man undone; the act should be done in a different frame of mind. Such, too, is the evil of unbelief which attaches to faith; and yet we ought not therefore to abstain from believing, but rather to believe and cry "Lord I believe; help thou mine unbelief"; and then the unbelief will not be imputed to us, but faith and penitence will prevail in God’s mercy through our Lord Jesus Christ. If anyone, in matters not essential, does something lawful which has been commanded by the Church (without prejudice to those laws of freedom of which we have spoken above, 1. xi. 5–7)—if he does this without knowing it to be lawful, or thinking it to be unlawful, or directing it not to God’s glory but to some unlawful end; as, for instance, when the Church bids us kneel at the Holy Communion, he might not know that this was lawful for him by God’s law, or might think it unlawful, or might direct that act to an unlawful end; then kneeling, in his case, will be evil, indeed, in the sense that evil defiles the act; yet neither can the act
itself be obstinately neglected without sin, because that would involve manifest disobedience towards the Church in a matter in which obedience is due to it; nor does unteachable and arrogant and disobedient ignorance\(^1\) excuse a man from the act. The act itself, in short, ought to be done without that evil, for we are bound both to know and to do our duty. The kind of evil, on the other hand, which impedes an act renders it legally necessary that the act itself should be left undone.

14. But, you will say, to obey the Church in any matter against one’s own conscience is not pleasing to God, but is sin, because it is not of faith (Rom. xiv. 23; Heb. xi. 6). I reply, That, so far as it goes, is true: but it is equally true that a man sins who, owing to obstruct a error\(^2\) of conscience,

\(^1\) *inscitia.* Forbes discusses ignorance in religious matters in *T.M.* ix. vi. 9–11 and *I.H.T.* iii. xx. 28. Quoting the lines,

> Ignorant qui se nescire ignota fatentur,
> Non errant, si nulla accedat opinio falsa,

he illustrates from Aristotle, who distinguishes between (a) ignorance \(\text{kατὰ διάθεσιν},\) or ‘deception,’ when the ignorance includes a false opinion, and (b) ignorance \(\text{ἡ μὴ κατὰ διάθεσιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀπόφασιν λεγομένη},\) which is ‘simple ignorance.’ An example of the former is the ignorance of the Sadducees (Matt. xxii. 29: cf. Gal. vi. 13), equivalent to error; of the latter, St Paul’s in 2 Cor. xii. 2.

This latter or simple ignorance may be further analyzed, according as it is censurable or not. It is censurable when it is ignorance of something which the person is bound in duty to know (cf. Heb. vi. 12; Matt. xvi. 11; Luke xxiv. 25); and that the scholastics called *ignorantia privativa.* It involves no defect, on the other hand, in so far as it relates to something which is not, or not yet, bound to be known; and so could be predicated, not of the patriarchs and Apostles only (Heb. xi. 8; Acts xx. 22); but even of the angels, and of the Lord Jesus Himself according to His Humanity (Mark xiii. 32). This was *ignorantia negative.*

\(^2\) In a statement on “the peace and concord of the Evangelical Churches,” signed, in the following order, by John Forbes of Corse, Robert Baron, Alexander Scrogie, William Leslie, James Sibbald and Alexander Ross, and addressed to Archbishop Spottiswoode in February, 1637, which is printed in Forbes’s *I.H.T.* xiv. vii, the distinction is made between fundamental and non-fundamental error. The former is error directly bearing upon any capital article of faith or duty, touching not any circumstance of it but its very substance, and that, not inferentially or by logical consequence, but immediately and in the first place: and a capital article of
does not hear the Church of God (Matt. xviii. 17). Error of that kind does not make for a good conscience, nor does it free a man from his necessary duty or from the penalties attaching to transgression (Luke xi. 49; cf. also Hos. iv. 6, 12; John xvi. 2; Rom. x. 2, 3). This is that foolishness which defiles a man (ἀφροσύνη, Mark vii. 22). Thus, therefore, people in error sin either way; if they obey the Church, they sin through the evil which defiles the act; if they refuse to obey, they sin through the evil which also impedes that disobedience, and for the sake of which the disobedience ought to be avoided: and so the poor wretches have death on either hand of them, so enmeshed are they in the nets of their own iniquity. There is only one remedy, that they should put away their pride and renounce their obstinacy, and put on a humble and teachable spirit and learn truth and, when they have recognised it, obey it in faith. And the truth will set them free.

faith or duty is such as it has been held necessary for every person of mature years to believe, know, or do from the first proclaimation of the Gospel to the present time. Illustrations of such fundamental articles are: "God, the mystery of the Incarnation, the Creation, the Fall, the grace of God, the Sacraments, and other primary heads of Christian doctrine." Error in these matters is indicated by inconsistency with Scripture, and deserves excommunication. Thus Forbes writes (I.H.T. i. vii) to Bishop John Leslie, of Sodor and Man, and urges him to excommunicate an anonymous writer, styling himself Irenaeus Philalethes, for 'contumacious' persistence in Socinian error. 'Contumacious error' is an aggravation of 'simple error' by the addition of unwillingness to be enlightened. Fundamental error may be practical as well as theoretic; as when men begin and defend a wrongful schism, or when the Papacy excommunicates men for non-fundamental error. As examples of practical error Forbes quotes Matt. v. 19, vii. 26; 1 Cor. xiii. 2; Apoc. ii. 20.

Forbes deals with conscience in the first book of his Theologia Moralis. He distinguishes between 'well-informed' consciences or conscience μετά γνώσεως (cf. Rom. x. 2) and 'ill-informed' conscience (cf. John xvi. 2) or conscience ἀνεὶς γνώσεως. The error of the latter is in the minor premiss of the practical syllogism; and this error, by the aid of Revelation and the light of reason, can be avoided or corrected.

St Thomas deals with such cases of conscience in I—II. xix. 5, where he concludes that "absolutely every will at variance with reason, whether right or erroneous reason, must always be an evil will."
Chapter xiv.

Reply to the arguments adduced in support of the paradox.
[The First Argument, § 1; reply to it, §§ 2, 3; the Second Argument, and reply to the same, § 4; the Third Argument, and reply to the same, § 5; the Fourth Argument, and reply to the same, § 6.]

1. Now that we have discoursed at length upon the substance of the paradox you propounded, let us go on to the proofs which you adduce. “Every action,” you say, “is either good or evil; therefore none is indifferent. The proof of the premiss is this;—every action which has all the circumstances of goodness or is destitute of any one such circumstance is correspondingly either good or evil. But every action either has all the circumstances of goodness or is destitute of any one such circumstance. Therefore every action is either good or evil. This was the argument into which Ambrosius Catarrinus fell at the Council of Trent resting on the authority of St Thomas1.”

2. I reply2, St Bonaventura, Scotus and Durandus all deny that every action is either good or evil; while it is clear from what we have said above how far this distinction must be admitted even in the case of St Thomas himself:—that is to say, that not every action is either good or evil, in the sense that it must be done or left undone by the necessity of divine law. But that concession avails you nothing for the purposes of our present argument. For those among us who attack the indifference of actions carry it so far as to deprive the Church of making decrees about the doing or not doing of the actions themselves.

1 innixus autoritati Thomae, i–ii. xviii. 3. “The fulness of the perfection of an action lies not wholly in its species, but some additional perfection is conferred by what supervenes in the way of accidents, or due circumstances. Hence, if anything be wanting that is requisite in point of due circumstances, the action will be evil.” Of course the evil involved in a circumstantial defect need not be of the kind here under discussion, viz. evil which causes the act to incur Divine condemnation.

2 Cf. sup. xiii. 2–5, 8.
3. You subjoin four proofs of your premiss; and though they have no bearing on our present discussion, yet I will reply to them, because you have put them forward. And to the first I say:—Of the goodness which necessitates\(^1\) an action, and so takes it out of the category of things indifferent or free, the necessary circumstance is divine commandment: but this does not attach to every action which is not evil. Nor is any act evil with the evil which impedes, unless it is forbidden. What St Thomas meant we have discussed abundantly above\(^2\): as to what Catharinus chose to think, we regard it of no consequence.

4. "An action," you say, "which is governed by reason, prudence, deliberation, and faith, or is not so governed, is thereby correspondingly either good or evil. But every action of a rational prudent Christian man is governed by reason etc., or is not. Therefore every action is either good or evil." I reply, a free or indifferent action may be governed by those things, because such governance does not take away their indifference, nor does it entail that goodness which is in contrast to freedom. That is abundantly clear from our foregoing discussion, and was illustrated by the example of a widow's marrying.

5. "The quality of an action corresponds to that of its proximate end, the latter being its chief determinant. Every end is in a summary sense good\(^3\). Therefore every action is good." I reply, Here you seem to wish that every action should be good, and so you will overthrow the common distinction and come to the conclusion that no action is evil; for even those who act wrongly have some end which they

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1 Cf. sup. xiii. 10, 13.  
2 Cf. sup. xii. 17; xiii. 8.  
3 praecise est bonus. This relic of ill-digested Protagoreanism is presumably a distortion of the truth, to which Aquinas alludes in 1–11. vi. 4, § 3 and 1–11. xciv. 2, that all our actions are done with a view to some profit or pleasure, which are in themselves good ends.
have put before themselves. Again, the proximate or internal end of an action is the full execution of the action itself, and that must be judged good or evil according to the moral rules of actions. But not every action or full execution of an action is good according to those rules. “But every end,” you say, “is in a summary sense good”; that is to say, either really good, or good in the opinion of the man who intends it. But his opinion does not change the character of the action; it does not bring true goodness into it or free it from moral evil.

6. “Every action capable of goodness or evil, so to speak, is good, if it be done according to God’s highest will, and, if it be not good, at any rate it is more suitable and expedient that it should be good. But every action is capable of goodness or evil. Therefore every action is good, or at least could be improved by being so.” I reply, a distinction must be made as regards that phrase of yours about an action being done according to “God’s highest will.” For if by “highest will” is meant divine precept, the action will be indubitably good as being commanded; but it will not follow from that that an action is evil if it is not done according to this counsel; for there are many free actions which are not commanded, and yet because they are not forbidden are not evil. And it is more appropriate that these actions should be free—that is to say, neither good nor evil—because God has judged it more appropriate neither to command nor to forbid them. If, on the other hand, by “God’s highest will” is understood the supremely good and wise divine disposition whereby He has distinguished the natures and orders of things and actions, it is true that every action done according to it will be good with a kind of natural or congruous goodness, but not with moral goodness. Thus, God has disposed that the stars should move in their courses, the tides ebb and flow, the ox low,

the dog bark, and that for men some voluntary actions should be legally necessary, others should be unlawful, others again neither necessary nor unlawful, but free or indifferent. Therefore, for an action to be morally good, it is not enough that it should be done according to this “highest will of God”: nor is it more suitable that every action should be morally good, because God in His highest will has disposed otherwise. Not but what every voluntary action must necessarily and by legal necessity be good in the sense of not being evil; and in that sense every indifferent and lawful action may be called good: although the goodness which attaches to it is not such as takes away its indifference or freedom.

*Extract from a letter of my reverend and learned colleague and brother in the faith, Professor Robert Baron, D.D.

The Necessity and Indifference of Actions.

Any act may be said to be necessary in two ways; viz., either by absolute necessity, which necessitates the actual doing of the act (and this you call, in Irenicum I. xiii. 7, necessity of the act defined itself or of the doing of that act); or by hypothetical necessity, which renders it obligatory, not indeed that the act itself should be done, but that, if it is done, it should be done in such and such a way, viz., in faith and to the glory of God. This latter type of necessity you explain at length and with much learning in that same section, and you point out that it is not incompatible with that indifference of an action, which is the subject of the quarrel that some of our brethren have with us. For there are two senses in which any particular action can be said to be mean or indifferent; —(1) that it is morally neither good nor evil, (2) that it is neither necessarily to be done nor necessarily to be left undone, inasmuch as there is wanting in its case that absolute necessity which springs from divine precept and renders it obligatory that the act should be done or not done. The first of these two kinds of indifference you reject, in company with St Thomas and even the brethren I have alluded to; while in reply to opponents, and after overthrowing their argument, you retain the second. And this you have every right to do, as is clear from that indifference which
asserts itself in acts regarded even in their species. For to marry in the Lord, and to remain celibate in the Lord, if taken in their generality, are not individual, but specific acts, in the sense of being common to all who either marry or remain celibate in the Lord. And yet of these specific acts I will make two affirmations: — (1) that they are mean or indifferent in that former sense of indifference mentioned above; for they are not morally good and the subject of divine precept as regards the actual doing of the acts of marriage and celibacy, but only as to the way or spirit in which they should be done: (2) that they are mean also in the second sense alluded to above, because this person or that is free to marry in the Lord or to remain celibate in the Lord, as you show at the end of that section by the illustration of the widow, Sempionia. Hence, in that question about the indifference of acts, in order to complete the generally accepted distinction between the act as to its species and the act in the particular, it appears on every ground that one must add this other distinction between acts considered as to the bare doing of the act and acts considered as to the way in which they should be done. For "to marry," whether regarded in species or in the individual, if it be considered *per se* and as to the bare doing of the act, is indifferent in both the two senses predicated above: for my taking this woman to wife (which entails a particular act), if it be considered *per se* and in its bare performance, as it has not been either commanded or forbidden by God, so is morally neither good nor evil. But, if it be considered as to the way in which it should be done—viz., in the Lord—then it is not indifferent in the first sense, but only in the second: for to marry in the Lord, whether regarded in species or in the individual, is morally good, and so is not indifferent in the first sense: nevertheless it is not absolutely commanded nor absolutely forbidden by God, but commanded only conditionally—viz., so that, if we marry, we marry in the Lord—and so it is indifferent in the second sense. As our last talk together showed a common mind between us, which gave great pleasure to you, I write this to you, to assure you that I am entirely at one with you in this question.
The question which Forbes discusses in Chapters xii, xiii, and xiv of *Irenicum*, Book I, namely, the existence of indifferent actions, is one which may be regarded as long ago settled. The rigid Puritanism of Thomas Cartwright and his compeers on either side of the Tweed, who could actually maintain that every act in life was either commanded or forbidden in Scripture, is scarcely now to be found. Men soon saw that such a doctrine was not only theologically untrue, but involved an iron tyranny over human life compared to which the Roman authority had been tender. No doubt the notion that every passage of Scripture was of private interpretation would tend to allow of a liberty of practice which was not there in theory; but that could only be, and indeed was, at the expense of the principles of order and charity; and on such a shewing there could be no place for the application of Moral Theology to the affairs of Church life.

The Preface, and the two subjoined preambles, to the Book of Common Prayer are devoted to the discussion of this question of Moral Theology. It was a vital issue of the century and a half which followed the Reformation, both in England and in Scotland. Hooker says of it, “My desire is to make this cause so manifest, that if it were possible, no doubt or scruple concerning the same might remain in any man’s cogitation.” Jeremy Taylor discusses it at length in the last book of his *Ductor Dubitantium* (iv. i. 14–21). But a special interest attaches to Forbes’s treatment of the subject. For he is—what Hooker and Jeremy Taylor were not—a scholastic. And there were points at which Protestant and mediaeval Scholasticism touched one another very closely. No Anglican writer leaves us with a stronger sense of the continuity of Christian life and tradition in the Reformed Church than this scholar of Aberdeen, or brings out more clearly—in his *Theologia Moralis* as much as in his *Irenicum*—the large area of common ground which

1 *L.E.P.* ii. iv. 6: cf. ib. 4 and 5.
Catholic and Protestant shared. One cannot read Forbes without feeling that the protagonists in the controversy were, through the use of common categories, closer to one another then than they are to-day. Forbes's mind is in close contact, not only with those of Scripture and antiquity—and it is said that he never inserted a reference in his text without first verifying it—but also with the great minds of the Middle Age;—with Peter Lombard, Gratian, Aquinas, Bonaventura, Scotus, Durandus. We feel in his pages what the development of Christian thought in the West might have been, if events had not forestalled it and split its progress. And in the First Book of the Irenicum we see him working from these common premisses to a defence of a conception of Churchmanship at once Catholic and free.

His task, like that of Hooker and Jeremy Taylor in England, was an urgent one, if anything of Catholic order was to be saved for posterity. Puritanism was not only painfully insular; but by its insistence upon the Bible only as the guide to all actions it threatened the very notion of a free and progressive Christian society, able to adapt itself as a society in non-essentials to changing needs and circumstances. They met the menace by a resolute assertion of the place of reason and custom as well as Scripture in the ordering of life and worship, and thus safeguarded not only the Catholic and supra-national character of the Church of England, but also that space and roominess within it which is claimed by the rational and aesthetic faculties of the greater part of men and women. To-day the Re-union movement recalls the issue in a form not less serious. The notion that Scripture alone prescribed for every action of man is dead; but in its place another doctrine, equally extreme, has arisen. It is that all matters of order in the Church, from the smallest minutiae of ritual to the ordering of the Sacred Ministry itself, are not only per se indifferent, as not being enjoined in Scripture, but can never become the subject of binding ecclesiastical ordinance; so that it is a matter of complete indifference what outward forms of worship a person affects, or to what visible body he belongs. This view, which asserts the indifference of all external religion is the exact opposite of the former, which denied the indifference of any. But it springs from the same root. The difference is due to the more critical understanding of Scripture and to the conditions of human life; the common root is an in-
adequate notion of the Church’s corporate authority, and of the functions of Christian thought. Further, to both the old and the new form of the error Forbes’s argument is an effective rejoinder. He wields a two-edged sword. With the one edge he cuts through the claim that no actions in life are indifferent; with the other he makes good the position that the indifference of actions may be taken away by the lawful authority of the Church. In other words he establishes a basis for rational freedom and reconciles it with law.

His discussion of this subject marks a climax in the general argument of the *Irenicum*. The preceding chapters are devoted to clearing the ground for it. Two obstacles in particular have to be cleared away, as they loomed large in popular prejudice. One is the belief that kneeling at the Eucharist—which was far the most contentious of the Five Articles of Perth—was idolatrous: the other that the Articles were in one way or another unconstitutional, whether as having been passed through a packed Assembly by means of irregular procedure or as being a violation of the Royal Oath of 1581. In regard to the second of these Forbes’s treatment leaves much to be desired. It seems certain that the Assembly was not constituted with due regard to the formalities of proper notice and impartial convening; the greater part of the debate was held in Committee; the Articles were presented in an omnibus resolution for simple acceptance or rejection; and the King’s conduct and utterances for some months before the meeting, and the scarcely veiled threats of his letter and of the Dean of Winchester’s allocu-
tion, are far from consistent with the qualities of gentleness and moderation which Forbes ascribes to him. He seems, indeed, to blink the fact that for years past the royal prerogative in causes ecclesiastical had been a burning question in Scotland; and that, if James had wished the Scottish Church to accept his desired changes, he should have taken particular care to observe all the formalities which law and custom prescribed. The distinction Forbes draws between scandal ‘given’ and scandal ‘taken’ was, no doubt, theologically unexceptionable; but in all cases of offence the conditioning circumstances are of first importance; and it is difficult to absolve the Articles of the charge of being ‘actively’ scandalous, when these are borne in mind.

History, however, was to pronounce no uncertain verdict upon
the processes and the persons responsible for the passing of the Articles by the methods actually used. When Forbes first published his Irenicum in 1629, it was not too late to hope that suspicions and animosities might die down; and even the events which pre- ceded the second impression of 1636, ominous as they were, could hardly have shewn promise of the actual fruit of civil strife which was to be harvested in the following year. By the time the final edition was prepared (1647–8), it was too late to affect the controversy by any alteration of the text. But at least the closing chapters of the First Book were as true in principle after the Revolution as before it. The authority of the Church to legislate in non-essentials still needed to be defended, or at any rate to be defended on rational grounds.

It is on that issue that the question of indifference debated in Chapters xii–xiv turns. As against the upholders of the Discipline, and in the interests of Christian liberty, it was essential to stake out a clear claim for the secondary obligation of all ceremonies. Ceremonies, that is to say, were among those things which Scripture had not laid down, for those at least who accepted the New Dispensation. They were in themselves 'free.' On the other hand the Apostles, and the Lord Himself, had laid down certain general rules of Church government and authority; and these indiff- erent things were among the matters on which this authority might be exercised. When that occurred, their indifference was removed and they became, in a secondary sense, 'necessary.'

It is one of the ironies of Scottish ecclesiastical affairs in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century that the very parties most opposed to the acceptance of "English innovations," even when sanctioned by their own ecclesiastical and civil authorities, were the champions of a discipline in external matters of the most rigorous and inquisitorial kind. The plea was that they were simply enforcing the observance of Scriptural commands. One of the

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1 So Hooker, in the case of ecclesiastical enactments, aims at shewing "Probable ground for the law and no necessary reason against it," in which case, given that the law is promulgated by a body with proper authority, it must be obeyed, always saving cases of (1) clear revelation, as e.g. to St Paul, (2) demonstrative and necessary proof against it. Those conditions alone entitle conscience to match its probable inference against the probability constituted by the judgment of society. Paget, The Fifth Book of Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity, p. 97.
main burdens of the dreary and crabbed pages of Gillespie's *Dispute against the English-Popish Ceremonies* was that the Church's authority in matters of practice extended only to the detailed application of a rule divinely given and explicitly declared. What this meant in actual life we can see from such a record as that of the proceedings of the Kirk-Session, published in the second volume of *The Spottiswoode Miscellany*. The Register there cited covers the years 1577 to 1634, which are the most relevant years for our purpose. The suppression of processions and plays, the admonition or punishment, sometimes even the excommunication, of persons accused of using slanderous language, disturbing a baptismal service, resorting to the 'Dragon Hole' with superstitious intent, flying or scolding, absenting themselves from preaching on Sunday, refusing to collect alms for the poor, violating the Sabbath by shaving, *turning of the riddle with shears* or shewing other symptoms of witchcraft, gossiping, consulting with witches—all these, together with the positive functions of appointing public Fasts of considerable duration, form part of the disciplinary authority of the local Church; and in all they would have the support, if necessary, of the higher courts. It was such tyranny as this which led moderate men like John Erskine, of Dun, Superintendent of Angus and Mearns, in the earlier period, and Robert Baillie, in the later, to look without disfavour upon the reintroduction of Episcopacy into the Church of Scotland. Episcopacy meant the acceptance of ecclesiastical authority which was in some sense free from the letter of Scripture; controlled by it, no doubt, negatively, in that it could not traverse what was there enjoined or forbidden; but empowered to take such measures as might be deemed necessary for the promotion of peace, order, charity, and edification. The object of Dr Forbes in the chapters here discussed is to provide a rational foundation for this kind of authority; and his argument must appeal to all who believe that the Christian revelation as given in Scripture has not dispensed future generations from the exercise of corporate judgment and common sense and from the responsibilities attaching to every free and living society.

1 *Ib.* ii. 227–320.
2 The author of the *Letters and Journals*, 1637–1662.
There is a passage in Aquinas\(^1\) which seems to give a clue as to the form in which Forbes's argument in reply to Lunan's Ninth Problem is presented. "Human actions," he says, "and other things, the goodness of which depends on some other things, have a character of goodness from the end on which they depend, besides the absolute goodness that is in them." The first part of the discussion is on the whole concerned with the "absolute goodness" of actions; the second with their end, motive, and other conditions. The division is a convenient one to follow here.

The essence of the Thomist ethic was its dependence on metaphysic. Thus, fullness of being was the essence of good, and that which had a deficiency of good was evil; and as a physical thing had its species from its form, so an action, or ethical thing, took its species from its object (I—II. xviii. I, 2). In the hierarchy of being, form determined what a thing was; in the order of quality, object determined of what kind it was. And by 'object' St Thomas understood both the end and the means of action—the end as the object of the interior act of the will, the means as the object of the exterior act of the body or brain. The end and the means, therefore, determine the quality of an act. For an act to be good, it must be good both as to the end willed and as to the means chosen; goodness in the end will not cover defect or aberration in the means. Evil, on the other hand, in the end will vitiate the best of means.

Actions, then, are ranged in 'species' according to their end and means, or object; and it is at this point that Forbes first grafts on to the Thomist stock his more Scriptural terminology. For Aquinas, writing as a philosopher, the good or evil of an object depended on the place of that object in the order of reason: he quotes Dionysius's words, "the good of man is being in accord with reason, and his evil is whatever is against reason." But what is in accord with reason? The answer is different for the Theist and the Naturalist, and again, among Theists, for the Christian and one who cannot accept Revelation. It is different for Theist and Naturalist, because the former holds that man has a supernatural end, the latter does not, and reason, in view of such an end,

\(^1\) I—II. xviii. 4.
has a different horizon and distinct canons of criticism from those which obtain where such an end is wanting. As between Theists, the Christian believes that the supernatural end has been envisaged and made comprehensible for us in Revelation, whereby we know the character of God and the marvellous destiny He has in store for us; and that He has also declared the means for attaining it. Reason, accordingly, for the Christian must embrace that Truth and that Way which have been offered to our race. And the place of their shewing is pre-eminently Holy Scripture.

And so Forbes identifies the 'specific' or 'objective' good and evil of St Thomas with the precepts and prohibitions of Scripture, and more particularly of the Decalogue as summing up all that Scripture has to teach us of the Divine will. In so doing, he inevitably refines upon St Thomas; for simply in the order of reason there is no cause why all specific good and evil should be set forth in Revelation. But we must remember his purpose. He has openly confined his discussion to remunerable good and penal evil —i.e. to that good and evil which are in immediate relation to man's supernatural end. And he is writing for men of the Reformed Religion, who held, as a primary article of faith, that the Scriptures contained all things necessary to salvation. There was no need for him to say that the Schoolmen would not have agreed with him on that point. For the purpose of his present discussion, it was more important that they did agree with him as to man's supernatural end and as to the means of attaining it having been revealed.

This identification once made, and the specific good and evil of St Thomas being equated with the substance of the Divine law, Forbes can write definitely: "That is good in species which has been so commanded by the law of God, that it is not right for a man to disregard it or do anything contrary to it; and that is evil in species, which has been so forbidden by the law of God, that it is not right for a man to allow or prescribe it on any pretext whatever" (Iren. i. xii. 13). And he gives as examples of the former love of God and one's neighbour, and of the latter blasphemy, adultery, etc. In the consideration of law, Forbes departs somewhat from St Thomas; for, whereas the latter uses the term Eternal Law to include that 'divine law' which was delivered to Moses and afterwards interpreted by Psalmist and Prophet, and finally
by Christ and His Apostles, Forbes distinguishes sharply between the two. In his Moral Theology, 'eternal law' is reserved to the inner law of God's being and character, His natural holiness, justice, truth and goodness, whereby He cannot lie, in which the perfection of His will consists. 'Divine law,' on the other hand, is part, and the chiefest part, of that law which "had a beginning in time1." The difference, however, is one of terms rather than of meaning, and is due to the philosophical interest of the one and the Scriptural interest of the other. For what "had a beginning in time" was not properly God's law, but its promulgation; though to a mind to which the thunders of Sinai were intensely present it was not incongruous to speak of the promulgation as though it were the beginning. There is nothing in Aquinas's treatment of Laws in i–ii. xc–c which is at variance with the first book of Forbes’s *Theologia Moralis*.

Actions which fall under the species thus defined and explained Forbes speaks of as necessary, in the sense that it is necessary, in view of man's supernatural end, that he should either do them or not do them. There is no middle course: he cannot choose about them—or rather he can, but he may not. They are necessary by Moral Necessity, as that may be contrasted with other kinds of Necessity such as Sacramental or Natural, because they belong to the sphere of moral conduct. They are necessary by 'objective' necessity, as that may be contrasted with 'practical' necessity; in the sense that no human authority, no considerations of time and place, no plea of ignorance or infirmity, can exempt from them. They are always and everywhere equally binding: while 'practical' necessity, on the other hand, attaches to those things—or, more strictly, ways of doing things—which God commands, whether immediately, as in the Levitical law, or medially, as in the canons of the Church, for a particular time and place and to meet particular circumstances. They are necessary, further, absolutely and

1 A similar distinction is drawn by Hooker between the First Eternal Law, being "that order which God before all ages hath set down with Himself for Himself to do all things by," and the Second Eternal Law or "that order which with Himself God hath set down as expedient to be kept by all His Creatures, according to the several conditions wherewith He hath endued them." See the lucid chart of Hooker's teaching in Bishop Paget's *Introduction to the Fifth Book of Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity*, opposite p. 99.
unconditionally, as opposed to that hypothetical necessity which only ordains that, if a thing be done, it must be done so, but does not ordain that it should be done. Thus, the honouring of parents is an action of absolute necessity. Its good may be vitiating for the doer, and so bring him no reward but punishment, by servility, or other defect; as, for example, when the man pleaded parental duty as an excuse for not following Christ; but the thing itself is commanded. Hypothetical necessity, on the other hand, always presumes that the doing of the act is doubtful; so, for instance, that, if alms be given, they must be given in charity to succour need, and not for display or at the expense of others; yet the giving of alms is not ‘absolutely’ necessary, since a man may have nothing to give.

Now, having made his equation between the moral ‘species’ of St Thomas and the contents of the Divine law, Forbes proceeds to distinguish between ‘higher’ or primary, and ‘lower’ or secondary, species. The latter he also calls ‘very special,’ or, as I have ventured to construe it, ‘specialized’ species. They are species which take cognizance of special circumstances, which, being of frequent recurrence in human life, may be regarded, as Aquinas put it, as “a principal condition of the object determining the species.” There are many moral rules about them in Scripture, as we should expect in a Revelation given in and through human history; and they are the subject of laws and decrees, whether ecclesiastical or civil. Theology finds allusion to them particularly in those interpretations and illustrations of the Divine law given by Christ Himself and His Apostles, and those imitations of it which are expressed in the customs and examples of the Church of the New Testament and in the ecclesiastical constitutions of later ages. Take, for example, almsgiving. The object of almsgiving is to do good to another by succouring his need. But the action is only necessary in certain circumstances. There must, for instance, be one in need, and the giver must have something of his own to give, and that (according to Aquinas) by way of superfluity. So circumstanced almsgiving is specifically good, though

1 ‘Absolute’ and ‘hypotheetical’ necessity are not used here in St Thomas’s metaphysical sense, though they are related to that: see note on i. xiii. 7.

2 Cf. ii–ii. xxxii.

3 This would still hold good, even if almsgiving were regarded in its extended sense to cover e.g. the gratuitous services of an artist.
the species is secondary, not primary; that is to say, it cannot be said to be universally necessary. St Thomas quotes Cicero's enumeration of circumstances (Orator), given in the hexameter line:

quis, quid, ubi, quibus auxiliis, cur, quomodo, quando;

to which Aquinas says Aristotle added yet another, 'about what,' which is tacitly included under Cicero's second circumstance. In the case before us, almsgiving is specifically good (a) when the giver has something over after providing for his own needs and those of his dependents, or when the instruments or aids of his charity represent such overplus, and (b) when the reason of his exterior act is the alleviation of real need. Defect of either of these circumstances would change the species of the action. Thus, when a man stints his parents to pay Corban (Mark vii. 11), or when he showers largess upon those who are not in real need, like the panem et circenses of the satirist, and so pauperizes them, the action has not the specific character and goodness of almsgiving. Not but what the Gospel counsels us to interpret our superfluity with what devotion to God we may; as the widow, casting in her mite, reckoned "all that she had" as superfluity (Mark xii. 42);—by so near a margin had she faith to live.

When Forbes speaks of these 'specialized' or 'very special' species of acts as 'lower' or secondary, he is following Aquinas; for, though Aquinas makes no such express distinction of species, he implies it in speaking of the process of reason, which, knowing no term, works down from the uncircumstanced and universal into the domain of circumstances, and endeavours to coordinate circumstanced acts also under some rational plan. The species so discovered are, therefore, 'lower' as being later in the order of reason. And just as reason strives to bring circumstances under the order of species, so Christian theology is ever referring them to the order of Divine command, which includes under itself not only all the moral advices and precepts of Scripture, but also and mediately the dictates of laws ecclesiastical and civil. The alternative was, and is, the chaos of private judgment, when every man is a law unto himself and claims to impose that law on others. Thus, one of Forbes's principal adversaries, the author of the Dispute against the English-Popish ceremonies, had maintained that the circumstances of place, time, etc. were a "principle of par-
ticularization” of acts, so that, *e.g.*, if a man took what was his own, the action was good; if he took what belonged to someone else, it was evil. It happens that the disputer could not have chosen an example better calculated to play into Forbes’s hands: for theft is an action which, though belonging (because circumscribed) to a secondary species in the order of reason, is expressly forbidden in the Decalogue; and, as he says, “anyone could see” that the two acts belong to different species. But, Revelation apart, and in the order simply of political reason—in a country, for instance, where the Gospel was unknown—where would society be, if it had admitted the circumstance of a piece of property being another’s to be a “principle of particularization” of human actions? The universal existence of law and custom proclaims that it is not so.

It will be seen that the ‘higher’ species of actions of which Forbes speaks are not coterminous with the Decalogue, which in fact contains precepts directly concerned with the ‘lower’ species as well. Forbes does not say where the ‘higher’ species are particularly disclosed in Scripture; but we shall not be going beyond his instances, if we say that they are to be found in the Sermon on the Mount rather than in the Ten Commandments. They cover the actions of the inward man, while the ‘lower’ species, by the very fact of their taking account of circumstance, cover the actions of the outward man. His point is that Scripture instructs us about both, not about the first only; that the theoretic rigour and practical antinomianism of some of those who boasted of their new-found liberty in Christ was contrary to the principles of Scripture; and that actions which were *per se* indifferent in species, not being the subject of any Divine command or prohibition, might yet come under one of the secondary species of Scripture in virtue of some circumstance conditioning the object determining them.

The term ‘indifferent’ is technical, and has its roots in Greek philosophy. Suffice it to say here that for ethics an indifferent action is one which is outside morality altogether; for Moral Theology it is one which in itself is outside the scope of Divine law. Peter Lombard speaks (*2 Sent. Dist*. xl. 2) of a school of thought which regarded all actions as *per se* indifferent, until morally determined by the faith, or lack of faith, of the agent;

1 Cf. *Dispute*, iv. ii. 3.  
2 See note on xii. 8.
and this is true negatively, that is, if acts be considered simply in
their natural or physical capacity, to the exclusion of all moral
regard. In such wise, as Jeremy Taylor points out\(^1\), "even homo-
cide itself and adultery, in their natural capacity, differ nothing
from justice and the permissions of marriage: and the giving of
alms is no better naturally than giving money to Mercury or to
an image." So, when an action is classified as specifically in-
different, it means that it remains simply in the category of a
natural happening, and cannot as such be the subject of moral
judgment. St Thomas's celebrated example of 'lifting a straw
from the ground' is just such an act. But indifference has synonyms
which mark the progress of thought. Indifferent actions are also
called \textit{mediae} or 'mean'—not in the Aristotelian sense of a mean
between two extremes of excess and defect, but because, when
reason sets out to apply to human acts the fundamental categories
of good and evil provided by the moral consciousness, it finds some
actions which cannot be brought under either category and so are
styled 'mean' or intervening. Again, they are called 'free,' a word
which betokens the recognition of some law or binding standard;
so that actions, which are not found to fall under the sanctions of
any such obligation, are a matter of free and arbitrary choice. Such,
for example, are, or may be, the clothes we wear, the food we eat,
the posture we adopt in worship.

Forbes accepts, against the Puritans, the Catholic and common-
sense view that there are many such mean, free, or indifferent
acts, even in the externals of religion; but he adds that Scripture
has made its position clear with regard to them. He finds in
Scripture two governing principles. One is the general principle
that "whatsoever is without faith is sin"—a text with which both
Romanists and Puritans made great play. Its meaning will be
discussed in the following division of this Appendix. The other
is that an act \textit{per se}, or in its primary species, indifferent, may
become in practice, or in its secondary species, obligatory, in
virtue of the Scriptural duties of order, peace, dignity, and edifica-
tion in the conduct of Church life. Any decision of the Church,
for instance, which makes or should make kneeling or genuflexion
at the Holy Communion, single or triple immersion or affusion
in Baptism, the sign of the Cross at the end of the Creed, a

\(^1\) \textit{Works}, x. 556.
reverence at the 'Incarnatus,' or similar point of ritual obligatory on all its members, is a circumstance conditioning the object which determines the species of the act; the act is thereby transferred from the species of worship in its simple significance, to that of ordered or social worship; and its indifference for practical purposes is thus removed. True, there are checks and limitations on the process. Any ecclesiastical enactment on such matters must be within the bounds of what God allows; if it be contrary to His known Will, then it becomes a duty to obey God rather than man. Again, such enactment may not extend beyond practice: the specific indifference of an action in Scripture cannot be removed by ecclesiastical authority, so far as its primary species is concerned; the action cannot be declared de fide. Scripture is thus the bulwark of liberty of conscience in such matters. But the right of the Church to lay down rules for its members in non-essentials is unimpaired and unimpeachable; and they are bound by their Christian profession to obey.

II

Hitherto we have been considering Forbes's handling of actions in the abstract and their specific good, evil, or indifference; and he had the whole tradition of Catholic theology behind him in asserting that there are actions which are indifferent in species. In the thirteenth chapter of the First Book he passes, however, to the discussion of actions in the concrete, and the theory he has established in the previous chapter is subjected to formidable attack. The essence of his opponents' position is that every action in the concrete is good or evil according as it is or is not directed to the ultimate end of action, and does or does not proceed from faith. In his reply he not only makes good the case he has already stated, but also derives support for it from that very point of an act's relation to the final cause which his antagonists had so confidently pleaded against him. We will first state the main gist of his defence, and then proceed to glance at the general questions of Moral Theology which his discussion covers, and with which he took for granted that his readers were familiar.

Forbes accepts _ex animo_ his opponents' contention that faith and right direction are essential to all good acts. They are not only necessary, but the only things universally necessary to every good
action; so that without them even an otherwise good action is made evil. And he allows that this faith and right direction are either present or not present in the case of every action. But he refuses to allow the deduction from this that therefore all actions are good or evil, and none are indifferent. For he is dealing with the quality of actions not after they are done, if we may so speak, but before they are done. By 'good' he means what must necessarily be done and may be left undone; by 'evil' what must necessarily be avoided, and may not be done. And to this antecedent necessity of an act nothing is added by the faith or motive with which it is done. The former necessitates the action or its omission, on pain of Divine displeasure; while the faith and motive qualify it in the sense that without them it cannot be done well. Their necessity, that is to say, is hypothetical, being conditioned by the decision to do or omit the act, and that decision does not affect the antecedent necessity or indifference of the act in itself. Yet again, Forbes distinguishes the two kinds of goodness here emerging; the first objective or intrinsic, as attaching to the act in its species, the second subjective or concomitant and qualifying the act as a sine qua non of its being done well. And we do not derogate from the necessity of faith and right motive in every action by insisting that it is distinct from the absolute necessity which binds us to do some acts and to avoid others.

But Forbes goes further. The very court of appeal to which his opponents resorted for a favourable verdict on their contention that all acts in the particular were necessarily good or evil is found to pronounce against them. They had appealed to the motive of an action or its relation to the ultimate end, namely, God. That had been a favourite subject with the Schoolmen, and they had found it no such simple matter as Forbes's disputants implied. For the ultimate motive of action, the love of God, could operate in more ways than one. The simplest case was when it operated actually—i.e. when it was the conscious and deliberate motive of a concrete action. But, as St Bonaventura had pointed out, that is more than can be asked of every act we do, or the burden of conscience would be intolerable. On the other hand, to say that a general or habitual resolve on such a motive is sufficient involves too great laxity, and is inconsistent with the testimony of the saints. But there is yet a third way in which the love of God
can be the motive of our acts, that is, *virtually*; when the higher reason is led by the actual motive of the love of God to resolve upon certain broad principles of action to that end, and the lower reason decides that such and such an action falls under one of those principles. This is how Scotus developed the argument. We might illustrate from the experience of work. A soldier, for instance, is called on throughout the day to perform a number of acts, some obviously useful, others not, some interesting, others not. It would be unreasonable to require that he should consciously refer each one of these separate acts to God—indeed, it would probably militate against the smartness of his movements. But his actions will be virtually referred to God, if he has decided that efficiency and obedience and the service of his country are godly things, and with this motive takes them into his will; and if he then wills to carry out whatever actions or movements—dressing, turning, wheeling, forming fours—are ordered by his superior officers. Inasmuch, however, as neither the actual nor the virtual\(^1\) working of the highest motive are always required of us by Divine law, but sometimes a habitual relation to God suffices, though it is insufficient to give to actions the quality of good, it is to be concluded that some actions—those, namely, which are referred to God only habitually—are neither good nor evil, but indifferent. Such, for instance, would be his choice of place in the file or the pitch of his voice in numbering off. The absence, on the other hand, of even this habitual relation would mean that a man was not living in faith; and all his actions would be in the theological sense evil.

When Bishop Creighton was called upon for a sudden answer to the question, “What is the object of life?” he replied: “Life is an opportunity of loving.” Robert Browning had given the same answer\(^2\); and both were voicing the tradition of Christendom. But the answer may be come at in different ways. Scholastic philosophy started from Aristotle, who, premising that all men desire Happiness, devoted the books of his Nicomachean Ethics to building up a definition of what Happiness was. This definition, which regarded Happiness as “an activity of the speculative in-

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\(^1\) The forming and fostering of this virtual relation to God is the essence of *morale* in an army, and affords the military justification for Church Parades.

\(^2\) *A Death in the Desert.*
tellect\(^1\),” or more theologically, as in the Eudemian Ethics\(^2\), as θεωρία τοῦ θεοῦ and even θεοῦ θεραπεύειν καὶ θεωρεῖν, was accepted and developed by St Thomas\(^3\), who states more precisely that man’s Happiness consists in the Vision of the Divine Essence; and, because “every knowledge that is according to the mode of a created substance falls short of the vision of the Divine Essence, which infinitely exceeds every created substance\(^4\),” man’s end can only be attained by supernatural grace and in a future life. And the adaptability of this conclusion to the Christian Revelation is immediately obvious. For the Scriptures, which record that Revelation, speak not only of the necessity, but also of the offer, of grace to human life, and declare the future life as an article of faith and not merely as a demand of the speculative intellect. Further, the Divine Essence is revealed as Love.

Theology, accordingly, has tended to describe the final cause of human life and action in terms derived from Scripture. One such definition, for instance, is that which Forbes uses most constantly in the Irenicum—“the glory of God.” Another and more common one is Charity or Love. They do not differ, for the reference of all actions to the glory of God does not mean that His glory is thereby augmented—which is impossible; but that it is published and shewn forth, and this is not done except by Love. Forbes preferred it here, perhaps, because the context in which it occurs in St Paul\(^5\) is germane to the controversy in which he was engaged, and was probably appealed to often by his opponents. But it is likewise the definition which Jeremy Taylor prefers in the second chapter of the last book of his Ductor Dubitantium, where he discusses the final cause of actions: he seems to regard it as the briefest and simplest summary of the whole matter. Charity, on the other hand, while it is, as Forbes says, “the measure of the goodness of everything we do\(^6\),” is a measure easier for the intuition than for the reason to apply.

Besides right motive, another quality is essential to all actions, and not least to actions in themselves indifferent. This is ‘faith.’

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\(^1\) Eth. Nic. i. x.
\(^3\) Especially 1-II. i and iii. The Scotists regarded Happiness as an activity of the Will rather than the Understanding.
\(^4\) 1-II. v. 5.
\(^5\) 1 Cor. x. 31.
\(^6\) T.M. i. xi. 18.
St Paul's words1, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin," were the *locus classicus* in this connexion. Like most of his teaching, this dictum was wrested to uses which it was ill-adapted to serve. Hooker tells us2 that Thomas Cartwright and his friends made great play with it, claiming that, as "faith is not but in respect of the Word of God," the text prescribed the necessity of reference to Scripture in regard to every action we do; and Gillespie shews that this interpretation had its champions in the Scotland of 1630. For Forbes is very insistent upon the right meaning of St Paul's words. They were vital to his case, for they conclude the Apostle's argument about things indifferent. And his exegesis betrays that accurate and patient discrimination which distinguishes scientific theology from Chrysostom to Aquinas, and from Aquinas to Hooker and the Anglican divines. For him the phrase signifies the belief and certain knowledge that such and such a course of action is lawful3; so much so, indeed, that be the act never so lawful, should a man do it without knowing it to be so or under the impression that it is unlawful, his action will be evil4. In other words, the 'faith' here alluded to is what we should call a "good conscience." So it was understood by Innocent III, who added to St Paul's words, *et quicquid fit contra conscientiam aedificat ad gehennam*5. So, too, by St Thomas, who writes: "Conscience is nothing else than the application of knowledge (science) to a given act. But knowledge is in the reason. A will, therefore, at variance with an erroneous reason is against conscience. But every such will is evil; for it is said: 'All that is not of faith is sin,' *i.e.* all that is against conscience." And Hooker takes his stand on the same ground, when he quotes a judgment of Cicero's, and lays it down

1 Rom. xiv. 23.  2 *L.E.P.* ii. iv. i.  3 xiii. 7, 10.  4 xiii. 13.  5 *Extra*, De restitut. spoliat. cap. 13, Literas. Cf. Chrysostom: "When a person does not feel sure, nor believe, that a thing is clean, how can he be free from sin? Now all these things have been spoken by Paul of the object in hand, not of everything."  6 i–ii. xix. 5, § 4. In this *Quaestio* Aquinas discusses conscience, and concludes that an erroneous conscience is binding, but does not excuse the act which issues from it, except where the error [*i.e.* in the minor premiss of the practical syllogism, which is provided by the higher reason] is such as a person could not help. Forbes follows Aquinas closely in *T.M.* i. xvi–xix.  7 *De Offic.* i. 9. Bene praepiciunt qui vetant quidquam agere, quod dubites aequum sit an iniquum.
that St Paul means "nothing else, but only a full persuasion that that which we do is well done."

There is no question here, therefore, of that much-disputed and celebrated doctrine of the sinfulness of all works done prior to faith, but simply of the state of mind in which any action that enters into the deliberation ought to be performed. What is required is a reasoned state of mind, one which does what it does upon principle, without qualms or doubts and in full confidence that it is doing right. Actions so conditioned have a soundness and strength which makes for wholeness and sincerity of character.

St Chrysostom, commenting on Gal. v. 23, speaks of Charity as κατάλλαλην φάρμακον—a mutual or reciprocal medicine. It would be difficult to describe the spirit of compromise, so far as compromise is rightful, in more attractive terms. Catholic order derives its potency and obligation from the healing properties of that spirit. It is because without order charity cannot function that the Church's enactments are of binding authority; and just as it is to that end that they are directed, so it is in that spirit that they must be maintained. Dr Forbes's vindication of ecclesiastical authority in non-essentials suffered from the fact that this spirit was unavoidably obscured by the passions of the time—passions which, if the bishops did their best to allay, the Crown was not afraid to arouse. That was not, however, the fault of the Aberdeen divine; and we should the more marvel that his exposition of the principles of Catholic order betrays so little of the animosities of the age, and is marked by so keen a vision and such scrupulous and impartial analysis.

III

None can read the writings of Forbes's opponents, such as Gillespie's Dispute or the stronger and more moderate Re-examination of the Perth Articles, without feeling that they represent an attitude to Christian liberty as expressed in the developing life and mind of the Church, which would hardly be maintained in any theological circles to-day. Forbes, on the other hand, is vindicating a principle which, while the forms of its application have changed, is as true to-day as it was when he wrote—the principle of the authority of the living Church to take order in

1 L.E.P. 11. iv. 2.
matters indifferent, and the duty of its members to obey. Three centuries ago the English Reformers, no less than the Church of Rome, believed that that principle was to be applied along the lines of uniformity. To-day, another policy is being shaped; and a new legislative machinery is being used to give statutory authority for a more elastic application of the principle. Such a solution of the problem of the Church's authority is beset with difficulties of its own; and it will be not less necessary for us than it was for our forefathers to realize the Scriptural grounds of peace, order, edification, and charity, on which the binding obligation of ecclesiastical enactments is based.

The position of the Church of England is laid down in the Prefaces to the Book of Common Prayer; and it is closely akin to that which Forbes defends in connexion with the Perth Articles. It is stated in "The Preface" (1661) that "the particular forms of Divine worship, and the Rites and Ceremonies appointed to be used therein, being things in their own nature indifferent, and alterable, and so acknowledged: it is but reasonable, that upon weighty and important considerations, according to the various exigency of times and occasions, such changes and alterations should be made therein, as to those that are in place of Authority should from time to time seem either necessary or expedient." The abolition of some Ceremonies is defended on the ground that they had become burdensome or led to abuse; while the retention of others is justified on the ground that order, discipline, and edification require some Ceremonies, and that the old ones deserve reverence for their antiquity ("Of Ceremonies," 1549). Moreover, though the keeping or omitting of a Ceremony per se is but a small thing, "yet the wilful and contemptuous transgression and breaking of a common order and discipline is no small offence before God." In other words, as Forbes puts it, the indifferency of a Ceremony is taken away, when it has become the subject of ecclesiastical and statutory enactment.

Though the principle of the indifferency of Ceremonies per se is thus asserted, and though it is implied that a National Church has an unfettered authority and discretion in the ordering of them, the careful respect for precedent constitutes in fact a limitation on the exercise of this authority and in that measure impairs the indifferency of those Ceremonies which have the sanction of pre-
cedent. The position is aptly expressed on the title-page of the Prayer Book which speaks of "Administration of the Sacraments and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, according to the Use of the Church of England." The Church, that is to say, while it allows the theological principle of the indifferency of all Ceremonies; yet adds that in practice some Ceremonies and Forms of Worship are so bound up with Faith and Charity as to carry a certain degree of obligation. A case in point was the use of the Lord's Prayer. The Puritans would have dispensed with this altogether in Divine worship as being a 'form.' But the Church of England could not, in fact, have done this without ceasing to be part of the Catholic Church.

The Preface "Of Ceremonies," when it speaks of precedent has in mind especially the custom of the undivided Church. In "The Preface" of 1661 yet a further type of precedent is mentioned as deserving of consideration. It is stated as a guiding principle in the Revision then made that the Church—*i.e.* the English Church—since the Reformation had made "such alterations in some particulars, as in their respective times were thought convenient: yet so, as that the main body and essentials of it (as well in the chiepest materials, as in the frame and order thereof) have still continued the same unto this day." Not only, that is to say, did the general tradition of antiquity, but also the peculiar tradition of the Church of England itself, demand consideration when new order was to be taken. The Prayer Book, that is to say, binds those who subscribe to it to have regard, when they come to take fresh order in matters indifferent, not only to the past of the undivided Church, but also to its own peculiar past in particular. And thus the Revision of 1661 was conditioned by circumstances which did not operate in the Revision of 1549.

To-day, yet other circumstances have arisen to condition the Revision of the Prayer Book. The Caroline Revision marked the high-water mark of the process of disruption which began in the sixteenth century: its aim was to embody the quintessence of the Anglican witness as against Rome and Puritanism alike. Yet, versatile instrument as it has proved itself to be, the Christian conscience calls to-day for other factors to be taken into account. Not only has the Church of England founded daughter Churches overseas which have developed their own rich and various life;
but the independence and isolation, which were the pride of National Churches at the Reformation, have given way to a sensitive alertness to, and interest in, what is thought and done in other Communions than their own. In other words, the Re-union movement has become a factor of great moment; and the claim is made that the indifferency of things is impaired not only by earlier decrees of that Church which proposes to order them, or of the whole undivided Church, but also by the existence of other decrees of other parts of the Church, which have a bearing on the matter in hand. Such decrees or customs are, therefore, in scholastic language, circumstances conditioning the object which determines the species of the act.

The growth of this Catholic consciousness in the English Church is the real clue to much of what appears as lawlessness in the life of the Church to-day; and it is only in so far as it is met and understood that the Revision of the Prayer Book now being undertaken will be successful. The way to meet it is frankly to recognize that the English Church must add to the appeal to antiquity and the appeal to its own past which it already makes yet a third kind of reference—the reference to contemporary belief and practice in other parts of the Church Universal. Such a ‘lateral’ reference was customary in antiquity; and, though one of the results of the Reformation was to banish it, the Re-union movement as inevitably tends to bring it back. No doubt its use involves special discriminations and cautions, which it is the business of theology to urge; in one important matter I have ventured to urge such discriminations in the second Appendix to this volume. For that reason it is perhaps better to speak of a lateral reference than of a lateral appeal; but the possibility of peace and order in our Communion will depend in large measure on the extent to which it takes this factor into account.

It is important, however, to emphasize the fact that these practical results of faith in the Unity of the Church do not affect the principle for which Forbes and our Prayer Book alike contend—that of obedience to the Church’s enactments. We dare not set these aside except in obedience to an express command of God as declared in Holy Scripture. It is to be presumed that when a man is ordained he satisfies himself as to the competence of the authority behind the ordinances which he gives his oath to observe; and
should he later alter his mind and come to believe that the English Church has in fact no such authority, his plain duty is to cease to work in her jurisdiction. It can be confidently said that neither Rome nor the East will stand upon the order of our Ceremonies when the Yea or Nay of Re-union is reached. The precise way in which the Eucharist is celebrated or the Athanasian Creed used or the Blessed Sacrament reserved is not one of those things which will weigh in the balance one straw at that great day. Rather are those preparing the way for the re-united Church who know how to be faithful to the principles of order, charity and peace in the smaller spheres of corporate life where at present their lot is cast.
APPENDIX II

EUCHARISTIC SYMBOLISM AND ADORATION

The purpose of this Appendix is to give some account of Forbes's treatment of Eucharistic theology and practice and to open up from it certain guiding lines of doctrine which seem to have particular value for the Church of to-day. Such a purpose requires little excuse or justification. In an age for which Science has made Matter a word of marvellous significance, that element of religion which combines the outward and physical order of the world with the central mysteries of the economy of redemption possesses a special interest; and the combination must afford some hope that even the mechanical economic forces which underlie society may be thought of as capable of being brought within the orbit of spiritual purpose and direction. Again, the issue is a fundamental one for all missionary and evangelical religion. For if, as Catholic tradition has always taught, the Eucharist is the sovereign act whereby the benefits of Christ’s Death are normally applied and received in the case of the baptized, then we cannot be satisfied—and there are signs that Protestantism is coming to be less and less satisfied—with any form of Gospel which obscures or belittles this truth. Again, the issue is vital for Re-union. The troubles of the Church of Scotland from the date of the Perth Articles to that of the National Covenant contain a double lesson; first, that uniformity of rite is perilous, if it betray insufficient regard for national custom and personal association; secondly, and no less plainly, that some degree of uniform doctrine and the possession of common principles as regards the Holy Communion are vital to the peace of the Church. And, finally, anyone who contemplates seriously the situation existing in the Church of England to-day cannot fail to observe the dangerous consequences of confusion, not to say anarchy, of thought upon the Eucharist. A great increase of sacramental religion felt in all quarters of the Church is accompanied by a bewildering uncertainty as to the methods and limits of the use of the Blessed Sacrament: while unfortunately those to whom obedience is due seem to have no
agreed and authoritative court of appeal on which to rely for sanction of their decisions. If we are to recover from this disastrous condition, the first requisite is clear and thorough thinking; and it is this which is a distinguishing mark of all Forbes’s work.

Various causes conspire to give particular importance to Forbes’s contribution to Eucharistic theology. He is a Protestant, in that he rejected the Roman doctrine of Transubstantiation; but in all else he is a Catholic. He takes his stand on no private judgment of the meaning of Scripture, but makes his constant appeal to the Fathers of the undivided Church. The abundant patristic testimonia which he cites are for him the indices of the mind of the whole Church throughout many centuries, and it is that mind which he desires to express and to transmit. That standard is one which the Church of England, and in large measure also the Church of Scotland¹, recognizes as one of authoritative weight. Moreover, Forbes has the great merit of nowhere foreclosing the issue. In rejecting Transubstantiation, he does not make the Lutheran mistake of setting up a counter-definition². Refusing to tie down the Church’s faith in the Eucharistic gifts to expression in the terms of a particular philosophy, Forbes called in the witness of the old world to redress the balance of the mediaeval; and his exposition reflects the variety, the potentialities of development, the unfinished ends of thought, so characteristic of antiquity. Though we cannot to-day rest in Forbes’s position, he himself makes every provision for Eucharistic theology to continue its

¹ Dr Sprott’s Worship and Offices of the Church of Scotland is a model of lucid arrangement and clear statement. He writes (p. 8): “The Westminster Directory, as enjoined in 1705, with whatever it did not abrogate of the earlier regulations of the Church, and all special Acts on the subject passed since 1690, may...be regarded as embodying the law of the Church as to Public Worship.” See also Dr Cooper’s edition of The Scottish Liturgy of 1637 for the history of Eucharistic doctrine in the Kirk; and, for modern interpretation of Presbyterian standards, A Manual of Church Doctrine, by Dr Wotherspoon and Mr Kirkpatrick (1921). For the standards of the Episcopal Church of Scotland, their Prayer Book, together with Bishop Dowden’s Annotated Scottish Communion Office, comprises the necessary evidence. Anglican formularies are contained in the Book of Common Prayer, particularly in the Order of Holy Communion, the Office for the Communion of the Sick, the Catechism, and Articles 25, 26, 28–36 of the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion.

² Commonly known as Consubstantiation: discussed by Forbes in I.H.T. xi. xxi. Yet the Lutheran confessions make no allusion to the term.
journey. And, thirdly, Forbes's teaching is always in close touch with concrete issues of practice and ritual. This is especially so in the *Irenicum*, where the controversy over kneeling at the Holy Communion was the occasion of the book. Consequently, what he writes has a very close bearing upon those questions of Adoration, of Reservation of the Blessed Sacrament, and of Eucharistic rites and ceremonies which are so prevalent in England to-day.

The sources for a study of Forbes's Eucharistic theology are as follows:

(a) *Irenicum*, i. i–iv, vii. x; ii. xvi. Part 4. These chapters deal with the right posture for communicants at the Holy Communion, and state the doctrine of Eucharistic Adoration.

(b) *Ib.* ii. xi. Prop. xiii. Part 8. This discussion of the Eucharistic Sacrifice occurs here in connexion with the nature and function of the Ministry; but Forbes regarded it as so well representing his mind on the subject that he incorporated it almost word for word in his *Instructiones* (xi. xx), which was published over fifteen years later.

(c) *Instructiones Historico-Theologicae*, Book xi. This book occupies nearly 90 pages in Garden's folio edition and contains a very wide survey of Eucharistic doctrine. More than two-thirds of the book is devoted to a powerful refutation of the Roman doctrine of Transubstantiation; but his own positive standpoint is always strongly brought out in contrast. In addition to this book two other portions of the *Instructiones* must also be consulted, viz. the seventh book, on Worship, and the ninth, on Sacraments in general.

If these various passages be taken together, they will be found to embody a doctrine of impressive consistency and weight.

It would have been possible, and perhaps the simpler course, to give an abstract or analysis of the eleventh book of the *Instructiones* and to build the rest of the material on to that substructure. But two considerations seem to recommend another method. One is that Forbes's object was largely polemical; he was marshalling a host of facts, arguments, interpretations, and testimonia, upon one side of a great controversy, determined, like a general in war, to bring superior force to bear at the vital points in the position of those who defended Transubstantiation. The purpose of this essay, on the other hand, is to set forth Forbes's positive teaching on the Holy Communion; so that, though we shall
from time to time observe the progress and dispositions of his conflict, there is no reason why we should follow him into the dust and turmoil of the struggle itself. His forces will come before us in review order rather than as arrayed for a battle long since won. Those, moreover, who desire to follow Forbes's own argument closely can now do so without trouble; for an English analysis of the greater part of *I.H.T.* xi has been recently published in Scotland. The second factor dictating method is the practical interest already avowed for this essay. Forbes's exposition has not only an antiquarian, scientific interest, but, like all great theological writing, serves to quicken and illuminate our own handling of similar problems to-day. Science demands that we should give to the master's words the precise meaning which they had for him; but wisdom claims that we should use them, when thus exactly determined, to fertilize the experience of our own generation. I have, therefore, exercised considerable freedom in transposing the material in hand, dividing it under heads and categories more adjusted to our needs: my debt to one recent statement in particular will be clear. But the detailed references to the *Irenicum* given in the notes will enable any who so wish to verify the tenour of this essay for themselves.

The Christian use of the word 'sacrament' to denote the Mysteries of our religion is traced by Forbes to a point beyond the commonly reckoned source in the Roman soldier's military oath. He quotes Varro and Festus for the statement that the word originally meant the money deposit handed in by litigants as pledge of their good faith. The loser's deposit in the case was appropriated afterwards to the treasury; and Festus adds two reasons for the adoption of the name 'sacrament' for it—one, that these forfeits were commonly earmarked for the expenses of public worship,

1 *John Forbes of Corse and his Eucharistic Teaching*, by W. W. Low, D.D. The Scottish Chronicle Press, 1923. The first six and the last chapters of *I.H.T.* Book xi, are omitted from the analysis, which confines itself to the chapters dealing with Transubstantiation. The result is naturally an incomplete view of Forbes's Eucharistic theology as a whole. I should say that the whole of this Appendix is based on my own analysis of *I.H.T.* xi and other passages made some two years before the publication of Dr Low's book.

2 *Belief and Practice* (Longmans). Mr Spens's Eucharistic theology reflects the thought of a long stream of Scottish Episcopal divines.

3 *I.H.T.* ix. i.

4 *De Lingua Latina*, iv.
the other, that a solemn oath accompanied their deposit. The application of the term to the military oath seems to be of later provenance\(^1\), belonging to an age when Rome had a regular standing army, and this significance seems to have been commended to the Christian Church by Tertullian\(^2\). But Forbes is probably not wrong in claiming that all the solemn and excellent associations of the word, and not this last only, were accountable for its general adoption by Christendom. It is noteworthy that the idea of a sacrament as a pledge is explicitly stated in the Anglican Catechism.

The word carried with it a much wider meaning for the Fathers than it does for us, owing to its equation with the Hellenistic μυστήριον. Thus Tertullian\(^3\) spoke of the Sacraments of God’s Judgment, of Gehenna, of Paradise; Hilary of the “secret sacrament” of the Incarnation\(^4\), and Ambrose\(^5\) likewise; and again, of the sacrament of our Salvation\(^6\). But that is not its technical significance. Properly it denotes a sacred sign of a sacred thing. From this base Forbes proceeds to build up a complete definition in the Aristotelian fashion. Sacraments are *signa practica*, as distinct from *signa speculativa*, instituted for the purpose of sanctifying as well as signifying\(^7\); or, in other words, they are not only didactic, but effectual, symbols. This is a point to which we shall have to return. Further, because God alone is the agent of sanctification and giver of grace, He alone can make their symbols effectual; they are sure signs and pledges only in so far as they have been instituted by Him\(^8\). And it is this Divine institution which makes them binding by “necessity of precept\(^9\).”

There was a time when they were not binding—the period, for instance, of the Jewish dispensation; nor are they binding on those who have not heard the Gospel, who are bound by no other obligation than that of ‘means,’ attaching to the dictates of the natural reason: but for Christians they are normally necessary, in the sense that they “give salvation\(^10\)” and that God has willed that salvation shall be offered in that way, and that consequently “contempt of them is fatal\(^11\).” On the other hand, Forbes does full

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2. *Apol.* xvii. 4 *de Trin.* x. 16–18 ff.
4. *Scotus*, in 4 *Sent. Dist.* i. qu. iii. num. 5.
5. *I.H.T.* x. v. 11, 24, viii. 1; *xvi.* vi. 21.
6. *Ib.* ix. i. 28.
7. *ad Martyras*, iii.
8. *de Incarnat.* v.
9. 4 *Sent. Dist.* i.
10. *Ib.* ix. i. 27.
justice to the Catholic safeguard of all sacramental doctrine—the caution that God is not limited by His Sacraments. "The essence (res) of a sacrament can be had sometimes without the sacrament," said St Augustine\(^1\); and Hugh of St Victor: "Spiritual reception, which is achieved by true faith, is enough without sacramental reception, where there is no contempt of religion." This is a doctrine of Catholic theology which we may well stress at the present time. Though sometimes obscured, it has never been forgotten; indeed our own experience of lives marked by the Divine grace, though without the sacraments, verifies it constantly. All the more unnecessary is it that, with a view to protecting its value, any Christian bodies should deliberately omit any sacramental rite or practice which Christian tradition has held to be normally necessary as a means of grace. That may well amount to a "tempting of God."

The various definitions of sacrament, which Forbes quotes from Gratian\(^3\), Scotus\(^4\), and the Tridentine Catechism\(^5\), are all only other ways of saying what is stated in the Anglican Catechism, when it is called "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace"; but the following words, so often forgotten—"ordained by Christ Himself"—derive great importance from the controversies of the Reformation period. Forbes distinguishes the New Testament sacraments from all others, and denies that any besides Baptism and the Lord's Supper could be called such, because they alone had been instituted by Christ Himself\(^6\). This is one of those passages which shew Forbes as something of a purist. Within the period of the formation of the Canon at least, and especially where the action of the Apostles and other disciples is concerned, a very high degree of authority attaches, apart from the explicit ordinance of Christ, to what the Church under the Spirit's guidance was led to do or to receive. It is hard to see, accordingly, how the title of "New Testament sacraments" can be denied to Confirmation and to Uction, not to speak of Ordination, which indeed was of Christ's own institution. The Tridentine claim to trace all the seven sacraments back

\(^1\) Cf. ib. x. v. 1, 3.  
\(^2\) Speculum Eccles.vii. (P.L. clxxvii. 364-366: not now ascribed to Hugh.)  
\(^3\) Gratian, Decr. iii. ii. Sacrificium.  
\(^4\) in 4 Sent. Dist. i.  
\(^5\) Catech. Trid. ii. i. 6.  
\(^6\) I.H.T. ix. iii. 5.
to Christ Himself rests on no sound historical evidence; but we cannot help feeling that it betrays a wise instinct, in refusing to draw a hard and fast line between what Christ Himself, and what His inspired Apostles, instituted for the benefit of His Church.

Forbes's final description of a New Testament sacrament, properly so-called, may be given in full. "A sacrament is a real, bodily, and visible practical sign, sure and effectual, instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ, and accompanied by a verbal formula and lawful usage, of spiritual and invisible grace, or God's spontaneous working in Christ and through Christ, bringing eternal salvation in accordance with God's covenant to wayfaring man (so long as he has, and perseveres in keeping, that grace); it is a symbol of the divine covenant and a perpetual bond of our religion: necessary, by necessity of precept, for all within the covenant, who are not prevented by age or slight progress in grace or regard for penance not yet finished or some natural obstacle or absolute impossibility; and to be carried out in due form, on the lines of its institution, by the administration of a properly qualified minister."

A very clear statement that the symbolism of the Eucharist is not didactic only, but effectual—not merely "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace...," but also "a means whereby we receive the same"—is to be found in utterances of Cyril of Alexandria. They are the more significant because they occur in passages, where he is emphasizing the point that "the flesh of Christ is not life-giving in itself, but by virtue of the Godhead dwelling in it bodily"; that the eating of Christ's flesh is spiritual; and that "its foundation and basis is faith"—a fact which Forbes labours at some length against Bellarmine, who had wrested the great bishop's words to the purposes of Transubstantiation. Thus Cyril writes: "Even the body of the Lord itself is sanctified by virtue of the Word conjoined with it, and becomes so effectual of mystical blessing that it can impart its sanctification to us"; and again: "We are the body and members of Christ precisely because through this sacramental blessing we take upon us the Son of God Himself." He employs two striking similes, which leave his belief beyond

1 I.H.T. ix. i. 36. 2 Effecti Dei gratuiti.  
3 Idoneo. 4 The Catechism.  
5 I.H.T. xi. xii. 24. Cyril, In Evan. Johan. on vi. 64. 6 Ib. iv. xvii.  
7 Ib. xi. xxii. 8 benedictionem mysterii: in Evan. Johan. iv. xvi.
doubt. "As a spark," he says, "thrown upon hay or straw sets fire to the whole, so the Word of God joined to our corruptible nature through the Eucharist will make it all rise again immortal and glorious." The second implies an even closer union: "As a man who takes some liquefied wax and pours other wax upon it mixes the one with the other throughout the whole mass, so it must needs be that, if a man receives the Lord's flesh and blood, he should be so joined with it that Christ is found in him and he in Christ." No one could teach more plainly than St Cyril that "the flesh of Christ is lifegiving to those who participate in the Eucharist."

For the understanding of the symbolic element in religion, as of all its other elements, the Catholic Fathers referred to Holy Scripture; and in the Church of England, which has made the appeal to Scripture the supreme test of all doctrines and traditions claiming to be authoritative, that reference is certain of endorsement. The scriptural sacraments are part of the symbolism of Scripture, and their meaning cannot be determined in isolation from the other types of it found there. Modern research into the Mystery-cults of the pagan world surrounding the early growth of Christianity present us, no doubt, with striking analogies to the sacraments of the Gospel; but it appears as though the attempt to find for the latter a Hellenistic rather than a Hebraic root, so far from making headway, is more and more clearly doomed to failure. The seed-plot and standard of Christian ideas remained throughout the early centuries the Bible. And a distinction which it may be convenient to work from in considering the symbolism of Scripture is suggested by a mediaeval writer, who says that "a sacrament consists in three things—namely deeds, words, objects." In other words, we may expect to find in the Bible a symbolism of language, a symbolism of objects, and a symbolism of actions. Certainly the examples of Scriptural symbolism which were cited in antiquity to illustrate the Christian sacraments do fall readily under this threefold classification.

1 *in Johan.* iv. xvi. 2 *Ib.* iv. xvii. 3 *I.H.T.* xi. xii. 23. 4 The evidence is excellently described in Dr F. Legge's *Forerunners and Rivals of Christianity.* 5 See *e.g.* Dr Schweitzer's *St Paul and his Interpreters*; Kennedy, *St Paul and the Mystery Religions.* 6 Hugh of St Victor: *de Off. Eccl.* i. xii: quoted by St Bonaventura, *in 4 Sent.* Dist. x.
1. Symbolism of Language.

The phrase would properly cover the whole Scriptural use of metaphor, which is in all literature the commonest form of this symbolism. Obviously we must limit it for our present purpose to those metaphorical expressions which present analogies with the words of institution. Of these there are three or four instances which have recurred constantly in theological discussion upon the sacraments. We need not delay upon St Augustine’s illustration of the principle that Scripture “commonly speaks of symbolic things as though they were the things symbolized” from Joseph’s phrase in his interpretation of Pharaoh’s dream— “the seven good ears are seven years”—because the symbolism there is of the simplest and least disguised kind. Far more to the point in this connexion are our Lord’s phrases, “I am the door,” “I am the vine,” “I am the good shepherd,” and St Paul’s, “that rock was Christ.” These cases are more complex: in none of them, not even in the last, will the mere statement that the sentences are metaphorical go far to elucidate their meaning; they need more radical analysis. Scotus had a ready answer to those who claimed that the words of institution—“this is my body”—in the Eucharist were parallel to “I am the vine.” He points out that, when our Lord said, “I am the vine,” He added the words, “and ye are the branches”—which could have been only figuratively the case; whereas, when He spoke the words “this is my body,” He added, “which shall be given for you.” Forbes, however, saw that the problem lay deeper down than this, and his reply, so far as it goes, hits the mark. Both phrases, he says, are figurative, but their principles (ratio) differ; for Christ, the subject of the sentence, “I am the vine,” is not a sacrament or figure of anything. It expresses “a certain simple resemblance”; while the words of institution express a “sacramental resemblance and connexion.”

In point of fact, in our Lord’s parabolic sayings about Himself the attribute is, if anything, a symbol of the subject, not vice versa.

1 in Evang. Johan. Tract. lxiii. 2. 2 in Leviticum, c. 57.
3 in 4 Sent. Dist. x. So, too, Durandus, in loc. 4 I.H.T. xi. xii. 4.
5 So in Shakespeare’s

Life’s a stage; and all the men and women players on’t, where the symbolism is precisely similar to that of the cases under discussion.
When He spoke of Himself as the door\(^1\) or the good shepherd\(^2\) or the vine\(^3\), He meant that He had in Himself “properties possessed, or suggested by\(^4\)” those predicates. And what those properties were is implied in the context; not in the spoken context only, but also in the whole field of associated ideas—familiar to all His hearers who knew the prophets—which our Lord’s words must have summoned to the forefront of consciousness. Behind the first two lies the conception of Israel as God’s flock, behind the third that of God’s vineyard. The people knew that, as His sheep, they were entitled to find pasture and security and tender governance; that, as His vineyard, they could expect good husbandry and fruitfulness; while they were conscious of spiritual leaders who starved and overburdened them, and of a spiritual sterility inconsistent with God’s fostering presence; and they knew of no door to richer nourishment. It was in relation to minds full of these images of promise and disappointment that Christ spoke His parabolic words; as though He should say, “You think of yourselves as God’s sheep, and so you are; enter into My fellowship, as through a door, and you will find rich pasture; trust to My governance, and you will be secure. You think of yourselves as God’s vineyard, vines of His own planting (and this He says to His disciples, to whom a more intimate knowledge of His mind was vouchsafed) and so you are; but I bring you a closer relationship yet. I am the true vine, the essential Israel of God; abide in Me, and you will inherit all the promises.”

Let us apply this now to the words of institution. Behind them also there lay a background of ideas shared by all present. It was this complex of associations which our Lord voiced when He said, “With desire have I desired to eat this Passover with you”—the associations, that is to say, of the Paschal sacrifice. And those associations could not fail to have been stung to the most vivid life by the words of institution—“my body...given for you,” “my blood...shed for you.” To the disciples it is difficult not to think that their meaning was plain. “We think of the Paschal sacrifice—and I am to be that now. Take and eat this bread, drink this cup; and you will partake of Me, the Paschal lamb, and have share in a Sacrifice of which all that have ever gone before

\(^1\) John x. 7, 9.  
\(^2\) Ib. 14.  
\(^3\) John xv. 1, 5.  
\(^4\) Belief and Practice, 158 ff.
were only adumbrations." But at the same time this very contrast in the context and correlates of the two sets of phrases respectively may be said to determine a difference in the 'principle' of their symbolism. The former group stand in relation to the conception of a personal Messiah, a heavenly Leader, a redeemed and reconstituted people of God; they not only correct the current conception of His promises, but announce the fact of their fulfilment. The words of institution, on the other hand, refer to an existing, familiar rite, now being solemnly performed, and yet awaiting more awful consummation; and this consummation they portend, together with the means of making it redemptive. The background of the first is a belief or idea; the background of the second is a sacramental act.

Another symbolic phrase often used on both sides of Eucharistic controversy was St Paul's: "that rock was Christ." It is one of the passages St Augustine quotes to illustrate his principle that the auxiliary verb in Scripture denotes representation no less than identification. And he interprets it in consonance with the sharp distinction he often draws between the sign and the thing signified. The thing signified, namely, Christ, has been the object of faith and the giver of grace in all ages of the Church, Jewish and Christian; the signs or outward forms only, under which He has been apprehended, have varied—for the Jews the cloud, the Red Sea, the rock, for us the water of Baptism, the bread and wine of the altar. Yet this exegesis is not wholly adequate; the rock does, or did in St Paul's mind, more than represent Christ. St Chrysostom comes nearer the heart of the matter, when he introduces the idea of Christ as the operating Power in the rock. "For St Paul means that it was not the nature of the rock that sent up the water—it would have run dry long before—but there was another spiritual rock which was working it all, namely Christ, who was present to them everywhere, the worker of all miracles." Here again, then, we shall best appreciate the meaning of the symbolic language by a paraphrase. The rock had a property belonging pre-eminently to the Christ—that of giving unfailing life and refreshment. The meaning, and the analogy with the words of

1 1 Cor. x. 3.  
2 in Leviticum, c. 57.  
3 in Evang. Johan. Tract. xxvi. 12, and xlv. 9; contra Faustum, xix. xvi.  
4 in 1 Cor. x, Hom. 23. See I.H.T. xi. xii. 8-10.
in institution, are well explained by a great English divine: "The Jews, besides the Red Sea crossing and the cloud, had another sacrament in the 'Rock that followed them.' The rock did not literally follow them, as the Rabbins have with dulness dreamed; but go where they would, the wondrous waters from the rock flowed by their path and camp. Figuratively, therefore, it followed; the life of it streamed after them: they were never without its life-giving influence; and therefore never destitute of a sacrament: 'that Rock was Christ.' And here observe the Apostle's view of the 'sacramental principle.' As Christ said of the bread, 'this is my body,' so St Paul declares, 'that Rock was Christ'; not that the bread was literally transformed into His body, or that the rock was changed into Christ; nor again, merely that bread represented the body of Christ, or that the rock represented Christ, but this—that which is wondrous in the bread and rock, the life-giving power, is Christ. The symbol as a material is nothing, the spirit in it—Christ—is everything 2.

To sum up. Analysis of the Scriptural passages which present the closest parallels with the symbolism of the words of institution reveals more than mere representation of one of the related terms by the other. The point of connexion between these terms lies in some property common to both, whether in fact or by suggestion; and the whole context must be laid under contribution for the discovery of what that property is. In the case of our Lord's parables of Himself, it is the possibility of entering through faith in Him into the Kingdom, of following Him as Leader, of inherence in Him; in the case of the rock in the desert, it is the fact of perennial refreshment; in the case of the words of institution, it is the possibility of a realized share in the blessings of His sacrifice. What Forbes calls the 'principle' of the symbolism differs, because the context of associated ideas differs; in the Corinthian passage it is sacramental, but not immediately so; only in the last it is directly and inevitably that. But all the expressions alike are figurative—not only figurative 3, as though that meant

1 Bellarmine hints at the same criticism, de Euch. i. ix.
2 F. W. Robertson, Lectures on the Epistle to the Corinthians, pp. 154, 155.
3 None of the patristic testimonia which Forbes quotes in support of the figurative and symbolic interpretation of the Eucharist—and they are very numerous—contain or imply the limiting word 'only.' An Anglican
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something less than real; but figurative in the sense that the reality has to be sought behind the figure and does not lie on the surface. Our Lord’s method of teaching suggests that it is such reality that is the most precious, and most characteristic of the Kingdom of God.

It is in this connexion that we may most suitably consider and criticize one of the main planks of Forbes’s own position with regard to the Eucharist. It may be summed up in the statement, repeated often in one context or another, that what the faithful receive in their hands at the Eucharist is “the sign, sacrament, symbol, type, figure, image, memorial of the proper, or literal, body of Christ.” Forbes is aiming at a concise statement of the doctrine of St Augustine. And the point of St Augustine’s doctrine is, to Forbes’s mind, the axiom that “no thing is at the same time sign and thing signified.” It is on the security of that axiom that Forbes proceeds to mass biblical, patristic, and liturgical evidence shewing that in the Eucharist the natural substance of bread and wine remain, and to rebut the doctrine of Transubstantiation.

It must be frankly admitted that the further knowledge which time has brought of patristic ways of thought goes far to impair the force of Forbes’s argument here. So far as the second and third century writers are concerned, it seems clear that their conception of symbolism was definitely the reverse of that on which Forbes relies. Harnack’s dictum is well known: “What we nowadays understand by ‘symbol’ is a thing which is not that which it represents; at that time ‘symbol’ denoted a thing which, in some kind of way, really is what it signifies.” Thus, Tertullian’s use of figura and repraesentare are very far from being purely symbolical. And, though Augustine’s distinction between ‘sign’ and ‘thing signified’ is no doubt an explicit advance on earlier ideas, even his teaching cannot be stretched as far as Forbes and the

bishop not long since shocked some of his people by saying that in the words of institution our Lord was speaking “only figuratively.” Many of his critics missed the point of his error, but were right in the instinct which told them that error it was.

1 Mark iv. 9. 2 I.H.T. xi. ix. 1.
3 Ib. xi. x. 4 History of Dogma, II. 144.
Dr Srawley draws my attention to a note by Prof. Turner, in J.T.S. vii. 596.
anti-Transubstantiation writers generally stretched it. On the one hand, his authority is weakened, when he appears as voicing an individual notion on the point and not the mind of the ancient Church generally. On the other, his sacramental teaching is far from consistent or clear. When he says that “the Word is added to the element and a Sacrament is constituted, itself being, as it were, a visible word (visibile verbum)\(^1\),” and also teaches that whatever is presented in Sacraments to the senses should be taken as a guarantee of the reality\(^2\), he is clearly going beyond the position which alone would have justified Forbes’s language. In other words, it is true of the Fathers as it is of the Bible that their symbolism is complex and requires analysis, if it is to be estimated truly; and there is no reason for thinking that their language about the Eucharist is more hesitating or less explicit than that of the Schoolmen, because their interpretation of our Lord’s words of institution is figurative rather than literal.

Further, the stress laid by Augustine and others in antiquity on the figurative element in the symbolism of language used in connexion with the Eucharist has a permanent value for later generations. Those who do, and those who do not, believe in Transubstantiation are bound to use expressions which betray some belief as to the relation subsisting between the Holy Elements and the Body and Blood of Christ. Sometimes it is said that Christ’s Body and Blood are ‘under’ the elements (\emph{sub utraque specie})\(^3\); at others, that His Body and Blood are ‘in’ the elements\(^4\); others, again, have preferred to speak of Christ’s being present ‘to’ or ‘with’ the elements\(^5\): while, yet again, the thought of many would be best expressed by the use of the preposition ‘through.’ All these usages are legitimate, so long as none are claimed as final or exclusive. All language used to describe a relation which is confessedly \emph{sui generis} is necessarily inadequate and figurative. And it is therefore the more vital that none should be pressed disproportionately as though it had a literal application. Each involves the use of a spatial metaphor to describe what is infinitely more

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\(^1\) \textit{In Johan.} Tract. lxxx. 3: cited in \textit{I.H.T.} ix. i. 11.  
\(^2\) Cf Harnack, \textit{op. cit. v.} i 56.  
\(^3\) Cf. Council of Bethlehem (1672); Council of Trent, Sess. xiii. 3.  
\(^5\) I suppose that this would represent the Lutheran doctrine.
than spatial. Only when we say that, by virtue of consecration, the holy elements are Christ’s Body and Blood, do we seem to have left metaphor behind: but it is only because we have exchanged the problems of metaphor for those of predication. The truth is that this relation is one of those that are best left undefined in word; for it is when embodied, mediated, and preserved in the symbols of rite and ceremony that its heavenly significance is most abundantly disclosed.

2. Symbolism of objects.

Just as symbolism of language may be taken to include all metaphorical expressions and its study, unless otherwise confined, become almost coterminous with the study of Poetry, so symbolism of objects may be claimed as synonymous with religious Art. Here, however, the fact that Scriptural examples only are engaging our attention imposes a far more immediate and radical limitation than in the case of symbolic language; for, while the Bible is full of poetry and so of metaphor, its attitude to artistic representations is one of consistent repudiation or at least suspicion. The beautiful ornaments of Solomon’s Temple are indeed described; but the biblical accounts of the first steps towards that enterprise, and of the divine displeasure at the moral evils which followed its accomplishment, reflect the characteristic Jewish dislike of works of art. St Paul was never more truly “a Hebrew of the Hebrews” than when he “saw the city” of Athens, with all its shining marble, “wholly given to idolatry,” and was disgusted. Even the Ark, and the Cherubim on either side the mercy-seat, were in the Holy of Holies and so invisible to the people. Sacraments and sacrificial offerings apart, perhaps the only symbolic objects permanently familiar to, and valued by, the Jewish people were the vestments and other properties of the Levitical ceremonial. And there the symbolism was quite simply didactic; like “the two stones upon the shoulders of the ephod” of Aaron, they were “for a memorial”; their use was that which Gregory assigned to images, as “the books of the unlettered.”

Scripture, however, presents two instances of symbolism of objects, which are, or have been claimed to be, germane to that

1 An exception is Ex. xxxv. 31-35. 2 Sam. vii.
3 1 Kings xi. seqq. 4 Acts xvii. 16. 5 Ex. xxviii. 13.
in the Eucharist. One is the water of Baptism. It is undoubtedly true that there was a tendency in fourth century and later writers\(^1\) to assimilate the idea of the consecration of the waters of Baptism to that of the consecration of the Eucharistic species, and to speak of a ‘change’ of the former as of the latter. But this represented no more than a phase in the development of thought; and there is far more authority even in early times for the conception which underlies the later formulations\(^2\) of the Church, when it distinguishes between _sacramentum, res sacramenti_ and _virtus sacramenti_, finding all three in the Eucharist, but only the first and the last in Baptism. On this matter Forbes seems guilty of some confusion and of too great readiness to find parallelism in a point where it does not exist. Thus, in contesting the view that, apart from consumption, the consecrated elements in the Eucharist have supernatural properties\(^3\), he appeals to the analogy of Baptism. The water of Baptism, he says, “becomes the laver of regeneration, and receives its saving power through the divine blessing and operation, but not through human immersion: does it therefore follow that immersion or affusion is not necessary to the full truth of the sacrament of Baptism, but that, anterior to and apart from this use, the laver mediates salvation, and so is the blood of Christ, which purges us from all sin, and the grace of the regenerating Spirit\(^4\)?” As a vindication of the truth that the _benefits_ of the Eucharist cannot normally be had without consumption of the gifts, the argument is unexceptionable; but it implies a parallelism in both the form and the matter of the two sacraments which

\(^1\) Mostly Eastern, _e.g._ Cyril of Jerusalem, Gregory of Nyssa (quoted below), and Coptic and Armenian rites. See T. Thompson, _Offices of Baptism and Confirmation_, pp. 167 ff.

\(^2\) The Anglican Catechism affords a good example of this, when, in the case of the Eucharist, it speaks of ‘sign,’ ‘thing signified,’ and ‘benefits.’ Dr J. H. Srawley kindly sends me some words from Wilberforce’s _Doctrine of the Eucharist_, which is much to the point (cc. v, vi, ix). Distinguishing between Baptism and the Eucharist, he writes: “The last depends, while the first does not depend, on consecration… In the one sacrament there is a _res sacramenti_, but not in the other: Christ may be _said_ to be present in Baptism, He is _really_ present in the Holy Eucharist. . . . The gift in Baptism is bestowed through the _ordinance_ at large: in the Holy Eucharist it is bestowed through the elements.” See also appended note 6 in Gore’s _The Body of Christ_.

\(^3\) On this see below, p. 229 f.

\(^4\) _I.H.T._ xi. vii. 9.
cannot be maintained. Again, he makes use of a passage from Gregory of Nyssa\(^1\) in a way even less satisfactory, where the effects of consecration are correlated in the cases of the water of Baptism, the altar, the person of the priest, and the Eucharistic species. Such an analogy involves either too much in the first three cases, or too little in the last. Yet once more, in speaking of the Real Presence, Forbes uses language which cannot, I believe, be paralleled in any of the great Church Fathers. We recognize, he says, no other than a relative presence of Christ to the outward symbol, like the presence of a thing signified and represented with the sign which truly represents, and in a way exhibits, it. “Thus the blood of Christ is present to the water of Baptism as its sign, relatively, and by correspondence; but to the baptized themselves really and in application\(^2\).” All these three examples illustrate how even the clearest thinker may overreach himself through excessive systematization. The truth is that, whereas in Baptism the symbolism is primarily of action and not of objects, in the Eucharist the symbolism of objects is fundamental. We cannot, in fact, correlate any part of the Eucharist with any part of other sacraments or sacramental things, until we have first determined its place in relation to the whole meaning of the Eucharist. To the latter the historical context of Christ’s final Sacrifice is of primary moment, and permeates every aspect of the symbolism.

For that reason we are on different and firmer ground when we come to the objects used in the Levitical sacrifices, and particularly the Paschal lamb. All alike—the bullock of the sin-offering, the lambs of the morning and evening sacrifice, the wine of the drink-offering\(^3\), the he-lamb and the log of oil of the wave-offering\(^4\), the lamb of the Passover\(^5\), the shewbread\(^6\)—were objects specially set apart for holy purposes. Further, the Law prescribed, in the case of such of these objects as were alive, that they should be killed, that so their life might be made available, whether for winning Jehovah’s pleasure in the form of “sweet-smelling savour\(^7\),” or for healing through the smearing of the blood on the

\(^1\) Orat. de sancto Christi baptismate (P.G. xlvi col. 582): quoted in I.H.T. xi. xv. 3. A similar parallelism is suggested by Cyril of Jerusalem, Cat. Myst. iii. 3, in regard to holy oil which becomes χάρισμα Χριστοῦ (cf. I.H.T. xi. xv. 5).

\(^2\) I.H.T. xi. vii. 2.

\(^3\) Ex. xxix. 35 ff.

\(^4\) Lev. xiv.

\(^5\) Ex. xii. 21 ff.

\(^6\) 1 Sam. xxi. 6.

\(^7\) Lev. xiv.
leprous ear\(^1\), or for commemoration and renewal of the blessings of salvation by a common meal on the victim's flesh\(^2\). But of all these, the last alone—the Paschal victim—contained lessons, commemorated benefits, and stirred emotions which affected the entire Jewish Church and people. For a lamb had been the means, and its death the price, of Israel's redemption; and participation in its flesh symbolized eucharistically and thus strengthened the relation of the people to God.

At the Last Supper, therefore, there was inevitably a symbolism of objects, whichever view we adopt as to the day of its celebration\(^3\). If, as the language of the Synoptics on the face of it implies, that meal was indeed the Paschal meal, then the significant object of the rite had been present to the disciples' eyes, and consumed by them, a few minutes before the Eucharist was instituted. If, on the other hand, the Johannine position is preferred, which makes the Lord's Death to synchronize with the killing of the Paschal lambs, the symbolism is, if anything, heightened. For then it is not a question of Christ giving deeper meaning and a new permanence to a rite which has already had much for those present, but of His giving Paschal as well as Eucharistic significance to a meal, and to objects, which otherwise would have had neither\(^4\).

In the first case, He adds to the symbolic object of the Passover others which have a still more solemn symbolism; in the second case, He substitutes for the symbolic object, which was missed and yet awaited, others which not only carry that symbolism but take it up into another and a more universal. In both cases, He in His own Person, now so soon to be offered, sums up all that the Paschal lamb had meant; and, whether the Eucharistic gifts were added or substituted, they could not have been less symbolic to the faith of the disciples than the lamb; they must have carried

1 Ex. xxix.  
3 The alternative views are well presented in Sanday's Outlines of the Life of Christ.  
4 The language of the New Testament seems to me on the whole to favour this view. St Paul's phrase, "Christ our Passover" (1 Cor. v. 7), St Peter's allusion to "the lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. i. 19), and the imagery of the Apocalypse, not to speak of the Baptist's utterances, support the Johannine synchronism of Calvary with the sacrificial killing in the Temple; while the Synoptic characterization of the Last Supper as "the passover" in actual fact would be what we should expect, and, indeed, would be justified, if our Lord had given to that meal a Paschal, indeed a super-Paschal, significance.
with them the lesson that they stood to the blessings of the New Covenant and to the ultimate redemption which it contained in the same relation as the Paschal lamb had stood to the more transitory benefits, and less solid salvation of the Old.

It is to be observed that the power of making an object symbolic commonly appears in Scripture as a prerogative of certain specially selected people—of patriarch, priest, or prophet, or of Christ Himself. It is thought of as something representative, requiring therefore an authorized representative person for its exercise. And this practical limitation—for it is never clearly stated—lies, if we consider it, in the nature of symbolism itself. Let us define symbolism as the means by which the less known and more distant is made available for us through the better known and the nearer. The latter, the symbol, is either something already familiar now invested with a new meaning, or it is something, whether object or action, which, if not familiar, is readily intelligible; but in both cases the guarantee and voucher for the symbol is the position of the person who uses it. If a common person should break an earthen bottle before the people, he would be either regarded as beside himself, or else disregarded entirely; it is Jeremiah’s vocation as a prophet that lends force to his symbolic action. It was one of the tragedies of later Judaism that the lineaments of priesthood and of prophecy had been so far obscured in the minds of the Church’s leaders that they could not discern them in the Christ, and so failed to understand His parables and symbols. And the case stands the same with us in civil life: we require recognized authority behind a symbol. Perhaps the commonest symbol in our experience is the silver currency. As is well known, the silver coinage is a token coinage: i.e. it is an effectual symbol. The amount of silver in the florin may, and often does, vary considerably; but the significance of the coin is unchanged. Hence it is vital that the right to reproduce this symbol—i.e. to mint money—should be strictly reserved to those who hold recognized authority in the commonwealth—in other words, the Crown.

This familiar symbolism of objects deserves still further analysis. The florin presents us with an ‘inward’ and an ‘outward’ part, or, as we may put it, with two series of properties. Its ‘outward’

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1 The Lucan version, “This cup is the new testament in my blood,” is strong testimony to the view urged in the text.
part comprises its natural or physical properties—weight, colour, proportion of true silver, size, etc.; and we have seen that these may vary considerably without the coin ceasing to be a florin. For what makes it that is pre-eminently its stamp or symbolic impress—its ‘superscription.’ That is what gives it its ‘inward’ part. Prior to that ‘superscription’ it has no constant significance or value. And its ‘inward’ part comprises a wholly new set of properties, which may be called civic\(^1\), social, or economic: they are summed up in the phrase, “purchasing power.” They do not take the place of the other properties, but are combined with, or superadded to, them; though, wherever their validity is recognized, they are infinitely the more significant of the two series of properties. In the case of token coinage the qualification as to the area in which it is ‘good’ must necessarily be made. What gives the florin its inward part or purchasing power is its ‘superscription’; and its ‘superscription’ is the effective signature of the will of the sovereign. Where obedience to that will in this respect is not a duty—\(i.e.\) where law does not require the significance—the florin normally loses its purchasing power. It may lose it altogether through becoming mere metal; or it may (\textit{per accidens}) exchange it for a much higher purchasing power, through the acquisition of a new property—\(e.g.\) that of giving delight to the eyes of a savage. But its symbolic meaning, which (so long as it lasted) was its real meaning, has gone, owing to its being no longer in relation to the sovereign will which determines the symbolism.

The analogy with the symbolism of the Eucharist will have suggested itself already. The properties with which the objects are invested by consecration are determined partly by their own nature as objects which give sustenance and refreshment, partly by the symbolism of language and of action with which they are associated. What we are now specially concerned with is their validity. We saw how in the case of token coinage its validity is dependent on, and limited by, law or the will of the sovereign. In the case of the Eucharist it is equally dependent on, and limited by, the will of Jesus Christ who ordained the Sacrament. But this very fact brings us to that which makes the symbolism of the Eucharist unique. For His will is God’s will. The will, that is to say, which determines the Eucharistic properties of these objects

\(^1\) The Aristotelian distinction between \(φύσις\) and \(τέχνη\) is in point here.
is identical with that which determines their natural properties; and the symbolic properties, therefore, have an ultimacy and a universality not less than that of the natural. Those limits which operate in the case of currency cease to operate in the case of the Sacraments, by virtue of the Incarnation. Christ’s ordinance, effected by the Holy Spirit and voiced by the Church at consecration, gives the objects a significance which (within all the purposes of the institution) causes them in effect to be wholly changed and transfigured.

That this is explicitly Forbes’s doctrine I cannot contend; but that many of the Fathers use language which accords with this analogy, and that Forbes approves their language, is equally plain. Twice Forbes uses the word ‘accidental’ to describe what we should call a change of properties; as when he recalls Ambrose’s illustration of the Eucharistic consecration by the iron which Elisha caused to swim¹, or the comparison instituted by Eucherius of Lyons between the change in men effected by Regeneration and the change in the elements effected by consecration². The change may be called, as Ambrose calls it, a “change of nature”; and Regeneration is fitly compared by Irenaeus³ to the change of a wild olive when it is grafted on to a fruitful one. Again, Forbes claims that Cyprian (or the treatise which bears his name) has in view a change of properties when he says that God “even today creates, sanctifies, blesses, and distributes to the faithful this His most true and holy Body⁴.” A similar doctrine is cited from Gelasius⁵: “The sacraments which we take of Christ’s Body and Blood are a thing divine (divina res)”; and his language and Theodoret’s are pressed. Of the elements Theodoret writes: “They remain in their former substance and shape and form, and are still visible and tangible, as they were before; but they are apprehended as what they have become, and are believed and adored... as being what they are believed to be⁶”: and again, God “does not change their nature, but adds to their nature grace⁷.” Ephraem of Antioch, in the sixth century, gives similar teaching when he says

¹ I.H.T. xi. iv. 2, quoting Ambrose, De mysteriis, ix.
² I.H.T. xi. iv. 4, quoting Eucherius, Hom. de corp. et sang. Chr.
³ Irenaeus, adv. Haer. v. x. 1.
⁴ I.H.T. xi. iv. 7.
⁵ I.H.T. xi. iv. 8, quoting Gelasius, P.L. LIX. 11, 12 (b).
that Christ's body "does not pass out of the sensible substance, and yet remains inseparable from the spiritual grace". So, too, Alcuin says that "God hallows the creatures offered to His gaze so that the things which were merely creaturely become sacraments: He quickens them, to be the mysteries of life." That is to say, adds Forbes, they are quickened, not in a physical sense or in respect of their physical properties, but in respect of the supernatural and life-giving properties which are added to them.

Forbes's purpose in citing these passages is to insist that the Fathers believed the natural properties to remain; but they bear witness also, as he fully agrees, to the belief that the elements were invested with new properties as well; and the equivalent ultimacy and reality of these properties is implied in the language of 'change.'

His objection to Transubstantiation is like that of our Article, viz. that it so describes the change as to "overthrow the nature of a sacrament" and fall into a heresy analogous to that of Eutyches with regard to our Lord's Humanity.

Analysis of the symbolism, therefore, of language and of objects in the institution of the Eucharist opens up, and testifies to, a doctrine of the real, objective, and sacramental presence of our Lord. By 'real' I mean that Christ is as truly accessible in the Eucharist as He was in Galilee, on Calvary, or in the Upper Room; by 'objective,' that this presence is conditioned and mediated by objects belonging to the external order, namely Host and Chalice; and by 'sacramental' that it is not visible nor corporeal in any natural sense, but vouchsafed in a symbolic and heavenly mode. That is doctrine which seems to do justice to the general current of Catholic experience and thought from the beginning, while involving nothing of the Eutychian attitude towards the natural substance of bread and wine which finds expression in the Lateran and Tridentine decrees and in the Articles of the Council of Bethlehem. Again, Roman doctrine speaks of Christ's presence as 'substantial' and 'corporal,' and either term is capable of defence on symbolic principles. By 'substantial,' that is to say, we should mean that the properties of mediating Christ's presence given to the elements by consecration are as fundamental to them and as ultimate in their being as their natural properties; and by

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1 I.H.T. xi. xv. 16 (in biblioth. Photii, cod. 229; P.G. ciii. 980).
2 I.H.T. x. 41.
'corporal' that what is thus substantially made present is Christ's Body and Blood. And we should not, therefore, deny that "in the sacrament of the most Holy Eucharist are contained truly, really, and substantially, the body and blood of Christ," though we should demur to any pressing of the technical meaning of 'substantially' and should insist that the word 'contained' was highly metaphorical. If it should be urged that that is in fact to use the words in a wholly foreign sense, I should reply that the symbolic character of the Eucharist is in fact very plainly affirmed by the Council of Trent. And it might be added that, on the other hand, there appears to be equally nothing in this doctrine which is incompatible with what the Prayer Book teaches about the Real Presence in the "Black Rubric."


This was far more common among the Semitic peoples, and indeed is still far more common in the East, than with us; and the Old Testament presents us with several of these acted lessons. Jeremiah breaking the earthen bottle before "the ancients of the people and the ancients of the priests" and Zechariah cutting his staves sur-named Beauty and Bands were typical. Perhaps the most striking example of it was Circumcision, which was the token of the covenant for all Jews from the earliest times, and where no other symbolism but that of action enters into the case. But here again the Passover is most to our purpose. Indeed, it is clear from the Irenicum that the action at the Last Supper was a matter of high controversy in connexion with Eucharistic ritual. It might be supposed that the only essential symbolic actions in the Passover were the setting apart of the victim, the killing, and the eating of it, of which only the last belonged to lay celebrants. But the opponents of kneeling at the Holy Communion sought authority for the sitting posture in the plea that it was a necessary part of the Paschal, and therefore of the Eucharistic, action. Forbes meets them with a reductio ad absurdum. Was it necessary too, then, that the number participating should be thirteen; that it should be held in some upper

3 Conc. Trid. Sess. xiii, Cap. iii.
4 Cf. I.H.T. xi. viii. 2.
5 Iren. i. iv.
room; and in a city? At the same time he enunciates a principle of great importance, when he lays it down that whatever is essential to any sacrament is expressly stated in Scripture, either in the account of its institution, or in some passage indisputably bearing upon it.

Symbolism of action is the aspect of the Eucharist which St Paul brings out with particular emphasis. For him the action proves the rite to be a commemorative sacrificial meal—a meal, because all there partake of the benefits of Christ’s Passion\(^1\); sacrificial because the holy gifts are offered to God\(^2\); commemorative, because all is done in remembrance of Christ and of His death\(^3\). And a similar stress is laid on the symbolism of action in the Fourth Gospel\(^4\), where the eating of Christ’s flesh and the drinking of His blood are described as necessary for all who desire eternal life. If St John does not record the institution of the Last Supper, it is not because he was blind to its sacrificial symbolism; it is because he desired to focus the whole symbolism of action upon the deeds of Christ Himself, the Lamb of God. Of the Paschal—that is, sacrificial—significance of the Last Supper something has been already said in the previous section: and we may be content here with emphasizing the fact that it is that element—the sacrificial—which appeared to the Church of antiquity to determine the character of the Eucharist. No word is more common in the Eucharistic prayers, whether of East or West, than the word ‘Sacrifice,’ meaning now the whole service, now especially the holy gifts, now the prayers and praises accompanying them. Generically, that is to say, the Eucharist is shewn by its symbolism of action to be a Sacrifice. Discussion has been rife on both sides as to whether the words ‘do’ and ‘remembrance’ do or do not carry a sacrificial meaning, and as to whether the bread and wine at the institution took the place of the Paschal lamb: but the Church has never had any doubt, so far as we know, what it was doing in the Eucharist. It was celebrating or offering a sacrifice. And we may add that no student of comparative religion, who has attended—it may be as a casual spectator—the Holy Mysteries, could give to-day any other answer.

In what sense, then, is the Holy Communion a sacrifice? To

\(^1\) I Cor. x. 16, 17.  
\(^2\) Ib. x. 18–21, cf. ib. v. 7.  
\(^3\) Ib. xi. 26.  
\(^4\) John vi. Symbolism of action permeates this Gospel. Here only, \textit{e.g.}, do we find recorded the washing of the disciples’ feet.
this question, and to a criticism of the Roman answer to it, Forbes devotes a chapter of considerable length\(^1\). The particular point of his attack is the Tridentine dogma of the propitiatory character of the Mass\(^2\); but, as was the case in regard to Transubstantiation, his exposure of what he believes erroneous teaching is made the occasion for much positive and wholesome doctrine in its place.

Against the Roman doctrine as defined at Trent, Forbes argues that it involves a frequent immolation, which is contrary to the Scriptural emphasis on the one offering, and in effect stultifies the Cross; for if pardon, grace and penitence can be obtained through "the unbloody sacrifice"—a phrase which he says savours of Docetism—what need was there of the oblation of the Cross or any other oblation to give it potency? It involved also inconsistency in exegesis; for while Roman theologians insisted that the words 'body' and 'blood' in the words of institution should be taken literally, they claimed that the 'breaking' and 'shedding' in the same context were figurative expressions. But in that case the propitiation must be regarded as figurative too, for it is the 'breaking' and 'shedding' which are definitely spoken of as propitiatory. Nor does the Tridentine doctrine of the application of the virtue of Christ's sacrifice on the Cross through the 'unbloody offering' of the Mass entitle the latter to be called a "true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice"; for, while it is the property of a true propitiatory sacrifice to win or merit pardon and grace, and that was done by Christ's sacrifice on the Cross, yet the application of such pardon and grace once won or merited is wrought through faith, prayer, and the sacraments, which are thus *media applicativa*, and not *sacrificia meritorie impetrativa*.

At the same time Forbes was too well aware of the sacrificial language of the Catholic Fathers in speaking of the Eucharist—to which we may add to-day that of the liturgies—to condemn such phraseology without reserve; and he gives a careful analysis of their usage on this point and of its meaning. They spoke of the Eucharist as a sacrifice, he says, in two senses; first, symbolically

\(^1\) *Iren. II. xi. Prop. xiii, Part 8; I.H.T. xi. xx.*

\(^2\) *Conc. Trid. Sess. xxii, cap. ii:* "The holy Synod teaches that this sacrifice is truly propitiatory and that by means thereof this is effected, that we obtain mercy, and find grace in seasonable aid. . . . For the Lord, appeased by the oblation thereof, and granting the grace and gift of penitence, forgives even heinous crimes and sins."
and commemoratively, the word being used of the symbol, which belongs properly to the thing signified, viz. Christ’s death on the Cross; secondly, in a spiritual sense, though in this sense the sacrifice is not propitiatory. From this point of view, the Eucharist is a sacrifice in three different ways, which can be distinguished as follows:

(a) The Eucharistic action is sacrificial as being part of the worship due to God.

(b) We may be said, as Chrysostom put it, to “offer our sins” at the Eucharist in contrition and prayer for pardon. It is a most fitting instrument for our profession of faith in the power of Christ’s Passion to save. And in this sense we offer to God or plead before Him Christ once immolated; praying Him to enable us to find grace and mercy through this commemorative offering. Thus it is, like baptism, prayer, or the hearing of the Word, a means to the obtaining of God’s promises. The sacrifice itself is presented above by our heavenly High-Priest as an all-sufficient offering, needing no repeated sacrifices of Masses here below, as though Christ’s priesthood had been extinguished by death.

(c) Finally, the Eucharist is a spiritual sacrifice, inasmuch as we there offer ourselves: as St Augustine says, “This is the sacrifice of Christians; we being many are one body in Christ”; and the Church is thus offered in the oblation which itself offers.

Forbes’s treatment of the Eucharistic sacrifice is affected at every point by his opposition to the doctrine of Transubstantiation; and had he been able to give a more developed statement of the symbolism of objects in the Eucharist, his conception of the symbolism of action would have been correspondingly enlarged. His just and penetrating criticism of the Roman exegesis of the words of institution led him to underrate the broad fact that the whole Eucharistic action at the Last Supper was steeped in sacrificial associations, and therefore to miss the consequences flowing from that fact. Granted, however, that the symbolism of objects is such as we have endeavoured to describe and involved a real identity of the sign with the thing signified by means of consecration, an analogous identity will extend to the action of which those objects are the focus and centre. Just as the Lord’s presence is not the less real because it is sacramental, so the sacrifice is not
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less a sacrifice because it is representative. At the same time, we must make here an important discrimination. We must avoid any idea of successive or repeated immolations of Christ, which is the most dangerous feature of the Tridentine doctrine: for nothing is more plainly taught in Scripture than that Christ’s sacrifice of Himself was once for all completed and accepted on the Cross. Solution of the difficulty is perhaps best to be found along the lines of the conception of the ‘inclusive’ Christ. We believe that Christ still pleads His once-offered sacrifice before the Father: He is “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev. xiii. 8, cf. v. 6). But Christ is more than individual. He is the universal Christ, in whom Head and members co-inhere. Just as St Paul can speak of “filling up that which is lacking of Christ’s sufferings” (Col. i. 24), so the Church can be conceived of also as the fulness or complement of His priesthood. And the Eucharist is the characteristic act of the priestly Body on earth. For us each Eucharist is separated from every other in time, and we cannot get rid of our successiveness. But a more fundamental view is that which regards each Eucharist as the offering, not of this or that priest or congregation, but of the whole Church, Christ’s mystical Body, sharing His priesthood and even, in a sense, His victim-hood. The action in time, that is to say, symbolizes, and by Christ’s ordinance is made one with, the action in eternity.

I will venture to close this section with some words from Jeremy Taylor, which are all too little known:

“In the institution of this sacrament Christ manifested...His almighty power...in making the symbols to be the instruments of conveying Himself to the spirit of the receiver: He nourishes the soul with bread, and feeds the body with a sacrament...In the sacrament, that body which is reigning in heaven is exposed upon the table of blessing; and His body which was broken for us, is now broken again, and yet remains impassible. Every consecrated portion of bread and wine does exhibit Christ entirely to the faithful receiver; and yet Christ remains one, while He is wholly ministered in ten thousand portions...Upon the strength of these premises, we may sooner take an estimate of the graces which are conveyed to us in the reception and celebration of this holy sacrament and sacrifice. For as it is a commemoration and
representment of Christ's death, so it is a commemorative sacrifice; as we receive the symbols and the mystery, so it is a sacrament. In both capacities, the benefit is next to infinite. First, for whatsoever Christ did at the institution, the same He commanded the Church to do in remembrance and repeated rites; and Himself also does the same thing in heaven for us, making perpetual intercession for His Church, the body of His redeemed ones, by representing to His Father His death and sacrifice. There He sits, a high priest continually, and offers still the same one perfect sacrifice.... And this also His ministers do on earth; they offer up the same sacrifice to God, the sacrifice of the cross, by prayers, and a commemorating rite and representment, according to His holy institution.... Our very holding up the Son of God, and representing Him to His Father, is the doing an act of mediation and advantage to ourselves, in the virtue and efficacy of the Mediator. As Christ is a priest in heaven for ever, and yet does not sacrifice Himself afresh, nor yet without sacrifice could He be a priest.... so He does upon earth by the ministry of His servants; He is offered to God, that is, He is by prayers and the sacrament represented or offered up to God, as sacrificed.... It follows then that the celebration of this sacrifice be in its proportion an instrument of applying the proper sacrifice to all the purposes which it first designed. It is, ministerially and by application, an instrument propitiatory; it is eucharistical and an act of adoration; and it is impetratory and obtains for us and for the whole church all the benefits of the sacrifice which is now celebrated and applied.

The foregoing analysis will have made it clear that all three forms of symbolism which have come before us are found in the Holy Eucharist, and were recognized there by the Fathers. We may go further and say that doctrinal error in regard to this sacrament is usually traceable to omission of, or defect in, one form or another. We have seen how near Forbes himself goes to forgetting the symbolism of objects, or at least to absorbing it entirely in that of action. But, were that allowed to stand, there

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2 In *I.H.T.* xi. vii. 7. Forbes cites Hesychius (*in Leviticum*, ii. viii, quoted by Bingham, *Ant.* xv. vii. 5) for the practice of burning the unconsumed portions of the elements after the service. But the general attitude was one of great reverence; cf. Origen, *in Ex. hom.* xiii. 3; Cyril Jerus. *Cat. Myst.* v. 21.
could be no point whatever in (for example) the Anglican rubric directing re-consecration, where the species do not already suffice for the communion; nor in the Scottish custom, once universal, known as ‘Lifting,’ whereby the celebrant, before the Consecration, takes and elevates the pattens and the cups containing the elements\textsuperscript{1}. Similarly, it is doubtful whether the ancient practice of taking home portions of the consecrated elements for private Communion\textsuperscript{2}—a practice common in ages of persecution, and, indeed, later—would have any rationale, if the symbolism of the Eucharist were not one of objects as well as of action. Nor again, however, is the symbolism one of objects to the exclusion of action. Forbes’s statement on this point exhibits admirable balance. While repudiating the Roman view which appeared to make consumption of the elements unnecessary, he evades the opposite error of Receptionism, according to which faithful reception operates almost as an efficient cause of the meaning of the sacrament. The true sacrament of the Eucharist, he says, is not per usum as efficient cause, but in usu as a sine quâ non of the consummation of the rite and the fulfilment of Christ’s command\textsuperscript{3}. The efficient cause is the Divine Word or blessing; but Christ blessed, and blesses, the objects as objects of consumption; nor have we any reason to believe them significant except as such. This is a canon which tallies faithfully with the words of institution: for our Lord said, not only “This is my body,” but “Take eat, this is my body”; not only “This is my blood,” but “Drink ye all of it, for this is my blood of the covenant which is shed for many.”

Finally, the symbolism of language is vital in the Eucharist. There is universal agreement among Catholic theologians of all ages—and it is this which distinguishes Catholic principles most clearly—that the consecration of the elements is the work of God. It is God who sanctifies them\textsuperscript{4} and makes them what they are; the power of the Divine Word is the invisible substance, according to which the bread and wine become Christ’s Body and Blood\textsuperscript{5}; the Word’s omnipotence changes the nature of the elements\textsuperscript{6};

\textsuperscript{1} Sprott, Worship and Offices of the Church of Scotland, pp. 114-117.
\textsuperscript{2} Forbes calls it Asservation, I.H.T. xi. vii. 30 ff.
\textsuperscript{3} I.H.T. xi. vii. 9.
\textsuperscript{4} Alcuin, de offic. div. quoted in I.H.T. xi. x. 39.
\textsuperscript{5} Ratrannus, de corp. et sang. Dom. 49 (I.H.T. xi. iii. 3).
\textsuperscript{6} Cyprian, de Coena Dom.
the adorable Trinity, or the Holy Spirit, is invoked to effect Christ’s presence\(^1\). There has been, and still is, wide divergence as to precisely what is the outward symbol and correlate of this Divine operation. The difference, for instance, between St Cyril of Jerusalem, who makes no mention in his account of the liturgy of the words of institution\(^2\), and Bishop Serapion, who is equally silent about any invocation of the Holy Spirit\(^3\), finds its counterpart to-day in the contrast we find between the Roman and Anglican liturgies on the one hand and those of the Church of Scotland and the Episcopal Church of Scotland on the other. The fact is that, though undoubtedly a rite which contains both the words of institution and an epiclesis is so far richer than one that omits either, there are manifold ways of symbolizing the operation of the creative Word or Spirit in the Eucharist; but none is simpler than the recitation by the priest, acting as spokesman of Christ present in the Church, of the actual words used by the Lord at the institution. We have a security there that what the Divine Word made the elements at the first He makes them still.

It is in the light of these principles that I would approach the problems of Eucharistic Adoration and of the use of the reserved Sacrament. The former was the principal issue of Eucharistic theology between Forbes and his opponents when the Irenicum was written; the latter has been for some time past a much vexed question in the Church of England. Both of them have become the seed-plot of a crop of theological phrases which seem to do little more for us to-day than darken counsel; and my aim will be, so far as possible, to deal rather with things than words.

Forbes discusses the question of adoration at the Holy Communion in connexion with the controversy over kneeling in the second book of the Irenicum\(^4\). He points out that in antiquity the rules and customs as to the posture to be adopted at the Eucharist embodied important principles. These were both negative and positive. Negatively, the reclining posture, customary at ordinary meals and also at social gatherings known as Love-Feasts, was definitely meant to be ruled out; while the standing posture

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1 Cyril Jerus. Cat. Myst. iv.  
2 Ib. v. 7.  
3 See J.T.S. Oct. 1899, p. 106. Both these examples are cited by Bishop Gore in The Body of Christ, pp. 80, 81.  
4 ii. xvi, Part iv.
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which took its place marked the distinction between the holy Meal and other meals. Besides the testimony of particular Fathers such as Dionysius of Alexandria and Tertullian, the Nicene and Trullan canons against any kneeling on Sundays would sufficiently shew what the custom was. Positively, the ancient Church aimed at ensuring at the Eucharist a posture of prayer and adoration, and standing was thus usual as being the normal attitude of prayer. It is to be observed that a similar principle was claimed by Forbes, and admitted by Gillespie, to underlie the Scottish custom of uncovering the head at the Eucharist—a practice not adopted for the hearing of sermons.

After citing patristic authority for the view that the Eucharist is part of the public worship of God, when the flesh or sacrificed humanity of Christ was adored and His Incarnation confessed, Forbes proceeds to draw out the bearings of the dogma of Transubstantiation on Eucharistic ceremony. The promulgation of the dogma in 1215 led directly, and within a few years, to the decree of Honorius III enjoining a reverence at the elevation of the Host or when the Sacrament was taken to the sick. The next and inevitable stage was when the Council of Trent, crowning the teaching of Aquinas and the Schoolmen, laid it down that the worship of latria, such as is due to the true God, is or may be rendered to the Blessed Sacrament. And Forbes concludes by saying that the adoration in question is idolatrous.

We must remember, in considering that judgment, that Forbes was dealing with adoration as it was actually offered in practice, and not as it might theoretically be offered. In his Moral Theology Forbes defines idolatry as the transference to a creature or work of art of the worship due to God. Whether in any given act or ceremony such transference takes place is largely a matter of judgment. It is to be observed, moreover, that the Council of Trent itself interprets its own language in a way which seems

1 Forbes cites de Coron. Mil. III. Bingham (xv. v. 3) says that de Orat. xiv was often cited to shew the standing posture; but he doubts whether it does so. French Protestants still stand for the reception of the Eucharist, cf. Bingham, iii. xiii. 1.

2 Summa, ii-ii. lxxxiv.

3 Conc. Trid. Sess. xiii, cap. v.

4 Iren. ii. xvi, Part iv. 18. In § 21 Forbes says that the error of the Transubstantiationists is similar to that of the Manicheans, who directed their devotions to the Sun and Moon as the habitations of God’s virtue and power.

5 II. i. 5.
intended to avoid misunderstanding; for while the findings of the Session speak of latria as rendered to the Sacrament, the Canon based on it only condemns those who say that “in the holy sacrament of the Eucharist, Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, is not to be adored with the worship, even external, of latria.” At the same time, the language which speaks of adoration being paid to the Sacrament is such as is difficult to justify. No doubt the Church cannot be content with any formulation which appears to set the Blessed Sacrament on the same level as sacred objects such as font or icon or altar; and to that extent a sound instinct underlies the distinction made by theology between latria on the one hand and τιμητική προσκύνησις or dulia on the other. There is a difference of principle between the consecrations behind the two cases: the one involves a change of use, the other a change of properties. But in so far as there is a change of properties, the consecrated elements become the Body and Blood of Christ, and it is He who is adored. We must remember—the caution is not unneeded today—that the Word is not made incarnate in the Blessed Sacrament; rather His incarnate Life is made insignate—that is, embodied in an effectual sign—and in that mode becomes the object of our adoration.

This is the positive point in regard to adoration which Forbes labours to prove. He bestows great pain upon the exposition of certain passages in the Fathers which seem to tell against him. Thus, when St Ambrose says that “the Sacrament of the incarnation is to be adored” or that Catholics in his day “adore the flesh of Christ in the mysteries, which the Apostles adored in the Lord Jesus,” he insists that no local, corporeal, or visible presence of Christ’s flesh is intended; but the worship is directed to Christ’s Humanity, taken up into God and now seated at His right hand in heaven. Still more categorical are the words of Theodoret,

1 For the doctrine of the Eastern Orthodox see Birkbeck and the Russian Church, by Mr Athelstan Riley, chap. xxiv. Dulia is the Western counterpart of this. Mr Riley illustrates it by the words of Sir Thomas Browne: “At the sight of a Cross or Crucifix I can dispense with my hat, but scarce with the thought or memory of my Saviour.”
2 de Spir. Sancto, iii. 76–80.
3 Ibid.
4 Cf. too, Augustine, on Psalm xciiii, Enarr. 9.
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"the mystic symbols are adored." Forbes meets the Roman exegesis of this passage partly on the à priori ground that the Catholics of antiquity never made creatures the object of worship; and partly by appeal to other teaching of Theodoret himself. He quotes at length from the Second Dialogue, where Theodoret makes the orthodox disputant maintain that the mystic symbols represent the veritable Body of the Lord, not changed into the nature of divinity, but filled with divine glory. When the Eutychian argues that, just as the sacred symbols are one thing before consecration, another after it (according to the Catholic doctrine), so, too, the Lord’s Body is changed since His Ascension into divine substance, the Catholic replies that the symbols remain in their former substance, figure, and form throughout, but are adored and believed as being the things which they are believed to be: and it is likewise with the Lord’s Body, which did not change its form, figure, circumscription and corporeal substance in becoming immortal and being seated at God’s right hand.

Throughout this passage there runs the argument, which Protestant theologians used so often against the Tridentine doctrine of adoration, that our Lord’s Body is "locally in heaven." The argument is put in its crudest and baldest form in what is known as the "Black Rubric." The purpose of this rubric was to justify the Anglican custom of kneeling at the Holy Communion, without causing suspicion of Roman error; and, though in its present form it "implicitly affirms the Real Presence instead of denying it," it represents a large tradition of Protestant Eucharistic thought. The Rubric declares that, by kneeling, "no adoration is intended, or ought to be done, either unto the Sacramental Bread or Wine there bodily received, or unto any Corporal Presence of Christ’s natural Flesh and blood"; and proceeds, "For the Sacramental Bread and Wine remain still in their very natural substances, and therefore may not be adored; (for that were Idolatry, to be abhorred of all faithful Christians;) and the natural Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ are in Heaven, and not here; it being against the truth of Christ’s natural Body to be at one time in more places than one."

Now, I desire to suggest that language of that kind is in fact

1 Iren. ii. xvi, Part iv. 34.
self-contradictory. To-day, at any rate, we do not believe that heaven is a place; and it is therefore inconsistent to speak of Christ’s “local presence in heaven.” Spatial metaphors and imagery are, no doubt, inevitable in religious thought; but that does not justify us in taking them literally and developing them—as though they were logical concepts—deductively. It is not hard to see what is meant by the imagery of “the local presence of Christ’s Body in heaven”: what is meant is that His Body is not now subject to the limitations of time and space which are characteristic of earth. Already, indeed, at the Resurrection it was clear that Christ’s Body entered upon some new, supernatural, mode of being; and this transition was, we must suppose, perfected at the Ascension. But the more we consider it in that light, the less justifiable is the inference against Eucharistic adoration. We know, in fact, nothing of the conditionment of the Ascended Christ that would entitle us to say that He is not really, objectively, and sacramentally present to our adoration in the Eucharist. The fact that the Crucified is also the Ascended is a claim that we should approach the Holy Mysteries with a solemn lifting of the heart to Him who is Lord of all; but it is surely no reason for denying that the symbolism of objects demands all that we can offer of inward and of outward homage and humiliation before Him who is thus, through the symbols, brought near to our frailty. In other words, the Holy Gifts in the Eucharist are always an objective occasion for the immediate adoration of Jesus, our Lord.

“We are bound to adore,” says Forbes; and no one can understand the ethes of Christian worship without realizing how this element of adoration has been a constant feature of the Eucharist from the earliest times. It is a fundamental factor giving to the religious consciousness of Catholic Christians its peculiar characteristics, and to liturgical forms their distinctive value. This worship may be expressed in various ways, and to different degrees; Gillespie claimed, for instance, that even his party shewed veneration to the Sacrament by sitting with heads uncovered: but the full symbolism is not expressed unless the ceremony of worship is in some relation to the Gifts themselves. The usual ceremony to-day is a genuflexion or an inclination of the head, combined with a special silence of concentration, at the consecration of the elements, and at their reception.

1 *Iren.* i. vii. 3.
2 *Dispute*, Part III, cap. iv.
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Forbes deals at some length with Reservation, which he calls Asservation. He regards Reservation as an alternative to the celebration of the Holy Communion in private houses, as a means of providing for the sick; and he means by it the setting aside of some portion of the Holy Gifts for immediate use when the public celebration is over. He even sees no objection in principle to perpetual Reservation in view of the possibilities of sudden accident or sickness; but he considers that Roman abuses, the chances of sacrilege, and the possible corruption of the Host make it unwise that it should be sanctioned in his day. Chief among Roman abuses he sets the cultus of the reserved Sacrament.

Nowhere does Forbes's fidelity to the standards of the early Church appear more strongly than in his treatment of a subject which was obviously distasteful to him: and his power of discriminating between what is a matter of principle and what of method is one that commands admiration. He realizes that the principle is that none should be debarred by sickness or infirmity from receiving the Holy Communion; and he recognizes that for this purpose it is necessary to take the Communion out of the whole action of which it forms a part. The symbolism of objects is still governed and conditioned by the symbolism of action;—and we may add that any Reservation would be meaningless, unless the symbolism of objects were such as we have described: but the various parts constituting the symbolism of action are capable of structural transposition and re-setting, if need so requires. No better illustration could be given of the truth that the Sacrament was made for man, and not man for the Sacrament.

So far, probably, few would demur; but the questions chiefly prominent to-day in the English Church concern further developments of this principle. If it be the case that communion can be taken out of its place in the whole action and be given apart from the public service and consecration, can we refuse the same permission to other parts of the action as well? Can we refuse it in the case of adoration? That seems to me to be the issue in regard to Reservation to-day.

1 Mr Athelstan Riley kindly draws my attention to the Eastern Liturgy of the Presanctified, where the Great Entrance is celebrated with the utmost reverence both of word and ritual: cf. especially the Byzantine rite (Brightman, Liturgies Eastern and Western, pp. 345 f.). The symbolism of objects here is abundantly stressed, and is combined with a symbolism of action which is consistently eucharistic throughout.
I believe that, in principle, such a displacement cannot be gain-said. It is true that it is without ancient precedent; but it is also true that what ancient precedent mainly proves is the adaptability shewn by the early Church in dealing with circumstances as they arose. And there are circumstances to-day which can be pleaded on behalf of elasticity as regards adoration. One is that under modern conditions regular attendance at the Sunday Eucharist is impossible for large numbers of the faithful. Another is that the early Mass, at which Communion is made, commonly takes a far shorter time than was the case apparently in antiquity, or than is the case now in the East; and the time for adoration and intercession within the rite itself is thus much restricted. It might even, moreover, be claimed that Christian experience has itself in the course of centuries increased our sense of the significance of the rite, and that the demand for supplementary opportunities for adoration springs from this. Be that as it may, so long as an earnest demand is made, the Church must be very chary of withholding consent. We have to allow for great differences both of temperament and of circumstances; and, where our own instincts may be to condemn or at least to be indifferent, a larger sympathy may perhaps lead us to be tolerant. And tolerance in this matter seems to be the truest following of the mind of antiquity.

At the same time, such permission carries with it the necessity of very careful safeguards; and it is in this matter that the Church of England has a peculiar contribution to make. Experience shews that popular devotion can easily and rapidly become morbid and enervating, unless it is guided and restrained; and nowhere is this more true than in connexion with the Blessed Sacrament. The fear felt by those in the Mission Field of anything that might be construed as fetish-worship is indicative of the danger. The surest safeguard would seem to lie in the constant assertion of the principle mentioned earlier in this essay, viz. that the symbolism of objects should not be divorced from the symbolism of action or of language. In other words it must be made plain that all devotions in connexion with the Blessed Sacrament shall be within the horizons of the Eucharistic action: that they are not something super-added to that, as a development of it, but are a part of it removed for the time being from their proper context and presented in a different order. The following consequences would seem to ensue:
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(1) The devotions used should be such as are appropriate to the Eucharist and to its central theme. They should consist of adoration and intercession only, and should be addressed only to the Persons of the Blessed Trinity.

(2) All ceremonial moving or handling of the Holy Gifts reserved (except for the purpose of administering Communion) should be forbidden on the ground that this is to substitute another symbolism of action for that which our Lord ordained. Processions and Benedictions, in particular, are outside the scope of the Eucharistic ordinance proper, and were provided for by our Lord in the institution of the Church and Ministry.

(3) The place of reserving the Blessed Sacrament should be near the altar, and should be kept securely locked, except when communion is to be administered. I find it difficult to resist the conclusion that, on abstract grounds, a ‘tabernacle’ or hanging pyx has advantages over an aumbry, seeing that the altar is the centre of Eucharistic association; but the possibility of abuse must be considered, and it is for those in authority to determine what circumstances require.

I have ventured to write thus explicitly about this matter, because devotional development in the Church of England has tended to outstrip theological thought; and if mischief is to be avoided, it can only be by the application of common principles. I do not believe that the attempt simply to suppress all extra-liturgical devotions would be legitimate, even if it would be successful; and it is therefore the more vital to set them in their proper place in the Church’s life of work and worship. That we shall be able to do if we remember the infinite richness of the Christian revelation of God, the One object of worship and the One goal of work, and endeavour to put the best construction on forms of worship which may make but little appeal to ourselves. Those, likewise, to whom such devotions are a help have a special duty to avoid their prayers becoming a matter of strife, emulation, or offence to others; for it is not where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved, but where it is received that the fulness of grace is promised and the unity of the Spirit proclaimed. I do not think that we need either expect or desire that extra-liturgical devotions should become very widespread in the English Church. What is to be expected and desired is that their place, though humble, shall be a recognized one and their significance understood.
APPENDIX III

A NOTE ON CONFIRMATION

The Lambeth Conference Re-union Appeal is silent on the subject of Confirmation, from which it has been inferred that Confirmation may be regarded as an indifferent matter, in the sense that it need not be required in the re-united Church. That is to interpret Divine institution with a very narrow precision. When the New Testament speaks of an ordinance as among the first principles of faith, and equates it with faith towards God, baptism, resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment (Heb. vi. 2); when, moreover, we find it practised in the earliest Church with the same frequency as Baptism;—then the inference is overwhelming that equally with Baptism it rests on the authority of the Lord Himself. Moreover, if the narrative in Acts viii be considered in all its bearings, Confirmation is par excellence the Sacrament of the Church’s unity. It was to avert the probability of separation in the Samaritan Church and to shew that old divisions were done away, that the two apostles were sent down to Samaria. No rite belongs more essentially to Re-union.

It is worth considering whether there is not room for an adjustment here which would not compromise Catholic principle. The Roman Church has an important precedent which may prove of great utility—viz. the permission to priests by dispensation to administer this rite. A case in point is that of John Carroll, who was the first American Archbishop. Born in Maryland and educated in Europe, Carroll returned to America on the suppression of the Jesuit order to which he belonged. In 1784, after the War of Independence he was appointed Superior of the Missions in the United States and was empowered, though still a priest, to administer Confirmation. Not till 1789 was he consecrated bishop. It is not conceivable that the re-united Church should dispense with Confirmation for any of its constituent communions nor admit that it was (as has sometimes been claimed) a matter of domestic discipline for Anglicans. It may be a matter of domestic
discipline, but the *domus* is "the household of faith" which has used this sacrament of the Spirit from the earliest days. Reluctance to adopt an unfamiliar rite might be overcome if, for a period at least, the power to confirm were granted to the presbyterate. For the practice of antiquity, cf. Bingham, *Ant.* Book xii. In the East the universal custom is for the presbyter to confirm with chrism consecrated by the bishop; cf. *The Early History of the Church and the Ministry*, p. 393.
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