

## CHAPTER XIX

ARTICLE XVIII.—*Of Church Order and Fellowship.*—We believe that the Supreme and only Head of the Church is the Lord Jesus Christ; that its worship, teaching, discipline and government should be administered according to His will by persons chosen for their fitness and duly set apart to their office; and that although the visible Church may contain unworthy members and is liable to err, yet believers ought not lightly to separate themselves from its communion, but are to live in fellowship with their brethren, which fellowship is to be extended, as God gives opportunity, to all who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus.

This article briefly states matters of grave importance, which have a long history behind them, and require on the minister's part careful thought and diligent study.

1. The Headship of Christ. It would seem that the Spirit of God had moved the Church of Scotland to bear witness to this doctrine throughout all the stages of her history, and often at great cost. Before, Popes and Kings and Courts, she has protested that the true Church has no Head but Christ, and is bound to obey Him, and Him only, as He guides His people by His Word and Spirit. Here in Canada, where no assault is made on our liberties, we ought to remember with gratitude those who, both in Scotland and in England, won them for us, and, above all, we ought to serve ourselves heirs of that great past by our loyalty, under changed conditions, to our only King and Lord.

2. The Administration of the affairs of the

Church. The visible Church, as an organized body, must see to it that its various functions are fulfilled in an orderly and harmonious manner, with the utmost possible wisdom and efficiency. Such Churchly activities as worship, teaching, discipline, and government, require intellectual and spiritual qualities of the very highest order on the part of those chosen to lead in their discharge. These men will be the Ministers of the Word, and others who may be associated with them in these functions.

(Note: the article does not go into detail here. The Scottish practice included "deacons," to manage the temporal affairs of the Church, and these were "set apart" for their work. The United Church reserves its freedom to adjust its practice to its needs, its opportunities, and its resources.)

3. The Sin of Schism. The Reformers strongly maintained that they were forced to break with the Church of Rome, because of its unscriptural character. They recognized any "particular Church," which had the notes of (a) the preaching of the Word, (b) the due administration of the Sacraments, (c) the edification of the members in the Christian life, to be a true part of the Visible Catholic Church, and they regarded separation from such a Church as grievous sin. The article takes the same ground; and the best commentary upon it is to be found in the words of Calvin, quoted by Dr. Lindsay, "When we affirm the pure ministry of the Word and our order in the celebration of the Sacraments to be a sufficient pledge and earnest that we may

safely embrace the society in which both these are found as a true Church, we carry the observation to this point, that such a society should never be rejected as long as it continues in these things, although it may be chargeable in other respects with many errors." The point of this "observation" lies in the application thereof!

4. Church Extension. The Church's primary duty is to preach the Gospel to every creature. This duty, however, cannot be adequately fulfilled by mere itineracy. The Church, as the fellowship of the Spirit, must be planted in all new territory, and its doors open to all by whom Jesus is acknowledged as Saviour and Lord.