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*The Authoritative Teaching of the Church shewn to be in  
conformity with Scripture, Analogy, and the  
Moral Constitution of Man.*

IN

# EIGHT SERMONS

PREACHED BEFORE

THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD,

IN THE YEAR MDCCCXXXVIII.

AT THE

## LECTURE

FOUNDED BY

THE LATE REV. JOHN BAMPTON, (M.A.) *Lectu*

CANON OF SALISBURY.

1838

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BY

HENRY ARTHUR WOODGATE, B.D.

FELLOW OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, AND RECTOR OF BELLBROUGHTON,  
WORCESTERSHIRE.

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*Ἐδικαιώθη ἡ Σοφία ἀπὸ τῶν τέκνων αὐτῆς.*

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1839.



TO  
THE REVEREND  
JOHN HENRY NEWMAN, B. D.  
FELLOW OF ORIEL COLLEGE.  
IN TOKEN OF LONG AND INTIMATE FRIENDSHIP,  
AND AS A TRIBUTE OF RESPECT  
TO THE HIGHEST INTELLECTUAL ENDOWMENTS,  
CONSECATED,  
THROUGHOUT A LIFE OF CONSISTENT PURITY AND HOLINESS,  
TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST'S CHURCH,  
THIS VOLUME IS INSCRIBED,  
BY HIS SINCERE AND AFFECTIONATE FRIEND,  
H. A. W.



# E X T R A C T

FROM

## THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT

OF THE LATE

REV. JOHN BAMPTON,

CANON OF SALISBURY.

— “ I give and bequeath my Lands and Estates to the  
“ Chancellor, Masters, and Scholars of the University of  
“ Oxford for ever, to have and to hold all and singular the  
“ said Lands and Estates upon trust, and to the intents and  
“ purposes hereinafter mentioned; that is to say, I will and  
“ appoint that the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford  
“ for the time being shall take and receive all the rents, issues,  
“ and profits thereof, and (after all taxes, reparations, and  
“ necessary deductions made) that he pay all the remainder to  
“ the endowment of eight Divinity Lecture Sermons, to be  
“ established for ever in the said University, and to be per-  
“ formed in the manner following :

“ I direct and appoint, that upon the first Tuesday in Easter  
“ Term, a Lecturer be yearly chosen by the Heads of Colleges  
“ only, and by no others, in the room adjoining to the Print-  
“ ing-House, between the hours of ten in the morning and  
“ two in the afternoon, to preach eight Divinity Lecture Ser-  
“ mons, the year following, at St. Mary’s in Oxford, between  
“ the commencement of the last month in Lent Term, and the  
“ end of the third week in Act Term.

“ Also I direct and appoint, that the eight Divinity Lecture  
“ Sermons shall be preached upon either of the following  
“ Subjects—to confirm and establish the Christian Faith, and  
“ to confute all heretics and schismatics—upon the divine  
“ authority of the holy Scriptures—upon the authority of the  
“ writings of the primitive Fathers, as to the faith and practice  
“ of the primitive Church—upon the Divinity of our Lord and  
“ Saviour Jesus Christ—upon the Divinity of the Holy Ghost  
“ —upon the Articles of the Christian Faith, as comprehended  
“ in the Apostles’ and Nicene Creeds.

“ Also I direct, that thirty copies of the eight Divinity  
“ Lecture Sermons shall be always printed, within two months  
“ after they are preached, and one copy shall be given to the  
“ Chancellor of the University, and one copy to the Head of  
“ every College, and one copy to the Mayor of the city of  
“ Oxford, and one copy to be put into the Bodleian Library ;  
“ and the expense of printing them shall be paid out of the  
“ revenue of the Land or Estates given for establishing the  
“ Divinity Lecture Sermons ; and the preacher shall not be  
“ paid, nor be entitled to the revenue, before they are printed.

“ Also I direct and appoint, that no person shall be qualified  
“ to preach the Divinity Lecture Sermons, unless he hath  
“ taken the degree of Master of Arts at least, in one of the  
“ two Universities of Oxford or Cambridge ; and that the  
“ same person shall never preach the Divinity Lecture Ser-  
“ mons twice.



## P R E F A C E .

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**T**HE peculiar circumstances under which the following work, and those undertaken under the same or a like appointment, are necessarily executed, present obstacles in the way of properly treating the subject, from which a work not placed under the same restrictions would be comparatively free. The ordinary rules of composition and arrangement are necessarily to a certain extent violated, and a corresponding room for criticism, of course, thereby afforded, as to the mode in which the subject is treated.

The circumstance of its being delivered openly, and that at intervals, before its general publication, renders it necessary, for the proper understanding of the subject, to place in the text what, in a work written solely for publication, would have been more appropriately placed in a preface; while the limit placed to the number and extent of the Lectures, not only renders it difficult to give to the subject generally the expansion it requires, but even causes the insertion of remarks thus transferred from the preface, to be attended by the sacrifice of what would materially conduce to its elucidation.

A preface, therefore, to works of this nature, may be

said to be rendered in some degree necessary, to supply such things as may have been omitted in the text to make room for prefatory matter—things necessary to give full effect to the subject, though not so much required at the earlier stages of its development.

It was my intention, when I first commenced this work, to take a far more extended range. I had long thought that the arguments derived from analogy and the constitution of our moral nature, which have been used for the defence of the Christian Revelation generally, might be applied with equal force to the constitution and polity of the Christian Church.

On commencing, however, with that which naturally claimed the earliest attention, as being first in the order of importance, The Rule of Faith, I found the subject grow in my hands; and it was soon obvious that the present work must be confined to that branch. The Scriptural statement alone of the principle which it was necessary to defend, occupied a whole Lecture; and the application of the same to doctrines and ordinances, I found could not be satisfactorily disposed of in less space<sup>a</sup>.

<sup>a</sup> I ought here to mention, perhaps, that when these Lectures were delivered, I had not read Mr. Newman's Lectures on the Prophetical Office of the Church. Had I done so, I might have been induced to omit, or state in a different form, some things which I have said, as being infinitely better treated in that work. At the same time, it is no small satisfaction to find what I have advanced confirmed by a work of such acknowledged value and authority, of which it may be truly said, that it is more calculated to check the progress and destroy the influence both of Romanism and Sec-tarianism, than any which has appeared in our day—a work as yet unanswered, and likely so to continue, alike by Romanist and Sec-tarian.

A peculiarity which must strike many persons as attending this and the like discussions, is, that from the prevailing ignorance and prejudice on the subject, one is obliged to treat it with a degree of earnestness and caution against being misunderstood, (involving, I fear, not unfrequently, a degree of repetition amounting to tedium,) not indeed unsuited to the importance of the subject, but disproportionate to the degree of knowledge which ought to be assumed to exist, among churchmen at least, on the subject. And it is impossible not to feel, that hereafter, when the nature of Church principles generally shall be better understood, as it was indeed till puritanism and profligacy in succession gave birth to the latitudinarian principles of the present and preceding century, the now urgent advocacy of Catholic principles will require the recollection of what men now think and hold, to account for the fact, which will otherwise appear inexplicable, that truths which will then appear self-evident, should ever have required to be set forth with so much earnestness. For this we must be prepared; and to those truly zealous for the faith once committed to the saints, although this will require to be taken into account, it will not occasion any real practical difficulty.

Looking, however, to the case as it stands at present, the necessity of calling men's attention to the nature and constitution of the Apostolic Church, does not stand in need of much proof. Whatever may have been the meaning attached to the word Protestant in its original acceptance, as distinguished from Romanism, however

dear to those by whom it was first employed, it is obvious that, in its ordinary and popular acceptance in the present day, it has little to commend it to those who hold the Apostles' doctrine in its primitive purity, and who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity. In its original acceptance, when the whole Christian world was Catholic, or nearly so, Protestantism, as forming the distinctive feature of that portion of the Western Church which protested against the corruptions of Romanism, had a definite and tangible meaning. Its meaning was *differential* and *specific*, not *generic*. If this was not expressed in words, it was only as being deemed unnecessary; and if, by the conventional force of language, it was used as a term by itself, rather than as having only the force of an *adjective*, it was only because at that time there was scarcely any other form of Christianity, by being combined with which, it might itself receive a corresponding limitation.

It must be clear, however, to the commonest observer, that from the various sects and heresies which have sprung up in Christendom since that period, each of which assumes to itself the title of Protestant, (and truly, as regards the mere denial of Romanism,) the term has itself assumed a generic character, which requires to be limited on the other side; unless, indeed, we are prepared to merge all positive differences in the mere negative point of resemblance, which consists in dissent from Romanism.

Now, whatever may be the views and feelings of sectarians on this point, no one who truly receives the Apostles' doctrine, even in its simplest form, as contained in

the Creed, will be content with this negative distinction. However anxious he might be, through abhorrence of Popery, to know that those with whom he has to do, whether persons or opinions, are *not* Romanist, yet his regard for the truth would make him no less anxious to know, on the other hand, what they *are*. And for this, the term Protestant, in its modern acceptation, will not suffice. It merely tells us, that a man is *not* a Romanist : as Christian men, it behoves us to know what he *is*.

This confusion has arisen, as was observed above, from the circumstance that, in popular language, the term Protestant is no longer considered as necessarily joined to that of Catholic, as in its primary acceptation ; and being, when thus disjoined, of a purely *negative* character, it affords no guarantee in itself, that the person to whom it is applied holds any essential article of the Christian faith. It affords no security that the doctrine of which it is predicated is otherwise than deadly error, ruinous to the souls of those who hold it. For it must be remembered, that there is no sect or heresy which does not profess to have formed its creed from the Scriptures, and which does not lay claim to the title of what is popularly termed (to use their own expression) Bible Christian. I say not with what justice, I speak merely of the fact, that in their *own* estimation, each of these finds its creed in the Bible. Nor, again, is there any sect which does not lay claim to the designation of Protestant, and whose claims are not admitted by most of the Societies which are so designated. Unless, therefore, we are prepared to admit, as some of these virtually do, that religious faith

is a mere matter of opinion, depending for its truth solely on the persuasion of those who hold it; that the doctrines of the Incarnation, Atonement, Sanctification, Baptismal Regeneration, the divinity of the Son and Spirit, the Holy Trinity, have no real existence but in the minds of those who hold them; or that having an existence, their reception is a mere matter of indifference as regards individuals, involving no responsibility or obligation, save that what they believe they believe conscientiously; it is evident that mere Protestantism, as such, is no security whatever against the most deadly error, nor the appeal to Holy Scripture, without some authority external to the opinions of individuals, any pledge that a tenet so alleged to be proved, is any portion whatever of the Christian faith. It is evident that we require some limitation to Protestantism itself, some distinctive character in it, besides the mere negation of Romanism, some limitation to the deductions which may be made from Holy Scripture, some guide in the interpretation of it, external to, and independent of, the caprice or fancy of each individual or sect. The churchman at once sees that this is effected by re-uniting to the differential characteristic of *Protestantism* the generic one of *Catholicity*, with which it was combined (in England at least) in its original acceptance: a process which restores to us the Reformers' Rule of Faith, and with it their creed. To this many objections will be found to exist in practice, both among the advocates of sectarianism, universally, and among orthodox Protestants in part; with the one, as bringing their differences with the Church to an issue, and placing them

in the wrong ; with the other, as introducing (to them) a new element in determining the rule of faith, which in former times has in practice led to grievous error, as none will deny when used *alone*, but the nature and value of which, when used in conjunction with Holy Scripture, they have yet to learn, and which they as yet view with jealousy and alarm.

Let me, however, state the case more definitely.

We, as members of the Anglican Church, believe in her doctrines, and assent to her ritual and government. We do this, because we believe them to have the sanction and authority of Holy Scripture, as well as that of Catholicity and Antiquity. Having had our minds early taught to perceive them, and our hearts to love them, we are enabled to trace them in the written word, and to see them pervading it throughout. From whatever source our first impressions may have been derived, here, at least, they receive confirmation and proof, giving them the force of convictions.

But the Socinian and Sectarian deny these, wholly or in part, though professing to receive the Christian Scriptures, and to found their views of doctrine and discipline solely upon them : for they all profess to abide by the Sixth Article of our Church.

Here we are at issue with them on a definite question, having between us the common ground from which to proceed, of our mutual belief in the genuineness and authenticity of Holy Scripture. Our first step is to cite on either side the scriptural authorities in favour of our respective opinions : on the force of these we join issue.

calling to our aid critical or other learning in support of the meaning of particular passages or words: yet the result is, that we remain as we were, each retaining his previous convictions—they pleading, on their part, the assumed Protestant principle, that Scripture alone is the rule of faith, and the right to exercise their own judgment upon it to the best of their ability. We, of course, deem them to be in lamentable error. They allege the same of us. Who is to judge between us? Our personal convictions, however satisfactory to our own minds, clearly will not by themselves place them in the wrong, without some other authority *external* to both parties, to whose decisions both must be assumed, on their own principle, to be amenable, whether practically admitting it or not. Still less will they satisfy the painful doubts of some third party who may be, as is frequently the case, looking on, anxious to form his opinions, yet unable to do so amid conflicting arguments, where no better ground has as yet been taken, than the individual convictions of the respective disputants.

The fundamental laws of all reasoning require, in every argument, this external authority or rule, common to and admitted by each disputant. It is obvious, that, in the present instance, it cannot be the Scripture, inasmuch as we have, by the hypothesis, already advanced beyond that stage of the argument; the interpretation of Scripture itself being now the point in question, for which this common and external rule is still required.

What is this rule? where is it to be found, and how defended?

But besides the objection alleged against the various texts of Scripture which we cite in support of specific doctrines, the Socinian has another argument of no inconsiderable weight to urge against us—the *à priori* argument, founded on the assumed improbability against such proof altogether. He asks, whether it is probable, that doctrines so important as we allege these to be, would be left to depend on proofs so difficult to be arrived at, and admitting of such variety of construction, hunted through distant and detached parts of Scripture, depending on the critical examination of words. This will be seen from the extracts from Milton and the modern Socinians, which I have quoted in the second Lecture.

Now it must be admitted that there is much apparent force in this objection; nor can we easily disprove the assumption, on the supposition that Scripture is the first informant and sole guide. It may be contended, I admit, and as I have attempted to shew in the second Lecture, that the analogy of Natural Religion, so called, favours the presumption of such proofs: but this argument from analogy, however satisfactory to the Churchman, would be of little avail to the Sectarian generally, as opposed to the Socinian, because it involves the assumption that a previous knowledge of the main truths of natural religion precedes, and in fact causes, the perception of these truths in the outward world; which, when used as an argument, would imply the admission of a corresponding previous knowledge in relation to the force which Scripture texts possess, as proofs of the Christian mysteries. At the same time, even the admis-

sion of the Socinian assumption, mentioned above, would by no means pledge us to admit, in the slightest degree, the inference which the Socinian would draw from it.

The truth is, that we might, without risk, admit his assumption of the antecedent improbability in question, and his objections to the indirect and alleged defective nature of Scripture proofs of important doctrines, viewed as sole informants. But there our agreement would end: from that point there is this essential difference between us:—that he uses the indirect nature of the proofs as arguments against the doctrines themselves;—we regard it as the natural and consistent result of what Scripture itself reveals to us respecting our rule of faith. With the Socinian, it is the premiss of his argument; with us, the conclusion. The doctrines, he maintains, are untrue—or if true, unimportant—*because* the Scripture proofs are indirect and by implication. We reply, that before coming to the perusal of the Holy Scripture, we are assumed to have derived our elementary knowledge of the Christian doctrines through another channel, though ultimately from the same authority with that of Holy Scripture; and that *therefore* the notices in Scripture of these doctrines are often brief and indirect, as addressed to those not unacquainted with the subject. For one and the same principle furnishes us with an answer both to the Sectarian's objections against specific texts, and likewise to his *à priori* argument founded on the general character of such texts. To the latter we reply, on the authority of Scripture itself, that the doctrines in question were not left to be gathered from these texts alone, nor in the

way which he describes. We reply that the reader of the Christian Scriptures is supposed to be already acquainted with its leading doctrines; that those Scriptures were written *for* Christians, and are addressed *to* Christians; and that consequently proofs indirect, latent, or by implication are sufficient, where, had we to derive our first notions from Scripture alone, we should require, as the Sectarian professes to do, full and direct statements.

The same principle furnishes us with our conclusive argument in disputing on the force of particular texts of Scripture. Admitting even that two apparently opposite texts, or that even the same text, may be made to support opposite conclusions, according to the prepositions or view taken by each side,—allowing the presumption to be equally balanced, it is clear that any authority which can be assigned to the opinion of either side, especially if it can be shewn, or can be presumed on reasonable evidence, that such was the doctrine taught by the sacred writer himself, must impart its authority to the texts cited in support of such view. Let us take, for example, the texts commonly urged against the doctrine of the divinity of our Lord and the Holy Spirit, or those against Baptismal Regeneration, or Episcopacy and Apostolical Succession; and likewise, on the other side, those by which we support these articles. Let it be granted, for argument's sake, that their respective force is equal, as texts; that they might prove either position in themselves, though the force of each is much neutralized at present by the existence of the opposite: if it

can be shewn, that there are reasonable grounds for believing that either of the propositions which they can thus be made to support was maintained by the writer of the same Scripture, or by those who, from personal knowledge of him or other circumstances, may be assumed to represent his sentiments, some of them having received their instruction from him or from those who had so received it; the force of the texts in question, as an evidence or proof, assumes a very different character. Or again, if it can be shewn that, at the period when the Church may be assumed to have been most pure, this or that interpretation was uniformly held by those whose numbers and unanimity afford a presumption against their having been in error, the probabilities in favour of such interpretation would possess a force little short of direct proof. This would be the case without reference to any previous teaching, on the mere assumption that the Scripture was our sole informant on the subject of Christian doctrine, the instrument for *teaching* as well as *proving*—the *guide*, as well as the *standard* of faith. It was observed however above, that these Scriptures presuppose the existence of *some* knowledge, on the part of the reader, of the things of which they speak, being addressed, (as we learn from the opening of St. Luke's Gospel, as well as all the Epistles, without a single exception,) to persons already instructed, and that for many years previously, in the Christian faith. The peculiarity of this feature in the Gospel, as distinguished from the Law, I have adverted to in the third Lecture, as also its adaptation to our moral nature. Viewed

however as a matter of fact, it is unquestionable, from the account which the Scripture gives of itself, that the Christian Church, as well as the body and form of Christian doctrine, and the Christian ordinances, are of earlier date by several years than the Christian Scriptures; that the latter are addressed to Christians, and presuppose in every case a knowledge (and of course with it a bias) of views and doctrines of *some kind*. It is a plain historical fact, that the Apostles themselves, under the inspiration and direction of the Holy Ghost, delivered *some* form of doctrine and ordinances, and that too at some length, to which their subsequent writings refer as to things well known to those whom they addressed. Also from the circumstance that the Apostles themselves died without committing to writing the form of doctrine which they had taught, and the system of Church government and ordinances which they had appointed, there is the strongest presumption, certainly no intimation to the contrary, that the system was designed to be continued as it had begun, by means of human agents, as distinguished from tables or a written covenant; a system shewn to be adapted to the Gospel itself, and more peculiarly so, when viewed in relation to our moral nature, and our state of moral probation. This would suggest itself *à priori*, from the nature of the case; while the appointment of a body of men to succeed the Apostles in their office of teachers and rulers, and the instructions given to the former to appoint others after them, to whom they were to communicate both their authority and commission,

add to the presumption alluded to the force of a complete proof—as complete, that is, as could be reasonably expected, where not only the evidence itself is moral, but the whole system is one designed to promote a high degree of moral probation, the leading feature of which is *faith*, and which, from its very nature, requires not only the testimony of external evidence to produce conviction, but also the predisposition of the heart, and a state of moral preparation, partaking, in kind, of that more perfect state of faith and submission of our nature to a moral and spiritual control, which it is the avowed object of the whole system of the Gospel to form within us.

Now we maintain that the form of doctrine which the Apostles taught, as well as the system of government and ordinances which they appointed—to which the Christian Scriptures refer—which St. Paul directed Timothy to hold fast, and to transmit to his successors, together with the Apostolical commission—have remained in the church ever since, according to the promise, having come down to us together with the Scriptures themselves. We maintain that the body of doctrine which the Anglican Church now holds, is substantially the same with that which the Scripture records the Apostles to have taught, before they penned the Christian Scriptures; and in the belief of which men lived and died, who could not possibly have even heard of those Scriptures, at that time not in existence. There may be adduced, doubtless, objections to the proofs of this identity of our doctrines with those of the Apostolic age: could it be

otherwise without a miracle, or without a degree and kind of evidence ill suited to exercise our faith in a state of trial? But without entering on the specific proofs of the doctrines themselves, which does not fall within the scope of these Lectures, I have attempted to shew, with regard to the objections alleged against such proofs generally, that they *prove too much*: that they lie against the proofs of the genuineness of Scripture itself, as well as against the testimony of things past altogether, as mere objections; but that as parts of a system, besides being sufficient for their purpose, they have analogy in their favour, and are, like the evidences of the genuineness of Scripture itself, calculated to promote the object of the Revelation itself, as suitable correspondent means, being adapted to our moral constitution, and calculated to forward the end of our being as moral agents. But without contending for the exact degree of proof, it is clear that whatever proof can be adduced that our doctrine and ritual is that of the Apostolic age, is, as far as it goes, decisive of the question between the Sectarian and ourselves, as to the force of opposite or ambiguous texts of Scripture cited on either side in support of our respective positions. It takes the matter out of our hands, referring it to a tribunal, the authority of which the Sectarian must admit, if he receives as authentic the Scripture account of the mode in which the Gospel was first revealed and taught; and if he is unable to shew that the form of sound words, which St. Paul committed to Timothy, with the command that he should in his turn commit the same to faithful men

who might be able to teach others also, is other than that which we profess to have received through the same channel, and which, by the blessing of God, and the covenanted promise of Christ's abiding in his Church, we hope, in our turn, to teach others also.

It unquestionably adds to the difficulties we have to encounter in defending this principle, that to this transmission and descent of the Christian verities should have been attached a term, against which, in former times, the fears and prejudices of men had been, and not altogether without reason, so strongly excited. Doubtless it had been so far better, as regards the present popular temper on the subject, could some other term than Tradition have been adopted, against which no such prejudice existed—as, for example, Historical testimony, Witness of the Church, or one of like kind ; under which names it will be found that there is sufficient proof of the Apostolic origin of the great truths which the Sectarian and Rationalist now reject as deficient in authority—proceeding on the assumption, that the Scriptures by themselves were designed to *teach*, as well as to *prove*, the Christian verities. And yet, were the term Tradition abandoned, we should feel as it were in some sort separated from many wise and holy men who have adhered both to the principle and the name. It were better, as regards the ultimate triumph of truth, and what is due to the memory of elder saints, to retain the term, however grating to the ears of sectarianism and licentiousness, however it may even awhile offend the weaker brethren ; and endeavour to redeem it from

the obloquy under which it has fallen, and to restore it to its right meaning and use.

It is some satisfaction to reflect, that other terms, equally or more significative of Apostolic truth, have, in their turn, suffered under the like abuse. It is something to reflect that even the term *Catholic* has in like manner been abused and driven from its original meaning, and has been even regarded as a badge of error, though a professed article of belief with every member of our communion. It need create no surprise, therefore, that other terms also indicative and preservative of Apostolic truth, should have fallen under the like abuse: that when the sins of the Church have brought them into disrepute, and caused them to be invested with a meaning foreign to their original design and acceptation, God should in his wrath have allowed it so to be; consistently with his mode of dealing with those who abuse his gifts, and hold the truth in unrighteousness. Let us rather hope, in patient faith, that as the minds of men have been gradually disabused in regard to the term *Catholic*, so will they also be in regard to Apostolic tradition. And it is no slight encouragement to know that, as the outcry against it has had its origin in ignorance or misconception of its real meaning, so when men have been at length led to read and consider for themselves, and to judge from recorded and authenticated views, they have, with very few exceptions, and these easy to be accounted for, uniformly arrived at the same result. With truly good and spiritual minded men, who had adopted Sectarian views from a misconception of their real nature, and from ignorance of the

Scriptural foundation and truly evangelical character of sound and pure Apostolic principles, their return to the latter is a question of *time* rather than of fact.

Let me, however, here offer a few remarks on some misrepresentations and objections which are found to exist on the subject.

In consequence of having traced the connection between the Sectarian principle and Socinianism, the advocates of Tradition and of the authority of the Church, have been represented as maintaining that the reading Scripture by itself, without any external guide or assistant, will lead a man to Socinianism : than which nothing can be more illogical or unjust. That a man should read Scripture without *any bias at all*, is next to impossible. That the reading without the authority and guide of antiquity has, as a mere fact, led *in the long run* to Socinianism, no one can deny without shutting his eyes to the state of belief among the great bulk of foreign Protestants, who read Scripture in this way, and form their creed on this principle, and whose distinctive feature, as opposed to the Protestant Anglican Church, consists in their adoption of this principle. But that this would be the result to any particular individual, reading Scripture in this way, it is a very different thing to affirm, and by no means follows. It is only negatively and accidentally that this principle leads to Socinianism, by removing that which would prevent such a result. As has been observed, to read without any bias at all is barely possible, and can only occur in the case of perfect vacuity of mind : every one must have his own tone of mind and thought, such as it is, however faint and weak ;

and this, whether consciously or not, must constitute his bias, with reference to which, facts of whatever kind, which are brought before him, acquire their relative importance. Scripture, like external nature, is capable of being viewed in different and opposite lights, and of proving different and opposite conclusions to the minds of individuals, according to their bias and prepossessions. This involves no objection in itself, being analogous to the laws of external nature, and conformable to the laws of moral subjects generally.

Whether this, in the case of any individual, will lead to his becoming a Presbyterian, Wesleyan, Independent, Baptist, Irvingite, or Socinian, will depend on the prepossession, natural or instilled, of the individual. Thus much, however, may be suggested *à priori*, that if the blessed Gospel be designed to correct and contravene our corrupt nature, and if the doctrines of original sin, the atonement, the divinity of the Saviour and of the Holy Spirit, are, as articles of belief, essentially conducive to that object, it might be expected that they would be far from meeting with a ready acceptance with those in whom that nature is least renewed, and who have yet to learn the first principle, which even the science of Morals declares to be essentially connected with our nature and necessary to fit it for its proper end, and which from morals is adopted into revelation, viz. the great moral truth, that our moral perceptions require to be developed and strengthened by a course of training under the authority and guidance of others. Unquestionably, the disregard for authority which is essentially involved in the Sectarian principle,

and the violation thereby of what may be considered a moral obligation, would be no small preparative for a state of religious belief which was connected, in the relation either of cause or effect, with a moral deterioration. In this sense, Socinianism would be the tendency, if not the probable result ultimately, of the absence of all external bias in reading Holy Scripture. As far as experience is at all decisive of the question, the existing state of the so called Protestant Churches on the continent of Europe, who profess to have formed their respective creeds from the Scriptures alone, would furnish no inconsiderable presumption that man's nature gravitates, as it were, towards Socinianism; that the principle of resorting to Scripture alone, without any external guide and authority, does, if *time is allowed it*, lead to that fatal heresy. But that this will be the result to any given individual, is a separate question, by no means following from the other. To this tendency, however, whether in the individual or a generation, the Church at once interposes an authoritative and effectual check, by teaching her children the Creed, before placing the Scriptures in their hands. This, indeed, Sectarians likewise do: but with them, the practice is in despite of their principle, not in conformity with it; and consequently it provides no security; nor could any individual member be said to depart from his professed principle in acting otherwise, either as regards himself or those who may be placed under him. And, moreover, the Church alone is enabled to affirm, that of all the forms of faith which the Scriptures may be made to

prove, that which she teaches, and which she proves from the Scriptures, can alone offer any evidence of apostolic origin. In this way it may be allowed, that the authority and teaching of the Church are preventive of Socinianism, and their absence productive of it. More than this, in addition to the moral tendency of the Sectarian principle, is not contended for. Nor, as regards individuals, does the warning that they are reading Scripture on the Heretical or Socinian *principle*, at all involve any charge of *personal* Heresy or Socinianism.

For my own part, I should rather believe, nay affirm, that if a case could be met with of a person reading the New Testament, literally without the slightest previous knowledge or prepossession, he would, in the first instance, be far from taking up any positively erroneous view. I would affirm, that the result of his reading would be that of inquiry founded on partial knowledge, rather than that of decided conviction, either way, on the Christian mysteries. I believe, that one situated as I have described, would, from a simple (literally) unbiassed reading of the New Testament, follow, as nearly as possible, the line of thought which I have sketched out in the third Lecture: that finding the direct historical narrative relate to him the rise, progress, and gradual extension, for several years, of a certain course of teaching, of the vital importance of which it speaks throughout, but with the full particulars of which, while it alludes to them, it has not made him acquainted; next, finding the epistolary portions which immediately follow *in order*, occupying a more remote position in point of

*time*, divided by a period of several years from the direct historical narrative, yet referring to it retrospectively, speaking of the teaching mentioned in it, as of something of considerable date, known and familiar to the persons whom themselves address,—I believe that his first and natural inquiry would be for that circumstantial teaching of which the Acts of the Apostles speaks, and to which the apostolic Epistles refer. The Epistles to Timothy and Titus, especially the injunctions contained in 2 Tim. i. 1, 2. would probably give the first direction to the inquiry, by informing him that the form of doctrine of which he was in search, had been committed, by its first teachers, to men whom they had appointed for the purpose of receiving and teaching it, and of transmitting it, together with the commission spoken of in the narrative, to others, who were in their turn again to transmit it in like manner—by a system designed to continue, as far as therein appears, indefinitely. His next and natural step would be, to inquire whether the system *was* continued—whether such a succession of men *did* arise and continue, receiving, and in turn transmitting, the commission and the knowledge spoken of both in the Acts and Epistles. And this inquiry would lead, step by step, when the inspired narrative closed, into uninspired history; and the more so, if the writings of men, some of them fellow-labourers and disciples of the Apostles themselves—writings, the genuineness of which is unquestionable, affording as it were a link connecting the inspired narrative with those historical records of the Church, which were removed by distance of years, as well as in point

of authority from the sacred writings,—exhibited to him a form of faith professing to be received from the Apostles, through those persons, as intermediate channels, to whom the Scriptures describe it as having been committed.

Or his inquiry might take this direction in preference: having followed the stream downwards to the point where it takes leave of inspired testimony, having seen the commencement of that apostolic succession of which the Scripture speaks, and finding the existing church professing to be in the direct line of that succession, he would commence from this point, and trace the stream upwards in his inquiry after the point of its conjunction with that, the commencement of which is related in the sacred writings. What the result of his inquiry would be is of little importance to the present argument. But this may at least be said, that if it should terminate in error, and he should have to commence afresh, he would have to conduct it on the same principle, merely from what Scripture itself relates on the subject. If literally unbiassed, and believing in the New Testament, he would there seek for the form of Christian doctrine, where, whether at present existing or not, the Scripture at least records it to have been originally deposited.

Hence it would also appear, that the Catholic or Church principle, in regard to the rule of faith, is, strictly speaking, more Scriptural, both in its origin and character, than that which professes to be formed from and to be guided by Scripture alone. The latter is not only without sufficient authority in Scripture, but, if

closely examined, will be found to be in opposition to the direct declarations of Scripture, as a principle; its conformity with Scripture in particulars being, as it were, accidental, and one which it possesses in common with the Church and Sectarianism of whatever kind, as regards any authority external to the mere judgment of individuals. The Church principle, on the contrary, is founded in Scripture from the beginning to its termination. It commences with the first intimation which Scripture gives us of the origin of our faith. It follows that Scriptural account step by step, as long as it continues to *guide* us, and when that ceases, it continues its course of inquiry in the *direction* to which the Scripture *points*, and by the means which the Scripture prescribes; holding in its hand, as it proceeds, those other blessed portions of Holy Scripture, which, though not designed as our guides, are yet appointed to light us on our way, and to assure us that the way in which we walk, is that in which the Apostles walked under the immediate light of Heaven, and to which the sacred writings point, ere they cease, as that in which the Church should hereafter go.

The principle which, in reply to the Sectarian's position generally, may be thus shewn to be Scriptural in its origin and character, I have attempted to shew, in reply to the Rationalist, is moreover conformable to the analogy both of Natural Religion and of Morals, and likewise adapted to our moral nature, and calculated to promote the end of our being as moral agents in a state of trial. On this branch of the subject, however, though the chief one,

I have not felt it necessary to make any prefatory remarks, further than to observe, that the arguments from analogy and adaptation, though in themselves distinct, yet are so closely connected through their common origin, that it is difficult, and sometimes impossible, in treating the subject, to keep them entirely distinct. I trust, therefore, that I shall be excused, nor be deemed to have bestowed on the subject less care than its importance demands, if, instead of running parallel throughout, these two arguments should appear occasionally to converge, and to occupy the place one of the other.

The objection which might at first appear to lie against the advocacy of these principles, viz. of appearing to make the Church, rather than Revelation or Christianity, the object of defence, I have noticed in the eighth Lecture. I would merely add here, that the point of defence has been determined by that of attack. If Christianity has been assailed through the Church, it is through the Church that it must be defended. In the vague indefinite sense in which the terms Christian and Christianity are employed in the present day, being made in popular language to include the worst forms of Heresy, not excepting even Socinianism, it must be obvious that the purity of the Gospel cannot, at present at all events, be defended under that general name, so as to satisfy those who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity, and are anxious for the faith once delivered to the saints. When Christianity and the Church Catholic were synonymous terms, as to the true Catholic Churchman they still are, the case was widely different ;

and to the Christian, his Churchmanship, instead of being used to distinguish him from the Heretic and Schismatic, served rather, as a term of love, to embody in the more endearing form of domestic relation, (if the expression may be allowed,) as a member of Christ's family and household, what, as a Christian, he might be led to view in the more awful relation of a weak and sinful creature towards his future judge. But now, since every one, how little soever he may believe respecting the nature and office of his Redeemer, is allowed in popular language to retain, or rather to usurp the name of Christian, it follows that, since we cannot control the fluctuating variations in the meaning of words, Christianity must be defended under the more lengthened definition of the Church's creed, or by that term which assigns to it a definite and substantial, as well as its original meaning.

It must not be forgotten that the Infidels of the last century are the Rationalists and Socinians of the present.

On the more popular objections commonly alleged against the principle contended for in these Lectures, besides those replied to in the Lectures themselves, little need be said. Indeed it may be observed that they scarcely admit of any reply beyond that of simple denial, being, in general, allegations of facts which have no existence but in the minds of those who allege them. It is asserted, for example, that the advocates of primitive tradition set up its authority as equal, if not superior to, Scripture itself; that they would establish on

its authority, as essential articles of faith, what the Scriptures do not contain; that they represent the apostles as having delivered to the church, as esoteric doctrines, what they in no way committed to writing; that they assign to the church the power of delivering, on independent authority, doctrines of her own, instead of giving form and shape to that which, in substance, is diffused over the face of Scripture, and interwoven with its structure; and that they also claim for her the power of determining *suo arbitrio*, on the interpretation of Scripture, in fundamentals, instead of bearing testimony, as a witness, to the truth as it has been received: confounding, throughout, the authority claimed for the church *from the beginning*, as a *witness* of primitive apostolic truth, with that claimed by the Romanist of making the *existing* church the independent *judge* in matters of faith; and as a part of the same error, charging us with adopting the *opinions* of the ancients, as opinions, instead of receiving their *testimony* of what they had themselves *received*.

However true it may be that the things here alleged are maintained in the Roman church, it rests with their opponents to shew that any of these has been advanced or maintained by the advocates of primitive tradition and ecclesiastical authority, in the Anglican church.

The vague *general* charge of Popery, and of admitting Popish principles, is in itself not of a nature to require serious notice. That it should be made, is not to be wondered at; inasmuch as there will always be those, who either

from prejudice will refuse to entertain a question which militates against judgments already formed; or who, from defective moral and intellectual vision, are unable to judge of the proportions of objects in perspective, or to distinguish their relative distance; blending in one confused mass whatever things are removed from their own centre of vision, no matter how distant one from the other.

Any *specific* charges of Popery however are, like the charges mentioned above, in no way difficult to reply to, being, *when specifically made*, resolved into simple questions of fact, to be determined by a comparison of the principles in question on the one hand, with those of the Anglican church on the other. I need scarcely add, that as yet the *onus probandi* lies on the other side. Whatever has been hitherto alleged, has been found to be, on inquiry, either not true as a matter of fact; or, if true, *not* at variance with the Anglican church.

The practice on the part of Sectarianism of branding with the charge of Popery whatever differs from it on the side of church authority, and places a restraint on its licentiousness and its wild interpretation of Scripture, is an ancient device on the part of the enemies of the Gospel. It was not unaptly compared, by Hammond, to the ancient practice of dressing up the martyrs in the skins of animals, in order to induce the wild beasts to fall on them with the greater ferocity.

With what spirit it was conducted, of what atrocities it was made the pretext, let the history of the past bear witness, in the sufferings of the church from the bitter-

ness of sectarian persecution during the Rebellion and the Commonwealth.

From this charge of Popery on the assertion of church principles, however, there arises a question entitled to no small consideration from those who value their Christian liberty; which is, that those who use it would not only limit our terms of communion, but virtually introduce a *new*, and that a *human* standard of faith. When a truth is proposed, a doctrine set forth, or an ordinance revived, which from neglect had fallen into disuse, the rule by which it is tried is not its conformity with any acknowledged standard. The question forthwith asked, is not whether it be true or Scriptural; not even whether it be maintained by our own church: but whether it be not held by Romanists. Now what is this but virtually to make Romanism in the negative the standard of faith; running into the error they profess to shun, and making the judgment of men in some shape their rule and guide?

This is a serious blow aimed at our Christian liberty, which may well excite the apprehensions of all who are truly zealous for the gospel in its simplicity and purity.

It has been well observed that it is the peculiar glory of the English church, as distinguished from other Protestant societies, that we are not the followers of any human teachers: that we are not, for example, Lutherans, or Calvinists: that we are not even followers of our reformers as masters, nor called by their name: that in none of our formularies or confessions of faith is allusion or reference made to the Reformation or Protestantism, even by name, still less as forming any part of our rule of faith;

nor is even an expression of opinion upon them recognised as in any degree entering into our terms of communion : that in fact we own no master but Christ and his Apostles.

But they who would make the negation of Popery their rule of faith, would rob us of this high privilege and distinction, deprive us of our Christian liberty, and enclose us with trammels more oppressive and tyrannical than those of Popery itself. What security have we, by this rule, that the blessed doctrines of the Atonement and Sanctification, the divinity of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, the Trinity in Unity, the efficacy of the Sacraments, the Communion of Saints—in short, what security have we that every article of the Creed will not be denied to us, if tested by this rule of the negation of the Romish faith ; seeing that all of them form integral portions of that faith ?

This question deserves the serious consideration, not only of those who value their Christian liberty, but of those who are zealous for the entireness and purity of the Christian faith. It is clear that the enemy of all truth has endeavoured to establish this spurious standard of truth among us ; and unfortunately indolence, ignorance, and prejudice, have alike combined to a certain extent to give it currency. But in truth this very resorting to Romanism as a negative standard of truth, serves but to betray the weakness of the cause it is designed to uphold. It contains the virtual admission, that by any acknowledged standard it is incapable of being maintained.

With regard to the rule of faith which it has been my

object to vindicate in these Lectures, this may at least be said, that no true member of the Anglican church will find room to object to it, either in its principle or its results. It adds no article of faith by the mere authority of the Church, because what it proposes, it also tests and proves by holy Scripture: it risks no article of faith by requiring the sanction of Scripture, because the teaching and testimony of the Church give weight and authority to those portions of Scripture which Sectarians and Socinians reject as not being sufficiently explicit as proof, on the (assumed) principle that Scripture is the guide and teacher, as well as the standard and proof. It fences the faith as it were by a double wall, against the Romanist on the one side, and the Sectarian on the other. To the spurious traditions of the one, it opposes the authority of holy writ, as testified by the voice of the Church from the beginning: to the selfwise interpretations, or wild deductions from Scripture, which the other would impose, it opposes the genuine traditions of the Church—Catholic as confirmed by holy Scripture. To both of these, however opposed to each other, it will naturally prove a restraint and an offence, even as, in civil matters, despotism and democracy alike find a check, and a consequent cause of hatred, in that form of government which combines the due protection of life and property with the exercise of rational liberty. To us however it may be truly said to set our feet in a large room. To the true member of the Anglican church it will bring no difficulty, if true to the principles which he professes to hold, and to the confession of faith which he

has made. That it does so to many nominal members of that church, as the fact cannot be denied, so neither need it create surprise, nor form any ground of objection. For herein lies the real cause of their hostility: that they are *not* true to their principles, nor to the faith which they profess: that they reject, for example, the efficacy of the Sacraments, Infant baptism, Apostolic succession, and the authority of the Church; even if they reject not doctrines more immediately relating to the eternal Godhead. And Tradition, giving its authority to the Scriptural proofs of these articles, which would otherwise be put aside by such men as unimportant or ambiguous, naturally becomes an object of dislike and hostility.

But where the whole body, both of doctrines and ordinances of our church, is truly held, no such objections will arise.

It may in truth be said, that of all those who profess to make Scripture in any way their rule, the Church alone practically and consistently abides by its principle. The Socinian will suppress or gloss over those texts which refer to the divinity of the Son and the Spirit, and the Holy Trinity; the Presbyterian, those relating to Episcopacy and Sacraments; the Romanist, those that are at variance with his spurious traditions; the Baptist, those which regard Infant baptism; the Independent, those which refer to Apostolical authority and succession, and the whole constitution of the Church. In fact, not to multiply examples, each denomination in turn rejects, or makes of no account, such portions of Scripture as are

at variance with its own tenets and views. It is the Church alone which may be truly said to receive "the whole Bible."\* And this by the grace of God the church is enabled to do, because, retaining the whole counsel of God as received from the Holy Spirit by the apostles, and by them delivered to the Church, she needs not to suppress or pervert any portion of Scripture, as proving things not in her creed; possessing that which gives a meaning and authority to those portions of holy writ, which others either pass over as insufficient to prove what they would wish to be untrue, or mutilate and pervert, to support errors they would wish to substantiate. Retaining in its primitive purity the *form* of sound doctrine which the Apostles received and taught, she is enabled, authoritatively, to communicate *form* and *shape* to the *substance* of the same, as contained in the Scriptures which, under the inspiration of the same Spirit, the same apostles wrote.

The barriers thus formed by the authority of Scrip-

\* "None, however, it would seem, but a complete and accurately moulded Christian, such as the world has never or scarcely seen, would be able to bring out harmoniously and perspicuously the full divine characters which lie hid from mortal eyes within the inspired letter of the revelation. And this, by the way, may be taken as one remarkable test, or at least characteristic of error, in the various denominations of religion which surround us; none of them embraces the whole Bible, none of them is able to interpret the whole, none of them has a key which will revolve through the entire compass of the wards which lie within. Each has its favourite text, and neglects the rest. None can solve the great secret, and utter the mystery of its pages. One makes trial, then another: but one and all in turn are foiled. They retire, as the sages of Babylon, and make way for Daniel. The Church Catholic, the true prophet of God, alone is able to tell the dream and its interpretation."

(Newman's Lectures on the Prophetical Office of the Church.)

ture on the one side, and by that of the church on the other, while they serve to protect each other, together form as it were the spiritual Thermopylæ in which, and there alone, the Christian soldier will successfully defend the fair and goodly heritage of his Lord, from the invading hordes alike of the Romanist, Sectarian, Socinian, and Infidel. Of these two citadels, the one, in time past, usurped by the Romanist, was made the instrument of arbitrary power and oppression, wherewith to assail the other fortress, and to keep in subjection all around it; a protection to those only who were willing to be his slaves. They who would drive the Romanist from his exclusive and unlawful possession of it, have in the excess of their zeal well nigh levelled it with the ground, leaving the vineyard as much unprotected from external aggression, as it was before oppressed by those who should have been its protectors.

God grant that it may be our lot to witness the rebuilding of this pillar and ground of the truth: that it may fall to the lot of this generation to build the old waste places, to raise up the foundations of many generations, and to be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in<sup>a</sup>.

<sup>a</sup> Isaiah lviii. 12.



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# LECTURE I.

## INTRODUCTION.

2 TIM. i. 13.

*Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.*

**I**T is the lot of all institutions administered by human agency, that in their passage through the hands of men, they have a tendency to deteriorate; and this, not so much in themselves and in their own nature, as by departing from their original principles, and thus becoming corrupted.

Hence it becomes necessary, from time to time, to return to their original principle and purpose, to compare their present state with their first design, their practice with their theory. To this, all institutions

incorporated on human society are liable, whatever their origin, whether human or divine; our natural tendency is to gravitate, to sink from the point at which we set out on any moral course. In peaceable times, we are more especially prone to this; we are apt to lose sight, partially or entirely, of the principle on which the institution of which we are members was originally based; and then it is, that on looking back, and comparing our principle with our practice, we discover, perhaps for the first time, how far we have deviated from it.

If this is true of institutions generally, it may be more peculiarly said of those of divine appointment; inasmuch as there exists in these, besides that *natural* tendency to deteriorate just spoken of, another risk, arising out of the very circumstance of their divine origin. For it is a peculiar feature of those dispensations which proceed more immediately from God himself, that, agreeably to the general analogy of his works, they are framed with reference to the moral condition of man, and the state of probation in which he is placed as

a moral and responsible agent. This very circumstance implies a liability to err, nay a certainty of doing so in particular circumstances, to a degree from which mere human institutions, which had no such end in view, would be comparatively free. Human institutions, for example, would be fenced by all the preservatives of which they were capable, limited only by the imperfection of human nature, or the want of sufficient control over circumstances on the part of the founder. Those of divine origin, on the contrary, would seem to find an earlier limit to these preservatives, at that point where greater security from error than that afforded, would interfere with a state of probation, by not leaving sufficient scope for moral trial, and for its consequence, the liability of falling into error. A state of probation must always require a degree of risk and temptation, sufficient to promote its exercise and the moral discipline of the agent; and this, in a greater degree than would be allowed in a mere human institution, where there existed at least the power to prevent it.

Another feature to be observed in regard to divine dispensations, is, that in the counsels of God, *time* does not appear to be taken into account ; that extraordinary means are not resorted to, nor is the course of nature interrupted, to effect results which time, however remote, would bring about in the ordinary course of things as appointed by himself. Having, for instance, revealed a divine purpose, and having appointed his instruments for carrying it into effect, the Almighty appears to have left them to operate through ordinary causes, and to allow the result to follow, at however distant a period of time, as it would follow, except the course of things should be interrupted and the design delayed, by the waywardness and wickedness of the agents themselves. Or again, having given intimations of his will, accompanied by a general warning of the evils which would follow from a neglect of it, and of the consequences which would be visited on those through whom that neglect should arise, he has left them to find out by experience, in the apparently ordinary course of events,

the sad reality of those evils of which they had been forewarned, and the truth of the denunciations.

These, which may be said to be the ordinary features of God's dispensations, it will be further seen are strictly analogous to those observed in the moral government of the world, as far as it can be traced in the course and constitution of nature. In all our moral obligations, for example, while the course prescribed for us is sufficiently clear and definite to direct those who desire to be so guided, and who are willing to seek Truth in the way she herself professes to be found, there is still considerable difficulty in following it, and room for doubt and error, together with a degree of temptation and risk of falling into vice, which, though very great, we cannot but feel is no more than is required for our probation as moral and responsible agents. And again, the effects of vice, or the violation of our moral obligations generally, are often remote—not perceptible for a considerable period; yet when they do come, bearing testimony to the truth of the warn-

ing implied in the admission of a moral obligation. And though we cannot but feel, that to have been checked at an earlier period of our course by some interposition of Providence, might have saved us from the present consequences ; yet that as a general rule, such visitations are less suited to a state of probation, and less calculated to promote the habit of self-denial and of practising virtue for its own sake, than the consequences of vice, which fall more remotely in the appointed order of things. The revealed dispensations of God, therefore, are analogous to those of the course and constitution of nature, both in respect of the greater scope they afford for error, as having reference to a state of moral trial, and in the remoteness of the period at which, in either case, the consequences of a violation of them become perceptible.

Nor do the visitations which God occasionally interposes to recall us to our duty within the covenant, form any greater exception to his general law, than those which he sends on individuals to reclaim them from a course of vice, form to the general

law, that the consequences of such a course are, as a rule, remote.

Let us apply these observations to the dispensation of the Gospel, especially to the provision made by our Lord for its propagation, in the twofold instrument appointed for that purpose, the Church and the Holy Scriptures; and the probation provided by the relation in which these two instruments stand to each other, and the consequent room for error of the most fearful magnitude to those who would violate that relation. We might suppose the appointment of instruments leaving far less room for trial and for error—as was the case with the Law, whose precepts were more specific, and consequently more easily determined. We might suppose the case of the Christian Scriptures having been given, like the Law, with such specific statements as to matters of faith, and such determinate directions on points of discipline, government, and practice generally, that no question could arise as to their meaning and object—so that he might run that readeth; instead of their being, as they really

are, of that nature, that the perception of their truths is made to depend much on the prepossessions, the bias, the wishes, the general tone and character of mind on the part of the reader. We might suppose it otherwise; but it is obvious to any one who reflects, that such a state of things would be unsuited to a state of probation, and the moral discipline required to attain the high and spiritual character of mind, which it is the tendency of the Christian Scriptures to form within us.

Again, we might suppose a case where the Church, the other instrument, having been fully instructed in the doctrine of Christ, and commanded to teach it, was to be kept by an extraordinary providence from corrupting the truth, through the instrumentality of continual warnings and chastisements, instead of being left, as it has been, to find out its errors by experience, and to meet with punishments, more slow and remote indeed, but far more severe, in the constituted course of things. It is obvious here also, that such a process, though pursued towards the earlier Jewish

Church, would be little suited to a state of probation now required for those who are ordained to walk by faith and not by sight, nor analogous to the dealings of God generally.

This feature in the divine dispensations may serve both to account for, and to reconcile to our minds, the greater degree of vitiation which has from time to time been observed in the administration of the Gospel, than would be expected, or be found generally to exist, in institutions merely human ; while the consideration that time is not considered in the divine counsels, if purchased at the expense of probation or the exercise of the principle of faith, may tend to check the despondency in which many might be disposed to indulge, at the comparatively little progress which the Gospel has made in the course of eighteen centuries.

The circumstances which generally lead us to turn to and reconsider our principles in regard to institutions, are various ; but the most obvious and of most frequent occurrence, will be found to be attacks

made upon them, either from without or by those ostensibly within, and that vitiation of the original principle before spoken of, which at first, and for some time, was too small to attract observation ; but gradually increasing, and thus becoming more visible, both in itself and by comparison with that which it professes to be, our attention is more forcibly drawn to it ; and we are made to perceive to how great an extent we have departed from our principle. At the same time, even this would perhaps escape our observation for a longer period, and till a great degree of vitiation had ensued, were it not for the circumstance of some external assault, which compels us to turn our eyes inwardly on ourselves, with a view to see how we may best meet it. And then again it is that our attention is awakened to any diminution of our internal resources occasioned by our previous neglect.

Such may be said to have been the case with the Church for the period preceding the Reformation : not that we need limit to that period the evils which it was the

object of that event to remove, but because it was then chiefly that the attention of the English Church was called to it by being placed in circumstances similar to those described. Its internal principle had long been vitiated; but without determining for what period violence had been offered to it, it was not till then that the English Church had begun formally to consider how she stood in regard to the original principles of her constitution, by adhering to which she might best place herself in the position of defence requisite for her protection.

A remarkable feature, however, in the Reformation in this country, and one which strongly denoted a superintending Providence, was the circumstance that the Reformers so little followed the ordinary tendency of human nature, nor allowed themselves to be carried away into the opposite extreme to that from which they had recently suffered and were now set free—that having seen the authority of the Church so greatly abused, and carried to that extent as almost to lead to the virtual exclusion of Scripture from having any share

of authority in forming a standard of faith, they did not, by a natural reaction, assign to it a corresponding excess of authority, to the exclusion of that of the Church; but that many of them were still willing to receive as the apostles' doctrine whatever had come down to them through the apostolic succession, whether embodied in liturgies, creeds, formularies, or even oral tradition, provided it could be found in, and proved by, Holy Scripture; admitting the presumptive claims of all that the Church had hitherto taught, until found to be at variance with Holy Scripture; but at the same time claiming the right to refer all such teaching to the written Scripture, before they would receive it as necessary to be believed for salvation—claiming, in fact, the right to try the alleged Apostles' doctrine by those Scriptures, which, by the admission of their opponents themselves, the same Apostles wrote. Both these principles, viz. 1st, the authority of antiquity, which may be termed the *generic* character of the faith; and, 2nd, the right of appeal to Scripture, which was its *specific* charac-

ter, and which are alike essential for the attainment of truth in regard to Christian doctrine—both these principles were maintained by the English Reformers, though popular ignorance and sectarian prejudice too frequently attribute to them the latter alone, and speak of *the* principle of the Reformation, as though there were but one—as though the Reformers, in appealing to Scripture as the ultimate *standard* of faith for proof of doctrine, overlooked the divinely derived claims of the Church to be the *teacher* of Christian doctrine, and her authority in matters of faith. And if they seemed to lay a greater stress on one, and to say little, in comparison, of the other, it was not that they underrated the latter, but that the circumstances of the times did not require them to give it an importance which it possessed already. At that time there were few who were *not* Catholics; few who denied the presumptive claims of the Church to be heard, till found to be at variance with Scripture. It was the right of appeal to Scripture for the truth and proof of what was taught, the

*specific* character of the faith, for which they had to contend; and to that they naturally attached, for the time, a greater importance; but that they did so, considering the circumstances under which they acted, would afford no proof that they underrated the authority of the Church and the presumptive claims of primitive antiquity, even were their own testimony on the subject wanting.

Their energies and labours would naturally be directed to the assertion and vindication of the authority of Holy Scripture; but that they did not undervalue or lose sight of the other principle, that of Catholicity, and that the apparently secondary importance they attached to it was purely *relative*, having relation to the peculiar circumstances of the times, is sufficiently obvious from their own recorded sentiments on the subject. Nay, even if they *had* made it a point of secondary importance absolutely, without reference to the temper and spirit of the times, it would not have been a matter of much surprise; nor would it have afforded a sure test of their real

sentiments, still less of the truth of the principle itself, considering the natural tendency of human nature, after being unduly forced into one extreme, to react in the other; especially when the principle, on the side of which they are tempted to excess, has been asserted at the expense of personal risk and suffering,, and sealed by the blood of their dearest friends and brethren. When therefore we find that, with all this temptation to go into an opposite extreme from that into which the tyranny of the Romish Church would have forced them, with the disgust which men would naturally take, even at the *legitimate* exercise of a principle, from the *excess* of which they had suffered and seen others suffer so deeply; when, notwithstanding all this, we find that our English Reformers did speak decidedly (no matter how briefly in comparison) on the subject of Antiquity, Church Authority, and Primitive Tradition, we may form some estimate of the importance which they at least attached to it.

It may not unreasonably be questioned, whether at the present day we have not

again arrived at that point in a departure, though in a different direction, from the original principles of the Gospel, at which the consequences of that departure, though following in the natural course of things rather than from any special visitation, are beginning to tell most fearfully, as well as perceptibly, on the interests and prospects of Christianity. For it would seem that the reaction in favour of the sole supremacy of Scripture, to the prejudice if not the suppression of Antiquity and Catholicity, from which the Reformers appear to have been providentially protected by the spirit of truth, that reaction (from causes into which it is unnecessary now to enter) did take place in the times succeeding them, and its fruits are seen not only in the errors and heresies which have in consequence sprung up and daily increase in number among us, but also in the circumstance that, with many persons, the mere mention of, or bare allusion to Catholic principles, Antiquity, and Primitive Tradition, creates alarm and suspicion, little inferior to that of Popery in its worst and

most hideous form. A proof, if such were required, how greatly we have departed from the principles, as well of the Reformers, as also of the Apostles.

In returning, therefore, to the original principles of our faith, it is obvious that our primary object should be, to redeem from the obloquy and disuse into which they have fallen, the true Catholic, or Church principle, as distinguished from the Sectarian and Rationalistic free-thinking principle of the age, and to assign to the Church and the Scriptures respectively, their part and province in the establishment of the Christian faith. To do this is indeed a work of some difficulty, not indeed in itself, nor from any deficiency of proof, but from the obstacles which present themselves in the prejudices and fears of men, which at times seem so strong as to refuse, not conviction merely, but to *entertain* the question at all, as though it savoured of impiety, and were derogatory to the word of God, and the sufficiency of Holy Scripture. Nor is the difficulty lessened by the consideration, that there

is to be found among the objectors to these principles, who, while they retain the doctrines, yet rest them on different grounds, so much piety, so much zeal, so much sincere regard for what they conceive to be the word of God, so much devotion to what they believe to be the cause of truth, that the utmost caution is requisite to avoid giving pain or needless outrage to the feelings; and still more lest, in removing what we conceive to be an erroneous principle, we fail to establish in its stead that which we believe to be a safer and more legitimate one, and thus leave in painful doubt and perplexity, perhaps in hopeless error, those whom we would fain have guided into truth. All which considerations may well serve to impress, on those who profess to advocate a return to those principles we have so long been losing sight of, the extent of the responsibility they incur, and how narrow is that way of truth in which the Church teaches them to pray that all those may be led who profess and call themselves Christians, so that they may hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the

bond of peace, and in righteousness of life.

Add to this, that we have to contend against fearful difficulties in the temper and spirit of the times. The same spirit which, in ecclesiastical and spiritual matters, has given birth to heresies and errors of such fearful magnitude, far from being confined to these, is embodied in the events, political or social, which are passing around us: it seems to infect the atmosphere in which we have our moral being, and, like the atmosphere of the natural world, its pressure, even on ourselves, is that from which we vainly try to escape; we ourselves must be more or less affected, and our judgments influenced by it, however unconscious of it ourselves. Not that there is any thing surprising or otherwise than natural in this; and so far, it may seem to assist us in seeing our way through the difficulties which beset us. For the spirit or principle of an age, be it what it may, will not vary in different things, but will be the same in all;—be it licentiousness, tyranny, indolent impatience of inquiry,

restless impatience of restraint—the spirit of undue submission, or lawless resistance ; be it what it may, it will pervade the whole moral atmosphere, and shew itself alike in all our acts or institutions—public or private, ecclesiastical, civil, or social. The union, for example, of Popery with Despotism, of Sectarianism with Republicanism, of true apostolical principles with mixed institutions securing rational liberty, where, in the one case, the authority of the Church is limited by the supremacy of Holy Scripture, and the wildness of individual interpretation of Scripture is checked by the authoritative teaching of the Church, protecting the judgment against itself ; and where, in the analogous case, the power of the executive and popular representation mutually exercise a check on each other ;—the union of civil and spiritual institutions, marked by these analogous features, is far from being accidental.

To proceed then : let it be observed, that two instruments were appointed by our Lord for propagating the Christian Revelation—the Church and the Holy Scriptures.

To both of these were their respective offices assigned: to the one to teach, the other to prove. The teaching of the one, after the Apostles were dead and the Canon of New Testament complete, was not to be received as essential to salvation, (as our portion of the western church teaches,) unless what it taught could *also* be found in, and be proved by, Holy Scripture; while, on the other hand, the written word presupposes, on the part of the reader, a knowledge of the doctrines of which it speaks, being addressed, as the opening of each Epistle sets forth, to Christians, and those of some standing; and therefore speaks by implication, in the way of allusion and reference, clearly indeed, but still in this way; nor does it any where intimate that it was designed to instruct in the elements of the Christian faith the persons whom it addresses; nor is there any intimation that persons reading it with that view, will ever, without some other and external assistance, attain to a knowledge of its truths. This will also be spoken of more fully hereafter. It is clear,

however, thus far, that if these were the two instruments ordained to be used conjointly for propagating and maintaining the truth, the suppressing, or in any way injuring either, would be calculated to give an undue preponderance, or a wrong direction to the other, and would necessarily have the effect of corrupting the truth; it is obvious, for instance, that the Church, unchecked by the appeal to the written Scripture, would be tempted to make, from time to time, such additions to the truth it professed to have received and to be empowered to teach, as the caprice or wickedness of men might suggest. It would be no less obvious, that the written Scripture, unless preceded in its perusal by instruction in those doctrines of which it speaks throughout as of things already well known, would not only incur the risk of having those doctrines overlooked, (certainly called in question from the absence of more positive proof,) but would also be wrested to prove points they were not *designed* to prove, but which they might be *made* to prove to the mind of any given individual,

who was already prepossessed with the notion, and desirous of finding proofs for it. That the first of the two evils here spoken of, would arise from the suppression of the one instrument, Holy Scripture, the whole History of the Papacy is at once the exemplification and the proof. That the corresponding evil on the other side would arise from the suppression of the Church's teaching, men are more slow to learn. Still that they are learning it, and that by sad experience, we may now trust, cannot be denied; and that too, for the reason spoken of at the commencement of this Lecture, viz. that the corruptions and evils springing from it, though less distinguishable at first, are now, from their increasing magnitude, becoming visible to the commonest observers.

That the Church's teaching has been sadly lost sight of and undervalued, and its paramount *authority* to hold the first place in the order of *time* absolutely denied, even where its *usefulness* as a previous guide has not been questioned, is too obvious to require proof; but that the evils which now overhang the spread of

true evangelical truth among us—the rationalistic free-thinking spirit of the age, the increase of the Socinian heresy, and, still more, the increase of the Socinian *principle*; the proud, flippant, self-sufficient temper of the times, in all that regards divine things and the spiritual condition of man—that these have any necessary or even accidental connexion with the suppression of the Church's teaching, or the attempts to change the relation which, by God's appointment, it bears to Holy Scripture, this men have yet to learn. The great enemy of souls long since tried how he could establish his kingdom by the suppression of the second instrument, and for a while he succeeded. When detected in that shape, he took advantage of men's fears and the natural reaction of their minds, to assume the opposite form, and to assail them in the other extreme,—with what success, need not be asked by those who will look around and see the numerous sects of heretics which daily spring up and increase among us, all of whom, as they suppose, find in Holy

Scripture the proofs of their respective creeds. That such do find their proofs in the Bible, as *they* think, we cannot deny. True, *we* may think them in lamentable and dangerous error; but it is difficult to say with what justice we can take upon ourselves to pronounce them responsible for it, or to say that we are better than they, if, denying the need of previous teaching, still less admitting the presumptive claims of the Church to be that teacher, we admit the principle that each person is to take up his Bible as that from which alone he is to derive his faith and his knowledge of his relation to God.

It was observed above, that for this principle there is not the slightest authority in the Scripture itself; a circumstance of which there will be occasion to speak more fully hereafter. It might not unseasonably be mentioned however, at this stage, as tending to disarm, in some degree, the prejudice which may have been excited in the minds of any thus far, by what has been already said of the authority of the Church, and the relation in which it stands

to Holy Scripture. Mention has been already made of the difficulties which present themselves in treating this subject, from the prejudices of men. Nor let it be thought that the term is used in any offensive sense. It is not denied that this prejudice frequently has for its base a sincere veneration for divine truth, a holy zeal for the honour of God and the purity of his word, and an honest indignation at those who for that word would substitute the vain traditions of men. But it should be observed, that both its direction and its object are wrong, when aroused against the authority and teaching of the Church in *conjunction with* Holy Scripture; and that to object to such previous authoritative teaching is at best *unsupported* by Scripture, even were it not, as it will be shewn that it is, *repugnant* to Scripture. With a view therefore to remove the prejudices which might be excited by what has been said thus far, let it be noted, that for the assertion, that the Bible is that from which each person or body of persons, is at liberty to form their own system of faith, as they severally think

best; in other words, that the Bible *by itself* is the sole *rule* and *guide* of faith, (as distinguished from the *standard* of faith, which it is,) there is *no authority whatever in Scripture itself*; nay more, that even the right to try by the standard of Scripture what we have already heard, the substance in fact of our Sixth Article, that even this is, in a certain sense of the word, an assumption—one, which God forbid should ever be questioned, but still an assumption for which there is no direct proof in *Scripture* itself, though abundantly proved from other sources, which, however, do not come into consideration here, as not being recognised by the advocates of the Sectarian principle.

Until, therefore, the teaching of the Church, and the sufficiency of Holy Scripture, have each their respective authority assigned and maintained in instructing sinners in the way of life, it is hopeless to expect that the Apostles' doctrine can be retained in its primitive purity, or the true Gospel of peace preached among men. The corruptions which have arisen from denying its due authority to Holy Scripture, form

the history of Popery ; those which flow from the opposite error of denying its proper authority to the Church, will form the history of the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries ; and if we are less able to trace them than we could wish, it is because, as is the case with the outward vision, the objects are too near to us to be so clearly discerned as those of former days : we live in the midst of them : they surround us like a dark vapour ; and though obscuring from our spiritual vision the light of heavenly truth, they are in their actual form less distinguishable than those which exhaled from the corruptions of Popery, which, in their day, were as little distinguishable, to those who lived in the midst of them ; but which, as the breath of heavenly wisdom has dispelled them, have now, when viewed in the distance of years, or from a higher point of spiritual knowledge, like clouds viewed from a distance, assumed to our eyes a distinguishable and tangible shape.

The errors, therefore, which corrupt the truth of Jesus in our day, are mainly to be traced, as were those of Popery, to one cause

—a violation of the harmony which ought to exist, in the relation of the Church's teaching to Holy Scripture: with this difference in our day, that whereas Popery suppressed Scripture, men now suppress or keep back the teaching of the Church: to this are all the heresies and errors of the day, with few exceptions, to be more or less remotely traced.

In support of this assertion, it may be observed, that every denomination of heresy appeals to Scripture for proofs of its creed, and professes to have deduced it *from* Scripture, in pursuance of an assumed right of private judgment, in the interpretation of Scripture, limited only by its ultimate responsibility to God himself. There is no sect of heresy which does not profess to abide by the Sixth Article of our Church; that is, according to *their* view of that Article, (for they will not allow the Church to be the expositor of her own Article,) overlooking the important circumstance that that Article was framed for *Catholics*, to whom, at that period, the authoritative teaching of the Church required to be but

little set forth, in comparison of the other neglected truth, the authority of Holy Scripture<sup>a</sup>.

We adhere to pure evangelical truth, so far only as it is determined whether we regard the Scripture as that from which we are to form our religion, according to our own interpretation and views ; or whether we regard it as that to which, *after* having been instructed by the apostolical Church, we are to approach, in prayer and in humble leaning for guidance on the Spirit of truth, “in order that we may know the “certainty of those things, in which we “*have been* instructed.” The first of these may be called the Sectarian or Heretical principle; the other, the Catholic or Church principle: it is only by adhering to the latter, that we can hope to maintain in its

<sup>a</sup> The logical fallacy of which they are guilty, consists in assuming the converse of the universal affirmative proposition, that “Whatsoever is Christian doctrine, is to be found in and proved by Holy Scripture.” Independently of the fact, that the terms will not of themselves bear this conversion, the framers of the article never contemplated that the subject itself would admit it.

purity, the truth as it is in Jesus. It will be my object in the following Lectures, to offer some arguments in defence of this principle, and to meet some of the objections commonly brought against it. This, it must be confessed, is a somewhat wide field, affording copious materials from which to select. Of the objections alleged against the Church's principle, I propose to meet those chiefly which are urged by the Sec-tarian and the Rationalist; that of the former being that the principle is unscriptural; that of the rationalist, that it is irrational, and unsuited to the nature of man as a moral and intellectual being, being calculated to fetter his moral and mental energies, pervert and enfeeble his judgment, and to make him the mere creature of prejudice; and likewise the objection, that it is opposed to what is supposed to be the *progressive character* of Christian knowledge.

Another feature objected to in the Church's system, is the admission of the principle of indirect, and, as some would term it, imperfect proofs in Scripture of

many essential articles of belief. The objections to this, I propose to meet, among other arguments, by shewing that the kind of proof thus afforded, (assuming it to be as the objectors state,) is as complete as that which we find out of the Bible, in nature, of things their belief in which the objectors admit unhesitatingly. This argument from analogy will be first used *elenchtically*, shewing that the objection proves too much: that it leads to Deism; and this might, for the main purpose, appear sufficient. But it will admit of being carried farther, and used *deictically*, shewing that the kind of proof which Scripture gives us of these articles of faith, is such as might have been expected *a priori*, or the assumption that it would bear an analogy to the proofs we meet with, external to the Bible, of things believed, on such proofs, by the objector.

It is desirable to keep distinct these two modes of using the argument from analogy, because, if to some, the *a priori* argument should appear unconvincing, we may at least fall back on the elenctic argument, and place the objector in the position of

admitting our principle, or of giving up his own.

The like distinction may be made, if necessary, in the argument from the adaptation of the church system to human nature, using it first elenchtically, by shewing that it does no more in the way of placing restraints on the freedom of thought, than is done every day by the objectors themselves, in matters where the defence of the practice would be, that is rendered necessary by the actual state of human nature: and then carrying the argument on to one of a demonstrative character, shewing the antecedent grounds in favour of the system. But as the arguments in either case will rest on nearly the same statements, and as the demonstrative argument is in itself sufficiently strong to be ventured at once, and to be admitted by every one, who would not impugn whatever has been written on the subject, and run counter to the universal practice of mankind, it will not be necessary here to make this distinction. We may therefore use the argument from the adaptation to human nature, at once as demon-

strative, as regards the *à priori* argument, endeavouring to shew, that the very points objected to in the catholic or church principle, especially those which regard the restraints placed on the exercise of freedom of thought, and the control assumed over the right of private judgment, that these are no more than might have been expected antecedently, on the assumption, that the Gospel, being itself adapted to the actual condition and wants of man, would be propagated by instruments calculated to promote its efficiency in meeting and providing for them; and by instruments, and in the mode, adapted to the moral constitution of the recipient.

It will be seen, that the persons to be replied to by each of these three arguments respectively, are different from each other; especially those to whom refer the arguments from Scripture, and that from the adaptation of the system to human nature. The one are frequently of a decidedly more religious character than the other, and generally strong and sincere assertors of the supremacy and sufficiency of Holy Scripture. The others are less marked by this, than by

their hostility to the restraint which the Church lays upon them.

The one are primarily jealous, really or avowedly, of the alleged infringements on the authority of Holy Scripture; and only secondarily so, of the restrictions placed on their own liberty of judgment. The other are primarily jealous of the interference with their right of private judgment; and only secondarily, and as it would seem accidentally so, as regards the Scriptures.

It is obvious, therefore, that the Scriptural defence of the system, and that founded on analogy and its adaptation to our moral constitution, apply in different degrees to each of these two classes of objectors respectively. At the same time, each class requires both: the rationalist, for example, while asserting with all his might the supremacy of reason, and therefore being mainly to be replied to by the philosophical defence of the system, yet admits the authority of Scripture in a certain way, and after his own fashion; and therefore requires the argument from that, as far as his principle will admit of it.

The Sectarian on the other hand, though professing to rest chiefly on Scripture, yet contends strongly on the reasonableness of exercising his own judgment upon it, in his own way. It will be seen, that “the *right* of private judgment,” which is, as it were, his watchword, is *enthymematic*, as though it were claimed on abstract grounds of reason. He therefore cannot shrink from the argument drawn from the reasonableness of the system, as exhibited in the philosophical elucidation of it.

The argument from analogy, in defence of the Scripture proofs of the Church’s doctrine, is addressed chiefly to those who, believing in the divine origin of the knowledge of God and of a future state, (which must be conceded,) are dissatisfied with the alleged imperfect and insufficient character of the proofs from Scripture, which the Church brings in support of doctrines which *they* reject, and reject on the ground of that insufficiency. These will consist of the lowest class of Sectarians—lowest, that is, as regards the number of Church doctrines they admit, and farthest removed, in

the scale of orthodoxy, from the Church's creed. At the same time, although it is to this class mainly, if not exclusively, that the argument from analogy addresses itself, it applies to sectarians of every other grade, who are for that purpose reduced, on their own principle, to one class—I say on their own principle, because it is difficult to conceive how any one who objects to the Church's doctrines, on the ground of the nature of the proofs by which they are supported, can, consistently with his principle, stop short of absolute Socinianism. This of course does not regard his personal belief, but the tendency of his principle as an argument which must lead to that: it proves in fact too much. This will be denied by him. The Trinitarian dissenter, while rejecting Apostolical succession, Infant-baptism, or the efficacy of the Sacraments as means and pledges of grace, on the ground of the insufficiency of proof of them in Scripture, will deny that the proofs of the doctrines which he *does* admit, are in any way inconclusive or unsatisfactory. Yet what says the Socinian

respecting those same doctrines? Is *he* satisfied with these proofs which to the other are so convincing? And how the former is to reply to him, consistently with his principle, it is difficult to conceive. True, they will join issue on the force with which the proofs strike each of them respectively; and each may, and probably will, retain his opinion. But the former has, by his own principle of the right of private interpretation, put it out of his power to condemn the creed of the other, or to maintain that his own is more scriptural or more essential to salvation. Let us now introduce a third party to the discussion in the person of the churchman. To him the proofs of doctrines, which the other rejects as insufficient, are quite sufficient and satisfactory.

The Sectarian for example, admitting the doctrines of the Divinity of Christ, and the Trinity, rejects Apostolical succession, and the efficacy of the Sacraments; while to the Churchman, the proofs of these are satisfactory. Again; the same Sectarian is perfectly satisfied with the proof of doctrines, which to the Socinian are insufficient; while

to the churchman, the Socinian's grounds for his heresy are no worse than those by which the other attempts to justify his. Hence arises an important result; that it rests with the Sectarian, of whatever grade or denomination, to shew how he can argue with the churchman respecting their points of difference, on the ground of the imperfect character of the Scripture proofs; *and likewise* with the Socinian, respecting *their* points of difference, on the ground of the sufficiency of Scripture proofs, which the Socinian will not receive, without the admission that some previous teaching or knowledge is implied, (or, on the supposition that this is the only proof which can be adduced in support of them.) He is in this position—arguing with the Churchman on Socinian grounds; and with the Socinian on Church grounds, (if on any beyond those of individual interpretation;) and in reference to either of these, his argument leads to the opposite principle. To one or the other of these he must belong. As regards his own *individual* convictions, he may remain where he is, at the expense of his consistency; but his *principle* becomes of

necessity merged in one or the other of these two.

As regards the principle therefore, we may fairly be allowed to place all who separate from the Church catholic, in the like position; or to lay down, that among Protestants there are but two principles: the Catholic or Church principle, and the Sectarian or heretical, which may be also termed the Rationalistic or Socinian principle—the Catholic, which assumes that the Church is the divinely appointed instrument for teaching the Gospel, with the Scripture for its credentials and proof, beyond which it cannot go—the Heretical, which regards the Scripture as the *sole* instrument from which, by virtue of this assumption, every individual and society is at liberty to form their own creed, as they may deem best, without any previous bias or external restriction.

That the latter of these two principles is at variance with Scripture, Analogy, and the Moral constitution of Man, it will be my attempt to trace out more fully in the following Lectures.

## LECTURE II.

ARGUMENT FROM ANALOGY, IN FAVOUR OF (ALLEGED)  
IMPERFECT PROOFS.

LUKE i. 4.

*That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.*

**I**N a work professing to give a summary of the tenets of the (so called) “Unitarian Christians,” published by authority by one of the teachers of that sect, the following passage occurs, with reference to the doctrine of the Trinity, and their reasons for rejecting it.

“So entirely do the Scriptures abstain from stating the Trinity, that when our opponents would insert it into their Creeds and Doxologies, they are compelled to leave the Bible, and to invent forms of words altogether unsanctioned by scriptural phraseology. That a doctrine so strange, so liable to misapprehen-

“ sion, so fundamental as this is said to be,  
 “ and requiring such careful exposition,  
 “ should be left so undefined and unpro-  
 “ tected, to be made out by inference, and  
 “ to be hunted through distant and de-  
 “ tached parts of Scripture, is a difficulty  
 “ which, we think, no ingenuity can ex-  
 “ plain<sup>a</sup>.”

Before offering any remarks on the preceding passage, let us turn to the following, to the same effect, from Milton's *Treatise on Christian Doctrine*.

First, with reference to his reasons for rejecting the doctrine of the divinity of the Son, and his unity with the Father; he writes: “ If indeed I were a member of the  
 “ church of Rome, which requires implicit  
 “ obedience to its creed on all points of  
 “ faith, I should have acquiesced from edu-  
 “ cation or habit to its simple decree or au-  
 “ thority, even though it denies that the  
 “ doctrine of the Trinity, as now received,  
 “ is capable of being proved from any pas-  
 “ sage of Scripture. But since I enrol  
 “ myself among the number of those who

<sup>a</sup> Statement of the views of the Unitarian Christians by Dr. Channing.

“ acknowledge the word of God alone as  
“ the rule of faith, and freely advance what  
“ appears to me much more clearly dedu-  
“ cible from the Holy Scriptures than the  
“ commonly received opinion, I see no rea-  
“ son why any one who belongs to the same  
“ protestant or reformed Church, and pro-  
“ fesses to acknowledge the same rule of  
“ faith as myself, should take offence at my  
“ freedom, particularly as I impose my au-  
“ thority on no one, but merely propose  
“ what I think more worthy of belief, than  
“ the creed in general acceptation. I only  
“ entreat, that my readers will ponder and  
“ examine my statements, in a spirit which  
“ desires to discover nothing but the truth,  
“ and with a mind free from prejudice.  
“ For without intending to oppose the au-  
“ thority of Scripture, which I consider in-  
“ violably sacred, I only take upon myself  
“ to refute human interpretations, as often  
“ as the occasion requires, conformably with  
“ my right, or rather with my duty as a  
“ man. If indeed those with whom I have  
“ to contend were able to produce direct  
“ attestation from Heaven to the truth of  
“ the doctrine which they espouse, it would

“ be nothing less than impiety to venture  
 “ to raise, I do not say a clamour, but so  
 “ much as a murmur against it. But inas-  
 “ much as they lay claim to nothing more  
 “ than human power, assisted by that spi-  
 “ ritual illumination which is common to  
 “ all, it is not unreasonable that they should  
 “ on their part allow the privileges of dili-  
 “ gent research and free discussion to an-  
 “ other inquirer, who is seeking truth  
 “ through the same means, and in the  
 “ same way as themselves, and whose desire  
 “ of benefiting mankind is equal to their  
 “ own.” p. 80—81.

“ Surely what is proposed to us as an  
 “ object of belief, especially in a matter  
 “ involving a primary article of faith, ought  
 “ not to be an inference, forced and ex-  
 “ torted from passages relating to an en-  
 “ tirely different subject, in which the  
 “ readings are sometimes various, and the  
 “ sense doubtful; nor hunted out by care-  
 “ ful research, from among articles and par-  
 “ ticles; nor elicited by dint of ingenuity,  
 “ like the answers of an oracle, from sen-  
 “ tences of dark or equivocal meaning;  
 “ but should be susceptible of abundant

“ proof, from the clearest sources. For it  
“ is in this, that the superiority of the  
“ Gospel to the Law consists ; this, and this  
“ alone, is consistent with its open simpli-  
“ city ; this is that true light and clearness,  
“ which we had been taught to expect  
“ would be its characteristic.” p. 118.

Add to this passage the following, from  
the same work, in reference to the Holy  
Spirit :

“ If it be the divine will, that a doctrine,  
“ which is to be understood and believed  
“ as one of the primary articles of our faith,  
“ should be delivered without obscurity or  
“ confusion, and explained, as is fitting, in  
“ clear and precise terms ; if it be certain,  
“ that particular care ought to be taken in  
“ every thing connected with religion, lest  
“ the objection urged by Christ against the  
“ Samaritans, should be applicable to us, *Ye*  
“ *worship ye know not what :* (John iv. 22.)  
“ if our Lord’s saying should be held sa-  
“ cred, whenever points of faith are in  
“ question,—*we know what we worship,*—  
“ the particulars which have been stated,  
“ seem to contain all that we are capable of  
“ knowing. or are required to know, re-

## LECTURE II.

“specting the Holy Spirit, inasmuch as re-  
“velation has declared nothing else ex-  
“pressly on the subject.

“Wherefore it remains now to be seen, on  
“what grounds and by what arguments we  
“are constrained to believe that the Holy  
“Spirit is God, if Scripture nowhere ex-  
“pressly teach the doctrine of his divinity,  
“not even in the passages where his office  
“is explained at large, nor even in those  
“where the unity of God is explicitly as-  
“sented.” p. 161.

“It seems exceedingly unreasonable, not  
“to say dangerous, that in a matter of so  
“much difficulty, believers should be re-  
“quired to receive a doctrine, represented  
“by its advocates as of primary importance  
“and of undoubted certainty, on any thing  
“less than the clearest testimony of Scrip-  
“ture; and that a point which is con-  
“fessedly contrary to human reason, should  
“nevertheless be considered as susceptible  
“of proof from human reason only, or  
“rather from doubtful and obscure dispu-  
“tations.” p. 162.

Now the Church claims for the Chris-  
tian doctrines an authority far higher

than that of human interpretations and deductions from Holy Scripture ; it assigns to them an antiquity, antecedent even to that of Scripture itself; and believes that in *form*, (while it leaves their *proofs* with Scripture) they have descended with the succession of the Christian ministry, to whom the New Testament describes them as having been committed before that sacred volume was itself written. We know, moreover, that the New Testament is addressed to Christians, and written for Christians; and that it presupposes, on the part of the reader, a course of previous teaching, and a knowledge of the leading Christian doctrines; and therefore naturally speaks in the way of allusion and reference to such truths, as to things already “most surely known and “believed” by him, to whom a formal statement of such truths would therefore have been unnecessary. We therefore, as Churchmen, believing this, are not unwilling to admit, that on the principle that the Scripture was given as that from which, as containing the whole revelation of God in *form*, as well as substance, (which we do *not* admit,) every individual or sect is at

liberty to form their own system of belief, as they may deem best, the Socinian argument against the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is extremely difficult to answer. The conclusion appears to follow legitimately from their principle, which however it will be at once seen they *assume*. “If it “be admitted,” as the first work quoted above proceeds to say, that “the leading “principle, in interpreting the Scriptures “is,” not only, “that the Bible is a book “written for men, in the language of men,” but also, “that its meaning is to be sought “in the same manner as that of other “books,” if this principle be admitted, it is no easy matter to explain the difficulty involved in the fact, “that a doctrine so “strange, so liable to misapprehension, so “fundamental as this is said to be, and “requiring such careful exposition, should “be left so undefined and unprotected, to “be made out by <sup>c</sup>inference, and to be “hunted<sup>b</sup> through distant and detached “parts of Scripture.”

<sup>b</sup> It is not altogether unimportant to observe the adoption of this same figure, by both the authors quoted above. The expression in the Latin original of Milton's work is “*aucupio quodam captari.*”

Again, if we admitted the assumption on which Milton's argument rests, viz. that we must come to the study of Holy Scripture, 'with a mind *free from prejudice*;' that the Christian verities are only the result of 'human interpretation,' mere *deductions from* those portions of Scripture, to which the Church refers for their proof *when* taught; we should not be unwilling to "allow the privilege of diligent research" and free discussion, to those who are seeking truth through the same means, and in "the same way as ourselves;" which on *that* hypothesis indeed they might be doing, but which, on our present principle of teaching and proving the Christian doctrines, they are confessedly *not* doing. Nor should we be unwilling to agree with him, that "an object of belief involving a primary article of faith, ought not to be an inference forced and extorted from passages relating to an entirely different subject, in which the readings are sometimes various and the sense doubtful." This difference of interpretation, the apparently incidental and casual way in which these doctrines

are mentioned, which now comes recommended to us by its peculiar fitness to its object, and its adaptation to a state of trial, where the reception of these truths on the peculiar evidence thus afforded, forms an essential feature in our spiritual probation, all this would, in that case, become a difficulty and a stumblingblock.

Against this admission, on our part, of the Socinian's conclusion from his principle, the Trinitarian dissenter will protest, feeling probably that the Scripture proofs of what he believes, as opposed to the Socinian, are not of the character described by the other. To the Churchman, it is a matter of comparative indifference whether they be so or not; to him, this difference between Socinian and Sectarian is perfectly intelligible, and creates no difficulty; he sees that the principle of the Sectarian, if fairly carried out, leads to Socinianism. Not that he is otherwise than pained at seeing this direction of any principle; much as he rejoices, for the truth's sake, to see that this is the natural consequence of the Sectarian and heretical principle; but he feels, that

against each of these, he possesses, as a Churchman, a principle, which, while it satisfies his own mind, brings them both to an issue, and places them both in the wrong; a principle which, if pressed, they too must admit, on any fair system of reasoning, on the authority of Scripture itself. He sees also, that whatever differences these two classes have between them, are but the natural result of their respective characters and feelings; that the one wishes certain points to be true—the other, not; and that accordingly, as in any other moral subject, each finds the proof of his own view, varying in strength and degree, according to the interest he takes in the point to be proved.

It should be observed, however, that the same argument which is so shocking to the Trinitarian dissenter, when applied to the Trinity, he uses without scruple against the Church, in regard to his difference with her. And therefore he places himself in this position;—that he is unable to maintain his ground against the Church, without admitting the Socinian principle, as regards

the right of private judgment in the interpretation of Scripture; he puts it out of his power to say that the Socinian is more in error, (certainly not more responsible for his opinions and belief,) than himself. Nor can he maintain his argument against the Socinian, without calling to his aid a principle, which involves the admission of the whole point at issue between himself and the Church. Therefore, for the purpose of considering the alleged defective character of the Scripture proofs of doctrines, we may reduce to one class, all those who differ from the Church's full doctrine: a process, which tends much to simplify the case, enabling us to take as our opponents, all those who require full and direct statements from Scripture, of all that the Church requires them to believe.

Now the Churchman will not be unwilling to admit, that, for many important points which the Church holds and calls upon her children to believe, the proofs in Scripture are not direct and explicit in the sense in which Sectarians regard proofs; nor is it necessary that they should be so—

say, e. g. the proofs in favour of Confirmation, Episcopacy, Apostolical Succession, Infant Baptism, or the efficacy of the Sacraments as essential means of grace. The question we are content to ask is, are the proofs such as we have a right to expect? or, without even going so far as this, are the objections brought against the *kind* of proof, other than may be brought against proofs of things external to the Bible, which those who object to these Scripture proofs are content to regard as sufficient? Now we maintain, that the very character and kind of proof of the Christian doctrines which we derive from Scripture, is at least as good as men are content to take in natural religion for what they there believe; and further, that it is such as we might expect antecedently, on the assumption, either that they would be analogous to those of Natural Religion, or that they would be adapted to our nature, viewed in reference to a state of probation; or from what Scripture would itself lead us to expect, from its account of itself and its origin, and of the mode in which the Gospel was first revealed

and taught. Let it be granted that it is as the Socinian or Sectarian (we have before merged them in one class as regards the *principle* of their objection) maintains; that the proofs of things which the Church holds and which they reject, are, as proofs, defective. It may be asked, is there nothing in this analogous to what we find in Natural Religion, and that in matters of deep interest? And if it is not what we should have expected antecedently from analogy, is it not at least that which, *when* we find it, may be accounted for by analogy? Here again it will be seen that the principle of the Sectarian, if followed up, proves too much, that after having led to Socinianism, the argument of both leads to a form of Deism. It was before shewn, that admitting, for argument's sake, that the Church's proofs from Scripture are, on the Sectarian principle, imperfect; those of Sectarianism are, on the same principle, imperfect also, and would justify the Socinian heresy. Again, assuming with the Sectarian of whatever denomination, that the only knowledge we possess of God, or of our

relation to him, is derived from revelation, we do not see how the Sectarian can deny the Deist's pretensions to the same knowledge from the light of nature, without calling in to his aid the principle which the Churchman contends for in arguing with him, by which he accounts for the supposed force of the proofs in question, by the possession of previous knowledge and instruction, of which, when once known, it is impossible to divest himself, even in imagination, so as to ascertain, in the most remote degree, what force such proofs would have had to his mind without that previous knowledge. That, in short, his argument against the Churchman leads to Socinianism, and thence to Deism; while his argument against the Deist leads to and involves the recognition of the Church principle.

The advocates of the sufficiency of Natural Religion take upon themselves to deny the necessity of a divine revelation. There is nothing surprising in this: when we possess knowledge, it is often difficult, if not impossible, to determine how or

whence we obtained it; especially if we have within us moral perceptions corresponding to it, and if we find obvious proofs of it, not only in its harmony with our nature, but in things around us and external to us. Now the facts which even natural religion professes to teach, are so congenial to our nature, are in every way so intimately connected with our being, and moreover are confirmed by such palpable proofs in nature and the world around us, that it is by no means surprising that persons should be led to believe they originally *derived* their knowledge from these sources, when every one is willing to admit that it is *confirmed* and exemplified. And they are the more likely to feel this, if there exist reasons of strong self-interest, though they may not be conscious of being influenced by them, for wishing it to be thus. This would be the case, if they merely felt it was that which their nature required, and which, when known, seemed as it were to belong to them. Much more will it be so, in matters of which there are obvious evidences in the world around, as

e.g. the existence of God and his attributes, and a future state. The proofs of these articles of faith, drawn from nature, are so strong, that the Deist believes he is claiming for them no more than their due, in maintaining that his knowledge is derived solely from them, denying altogether the necessity of a divine revelation for that purpose.

This position of the Deist is denied by the Sectarian; in which we thoroughly coincide; though we speak in the name of the latter as distinct from ourselves, since our argument is with *him* presently. He admits the visible proofs which the world affords of natural religion, but denies that they are sufficient to derive that knowledge from in the first instance, though strong proofs of the fact when known. He maintains that their force is derived subsequently from *reflection*, analogous to the meaning of a prophecy elicited by its fulfilment; which, though very clear and satisfactory *when* brought to pass, so much so, in fact, as to make us feel that it must have been obvious from the beginning,

yet we know, as a matter of fact, that *until* fulfilled, few even of those most interested in it, appear to have had any conception of its real drift, or the mode of its fulfilment.

These are the arguments mainly by which the Sectarian replies to the Deist, when, from the force which the evidences of natural religion possess as *proofs* of revealed religion, the Deist would argue to their sufficiency, as *sources* of knowledge for superseding it in the first instance: and in this reasoning we, as Churchmen, fully concur. And we further agree with him in the unfairness with which the Deist assumes the whole point at issue. As to the question how far these truths *could* have been known without revelation, we cannot, of course, in arguing with the Deist, derive any presumptive argument against *him*, from the fact that they were first revealed. But we have a right to maintain that his position must at least be for ever incapable of proof; we may at least throw on him the onus of shewing that they could be discovered from these evidences in nature. The mere fact of their being

believed by those who knew not revelation, proves nothing to us who hold that they were revealed in the first instance, and when once known, would, from their congeniality to man's nature, cling to him in every stage of society or knowledge, in some shape or other, however corrupted and debased, long after the source from which they were derived had been forgotten in the distance of years. This argument we cannot, of course, use against him, who denies the revealed origin of them, as it presents no common ground on which we can proceed; but it prevents him, on the same principle, from using, against our position, the circumstance that nations, unacquainted with revelation, have yet held these truths. We are therefore severally left where we were before, as regards that ground. The abstract question could only be determined by experiment, and that too by an experiment not likely to occur.

We must, for that purpose, find a nation, or an individual, either brought up purposely in ignorance of these things, or else so far debased and gone back in the scale

of humanity, as to have lost the *entire* knowledge of them ; we must then place them in the way of advancing in civilization and knowledge, with the further condition that they were restrained (supposing it were possible) from all access, whether to persons, books, or other records, which could convey the slightest intimation of these things ; and this being done, in their progress in civilization, (the limits of which we need not fix, nay, every assistance to which we will be supposed to furnish, provided nothing was done which could convey the remotest intimation of the truths which we wished to keep from them,) we must watch and see whether, by the force of their own minds, and the assistance furnished by external nature, they would arrive at the conclusion that there was any superior being not of this world, or any continuation elsewhere of that principle of life in themselves, the termination of which here at least they daily witnessed. Nor would it at all meet the case of this supposed experiment, to produce a nation, or an individual, with whom these articles,

though believed, were still held in the most debased and corrupted form,—and then to draw any argument from the effect which improved civilization would have on them. This would not meet the case, for here it is already known, and when known is, we admit, proved by things around on all sides, and will abide with them through their several stages of civilization or debasement; and that they improve as knowledge improves, is obvious from the superiority of the opinions held by the wiser of heathen philosophers, over those of the multitude, respecting the Deity and a future state; a superiority which was obviously the result of more education and deeper thought, which enabled them to see the folly of the popular theology; the natural result of a cultivated mind reasoning on facts *already* known; but proving nothing whatever respecting its capacity to have discovered those facts in the first instance.

We have gone into this discussion with the Deist, concurring, as we proceed, with the Sectarian, not as arguing with the

former, but as shewing the argument by which, changing the terms, we also reply to the Sectarian himself. It will not be said that the argument against the Deist has been overstated, nor will the Sectarian deny that it is thus that he replies to the Deist's denial of the necessity of a divine revelation for the knowledge of these things; nor that, unless thus replied to, the Deist is able to advance that which, *primâ facie*, has great weight.

Let us now apply the same process of reasoning to the Sectarian, in reply to his assertion, that for the knowledge and proof of the great mysteries which we meet with in the Bible, no knowledge or assistance is requisite beyond that furnished by the Bible itself; and likewise to his rejection of some, on the ground that the passages adduced in support of them are not sufficiently explicit, nor of that prominent character which would be expected in the proofs of such important doctrines; though he is not unwilling to admit that their force as collateral proofs would be considerably augmented, on the assumption of a previous

knowledge of them on the part of the reader. The Sectarian admits then the genuineness and authenticity of the canonical books of Holy Scripture. He admits likewise that, without them, the facts which he does believe would not have been known ; in other words, he admits the necessity of a divine revelation—though *when* known, he allows<sup>s</sup> that corroborating proofs of these facts are to be seen in many things *out* of the Bible ; say, e. g. in external nature, or in the constitution of human nature. He admits also that the Deist, obtaining possession of these facts from Revelation, makes an unfair use of them, ascribing his knowledge of them to his own reason acting on *proofs* which it cannot be denied are furnished by many things, *when* the facts themselves have been previously known or even suggested ; but which *till then* are insufficient. He admits, therefore, that the proofs external to the Bible for truths revealed *in* it, are of this character—insufficient in themselves to have even suggested the idea without a revelation, yet so strong when the truths are once known, that it is

difficult to persuade any one, not a believer in revelation, but that he derived his knowledge of these truths from their proofs originally. We may therefore, in fairness, include him among those of whom we ask this question; “If Scripture gives the “proofs of the truths we are called upon to “believe; what is the kind of proof we “should expect, antecedently, to find there, “on the supposition that this work of God, “his written word, would bear any analogy “to the other works of the same divine “Author, especially those, from which we “may be presumed to gather, directly or in- “directly, any manifestations of his nature “or his will?” For we have two arguments with the Sectarian: I. The *à priori* argument in favour of the Church’s view of the real nature of Scripture proofs, drawn from analogy. II. The elenctic argument, drawn, either from that which he uses against the Deist, which proves too much in our favour; or from that against us, which proves too much in favour of the Deist: leading in fact either to Deism, or to the admission of the Church’s principle.

Of these two, the argument from analogy presents the strongest presumption against his main objection, founded on the alleged defective character of the Scripture proofs of doctrines without previous teaching; i. e. if, in the written word, we should expect antecedently, to find proofs of important doctrines, analogous to those which natural religion furnishes of divine things; in other words, on the assumption, that the proofs we meet with in Scripture, would be analogous to those which we find in natural religion, whether of the same divine truths, or of others. If the existence of any previous teaching were admitted, to which the Scripture would be supposed to refer, and of which, it might be supposed to be a continuation, the indirect character of its proofs would follow naturally enough; we should expect to find, and be content with, allusions, references, and proofs by implication, where, on the supposition that Scripture contained our *primary* instruction, we should require full and direct *statements*. At present however this is not admitted; it will be proved in its proper place. We

are now considering the objections brought, *à priori*, against indirect proofs, *as such*, as well as (carrying the argument a stage further) the grounds which might be supposed to exist antecedently, in favour of the probability of such proofs. It might here be observed, however, that whatever evidence is established thus far of the existence of such proofs, is an argument *à priori*, as far as it goes, in favour of the probability of some previous teaching and knowledge.

It should be borne in mind here, that in estimating the antecedent probability of this kind of proof, the opponent is supposed to admit the necessity of *some* divine revelation, in order to have arrived at the truths he holds, in opposition to the Deist, who maintains the sufficiency of the light of nature, and of external proofs, to have given the same knowledge; and that the former maintains, that though proofs of these are to be seen every where, *when* once known, yet that the truths themselves are originally derived from some other source; and that if it appears otherwise to the

Deist, it is, because he cannot divest himself of such knowledge when once obtained, and that he unfairly ascribes to the proofs in nature, a power, which though they possess, they only derive by reflecting, as it were, revealed light.

To this may be added another peculiarity of the natural evidences of religion (which does not however refer to any one class of Religionists, as to their being Deists or otherwise); that besides the intellectual perception of them, their force depends much on the moral condition of the person, for the time being, to whom they address themselves; that though adduced as proofs even of things familiar to him, yet they often fail of having any effect as evidences. And as a rule, as far as may be drawn from induction and observation, it may be said that their force as proofs, or the capacity to feel them as such, varies in proportion to the moral character of each individual; and that frequently to the same person, the very same proofs possess a different force at different times, if,

during the interval, any change has taken place, for the better or worse, in his moral state.

Some, for example, will see in the natural world, proofs of the benevolence of God, and the prevailing features of love, mercy, and justice; subject to apparent exceptions, which to their minds, create no serious difficulty: others, on the contrary, will see, as they imagine, arguments against these, if not against the presumption of there being a superintending Providence.

The attention of some, is more called to the devastating effects of sin, on our moral condition; while that of others, will be rather awakened to the harmony still to be traced in the constitution of our nature, notwithstanding the effects of sin; their respective views being often determined, among other things, by the morbid or sanguine temperament of each.

Again, the views of the very same person will change, both in kind and degree, if any change has taken place, meanwhile, in his bodily or mental condition. In fact,

not to multiply examples, it may be truly said of all of us,

“ Our eyes see all around in gloom or glow,  
 “ Hues of their own fresh borrowed from the heart.”

If then we take up the Scripture, as containing the proofs of great truths relating to the Deity, and to men as regards their relations to him, should we not, on the assumption, that the author of nature was also the author of revelation, and that the process in each would be analogous, expect to find in the latter, proofs of that character, which, though very abundant, and though simple and obvious *when known*, are such as, if any one could be found, or even be supposed, to have been brought up in ignorance of the truths to which they refer, would leave a considerable question, (without at present urging the probability that they would *not*,) whether they would of themselves, and without the least previous teaching, suggest these truths? In what way they would be exhibited to us, so as to have this particular effect, is not a matter of any moment for the present argument, as long as they would stand in this particular

relation to the truths of which they were the evidence.

Again ; in reference to the other peculiarity just alluded to, respecting the dependance of external evidence on the moral condition of the person ; admitting even, that the proofs were in themselves sufficient, as regards their independence of any previous instruction, should we not expect to find them of that peculiar character, as proofs of great moral truths, that they would have to depend, for their reception and force, very much on the moral condition of the persons to whose belief they were proposed, and therefore, so far imperfect in themselves, as to require to be filled up by the predisposition, if not the actual wish, to be influenced by them, on the part of the reader ?

Now it is obvious, that this is what no proofs could be liable to, which were simple direct statements in themselves, and moreover repeated and reasserted in each portion of the work, as frequently as their importance demands, and as they would be, if the author were himself impressed with a

sense of their importance. And that they are at least not thus categorically stated in Scripture, will, I think, hardly be denied ; still leaving open the question, how far they are independent of any thing but themselves for having their meaning elicited. This therefore would lead us to expect, that the statements involving these proofs would, in the first place, not be formal and direct, so that he may run that readeth, however independent of any external or previous teaching.

In the next place, we should expect, that besides being indirect, they would be of that description, as to admit of two opposite constructions ; and yet that each should be satisfactory to those by whom they were respectively adopted : that the adoption of each should be attended by a distinct moral condition, a distinct character of mind, sufficiently uniform in the respective holders of each, to warrant the presumption, of there being a close connexion between the character of mind and the views of Scripture with which it is associated ; and further, that the interpreta-

tion of each would vary, in proximity or the reverse, according to the degree in which the holders exhibited a resemblance, or the reverse, in regard to tone of mind and general moral character.

We are thus furnished with strong grounds, from analogy, of an antecedent probability in favour of proofs, in a written revelation, so far imperfect in themselves, as to require to be filled up, in the one case by previous knowledge, in the other, by the predisposition of the moral inclinations. How far this probability is realized by facts, in regard to previous knowledge, we shall see when we come to examine the written Scripture itself. How far it is realized, in regard to their dependance on the heart and moral capacity, will be seen by every one who has observed, with any degree of attention, the various kinds and degrees of Heresy or of Infidelity, which have fallen under his notice, whether in different individuals and bodies, or in the same individual or body at different periods. He cannot have failed to observe the different, and sometimes opposite force,

with which the very same Scriptural proofs of the Christian verities have been attended; at one time, and to one person, carrying complete conviction; at another, completely powerless, or explained away. Nor will he have failed to observe, in a *general* way, for it is not given us to scan the motives and judge the feelings of others too closely, how much the force of these doctrinal proofs will vary, according as he beholds, in the individual or body to whom they are proposed, an approach to, or a departure from, that peculiar character and tone of mind, which it is obviously the tendency of a belief in such doctrines to form within us. And, to those who will turn their eyes inwardly on themselves, and search into the secret recesses of their own hearts, it needs not that another should tell them, that the doctrinal statements of Holy Scripture speak to them with more or less force of proof, are received by them with hope or fear, willingness or distaste, in a way calculated in either case, to exercise a most powerful influence on their faith through the medium of the will,

according as they feel within themselves, that they can realize in their hearts those motives to serve God, which it is the effect, if not the object, of a belief in those blessed verities to create within them, and the absence of which motives gives them a direct interest in wishing the doctrines untrue, which in that case they cannot but feel must condemn them.

The first argument then which we use with the Sectarian, as regards his objections to the (alleged) imperfect and indirect nature of the Scripture proofs which the Church is content to receive in support of her doctrines, is that of antecedent probability derived from the assumed analogy of Scripture to nature. It should be observed, however, that though stated in this form, as regards its being antecedent, yet it is by no means necessary that it should amount to a positive declaration of probability, if to any the argument should appear incapable of being carried to that extent. It is quite enough for the present purpose, if, without urging it to this, we use it elenchtically, to remove any objections

which might seem to lie antecedently against such a supposed feature in Scripture proofs. It would at least serve to shew that the same objections lie, according to the statement of the Sectarian himself, against the proofs in natural religion; that, granting they do exist in Scripture, they are no more than we might expect to find, on the supposition that they would be analogous to those of the former.

This argument, it will be seen, has reference to those doctrines, the proofs of which the Sectarian rejects on the ground of not being sufficiently explicit in themselves, nor such as we should be led to expect in a divine revelation.

The other argument which we employ against the Sectarian, has reference to proofs which he does admit, but to establish the validity of which he has unconsciously called to his aid the principle for which the Church contends on behalf of those doctrines which he rejects; and which he in his turn uses against the Deist, to account for the seeming suffi-

ciency in nature to discover divine truths ; viz., the principle that he is already in possession of the question before coming to the testimony : while the argument which the Sectarian uses against us in favour of those proofs, the independent sufficiency of which he admits, is no more than the Deist might, on his own principle, employ against him.

The Sectarian is in this position between the Churchman and the Deist. He argues with the Churchman on deistical principles : he argues with the Deist on Church principles : whatever he contends for in favour of the sufficiency of his own Scripture proofs to teach so as to supersede the teaching of the Church, the Deist contends for against him in favour of his own natural proofs, so as to supersede the need of a divine revelation. On the other hand, whatever he alleges against the sufficiency of the Deist's proofs, as only deriving their force by reflection from previous knowledge gained from other sources, though admitted to be so clear, *when known*, as to make the mistake not unnatural ; the same

the Churchman might and does allege against his claim to have derived his first views of Christian doctrines from those portions of Holy Scripture, which, while refusing to recognise them as the primary instrument of instruction in regard to *time*, or as transmitting the *form* of Christian doctrine, the Churchman would be as jealous as the Sectarian in guarding with his life, as containing the proof of those blessed truths on which depend his only hope of salvation, and as being the ultimate *standard* of divine truth.

Whether, in either of the cases we have been considering, men could have dispensed with their *guide*, and have depended on their *proof* alone; whether, for example, the Sectarian *could* have deduced the doctrines he believes from Scripture alone; whether the Deist *could* have deduced from the light of nature and the evidences of the natural world, the existence of God and of a future state, are questions which can never be determined till children are brought up in utter ignorance of these truths, apart from the habitations or con-

verse of those who in any degree believe them. Till this experiment has been tried, and every opportunity thus afforded by free access to the Scriptures, every intercourse with men, whether by tongue or writing, being debarred, it were utterly unwarranted by any thing in the word of God to assert that they would so learn. Neither is the solution of this question at all requisite for the present purpose: all that is here contended for is, that the argument of the Deist against the Sectarian, is at least as good as that of the latter against the Church—that in fact the argument of the Sectarian leads to Deism: and, that the argument which the Sectarian employs against the Deist, tells with equal force against himself in the hands of the Churchman—that it leads to an admission of the Church principle.

Tell us not of men who, having long lived as infidels, have at length been brought, under grace, to a knowledge of the truth by reading the Holy Scriptures. Such cases prove nothing respecting the point under consideration. Although re-

jecting these sacred truths, they have long dwelt among men who believed them, and among whom they heard them spoken of; nay, that they *knew* them, is *implied* in the assertion that they *disbelieved* them. It was impossible but that they were in possession of that elementary instruction for the need of which the Church contends; and when at length they were in mercy led by the Holy Spirit to the perusal of the Holy Scriptures, they came to that sacred study—it will be said, “to judge for themselves.” Be it so; this is all that the Church contends for. But she would embody that admission in the words of the inspired evangelist; and in “coming to Holy Scripture to judge for themselves,” she sees the unconscious fulfilment of the divine appointment, “that they might know the certainty of those things in which they *had been*” (no matter whether they believed them) “instructed.” That men should thus, in the pride of the human heart, deny the heavenly source from which they derived their knowledge, is surely not a matter of wonder; still less a reproach to that source

of light and knowledge, as though it were not needed for our blindness and infirmities.

“ For it is not to be imagined that men  
 “ fail to profit by the light that has been  
 “ shed upon them, though they have not  
 “ always the integrity to own the source  
 “ from whence it comes ; or may turn their  
 “ back upon it, whilst it fills the atmo-  
 “ sphere around them ; no, not even if in a  
 “ higher strain of malice, they address the  
 “ great luminary, only, as the apostate spirit  
 “ once did, ‘ to tell it how they hate its  
 “ beams.’ ”<sup>a</sup>

If “ the fact is not to be denied, that  
 “ the religion of nature *has* had the op-  
 “ portunity of rekindling her faded taper  
 “ by the Gospel light, whether furtively or  
 “ unconsciously taken ;” as little can it be  
 denied that Sectarianism has lighted her  
 torch at the altar of that holy flame, which,  
 on the day which witnessed the new-born  
 Church of Christ, descended from the  
 Father of lights, and rested on each of the  
 Apostles, with whom, and their appointed

<sup>a</sup> Davison on Prophecy.

successors, it will, if we believe the holy promise, abide till the angel shall be sent forth to gather together the elect whom that light shall have guided into the way of salvation which is by Christ Jesus.

Let not Sectarianism, like the religion of nature, “dissemble the obligation and the conveyance, and make a boast of the splendour, as though it were originally her own, or had always in her hands been sufficient for the illumination of the world<sup>b</sup>.”

<sup>b</sup> Davison on Prophecy.

## LECTURE III.

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THE SCRIPTURE STATEMENT AND PROOF OF THE  
PRINCIPLE.

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2 COR. v. 19, 20.

*And hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.*

**O**NE of the objections alleged against the Church's principle, that portion of it at least which regards the relation of the Christian doctrines to Holy Scripture, from which it was proposed to vindicate it in these Lectures, is that urged by the Sectarian, that it is repugnant to Scripture itself. Therefore, before entering upon the subject of the adaptation of the principle to the moral constitution of man, it will be desirable

first to examine the Scriptural grounds on which it rests; although in doing this we shall be necessarily led over a somewhat beaten track, and be exposed to the charge of repeating obvious truths. This is rendered the more necessary, however, from the circumstance that the Sectarian, assuming to himself exclusively the credit of being guided by Scripture in the formation of his views, is apt to stigmatize the Church's principle, as though it were without sufficient foundation in Scripture, if not actually repugnant to it. And it is somewhat remarkable, that this party, while contending for their principle of the Bible, and that alone, being the authority by which they are to be guided in the formation of their creed, overlook entirely the fact, that *for this, their fundamental position, the Scripture itself furnishes no authority whatever.* It is true, they will adduce passages to that effect, as for example, 2 Tim. iii. 15—17, but a moment's reflection will shew any one that this furnishes no argument; and if it be admitted as evidence, referring as it does to the Old Testament exclusively, it

would at once, on their own principle, go to prove the New Testament utterly unnecessary. And they may be safely challenged to produce any authority from the New Testament, (which must of course be the authority, if any,) in support of their position.

This principle of theirs, which may be described as being represented by that unmeaning, or at any rate perverted saying, "The Bible, and Bible alone, is the religion of Protestants," is one which men have gone on repeating, till, as is often the case, they have persuaded themselves of its reality. Nor is it one difficult to be accounted for, considering the natural tendency of men's minds to react in an opposite extreme, after being unduly forced into the other; but more particularly, from the liberty of choice and unlimited right of private judgment which the principle involves, and the absence of those wholesome restraints upon the heart and mind, which the Holy Spirit mercifully imposed in the constitution of the Apostolic Church, and which, though in truth a protection

against ourselves, are repulsive to the natural pride and independence of man; like those laws of civil society, which, while they protect us in the exercise of rational liberty, are an offence to the turbulent, and the hatred of evil doers.

The Sectarian principle, therefore, is one the existence of which is by no means difficult to be accounted for, whether considered historically, or with reference to its bearing on some of the passions of our nature; but at the same time, it is one for which there is no warrant whatever in Holy Scripture. And in saying this, it may further be observed, that there are not only no direct statements in Scripture in support of this principle, but not even those indirect proofs, those proofs by implication, which would be satisfactory on the assumption that the principle was already understood and admitted by those for whom the Scripture was written—those proofs which the Church receives in support of the doctrines which she holds, and which even Sectarians are content to take in proof of those points which they hold in common

with the Church. There are not even proofs or notices of this description in the New Testament, that the Sacred Scriptures were designed to be the sole work of inspiration, the sole work of the Holy Ghost speaking through men ; still less that they are designed by themselves to teach Christianity ; or are that from which alone men were to derive their knowledge of God, of their relation to him, or of the mode in which they were to worship him.

If there be any to whom this assertion is new, and whom, from its apparent novelty, it may startle, while it might seem for the moment to strike at the authority which should be ascribed to the Holy Scriptures, and detract from the reverence with which they have been accustomed to regard them, (and God forbid that authority should be weakened or that reverence diminished,) I would entreat such to bear with me a while, while I proceed to shew that the Church, in asserting her authority as the depositary and teacher of God's word *in conjunction with Holy Scripture*, and denying the office of the Scripture as a primary

and sole *guide* to the knowledge of the whole counsel of God respecting them, does not trifle with their hopes or the grounds of their salvation; does not, as they may think, take the authority from God to give it to man; does not, while removing with parental hand that on which they now lean, leave them without support; but replaces what she takes away by another prop, more sure, more consoling in the hour of doubt and darkness, more conformable to the general analogy of God's dealings, and, what is of the chief importance in the truly Protestant sense of the word, more strictly in accordance with his written word, more purely scriptural. For, in asserting her authority to be the primary instrument (in point of time) for teaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Church is not left, as is the principle of Sectarianism, unsupported by the testimony of Holy Scripture. Nay further, she is not compelled to rest, for the credentials of this authority, on Scripture proofs as indirect as those on which she is often content to rest for the proof of her particular doc-

trines; but the grounds on which the Church asserts her claims and her authority primarily, are no other than those furnished by Holy Scripture itself, and that not by implication merely, but by direct historical statement. These we will now proceed to review.

The notion here contended against, respecting the relation of the Christian doctrines to Holy Scripture, is probably in some measure to be ascribed to a confusion, in the minds of those who hold it, of the principles and provisions of the Gospel with those of the Law. If any one, previously familiar with the Old Testament, had been told that the New Testament was written by men under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Spirit, on things pertaining to man's eternal salvation, to which he was to refer, as to an unerring standard, for the proof of all things said to be essential to that salvation, it would be not unnatural for him to suppose, at first, and before he had read it, that it was also the primary, if not the sole instrument for revealing these things to him.

This he would infer from the analogy he might naturally assume it to bear to the Law and Revelation given by Moses, which was, in its day, the primary, if not the sole instrument of making known, to those who lived under it, their relation to God, and the duties arising out of it.

And yet, though the Law had the same ultimate end in view with the Gospel, though it was preparatory to it, and the schoolmaster to bring men to it, yet in many respects, in its form, its sanctions, the mode of its promulgation, and the instruments by which it was promulgated, it was not only different, but essentially, and, as it would seem, designedly, opposed to it. The one was a covenant of works—the other, of grace; the one, of the letter—the other, of the spirit: of the one the sanctions were temporal—of the other, spiritual and eternal: the one brought men into bondage—the other gave them liberty. The design of the Almighty in thus giving this opposite character to each of his two dispensations, it would not be part of the present subject to inquire into. We first notice

the fact that they *were* thus opposed. Published, however, as the Gospel was, first among the Jews, who had not only received the Law previously, but had been taught to regard the Gospel as the fulfilment of it, and as the second and final revelation from the God of their fathers, it would not be unnatural nor surprising, that they should expect to find, in the one, the main features which had characterized the other. Certainly, we know that its dissimilarity was the first, if not the chief cause, which served first to prejudice them against it, and ultimately led them to reject it. That this resemblance to the elder covenant would be expected by them, would seem to be implied in the repeated warnings and cautions which were given of those things in which the dissimilarity would be most felt, and be most likely to prejudice the Israelite against the new religion. This is strikingly seen in the repeated warnings of the sufferings which would befall the first converts, as well as in the sufferings themselves when they actually arrived: as though it were designed to impress on the

Jew, that, whereas the elder covenant had been one of this world, sanctioned by temporal rewards and punishments, having the promise of present prosperity to those who obeyed its precepts; lest the Christian convert should be led to expect that the new covenant, proceeding from the same mighty Author, should partake of the same character;—in addition to the differences, revealed at the time, respecting the fundamental features of the two covenants, it was expressly and repeatedly intimated, that the sanctions would not be like those of the former one. And when the hour of trial came, painful experience attested that those warnings had not been given in vain—that it was not without reason that divine mercy had “told them of these things before they came to pass, that when they did come to pass, they might remember that he told them,” and not imagine, from the contrast which their sufferings bore to the blessings which had attended their fathers, that it was because they had forsaken his Law, that God had given them over to their enemies.

Now looking at the dissimilarity between

the two covenants, in all the points which have just been briefly adverted to, we might be led to expect, certainly not surprised to find, a dissimilarity in the instruments by which, and the mode in which, the two revelations would be respectively made ; and the more so, if the character of the instrument would be likely to be determined by that of the covenant, or the more immediate object of the Revelation itself.

We thus arrive, if not at the antecedent argument in favour of a different instrument, and a different mode of promulgating the new covenant, at least at grounds for removing any objections which might be supposed to lie antecedently against such a different instrument or mode being adopted, (and to the mind of a Jew such would lie, but for the precautions which appear to have been divinely taken to prevent them.) And when we further consider the more important features of the new covenant, in respect of its being not of the letter but of the spirit, involving the highest state of probation and spiritual dis-

cipline, completely adapted to man's nature as a moral and responsible agent, and calculated to promote the end of his being in a state of trial ; we might not unreasonably expect, that the mode and the instruments by which knowledge should be communicated and he exercised therein, should have relation to these features of the covenant, should have regard to his nature as a moral and responsible agent, and be in themselves also designed to promote, in their office of channels of divine knowledge, the main end of his being, as in a state of probation. How far and in what way this was realized in the Gospel, we have now to see.

The chief feature that meets us on taking up the Historical account which Scripture gives us of the Gospel Revelation, as distinguished from the Law, is, that whereas the Law was promulgated in writing, the Gospel, on the contrary, was committed, in the first instance, to human agents, by direct inspiration, and by them communicated to the people, without the intervention of, or reference to, any written document, as regarded that which they were commissioned

to teach, or an appeal to any authority beyond their own commission ; the divine origin of the latter being attested by the miracles they were empowered to work in confirmation of it. The Law was committed to tables—the Gospel to men. The Law was designed to be perpetuated, as it had begun, in writing.—The Gospel was to be perpetuated and preserved, not in writing, (as regards any express divine appointment to that effect) but by a society of human agents, especially by a body of men (without being confined to them) ordained to this purpose by those before them, who were in their turn, by the appointment of the same Spirit, to communicate what they had thus received to others, whom they were empowered to ordain for the purpose. The ordinances of the Law were made known by what God *said* in that Law.

The ordinances of the Gospel were made known by what God, through the inspired Apostles, actually *did*; the *existence* of such ordinances being, in many cases, the first intimation to us of their *appointment* ; e. g. Infant Baptism—the Eucharist, as an es-

sential means of grace—the appointment and observance of the Lord's Day—Episcopal Ordination—Confirmation—Apostolical Succession. The Law, once delivered in its written form, was complete, thenceforth nothing could be added to it nor taken away, till recalled by its Divine Author.

The Gospel, on the other hand, received by the Apostles from the Holy Ghost, was doubtless delivered by them in all essential points of doctrine, withholding nothing—“the whole counsel of God” being declared by them. But in respect of ordinances, which, though indifferent till appointed, yet when appointed became essential, and were, as proceeding from them, of divine appointment, these the Apostles, acting under inspiration, appointed from time to time as circumstances might require; acting under the authority of the commission given to them, “As my Father hath sent me, so send I you;” and the sanction, that “whatsoever they should bind on earth should be bound in heaven.”

Let us now consider the Gospel as a sys-

tem of doctrine, and as the revelation of God's purpose towards us in his Son Jesus Christ. This was described as having been committed to human agents, without the intervention of, or reference to, any written law or commission, and without any intimation that it was to be committed afterwards to writing as Moses was enjoined to do in regard to the Law ; thereby declaring, as far as could be inferred from the existence of a divinely appointed and complete mode of instruction, and the absence of all intimation, that any alteration was hereafter to be made in the system ; that such were the divinely appointed means, under the new dispensation of grace, for communicating its glad tidings, and the revelations connected with it, till the end of the world.

Many are willing to admit this to a certain extent ; so far that is, as to allow that the Church is the expounder of Scripture, and that the Church's views are of essential assistance in determining the meaning of Scripture ; that the Scripture is the primary revelation, the Church its interpreter only. But the Scripture itself warrants us

in going much further than this ; and, if we consider it attentively, it will exhibit to us the Church as containing the primary revelation, (in regard to *time*,) the *body* and *form* of Christian doctrine, as being the instrument expressly appointed for the purpose of teaching it ; and the Scripture, as containing the *substance* and the *proof*, beyond which the Church cannot go in teaching or commanding any thing to be believed as necessary to salvation.

Let us review what the Scripture itself tells us on the subject. Let us take, as the point at which to commence, the period at which, after the resurrection and before the ascension of our Lord, the Apostles, having been previously chosen, received from him the commission to baptize, and to preach the Gospel ; with the injunction, however, that they should remain at Jerusalem till they had received power from on high, and the knowledge of the truth into which the Holy Spirit should guide them ; in other words, until they should have revealed to them that on which, though they were so soon to preach it, they

were as yet very imperfectly informed. It should be remarked, however, here, that in viewing the Scripture account of this origin of the Gospel, the same difficulty meets us which was spoken of in a former Lecture, as being caused by the mere possession of knowledge. When once we possess knowledge, we cannot divest ourselves of it, even in imagination; and therefore it is impossible for us to ascertain how we should have felt without it, in regard to things which to us, perhaps, have little or no existence, except in relation to such knowledge, as is the case with many proofs in Scripture of the Christian doctrines. It is on this principle, that, familiarly acquainted as we are with the contents of the four Gospels, as also of the Epistles, it is difficult, if not impossible, for us to place ourselves in the position of those to whom these things were unknown, as was the case with most of those to whom the Apostles first preached the Gospel, and who consequently had no knowledge of these things, except so far as they learned them by oral communication from the Apostles.

Let us, however, keeping as nearly as possible in thought to this ignorance, commence our view of the progress of the Gospel from this point.

The Apostles, then, having received their commission to preach and to baptize, were to remain at Jerusalem till, according to the promise, they should receive knowledge and power from on high—both their Commission and Credentials. In the interval, they do not appear to have had much conception of the nature of the knowledge they were to receive, nor of the real object for which Jesus had come into the world and died. The language of disappointed hope, as expressed by the disciple on the way to Emmaus, “We trusted that it had been he who should “have redeemed Israel,” shews what their expectation *had been* prior to their Lord’s death; while the question, “Lord, wilt “thou at this time restore again the king-  
“dom to Israel?” shews, that even after their assurance of his resurrection, they had made little progress towards attaining to the knowledge of the spiritual nature of his kingdom; and at the same time, his

reply to this question points to the coming of the Holy Ghost, as that which was to remove their ignorance and enlighten them on the subject of his kingdom. On the day of Pentecost, however, we find the whole aspect of things changed. The minds of the Apostles respecting our Lord's death and the object of it, are no longer undetermined; all ignorance is in an instant removed by the revelation, then made, of the great scheme of man's redemption by the death and resurrection of Christ. From that moment, the events of his life become to them connected with the mighty work which they were now commissioned to reveal. Those events, before known, indeed, yet not understood, now had a distinct meaning; words and deeds were now, as he had foretold, brought to remembrance, and the Apostles themselves guided into all truth. And that day, at whose dawn the Church as yet had not an existence nor a name, had, before its close, beheld that Church receive into its bosom three thousand souls. On that day, and on every occasion on which the Apostles, by their teaching, converted sinners to God,

from the day of Pentecost to the last event recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, they advanced what they did advance, on the authority of their commission, confirmed by the miracles they were empowered to work in attestation of it. In no case is any written document referred to, as forming the message they were commissioned to deliver. If the Scriptures of the Old Testament were on any occasion referred to, (those of the New were not yet in existence,) it was generally either in corroboration of what they taught, as shewing therein the fulfilment of a prophecy, as in the sermon of St. Peter on the day of Pentecost, and the address of St. Paul in the synagogue of Antioch in Pisidia; or to remove some objections which might seem to lie against the doctrines they preached, as being opposed to the testimony of the Law and the Prophets; of which kind was the address of St. Stephen previous to his martyrdom—and even this may be regarded primarily as the legal defence of a prisoner on trial, though used no less as an instrument, in God's hands, for preaching the

Gospel to those to whom it was spoken. But on no occasion is any Christian Scripture spoken of as their authority for what they taught, or as designed, either with or without the aid of their exposition, to teach what they were teaching.

It is unnecessary to advert to the several cases in which, and in some instances for a long period, St. Paul is described in the Acts of the Apostles, as preaching the Gospel and founding Churches in particular places; but it may be observed, that in no instance is allusion there made to any written Scripture having been used for communicating the truths of the Gospel, nor is the most remote intimation given, notwithstanding, that those whom he taught, were otherwise than fully instructed in the whole truth. And in connection with this, it should be particularly observed, that when St. Paul told the Ephesian elders, that “he had not shunned to declare to them all the counsel of God,” although this was some years after the Church at Ephesus had been founded, and it may be reasonably assumed that men had lived and died

in the faith, yet *at that time the Epistle to the Ephesians had not been written.*

Thus, then, for a period of several years, the Gospel had been preached, and Churches founded, without any intimation, however remote, that any Christian Scripture had been employed for the purpose. Regarding, as we must, the Acts of the Apostles as containing the *direct* inspired narrative of the History of the Gospel Revelation, commencing with its first promulgation on the day of Pentecost, it may be said that, from its beginning to its termination, it makes reference to no written documents as its authority, nor speaks of any such being designed as instruments for the purpose of communicating it: so entirely was the whole revelation, the whole scheme of salvation, communicated directly by the Holy Spirit to the Apostles, and from the Apostles to the Church, without any intermediate channel or instrument being employed in either case.

Neither again are we told to the full extent, in this history of the Revelation, what that Revelation, whose origin and

early progress are thus described, consisted in ; at least, we are not told, to the degree we should expect, were it designed that we should derive our knowledge of it from this narrative. We are told that it was revealed to the Apostles, and by them communicated orally to the converts; but what it was which was thus revealed and thus communicated, we are not told, except, as it were, incidentally, where the circumstances of the history appear to require a fuller allusion to it. In this way some articles, and those fundamental ones, are spoken of, which, to those previously imbued with Christian doctrine, would be at once recognized, and would appear to be stated with a degree of plainness and precision, equivalent to the declarations of primary instruction. But without going to the question, whether we should have understood the full allusion and meaning of these passages, without being thus imbued in the doctrines by previous instruction, it is obvious, from the way in which they are there introduced, that they were not *designed* by themselves to give that instruction.

But granting, for arguments' sake, that this was the method in which these chief doctrines were intended to be communicated to us; and that, stated as these are supposed to be, we have no excuse for not recognizing and receiving them, even though we had not heard of them before; what becomes of many other doctrines, which we hold to be equally sacred, and as essentially parts of the Gospel revelation, of which, however, there is confessedly not the same full notice in this history of that revelation? as, for example, first of all the Holy Trinity, next the efficacy of the sacraments as means of grace, Infant Baptism, Episcopacy, and Apostolical Succession? Believing these to form part of the commission which the Apostles received from the Holy Spirit, we cannot account for their omission, (for certainly, whatever allusion is made to them, there is little direct statement,) on the assumption that the history which relates the progress of the Gospel revelation, would tell us also in what that revelation consisted.

It must therefore be admitted, that to the close of the History of the Gospel Re-

velation, as narrated in the Acts of the Apostles, (for it doubtless does terminate with this book, though more may be *inferred* from allusions and notices in the other writings,) we are not told with any precision or fulness, what it was which, during that time, the Apostles preached as the Gospel Revelation, which, throughout the narrative, Christians are represented as believing, and in the belief of which they died. For this, therefore, we must go to other parts of the New Testament; and we shall perhaps be told by our opponents, that there, in the Epistles especially, we shall find the doctrines fully stated, whence we are to gather our knowledge of them, as well as inform ourselves on points of discipline and church government, as far as God has therein revealed his will concerning them; beyond which we have no liberty to inquire for ourselves, or authority to prescribe for others. And we shall perhaps be further told, that though the Apostles, during the chief period of their ministry, communicated the Gospel by means of oral instruction, yet that after-

wards they committed it to writing for the instruction of the Church; and that the writings of the New Testament now stand to us *in the place* of that oral instruction, called the “form of sound words,” which they had employed with the first converts, and in the early period of the Church. Let us ascertain how far this is so by a reference to these Scriptures themselves. But here the caution must be again repeated, that we mistake not *proofs* for *teaching*; nor be too hasty to conclude that a notice, which is sufficient to furnish *proofs* of a fact acknowledged to be previously known, is for that reason sufficient to have informed us of, or to have suggested that fact, by its own force, without such previous knowledge. With this caution, let us refer to the Apostolic Epistles, with the predisposition, it may be, to find in them that full and direct information on the Christian doctrines, with which the narrative of the Acts, while it relates their history and progress, does not furnish us. Here, however, we are met, in the outset, by a circumstance which at once places a bar upon any such

expectation. On taking up the Epistles one by one, we find, in their preamble or salutation, that they are, without a single exception, addressed, not to strangers, but to Christians; not even to *beginners* in the Christian faith, but to Christians of some standing. This circumstance alone, in the absence of other proofs, would be no inconsiderable argument, previous to an examination of the fact, that they would not be designed to convey the primary knowledge of these truths. We should expect to find antecedently that, addressed as they are to Christians, they would presuppose, in the hearer or reader, a knowledge of the chief Christian doctrines; however we might expect to find that they would enlarge upon them, and point out the great practical results which would flow from a belief in them; or that they would remedy any misconceptions which may have been formed of them, either from misunderstanding them at the time, or from subsequent forgetfulness, or from counteracting errors since instilled by false teachers: whatever we might expect to find said in reference to

all or any of these several points, we should certainly expect that they would presuppose a knowledge of the doctrines themselves; and that in speaking of them, they would do so, not in the way of formal enunciation, but by way of allusion and reference, as to things already known in some form or other.

Now that this actually is the case in regard to the Apostolic Epistles, it can scarcely be necessary to repeat here, being obvious to any one who will examine those sacred writings fairly and impartially, however cursorily. Take, e. g. one of the strongest passages to which the Church refers in proof of the divinity of Christ, Phil. ii. 5—11. The Apostle is not mentioning it, as if for the first time, nor as though his chief object in mentioning it were to propound the *fact*; but citing it as a fact *already known*, he *refers* to it to cheer and encourage the Philippians, by so bright and glorious an example, as became the *acknowledged* servants of Him of whom he speaks, to bear, with like humility and Christian fortitude, the perse-

cutions and sufferings under which it is one great object of this Epistle to comfort and encourage them.

That this indirect mode of stating, in the Christian Scriptures, this and other vital doctrines, does not affect their validity to us as a standard of faith, nor the value and blessedness of the same Scriptures, for many and great purposes belonging to our peace, besides the mere proof of doctrines and articles of faith—their inestimable value as radiations of heavenly light, reflecting, as it were, though in these scattered coruscations, the divine glory—their profitableness “for reproof, for correction, “for instruction in righteousness, that the “man of God may be perfect, thoroughly “furnished unto all good works;”—all this, we as Churchmen admit to the utmost, and acknowledge with thankful devotion. And further than this, it might be shewn, that for these blessed objects, the indirect mode here spoken of, not only presents no objection, but comes recommended to us by its analogy to the rest of God’s works, and its adaptation to the wants of our nature.

What was said above of the Epistles, respecting their not being designed to *teach* the Christian doctrines, from their being addressed to Christians and presupposing a knowledge of those doctrines, as well as their validity and sufficiency for the *proofs* of those doctrines, applies also to the Gospels. These also are addressed to Christians, and presuppose a knowledge, if not of the facts recorded, at least of the doctrines founded upon them, and subsequently revealed by the Holy Spirit. The object of St. Luke's Gospel, and of the circumstances, in part, under which it was written, he states himself in the fourth verse of the first chapter—that the disciple “might know the certainty of those things wherein he *had been* instructed<sup>a</sup>.” And

<sup>a</sup> Or *catechized*—περὶ ᾧν κατηχήθης. It is impossible to urge too strongly the important testimony which these words of St. Luke bear to the principle maintained by the Protestant Catholic against the Romanist on the one side, and the Sectarian on the other.

While against the one, they point directly to previous instruction, if not to Catechetical teaching, previous to knowing the certainty and proof of the same from Holy Scripture; against the other, in regard to oral tradition, they shew “that St. Luke thought not what was de-

the same Evangelist, in the preceding verses, speaking of the writings of others who had done as he was then doing, having previously been “eyewitnesses from “the beginning and ministers of the word,” terms them “a declaration of those things “which are most surely believed among “us.” Of the immediate object of St. John’s Gospel, and its peculiar and immediate reference to the heresies of his day, especially those of the Ebionites, Cerinthians, and others, there can be no doubt. His Gospel appears to presuppose not only a knowledge of the doctrines themselves, but also, in part, of the controversies which had been raised upon them.

It cannot, therefore, be said that the Christian Scriptures, written as they were *for* Christians, and addressed *to* Christians, were designed, in their original purpose,

“delivered by word of mouth only, even by the eye-witnesses and ministers of the word, sufficient to give Theophilus a knowledge of the certainty of these things, “without writing the Gospels; and this the wisdom of “God shewed, in causing them to be written, saith “Irenæus, ‘to be the pillar and foundation of the faith.’”  
—*Whitby in loco.*

to teach Christianity to those ignorant of it, however complete the proofs they afford of it to those who have been taught. Nor is there any better ground for supposing that, admitting their original object to have been different, their divine author intended them to serve that purpose *now*, as supplying the place, in these later times, of the oral instruction of the first inspired teachers. This will be seen more clearly presently; but it may be observed here, that even in their original application, they seem to be shielded by a sort of jealous precaution, lest their object and their relation to the Christian doctrines should be hereafter misunderstood; as though the Holy Spirit designed to warn us, through the sacred writers, of the use to which these Scriptures would afterwards be perverted<sup>a</sup>.

The relation of the Epistles to the Christian doctrines would perhaps be best seen, if we could suppose that, in the Acts of the Apostles, at the exact point in the history at which the Apostle had written each of

<sup>a</sup> See Rom. xv. 14, 15; 1 Peter v. 12; 2 Peter i. 12. iii. 1, 2; 1 John ii. 21.

his Epistles, (of those at least the dates of which fall within the period comprised by the Acts of the Apostles,) the sacred historian had notified the name of each of them in its proper place : as if, e. g., he had said, Here the Apostle wrote such or such an Epistle. Or, which would make it clearer, if, after having arranged the Epistles in chronological order, we were to place them in the Acts of the Apostles at the particular period, as marked by time and place, when they were written ; and having done this, to read the whole as one continued history. We should thus, by bringing them in juxtaposition with the history of the Apostles' teaching, form a juster estimate of their office in relation to Christian doctrines. Finding the history relate to us the progress of a certain teaching on the part of the Apostles, with the particulars of which it has not as yet acquainted us, but which it might be supposed we should find stated in the other Scriptures, we turn to those Scriptures for that purpose ; and find that they, instead of giving us, in full or in detail, the particulars of that teaching,

treat it as though it were already taught, and speak of it in the way of allusion rather, as to something already known ; thus declaring, by implication, that there was something between that history and those Epistles, which the written Scriptures as yet have not communicated, but which obviously is understood to exist somewhere, unless we can find which, we are in the situation of a person (if the comparison may be allowed) who has lost one in a series of volumes on a given subject, the substance of which he *thinks* he can gather from the remainder, but of which he desires to be assured from authority ; especially since he finds that others also profess to deduce, from the same, a system materially opposed to his own, but which *may*, after a fashion, be deduced from them, and which he feels that he has no authority for pronouncing to be erroneous, beyond his own private opinion, if it be admitted that this principle of mere deduction is the only, or even an authorized mode of ascertaining the truth.

This teaching, to which the Epistles refer, the Apostles obviously possessed, having

been described as receiving it, according to promise, from the Holy Ghost ; and the Epistles are too circumstantial in their allusions to it, not to have been written consequent upon it, and with immediate reference to it. It should also be particularly observed, that the Epistles continually speak of, and allude to, “the Word of God.” And this Word is evidently spoken of as denoting the revelation of God in his Son, and the glad tidings of salvation offered through his name ; nor does it appear in any case to be used in any other sense, except in Heb. xi. 3. and 2 Peter iii. 5, or as otherwise than comprehending all that is necessary to be known and believed for salvation, “the whole counsel of God” towards those to whom it was preached. In the Gospels, “the word,” and “the Word of God,” though used parabolically and prophetically, (inasmuch as at that time the Gospel scheme of salvation had not been revealed, and was known to none but its divine author,) yet appears to be intended, frequently though not exclusively, in the same sense when used by himself ; as, for

example, in the parable of the sower, and in Mark iv. 17, (and perhaps John xii. 48,) Luke viii. 21. xi. 28.

It is remarkable, however, though generally overlooked, that the expression “the word of God,” when used to denote the *Christian* revelation, though denoting that word as something *past* and *already delivered*, yet *in no instance*, either in the Epistles or Acts of the Apostles, means *the written Scripture*; nor in any other sense does the term “word” in the Epistles refer to any thing written, unless perhaps we except the instance in 2 Thess. iii. 14, where the Apostle refers it indeed to what he had written in the same Epistle; but this, not on a point of doctrine, but of discipline.

I do not say in what sense the term is used in the Gospels, because that would be to assume the point in question. Being used prophetically, its reference will depend on the sense in which, when brought to pass, it was to be employed; which, as we have seen in the Acts and Epistles, which speak of it as a matter of fact, is never that of written Scripture.

We are therefore compelled, by the necessity of the case, as shewn by the simple statements of Scripture, to fall back on the principle laid down above: that it was the peculiar design of God, that the Gospel, as distinguished from the Law, should be committed, as regards its form, not to tables of writing, but to men. Or to shew this more clearly by these several parallelisms: The history of the Gospel, prior to the day of Pentecost, will be analogous to that of the elder covenant, previous to the delivery of the Law, (as far as any analogy is there required.)

The Revelation by the Holy Ghost, of the scheme of redemption by Christ, on the day of Pentecost, is strictly analogous to the delivery of the Law on Mount Sinai; while its being ordained to take place on the anniversary of that delivery, and on the day appointed for its commemoration, was symbolical of the fact now also revealed, that henceforth it was designed to supersede it and to supply its place.

But there is wanting, in the Gospel revelation, the analogous appointment to

that in the Law, by which Moses was commanded to commit to writing that which the Lord had spoken in his hearing and that of the people, as the future instrument for teaching that Law. There is no record that the Apostles received a command to commit to writing the new Revelation as it had been communicated to them by the Holy Spirit. There is no record that the Apostles did so commit it to writing. That the writings which they have left to us are not that communication in its *form*, (which the analogy requires,) however infallibly they furnish its *proofs when known*, we have already seen. But that they communicated that word of God, as it had been delivered to them; that they kept back none of it, nor had shunned to declare the whole counsel of God, at the very time they were penning the inspired Scriptures, those same Scriptures plainly tell us.

Let us however here turn, with thankful devotion and wonder, to that peculiar and merciful adaptation to the nature and wants of men, displayed in the appointment, that the Gospel, a dispensation, not

of the letter but of the spirit; not of judgment, but of mercy; not of wrath, but of love; involving the highest form of probation and discipline, yet bringing men into personal connexion with its author; placing them in those relations to him, out of which arise motives to serve him of a personal character, making their duty henceforth one of personal obligation, the result of a faith working by love;—that a dispensation of this nature should be administered, not by the stern unbending written tables of the Law, but by men of like passions and infirmities with those to whom as ambassadors they were sent; themselves once sinners and aliens, yet now pardoned and made vessels of mercy; men who could sympathize with those to whom they ministered; who could bear with their waywardness, and feel for their misery and obduracy, having been themselves in the like condemnation; men, feeling in their own persons the blessedness of pardon and of reconciliation with God, of that change from death to life, which is the portion of Christ's redeemed people here,

and the earnest of that future inheritance which is their portion hereafter ; men who, feeling all this, combining the wisdom of the serpent with the simplicity of the dove, and thinking no cost or trouble too great which could save a soul from perdition and bring it to Christ, would, being by the Spirit of truth instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, bring out of their treasure things new and old, able to give the milk of the word to babes, and stronger meat to those of fuller age and spiritual stature ; willing and able, if needs be, to be made all things to all men, that they might by all means save some ;—who, whatever authority was and must have been assumed by them in Christ's flock, of which he had made them overseers, yet felt this was no cause of human boasting, but rather of fearful responsibility ; who must have felt, in the words of one of their number, “ Yea though I preach the Gospel, I have nothing to glory of ; for necessity is laid upon me ; yea woe is me if I preach not the Gospel ;” who, under the sense of their own weakness, must, with the same

Apostle, have asked, "Who is sufficient for these things?" and who could have found no answer to meet the despondency which this feeling must otherwise have engendered, save the promise of their divine Master, the last he breathed before he returned to glory, (surely was it then most needed,) "Lo, I am with you alway; even to the end of the world. Amen."

If, however, this Scriptural account of the promulgation of the Gospel be a just one, and I am not aware that it is overstated or partially represented, a most important result suggests itself, which should be briefly adverted to here, but which will be considered more fully in another Lecture. If it was the design of God that the Gospel should thus be confided in the first instance to human agents, and by them communicated to the Church orally; and if the Canon of Scripture closes without itself giving us that form of doctrine committed to writing, or intimating that the first teachers of it had themselves provided for its being so committed; the question at once presents itself, "What provision was

“ordained for transmitting this form of doctrine to the Church when the Apostles should be no more?” That no such provision should have been made, would be most unaccountable; that it was not by being committed to writing, we have already seen. The question therefore, as it were, forces itself upon us; “Was there no provision made for transmitting it, as it had commenced, by human instruments?” Were the Apostles commissioned to appoint no persons who might hereafter occupy their place and exercise their functions; to whom, together with the word of God which they had received from the Holy Ghost, they might give authority to preach it; and who might in their turn hereafter appoint others to succeed them, with the like powers; thus perpetuating the merciful purpose of God as manifested in the first Christian converts, and transmitting the form of doctrine and the authority from generation to generation?

Now antecedent to any evidence of the fact, this question would seem to force itself upon us, from the very nature of the

case, as shewn in the preceding circumstance. We thus arrive at the strongest presumptive grounds in favour of a succession of Apostolic Ministers. This we possess, even though we were in possession of no subsequent knowledge; though we had never seen the clear and unquestionable declarations on the subject in St. Paul's Epistles to Timothy; though we had no historical evidence of the fact, nor the testimony furnished by the uninterrupted practice of the Church to the present hour. Without such a provision, the whole matter would be perplexing and unaccountable.

We arrive also at another important conclusion—viz. that while for *proofs* of the Christian doctrine we should refer to Scripture as the *standard* of faith, yet for its *form*, if ever reduced to writing, we should look to the writings of those who succeeded the Apostles and had received the truth from them; or to those records which, though uninspired, were likely to furnish the most authentic accounts of what those primitive Christians held and taught. And in regard to matters of discipline and ordi-

nances: since the Scripture is comparatively silent respecting them, having merely stated that our Lord had delegated to the Church the power of ordaining and regulating these, with the promise of his sanction to their appointments,—we must look for them both in primitive practice, and in the universal practice of the Church ever since; with the limitation, of course, as in the case of doctrines, that nothing is to be received as necessary to salvation in the one case, or binding on the conscience in the other, which is repugnant to the written word of God.

Lastly. Believing that *every* Christian verity was revealed by the Holy Spirit to the Apostles, and by them communicated to the Church, if new doctrines are proposed to us as being supported by Scripture proofs, we shall not be content with that, knowing that not even our own rest on that alone, and that Scripture is, by its own statement, capable of being wrested to a wrong purpose—independently of the analogy of things, which tells us that the evils of blessings abused, are proportion-

ate to their benefits when used as God designed ; but we shall also endeavour to ascertain whether the doctrine or tenet in question was held in those ages of the Church in which, from its proximity to the fountain head, the stream would naturally be assumed to be most pure.

Having brought the subject therefore to this point, let us for the present leave it, reserving the fuller consideration of these and other deductions from the Scripture account of the Gospel for another Lecture ; merely observing, in concluding this, that if to any it may seem superfluous, if not dangerous, to raise questions as to the *origin* of our Christian knowledge, while we are content with its *proofs*, and to dispute about the *rule* and *guide* of our faith, while we are agreed as to the ultimate *standard* by which all truth must be eventually tried ; our reply is, that it might frequently perhaps be spared, did the question merely regard our own personal convictions ; and likewise, in many cases, (for it cannot be conceded as an absolute rule,) in our dispute with the Romanist, who, holding what we hold, but

holding at the same time much that we do not hold, as finding no warrant in Scripture, may in these be combated rather with the written word, as testing those things which, through the vain traditions of men, he has added on to the pure word of God as embodied in the Apostolic traditions of the primitive Church, and confirmed by the testimony of holy Scripture. But the battle in our day is with Socinianism rather than with Popery; with the Epicurean laxity of a self-styled intellectual age, rather than the ascetic gloom of the dark ages—with Rationalism, rather than with Superstition. With these new enemies we must fight with other weapons. It is not enough for them to shew that a proposed article of faith is such as may, by some ingenuity, be made to find its authority in Scripture. With us, that authority is not initiatory, but appellative; and with them we claim the right of trying their doctrine by the testimony also of Catholic Tradition. Neither is it any valid objection they urge against the Christian verities, that their Scriptural proofs are indirect, often latent,

and implied rather than stated. We do not rest on this proof alone the *specific* character of our faith, without regard to its *generic* character also—that it is the catholic faith, held from the days of the Apostles downward.

It is only by preserving this Apostolic relation between the Christian verities and their proofs in Holy Scripture, that, in the study of those “Holy Scriptures which “were written for our learning,” we can have a reasonable hope that it will be granted to us, in answer to our prayers, that “we may in such wise hear them, “read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest “them, that by patience, and comfort of “God’s holy word, we may embrace, and “ever hold fast the blessed hope of ever-“lasting life, which God has given us in “our Saviour Jesus Christ.”

## LECTURE IV.

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APPLICATION OF THE FOREGOING TO DOCTRINES AND  
ORDINANCES.

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2 TIM. ii. 2.

*The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.*

**H**AVING reviewed, in the last Lecture, the account which Scripture itself gives us of the origin and progress, both of the doctrines and of itself, up to the period when the Canon of the New Testament closes, we are brought to this point. We have seen that the Gospel, unlike the Law, was committed by the Holy Spirit, not to tables of writing, but to men. And that during the lifetime of those men, as far as the New Testament informs us, it was taught, not by written Scripture, but by oral instruction. In what form they

taught it, or what it was in fact which they did teach, the New Testament does not inform us very minutely. It intimates that they kept back no part of what they had received from the Holy Ghost, but taught the whole counsel of God. Whether, at any future period, the Apostles themselves committed to writing what they had thus taught for so many years by word of mouth, the Scripture is silent. For that the books of the New Testament do not constitute it in form, (however satisfactorily they provide the proofs of it,) we have already seen from the testimony of those sacred writings themselves. We have seen that those writings are in every case addressed to Christians, and presuppose an acquaintance with the Christian doctrines, being addressed, in most cases, to the same persons whom the writer himself had previously instructed in the form of Christian doctrine. And not only is this set forth in the preamble, or form of salutation, at the beginning of each Epistle, but any one who reads with an ordinary share of attention, will see that the notices of the most im-

portant doctrines, even that in Phil. ii. 6—11, however satisfactory and indispensable now as proofs, yet are introduced in reference to truths already known and familiar to the reader, not as those made known to him for the first time; and obviously never could have been designed for that object, even had their own declarations on the subject been wanting.

We are, therefore, naturally brought to the question—Where is that body and form of Christian doctrine which the Apostles received from the Holy Ghost, and which they communicated to the Church? or rather, which will facilitate the inquiry, What became of it when the Apostles themselves were dead, if the Apostles themselves did not, as we believe to be the case, themselves commit it to writing? It was not from any want of importance in the doctrine itself that they did not so write it down; for it is spoken of as a “form of sound words,” a “sacred thing committed, and to be kept “by the Holy Ghost dwelling” in the person to whom it had been committed; it is described as “the faith once committed

“to the saints,” and in another passage, as “the whole counsel of God.” It were unreasonable, therefore, to suppose that it was designed to die with the Apostles; and if we do not find that they made any provision to preserve it in a written form, still less that they wrote it down themselves, the question remains to be answered—What became of the form of doctrine when they were dead? It would be utterly unaccountable if *no* provision were made for perpetuating a thing of such vast importance to the souls of a lost world, and for transmitting it to future ages.

Being convinced then that some provision must have been made, what provision would suggest itself to our minds as likely to be appointed for perpetuating the doctrine, other than that which its divine author appointed for making it known in the first instance; unless it can be shewn that there exist reasons, on some other ground, why this could not be continued? Should we not expect to find the same system continued, at all events, until some intimation should be given that it was to cease; or

unless there was something in the system unsuited to the object to be attained, either in itself, or in reference to its being continued beyond the Apostolic age? Now as regards the suitableness of the means adopted in the first instance, in committing the Gospel to human agents and instruments, allusion was made, in the last Lecture, to the merciful adaptation to the wants of our nature, exhibited in this appointment, by which, considering its object, its sanctions, its living principle of active faith, its relation to us as placed in a state of moral probation, the Gospel was committed to men of the like passions and infirmities with those whom they were commissioned to bring to a knowledge of its saving truths, and who could attest from their practical experience, and exhibit in their own persons, the efficacy and blessedness of its saving power. Unless therefore it could be shewn that such a system would be less suited to subsequent ages of the Church than to that of its commencement, should we not expect, antecedently to inquiry, to find that some provision had been made for its continu-

ance, especially if there is no intimation of any other system having been ordained for the purpose? Should we not expect to find that the first inspired Apostles would be commissioned to appoint others, to whom, before they left the world, they might confide the sacred truths committed to themselves; and who, in their turn, might commit the same to others whom they had appointed for the purpose both of preserving and of teaching it; thus, by a succession of agents expressly and lawfully appointed for the purpose, transmitting the same form of doctrine to the end of the world? It would not be overstating the case to affirm, that this would suggest itself from the very nature of the case, as being the obvious solution of what must otherwise present a great difficulty, viz. that the body and form of Christian doctrine, after the immense importance attached to it in the Sacred History, should be left without any visible means for its perpetuation and transmission. The nature of the case would suggest the necessity of *some* means being provided for these objects;—the harmony of God's designs

and the analogy of his dispensations would suggest, that those just described would be the means adopted.

We thus arrive at the strongest antecedent probability in favour, not only of some channel for transmitting the form and body of Christian doctrines *exterior* to the Scriptures, but of the appointment of a series of ministers who might successively occupy the place and office of the Apostles, both for receiving the doctrines and transmitting them to others; both as the depositaries and trustees of the truth, and as the instruments for teaching it. Now view this in connexion with our Lord's declaration to his Apostles, that whatsoever they should bind on earth, should be bound in heaven; and that whatsoever they should loose on earth, should be loosed in heaven; and with his promise to be with them even to the end of the world. Turn from this to the account which the Scripture gives us of the appointment and ordination of Timothy and others, and view these in connexion with the following injunctions delivered by St. Paul to Timo-

thy, after his separation and ordination to the work of the Christian ministry, and his appointment to be a Bishop in the Church.

“Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery.” (1 Tim. iv. 14.) “Take heed to thyself and unto the doctrine—continue in them.” v. 16. “Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee, keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.” (2 Tim. i. 13, 14.) And especially the following striking passage: “Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus:—And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, *the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.*” (2 Tim. ii. 1, 2.)

These passages of Scripture, viewed in connexion with the antecedent probability in favour of Apostolic succession and Catholic tradition, as exhibited by Scripture

itself, and especially with the circumstance that what the Apostles taught, is not related in Scripture, circumstantially or in form, are so strong and clear, that they would seem, when viewed impartially, sufficient of themselves to establish the fact, even on the assumption that we are to deduce our opinions on these subjects from Scripture alone, without the aid of any collateral or subsequent testimony. And when we come to consider the case as it really is; to add the testimony of ecclesiastical history; and to see, from this, the unquestionable fact that, from the beginning to the present hour, there ever has been such a succession of Apostolic ministers—such a transmission, with them, of the doctrines received by the Apostles themselves, and by them delivered to their immediate successors; and that these have, in every age, been regarded as the appointed means and instruments for perpetuating and transmitting the form of doctrine; it is difficult to conceive what further evidence on the subject could be reasonably expected as to the purpose of Christ to his Church in this respect; nor is

it easy to propose any other solution of the matter, which does not, either in itself or in its consequences, (which must of course be taken into account in estimating the force of a principle,) present greater difficulties.

Moreover, consider that, however grievously particular branches of the Church may have erred; (and God forbid those errors should be extenuated or lightly accounted;) however they may in turn have corrupted or suppressed individual doctrines; yet that the Church, *as a whole*, has never yet been in vital error,—never yet, as a whole, suppressed or corrupted any one fundamental or essential doctrine. Consider, further, that in the Divine dispensations, *time* is no object to Him in whose hands is eternity, and with whom a thousand years are but as one day; and that in His dispensations, natural and revealed, extraordinary means are not interposed to bring about results which time, however distant, would effect in the ordinary course and constitution of things; nor to save men from error, of which, after he has once

forewarned them and provided such means of escape as are consistent with a state of probation and trial, time, however remote, and sad experience would at length convince them, when they had neglected those means;—thus leaving them to find out, if they will, the reality of those shoals and quicksands, of which the light of his prophecy had warned them, as calculated to make shipwreck of their faith. Consider all this, and it must be admitted, that there is nothing in the consequences, real or probable, of the principle here contended for, from which any argument could be drawn against that principle, as tending, in any one of its results, to militate against the analogy of his dealings, whether as exhibited in Holy Scripture, or in the course and constitution of nature.

Admitting then, that the body and form of Christian doctrine was to be continued as it had begun, being vested in human agents, subject to the proof of Holy Scripture; (which, in one sense, after the Apostolic age, stood in the place of the miracles, as the credentials of the teacher;) there result, from

this, deductions of the greatest moment, which may be regarded as representing, in the main, the chief features of the Church principle, and those commonly objected to by the Sectarian. What these are, I shall proceed to state in the remainder of the present Lecture, before shewing, in the following ones, their analogy to God's other appointments, and their adaptation to the moral constitution of man.

In order, however, to obviate any undue prejudice which might be excited against these, I would again observe, though at the risk of being charged with needless repetition, that although they are deductions from a particular principle, yet that the principle itself is one of purely Scriptural origin, deduced from the account which the Scripture itself gives us of the origin and early progress of the Gospel.

The first result then to which we arrive, is, that for the *form* of Christian doctrine we must look *out* of the Scriptures; whether as declared in controversial writings, or formally drawn out in articles of belief,

or embodied in liturgical or other formularies. If ever it was committed to writing, it would be subsequently to the days of the Apostles and the writing of the New Testament. And it is to be expected that it would be so committed to writing by men who would desire to retain and perpetuate what they had derived from the fountain head; and it would also be more called for as the Church increased in numbers, when the want of some system and compendium of doctrine would be felt, to meet the demand for teachers, and as means to facilitate instruction: though, probably, some of the first indications of it would be found in the controversial writings of the Fathers, being called forth by the heresies and departures from the faith, which had begun to spring up even in the Apostles' days.

Neither is it any valid objection to these doctrines that they are not found expressed in *formal* statements, until drawn forth at this or that period, and then perhaps by some controversy or heresy. This mode of gradually developing the truth, and of making

these apparent incidents the occasions of doing so, is not only that which it has pleased God to adopt in regard to doctrines, but is strictly analogous to the course pursued in the gradual development of matters of more practical character in the Scriptures themselves. Such e. g. is the course observed in regard to offences; such also in regard to the due celebration of the Lord's Supper, in 1 Cor. xi. The instruction given by the Apostle on these occasions, though at first sight the result, in the one case, of questions referred to him,—in the other, of an abuse which had been brought under his notice, is more valuable to us in this form, than it would have been in the form of bare precepts without reference to any existing circumstances. Being drawn forth by circumstances which actually occurred from the Gospel coming in contact with human nature, they are much more calculated to meet our wants than bare rules or precepts. St. Paul's direction not to make the Lord's Supper an occasion of excess or wrangling, would perhaps have

been by many deemed superfluous, if delivered in the form of mere precept, before a case had actually occurred which called for them.

Analogous to this is the method which seems to have been adopted by the Holy Spirit for the gradual development, to the world, of the form of Christian doctrines, through the medium of heresy and controversy, or of questions arising from doubt or misconception.

Hence, apart from the fact that it is historically true, the inquiry after what it was that the Apostles taught, would naturally take this direction. Finding the history of the commencement and early progress of the Gospel, (as related in the Acts of the Apostles,) and the Epistles running parallel to each other, both of them speaking fully of the word of God, yet neither of them distinctly stating what it is, we should be led naturally to follow ecclesiastical history, step by step, into the region of uninspired testimony, and look out for the first intimations we could meet with there, of any thing in the shape of

system or body of doctrine, professing to represent the creed of the Church, and the faith as received from the Apostles ; subject, of course, to the corroboration and testimony of Holy Scripture. We should expect that its descent would be necessarily traditional, as distinguished from any inspired written form, seeing that the Apostles themselves, though professing to have communicated it wholly and unreservedly to those whom they taught and appointed to succeed them, yet died without having themselves reduced it to writing. The first stage in its communication being in this sense traditional, every subsequent one necessarily became so, the successors of the Apostles having, as uninspired men, no authority for transmitting it as the word of God, beyond their own assertion of having received it from the Apostles, (whether immediately or through more links in the chain of descent,) and the testimony of the Scriptures admitted to have been written by the same Apostles. In another sense it would *not* be traditional, seeing that it was committed to

writing, its most essential doctrines at least, in the very earliest ages, in forms in which we receive and use it to this very day.

And here it may be well to observe on the indefinite meaning attached by many to the word *Tradition*, and the needless and inconsistent alarm and prejudice with which any mention of it is received, when spoken of as the channel through which we receive any portion of the Christian faith. It is not difficult to account for the prejudice against Tradition, knowing the sad abuses to which it has been perverted in past ages of the Church. But this does not affect the part which God designed it should occupy in the transmission of the Christian doctrines; nor render it less incumbent on us to endeavour at least, to redeem it from the obloquy and prejudice under which it has fallen. It has been before observed, that for the assertion that the Bible alone is our guide to the knowledge of the Christian verities, there is no satisfactory authority in the Bible itself. It may be said with no less truth, that there

*are* intimations, if not positive declarations, in the Bible, to which those who profess to take the Bible for their guide cannot be blind without wilfully shutting their eyes to them, that Tradition, in conjunction with Holy Scripture, was the instrument ordained by the Holy Spirit for preserving and transmitting the Christian verities; Tradition conveying its form—the Scriptures supplying the proof. Nay, further, if we take the strict letter of Scripture, the intimations in favour of Tradition being the instrument, are stronger and more frequent than those in favour of Scripture. The relation of Scripture to those verities, as set forth in the Sixth Article of our Church, rests, as was observed above, on other authority than that of any direct Scripture proof: and essential as is the protection of this Article to the purity of our faith and our Christian liberty, we have no right to abuse it so as to attempt to overturn God's own appointments, as though we were wiser than he—as though we were so well able to determine how the Gospel *ought* to be taught, that we may take upon ourselves

to affirm that it *was* and *must be* so taught, in the face of God's own declaration to the contrary, as revealed in the very Scriptures which we *profess* to make our guide. Every one who is aware of the fearful extent to which tradition has been abused, and the purposes to which it has been perverted in past ages of the Church; and who also feels, as every Christian should feel, that, as a member of Christ's body, he cannot but partake of whatever befalls that body, whether of guilt or suffering; would be willing to bear long with the prejudices he has to encounter, and must acknowledge that it is not his to shew impatience or a want of forbearance towards those whose fears render them slow to receive, even in its *legitimate* form, that, with the *abuse* of which alone they have been hitherto acquainted. At the same time, those who are thus strongly prejudiced against Tradition, even when used in conjunction with Scripture and ultimately subjected to it for proof and authority—tradition occupying the first place in the order of time—these should be reminded that the genuineness of Scrip-

ture itself is likewise a matter of tradition—received on similar traditional evidence—a tradition, which God forbid we should ever be led to question; nor should we overlook the consideration of the wants of our nature exhibited in this peculiar provision, nor its suitability to us as placed in a state of probation. Still it is, after all, a matter of fact, traditional. Men are accustomed to think and speak of the New Testament, as if, like the Law, it had been committed to the ark, and there kept, as if by an extraordinary protection of the Almighty, from all possibility of change or corruption; or as if, more sure than even the Law in the days of Josiah, it had been suddenly found and recovered, in a way calculated to preclude all doubts of its genuineness, even to the most sceptical—regarding its genuineness as a kind of axiom in theology, which it were as unreasonable to question, as the evidence of a miracle worked before their eyes. It is hardly necessary to remark, how entirely repugnant to any notion of a state of trial, would be this mathematical demonstration

as it were of a fact, the belief of which forms so vital a feature in our moral probation. It is unnecessary to dwell on the improbability that God would have left it in this state, independently of the fact that he has not so left it. To those to whom the doctrines of the Church Catholic are an offence, whether from sincere though mistaken scruples, or, as is more commonly the case, from the barriers they interpose to the self-wise inquirer, and the restraints they impose on the presumptuous and self-sufficient spirit, in which, under the name of free inquiry and liberty of thought, the pride of the natural man delights to exercise itself—to these it is doubtless acceptable to imagine that the grounds on which they receive the Scriptures as genuine, do not pledge them to any principle which may hereafter, on some other subject, be employed against themselves. And yet, if questioned as to these grounds, they are unable to refer them to any other source than tradition, and the authority of the Church—the very same tradition, the very same authority with that on which we

receive that body of Christian doctrine, that form of sound words, for the proof of which we *afterwards* refer to Scripture. Twist and turn this as we will, it comes to the same point. Call it Historical evidence, or by whatever name we will, it is but another name for Tradition; we receive these Scriptures (as regards their external evidence, of which alone I am now speaking) on the *traditional* testimony of past ages; we receive them *because they always have been received* as the original sacred writings—on precisely the same grounds as those on which we receive the Christian doctrines, (subject to Scripture proof hereafter,) viz., *the testimony of the Church*, on which, by whatever name we call it, we are ultimately compelled to lean; as our Article expressly says, “In the name of the Holy Scripture we do understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testament, *of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church*<sup>a</sup>.”

<sup>a</sup> It is curious to observe, how those who are most vehement in their professions of adherence to the Sixth Article of the English Church, either virtually omit the sentence here quoted, or entirely overlook their admis-

In order, however, to obviate any undue prejudice or misconception, it might be well to state here, what will be explained more at length hereafter, that for things past we cannot have any other testimony than that of tradition, *or* a miracle. The kind of traditional testimony may differ in *degree*; still it is but in degree; the only alternative involving a difference of *kind*, is a miracle. And if this should appear to weaken the evidence for Scripture rather than strengthen that of the doctrines, it will be shewn in its proper place, that the objections which might seem at first to lie against both, necessarily arise out of the nature of the case; and next, that they are no more than is requisite for our probation, as trials of faith—that they form essential parts of our trial, and are overcome by the same kind of faith which it is the aim of the Gospel to form within us, and by which we receive the doctrines themselves, even when the genuineness and authenticity of the Scriptures themselves are fully admitted.

sion of the authority and traditional testimony of the Church, implied in their assent to it.

Moreover, there may be drawn, as some may think, a collateral argument in favour of the genuineness of the Christian Scriptures, from the circumstance that the channel by which we receive those Scriptures, is the same by which we also receive, not only the true Catholic tradition, but the spurious traditions of the Romish Church, which the appeal to those Scriptures has contributed to overturn. Had the traditions of the Church, and the writings of the New Testament, been in the keeping of two parties respectively opposed to each other, I will not say there would have been any thing prejudicial to the Scriptures from their being opposed to the traditions, whenever they were found to differ; but there would, at all events, have been wanting that testimony in their favour, which is now furnished by the circumstance of their having been in the keeping of those with whose doctrines they are at variance, and who might be supposed to have an interest in suppressing or corrupting such portions of Scripture as were unfavourable to their cause. The argument thus furnished in

favour of the genuineness of the New Testament, is analogous to that in favour of the Jewish Scriptures, provided by the circumstance, that the Jews themselves were the guardians and keepers of that book, which at once related the history of their apostasies, rebellions, and punishments; and which declared, by an appeal to itself, how, according to their own shewing, they had made the word of God of none effect by their traditions.

Admitting, then, the traditional character of the *form* of Christian doctrines, seeing that the Scriptures themselves give us little account of it, yet speak of its having been unreservedly communicated to the Apostles, and by them to their disciples; and refer distinctly to a provision already made, by which the form of doctrines should be perpetuated by being communicated to a body of men especially set apart for the purpose, who were, in like manner, in their turn, to set apart and teach others after them;—there arises from this,

I. The absolute necessity, on the part of those who are dissatisfied with, and would

appeal from the doctrinal decisions of the existing Church, of referring, not to Scripture only, but also to history and to antiquity; especially to the writings of those who, living either in or near to the Apostolic age, were likely to have received the Apostles' doctrine in a less adulterated form than when, in a later period, it had contracted more defilement in passing through the hands of corrupt and fallible men. But, as regards the popular notion of taking up the Scriptures and judging for ourselves, making such *deductions* from Holy Scripture as the sacred text may to us seem to suggest, without reference to any previous instruction, or any historical intimation that such a tenet has been at least spoken of in the Church, though requiring proof before it is to be received as true—reading in fact for new knowledge on things necessary to salvation, rather than to “know the certainty of “the things in which we *have been* instructed”—for this we have no warrant whatever; however fresh light may break upon us, from repeated perusal, on things not essential to salvation.

Still less have we any authority for what is popularly called free and bold inquiry in reading Scripture; still less for fancying that we can make any doctrinal *discoveries*, or that knowledge of this kind is *progressive*. Believing, as we must, that the whole counsel of God was revealed by the Spirit to the Apostles, and by them communicated to those whom, led by the same Spirit, they appointed to succeed them; the utmost we can hope to attain to, after the most laborious researches into Scripture and antiquity combined, is at best to recover such portions of those blessed verities, those sources of hope and rejoicing, which the vain traditions of men have overlaid with corruption and error, or which, for the sins of his Church, the Lord has in wrath caused to be hid from his people.

II. In regard to ordinances. We find from Scripture that the Apostles were appointed to “preach the Gospel,” or “the Word;” in which would necessarily be included every thing necessary to carry that word home to the hearts of their hearers, as well as to keep it there—its machinery,

if the expression may be allowed—every thing necessary for implanting the seed of eternal life in their hearts, as well as for retaining it there, and nourishing it, so that it might bring forth fruit unto holiness. For these objects, ordinances become of essential importance as instruments. Now of these, little direct mention is made in the New Testament, while their necessity would be such, that it were unreasonable to suppose for a moment that the Gospel would be devoid of them, when viewed in relation to its object, and the beings whom it was designed to influence. Where, then, should we look for them, or how should we defend, or what weight and authority attach to, those which we may find actually existing in the Church?

Here, then, we are again referred to the authority and commission given to the Apostles, to preach the Gospel and to found Churches; together with the sanction, which applies here also, that whatever they should bind on earth should be bound in heaven. That they did appoint ordinances, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and

that, besides preaching the Gospel, they wrapped it up, as it were, in outward forms and ordinances, we have ample intimations; as also that they attached great importance to the observance of them, as of the appointments of an authority which every member of the Church was peremptorily called upon to obey. Yet what these ordinances actually were, we are not told very explicitly in Scripture itself; though we find sufficient proof of them, when we believe that we have learned what they were.

Now from these considerations it follows, that for a fuller account of the ordinances themselves, we must, as for the form of doctrine, look out of Scripture, either in the past or present practice of the Church; still, as in the case of doctrines, not regarding them as essential to salvation, (whatever might be the *presumptive* claims to our acceptance furnished by their mere *existence*;) unless they can also be proved by Scripture. At the same time, to know what the ordinances were, which the Apostles instituted, we must, if we dispute the Apostolic origin of those which the Church

offers us, and the sufficiency of the texts to which she refers in support of them, look out of Scripture into uninspired ecclesiastical history; especially where that history assumes any thing like a systematic form, and where we have good ground to believe, that those who speak of them or who are described as adopting them, received them either immediately, or through satisfactory channels, from the Apostles themselves.

Now those ordinances which, under these limitations, we find that the Church received and adopted, we may reasonably assume to be of divine appointment;—divine, that is, as regards the appointment by the Apostles, and those Apostles acting under the guidance of the Spirit, and in pursuance of the authority delegated to them by their Lord. This, I say, we may reasonably assume—as reasonably, at least, as any thing else of which the statements are not positive and direct. It appears to follow directly from the scriptural statements of the authority given to the Apostles, from the comparative silence of Scripture respecting ordinances, the necessity of

which would be unquestionable, and from the existence of the ordinances themselves traced historically to the days of the Apostles.

If, therefore, we find them in accordance with Holy Scripture, we have a right to regard them as the institutions of the Apostles themselves. It is important to urge this, because so little *express* mention is made in Scripture itself of particular ordinances, especially of Episcopacy; and Sectarians have taken upon themselves, from this circumstance, to deny their divine origin. Now admitting, with some, that the *doctrines* of the Gospel are sufficiently clearly gathered from Scripture without preliminary instruction, are they prepared to admit the same of the *ordinances* of the Christian Church? And yet it were unreasonable to imagine that such would be entirely omitted in the scheme; we should expect to find instructions and authority for them somewhere, and in some shape. And instead of being driven about in painful perplexity, we find a simple solution of the question in the principle laid down

in a former Lecture, respecting the peculiarity of the Gospel as distinguished from the Law, in being committed to human agents, instead of to tables; its merciful revelation and its covenant being made through the one rather than the other, and committed to instruments of the like passions and infirmities with those to whom they were commissioned to impart the knowledge of its saving truths.

In conformity with the same principle, the appointment of its ordinances appears to have been committed to the same agents, and to be made known to the Church by what God, through the Apostles, *did*, rather than what he *commanded*. The sacred writings would themselves seem to imply, from many expressions in them, that a minute ritual was contemporaneous with them; that the Apostles recognise it as existing and binding; that it was founded on religious principles, and tended to the inculcation of religious truth. Not that any formal proof is conceivable or attainable, considering the brevity and subjects of the inspired documents; but such fair

evidence of the fact, as may recommend it to the belief of the earnest and single-minded Christian.

It is abundantly evident that the Epistles were not written to prescribe and enforce the ritual of religion; all then we can expect, if it existed in the days of the Apostles, is an occasional allusion to it in their Epistles, as existing, and a plain acquiescence in it: and thus much we find<sup>b</sup>.

First we have the more general allusion to ordinances, as to things well known and understood by those to whom it was addressed: such, e. g., would be the clear and forcible command given by the Apostle to the Thessalonians, (2 Thess. ii. 15.) “Brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by *word*, or our epistle.” It would seem indeed as if the very multiplicity of the details of the Church ritual made it plainly impossible for St. Paul to write them all down, or to do more than *remind* the Corinthians of his way of conducting

<sup>b</sup> Rites and Customs of the Church—No. 34. of the series called Tracts for the Times.

religious order when he was among them. "Be ye *followers* of me," he says: "I praise you that ye remember me in all things." It is evident that in the working of any large system, there are a thousand little points which a present instructor alone can settle. This did St. Paul, as regards the system of Christian discipline and worship; and when he could not go himself, he sent Timothy in his place. "I beseech you, be ye followers of me.... For this cause I sent unto you Timotheus, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every Church."

Here there is the same reference to an uniform system of discipline, whether as to Christian conduct, worship, or Church government.

Let us turn from these more general allusions to those of a more specific character; e. g. "What, have ye not houses to eat and drink in? or despise ye the Church of God?" a passage which is remarkable as being a solitary allusion in Scripture to *houses* of prayer under the

Christian system, which nevertheless we know from ecclesiastical history, were used from the very first. Here then is a most solemn ordinance of primitive Christianity, which barely escapes, if it escapes, omission in Scripture.

Next, in the original institution of the Eucharist, as recorded in the Gospels, and the account given us of our Saviour's washing the disciples' feet, followed by the injunction that they should do the like to each other,—there is little intimation there given, that the one was to be of less permanent observance than the other—certainly not sufficient to reconcile the total omission of the one with the regular and solemn observance of the other. We are compelled mainly to refer the distinction to the practice of the Church, confirmed by the seemingly incidental allusion to the one in St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians, which thenceforth acquires the force of a proof, referring as it does to an ordinance spoken of as existing then, and which we continue to observe to the present hour, though the origin of its permanent character, as distin-

guished from the washing of feet, is nowhere expressly recorded.

Neither, in the original institution of the Eucharist, is there any mention of consecrating the elements, nor any authority for our practice and the prayer of consecration ; but St. Paul, in 1 Cor. x. 16, calls it “the cup of blessing which we bless,” and obviously alludes to it as to something well known to those whom he addressed.

Similar to this are the seemingly incidental notices respecting household and infant baptism, the observance of the Lord’s day, the assembling for the purpose of divine worship ; none of which, taken by themselves, would have the force of independent proofs, according to the Sectarian principle ; but which, taken as parts of a system, and viewed in connexion with the fact that they were addressed to those whom the writer had himself previously taught, and among whom he had long dwelt ; next, with the fact that the ordinances to which they refer have existed from that day to the present, furnish sufficient evidence of the fact contended for,

to recommend it to the belief of every earnest and single minded Christian.

These instances then, not to notice others of a like or different kind, are surely sufficient to reconcile us to the complete ritual system which breaks upon us in the writings of the Fathers, and to lead us to attribute to the latter something more than the respect due to mere human institutions. If any parts of it indeed are contrary to Scripture, that is, of course, a decisive reason at once for believing them to be additions and corruptions of the original ceremonial; but till this is shewn, we are bound to venerate what is certainly primitive, and probably is Apostolic.

If, then, we have the clearest intimations of authority given to the Apostles, with the promise of a divine sanction to their appointments; if we find that in pursuance of this they made these appointments, why, it may be asked, are we to regard these as less of divine appointment, than if we found a specific command to that effect in an Epistle—if (which must be conceded) we have reasonable grounds to believe that the

Apostles did institute them? Why is that which God, through the Apostles, thus *did*, less sacred or less binding upon us, than that which God, through the same Apostles, *said*? If we find the Apostles speaking of what they *had done*, surely, knowing as we do that they acted under the immediate inspiration and direction of the Holy Ghost, we ought to regard that which they had then done, as being as much of divine appointment as any more specific precept of theirs in the same Scripture. If we find them speaking of a certain order of men whom they had ordained, or of certain ordinances which they had either appointed or were ministering, how can we, without placing a limit to their infallibility and authority, which would go to shake the whole foundation of our faith, regard these appointments as less proceeding from God, as less declaratory of his will as regards his Church, or as less binding on the Church now, than if the Apostles had said, “I will  
“ that such and such men be ordained;  
“ that such and such a succession of minis-  
“ ters shall continue as teachers of the word;

“and that such and such ordinances be “established?” Did the Apostles *speak* only as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, and did they *act* merely as fallible men, with no further intimations of their divine Master’s will than such as is vouchsafed under the ordinary operations of the Spirit in our day?

If it be thus, where is our authority for the practice of Infant Baptism, and the rite of Confirmation? where our authority for the observance of the Lord’s Day, and of public worship? the notices of which in Scripture are too scattered and remote to have the force of proofs on the Sectarian principle; though conclusive to those who view them in connexion with the historical fact that the Apostles themselves observed these ordinances.

But, it will be said, on this principle each branch of the Church may still claim an assent to its own creed, however discordant one with another, and plead the authority of Tradition and Antiquity for what it teaches.

This we deny. On the part of the Church we maintain, that if we resort to this rule

of faith, viz. Antiquity and Catholic Tradition, subject to the proof of Holy Scripture, (the former being the generic, the latter the specific character of our faith,) and moreover with a mind *morally* qualified for the investigation and perception of truth in such a matter, content to take such evidence as the subject, from its nature, is necessarily confined to, which is an essential element in forming a right judgment in morals and on moral subjects, we shall *not* differ in our respective creeds. Men *do* differ, because they will *not* resort to this rule; at least it rests with our opponents to shew, that there exists any branch of the Church which, having resorted to it, holds a faith different from ourselves who profess to have determined ours by it. This principle the Church lays down on the common ground, of the authority of Scripture. Herself gives the result of this in our Articles, Creeds, and Liturgies. For the *presumptive* claims of these to belief, she pleads Universality and Antiquity; for the ultimate proof of the several articles of faith stated or implied in them, she appeals

to Holy Scripture. Surely it remains for our opponents to shew that we are in error—to shew that others, after having adopted this rule, have attained to a *different* faith. When they have done this, it will then be time enough for us to join issue on points of difference, and to determine whence they have arisen.

It must be confessed, that there is, even in this modified and Scriptural view of the use and importance of Tradition, much that is at variance, in the minds of many, with strong and early prepossessions, (of which I would not be thought unmindful,) calculated to lead them, however unjustly, to receive it with suspicion and prejudice. And, as was observed in a former Lecture, were the question merely our individual conviction, or were our contest with Popery alone, there would be less urgent reason to contend for it; though, even with the Romanist, it would not be sufficient to argue upon Scripture proofs alone; lest he retort on us the argument we employ against the Sectarian's alleged right of private judgment; viz. that his

principle puts it out of his power to condemn the Socinian who proceeds upon the same. In neither case would there be any authority external to the opinions of individuals on disputed or doubtful texts.

But here we have no choice to make. The question does not rest with us: it has been already opened by the assailants of the truth; and we are compelled to act on the defensive. The fundamental articles of the Christian faith are called in question on the alleged insufficiency of proof in Scripture; and heresies are held and taught on the alleged authority of texts of Scripture, which, whether valid or no, are maintained to be as good as those to which we refer in support of our creed. Whether we will or no, we are met by the Socinian argument, founded on the assumption that Scripture is our sole guide from which each is at liberty to deduce his own creed as appears best to himself. We are here met, first by his powerful argument—that on this assumption, it is unreasonable that truths of such magnitude should be left to be so gathered and learned, as many (to us) most

important doctrines would confessedly appear to be; next, by his argument—that on the principle of the right of private judgment in the interpretation of Scripture, his views of Christian doctrine may be as correct as ours: both which arguments are employed by the authors quoted in the Second Lecture.

On this assumption, it is difficult, if not impossible, to reply to him, or to pronounce him to be in error by the decision of any other authority than that of our own private judgment, for which we have there no more right to claim a deference than he has for his. And, what is more fearful, we have no better authority than this, (which at any hour of individual trial of darkness and doubt may fail us,) on which to rest, not only our own eternal hopes, but also the sacred duty, (which, whatever be our belief, we must in consistency practise,) of instilling by the earliest possible bias, and of tending in their growth by all the authority, natural or otherwise, with which we may be invested, the principles of that form of faith which we ourselves believe to be

the true one, in the hearts of those whom God has made dependant upon us, and for whose salvation, as far as it is dependant on such means, we feel ourselves responsible. The name of Tradition need convey no alarm to the minds of those who will view it in the light in which it has been here attempted to set it forth, or to those who assign to it no further authority than that which is here contended for. If there are difficulties connected with its adoption; if it limits the exercise of our private judgment on the words of Scripture; if it reduces us to the alternative of adopting the decisions of those who have gone before, *or* of forming a judgment for ourselves only at the cost of much labour and research into History and Antiquity; it is at least only in accordance with the divine provisions respecting us in matters of equal importance. For it is in like manner only that we can be satisfied of the evidences of our faith, nay, even those furnished by the Christian miracles: it is thus only that we can be satisfied of the credibility as well as genuineness of the Scriptures themselves.

Does it follow then that every one who would inform himself on the Christian verities, must necessarily go through the laborious process of investigating History and Antiquity, and of making those researches for which the longest life would scarce suffice, even were there no other demands on his time and thoughts? By no means. It must be remembered that the argument here is not with members of our own communion, (except accidentally,) who both believe in the doctrines, and are satisfied with the proofs of them in Holy Scripture; but with those who take upon themselves to question our faith as embodied in the Liturgy and Articles. Such as these we are compelled to refer to the grounds of our faith. The Church gives all these verities at once into the hands of her children; places before them the whole body of Christian doctrine; offers a guarantee for the truth of it, and requires their assent to it. The disciple has but to prove and hold fast what he has thus learned; for which purpose, after having taught him, the Church places the Scriptures in

his hands, by reading which, under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, he may “know “the certainty of the things in which he “has been instructed ;” and for this, Scripture will, to the humble inquirer after truth, suffice. But those who desire to investigate by reading the course of primitive and Catholic tradition, and have time and ability for the task, are not forbidden, but are encouraged to the undertaking. Only it behoves such to take heed to the motives which lead them to it ; whether it be in the humble, teachable spirit of inquiry, which earnestly hopes that the truths which the Church has taught them may be further proved and confirmed to their minds ; or in the presumptuous self-sufficient spirit of human pride, which delights in novelty, and in questioning the collective wisdom of former days : whether it be in the hope to find things true, or the desire to find them false. Nor would the opposite result, to which the latter of these two courses might possibly lead, furnish any argument against the efficiency of the Church’s principle for the attainment of truth when used

aright : it is that to which the investigation of *all* moral truth, and the actions of *all* moral agents must necessarily be liable. But for any other course for the attainment of truth in regard to the Christian doctrines, we have no warrant either in God's word or in reason. If any one is disposed, in the popular language of the day, to judge for himself, and to exercise an *unfettered* opinion on things sacred, (to say *unbiassed* opinion would involve a contradiction in morals and on moral subjects,) let him at least be so far consistent and honest, as to judge by those means which are appointed for the purpose, and through which alone the subject itself professes, through the medium of Holy Scripture, that the truth will be attained : it is to her children only that wisdom can with reason be expected to justify herself. Let him refer to the primitive faith and practice ; let him search the records of antiquity ; let him trace back the truth to the fountain head, or to that point where it may be expected to be found most pure and unadulterated. And this let him do in an humble

spirit—one that is not easily fatigued or frightened at the task before it. Let him bear in mind what he has undertaken, which is no less than to reconsider the decrees of former councils, to reopen questions long since set at rest, to appeal from the collective testimony of the Church for eighteen centuries. A project bold as this, an undertaking of this magnitude, ought to shrink from no labour, should be deterred by no difficulties. Let him use every collateral aid within his reach. Then let him refer to the test of the written word, whatever, in the course of the investigation, he may meet with. Above all, let him ever invoke the especial guidance of the Spirit of truth, by whom the holy penmen were themselves “guided into all truth,” and without whom all our labour and reading were in vain. And it may so be, that when he has done all this, he may, by God’s mercy, learn the first step towards divine knowledge, of which perhaps he was before ignorant—he may learn *humility*. He may learn that the Church has been indeed a faithful witness and guardian of the truth.

He may discover that the faith which has been sealed by the blood of martyrs, is indeed "the faith once delivered to the saints." He may learn perhaps not too late, that it is not only in respect of purity of heart and life, but of childlike simplicity and humility, in the willingness to be taught, in filial submission and dependance on those whom God had appointed his spiritual pastors, that it has been said, "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein."

## LECTURE V.

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ARGUMENT IN FAVOUR OF A BIAS OR PREJUDICE  
DRAWN FROM ANALOGY, AND ITS ADAPTA-  
TION TO OUR MORAL NATURE.

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LUKE XVIII. 17.

*Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God  
as a little child, he shall not enter therein.*

**I**F the view be correct which has been taken in the two preceding Lectures, of the scriptural intimations respecting the relation in which the doctrines and ordinances of the Christian Church stand to the text of Holy Scripture; and if it be true that the New Testament presupposes, on the part of the reader, a knowledge of the main doctrines of which it speaks, and of the main articles of the Christian faith; the necessity of previous teaching before

coming to the perusal of the sacred volume, would seem to be at once admitted. And it would follow, as a necessary consequence, that before reading it ourselves, or putting it into the hands of those whose religious education we were conducting, we should endeavour to acquaint ourselves, or them, what those doctrines and articles of faith consist in, to the best of our belief, or according to the best means we can resort to for the purpose of ascertaining: we should otherwise be placing ourselves, or them, in the situation of the Ethiopian mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles; and with him should wish that some one had informed us before, or were at hand to inform us now, on the several points to which the Scripture refers; and should be driven to confess with him, “How can I understand, “except some man should guide me?”

Whether we have possessed ourselves of this previous teaching in its pure and genuine form; whether that which we teach is that which the Apostles had themselves taught, before they penned their respective writings, is a separate question;

as is, likewise, the vindication of the mode in which we profess to have determined that question.

Moreover, from the moral character of the doctrines themselves, from their avowed influence on our hearts, dispositions, and characters, which would of itself presuppose and imply some moral preparation and fitness on the part of the recipient; from the fact that the very same passages give rise to such opposite interpretations and deductions, varying according to the several preconceptions of the various readers; it would follow, that we should not only give the *enunciation* of the doctrines,—not merely propound them to the *intellect*, but that we should also endeavour to prejudice the *will* of the disciple in their favour; that we should try to make him feel a personal interest in them, to lead him to *wish* those things *proved* to be true which we have placed before him. This would follow from the moral and practical character of the doctrines, and their personal relation to ourselves as moral agents; so that the bias or prejudice,

which is rendered necessary by the very circumstances under which the Scriptures were written and their relation to the Christian doctrines, would be further required by the character of the doctrines themselves.

That the Church adopts such a course of preliminary teaching; that she resorts to this bias or prejudice in reference to Holy Scripture, in the spiritual instruction of her children, it is unnecessary to state here; as also that the instruments she adopts for this purpose are mainly the Catechism, Creeds, Articles, and Liturgy, attended by all the jealous precautions taken to keep them from being altered in themselves or superseded by others; as well as the immediate and strenuous opposition offered to views or interpretations of Scripture of an opposite tendency, not merely those which might contradict her own views, but those even which have not received her sanction.

Now it is this feature in the Church's teaching and views of scriptural truth, which causes offence to a large class of

dissentients; to all those, in fact, who dissent from her on the lower side of the scale, if it may be so termed; that is, *not* on the side of catholicity. I do not say that their offence at the system causes their dissent: it is the consequence rather than the cause of it: it is the circumstance that they *have* adopted a creed opposed to that of the Church, as well as the grounds on which they are obliged to defend it, that not unnaturally engenders a feeling of a deeper and stronger character than would be accounted for by a mere difference of opinion, in a supposable case, between parties free to form their respective opinions, in pursuance of some principle held in common between them;—which principle, involving, as it would in this case, the right of forming their respective creeds from the text of Scripture alone, is not admitted on the part of the Church.

Their objections take a twofold direction.

I. Against the principle, as such, of biasing or prejudicing the mind in the pursuit of truth; and—

II. Against the particular instruction and form of faith by which the Church effects this.

The objections brought against these are to be replied to on different grounds. And in each, the grounds will vary according to the nature and origin of the objection alleged. In regard to the former of the two questions, that regarding the principle, it is objected that it is unscriptural—that it is erroneous as a principle in the abstract—that it is irrational and unphilosophical, unsuited to the nature and constitution of man; and this, for reasons which will be adverted to more fully presently. The assertion that it is unscriptural has been replied to in the two preceding Lectures.

Next, it is objected, that even were the principle admitted, yet that the particular instruction and bias adopted by the Church is unauthorized, and incapable of proof to the extent which would be required, so as to justify the Church on insisting upon it, in the way she does, to the necessary exclusion of other creeds—and this too on a sub-

ject which, from its very nature, would seem necessarily to admit of much variety of opinion—that the proofs alleged are unsatisfactory—nay, that the mode and principle of the proof are still more so;—that it is unreasonable and improbable that things, so important as these are affirmed to be, should be left to a mode of proof so inadequate and unsatisfactory as this obviously is.

Reserving to its proper place the fuller consideration of these objections to the particular bias and instruction which the Church adopts, I would merely observe, in alluding to the subject at this stage, that for this authority and proof we must of course refer chiefly to the authority of the Church, to traditional and historical testimony, which, in all matters relating to the genuineness of Scripture or Christian doctrines, must be very much dependent on the evidence which the Church itself affords; and which, from its very nature, implies that it is moral, and therefore, in one sense, defective testimony. But that such evidence is not inappropriate to a subject of this nature, will be shewn in its

proper place; as also its conformity to general analogy, its adaptation to our moral constitution, and its suitableness to a state of probation. Let us now proceed with the first branch of the subject, the objections brought against the principle, as such.

The objections commonly alleged against the Church's principle of biassing the mind, and of demanding from the disciple an assent to her doctrines before putting the Scriptures into his hands, are chiefly these:—that it is irrational and unphilosophical—unsuited to man's nature—placing undue and unwarrantable restrictions on his mind;—that it is unfavourable to the spirit of free inquiry, and hostile to the progressive character of Christian knowledge. It is urged, moreover, that it involves the fallacy of reasoning in a circle—defending the practice on the ground of our own convictions, yet unable to give any other account of our convictions but the fact that they were formed by a similar process:—that the Church defends indeed her principles, as well as her doctrines, by appealing to Scripture; but assumes to her-

self the office of interpreter of Scripture. Of these objections to the principle, that founded on its opposition to the progressive character of Christian knowledge has been already replied to by what has been said above<sup>a</sup>, on the relation of the Christian doctrines to Holy Scripture.

In a lax age, like the present, especially when we consider the popular dread (of which it is not my intention here to speak disrespectfully) of Popery, and of every thing, whether true or not, connected with it, it is not difficult to conceive that some portions of primitive apostolic truth, though of course not of first importance, may have been partially lost; which, by a diligent search into the records of the Church, we might by God's grace be enabled, if not to recover, at least to confirm. But that Christian truth, as such, in things essential to salvation, is progressive, beyond the point at which the Apostles left it, is a principle which cannot be for one moment entertained, but on the supposition, from which our feelings recoil, that the Holy Spirit had failed of guiding the Apostles, according to the

<sup>a</sup> Lectures III. IV.

promise, into *all* truth; or that the whole counsel of God, which the Apostle spoke of having declared to the Ephesian Church, regarded in them, in respect of their relation to God and their means of salvation, a state different to that which the supposed progressive character of Christian truth would seem to imply in those who have lived since.

The other objections to the principle are to be replied to in different ways, having reference to the grounds of the several objections respectively. We might here reply first elenctically, shewing that whatever is alleged against the Church principle on account of its biassing or prejudicing the mind, is no more than might be urged against the principle pursued on all moral subjects, and in all moral instruction: and, in strict justice, our opponents could have no reason for complaint, if we were content to rest our defence upon this elenctic argument alone.

We may, however, without stepping out of the science of morals, or advancing any thing which would not be sanctioned by it,

go on to the demonstrative argument, and affirm, that the principle in question, so far from being unphilosophical, or calculated to fetter the human mind and impede the progress of truth, is perfectly in accordance with that philosophy whose province it is to treat of man's moral nature; (to which branch it must in common sense and fairness be referred;) and that it is not otherwise than might have been expected antecedently, on the assumption that it would be analogous to other systems of instruction on moral subjects, or that the Gospel, itself a great moral truth, and addressing itself to the several parts of our moral nature, would be taught and conveyed by instruments adapted to the moral constitution of the recipient.

It should not be forgotten, that the object of the system is not investigation and inquiry, but instruction—not to *discover* truth, but to *teach* it. The confusion of these objects is one great cause of the fallacy which leads men to object to the Church's principle. There must be, of course, in evangelical, as well as in other

truth, both the liberty and the means of investigation and inquiry, even to tracing things back to their first principles; but then in evangelical, as in other truth, this must be pursued by the method which the subject itself, and the revealed will of its divine author, point out as the legitimate one.

Viewing the system objected to, however, as one of instruction rather than investigation and inquiry, we might, before proceeding to shew its analogy and fitness, call on our opponents to adduce any case of moral (as distinguished from demonstrative) truth, where the same principle is *not* adopted in teaching it, and in the formation of opinions and character under it—where the mind of the disciple is *not* first biassed or prejudiced in favour of it, before the proofs and illustrations are brought before him; and where at least a temporary and conditional assent to the opinions and belief of the teacher is not both demanded and given, on the sole authority of the latter, as being presumed to be rightly informed; or if there is any thing reciprocal in the agreement, it is the promise, on the part of the teacher, that

after a given time, the assent of the disciple will be demanded on no other ground than his own personal convictions. And, allowing for exceptions, to which even the laws of nature are liable, and which, in the case of moral truth, can generally be traced to some violation of the conditions by which it is perceived, it will be found that the convictions of persons thus taught and trained, proceed with a degree of uniformity and agreement, indicating the existence of some general law, for which the uniformity in the system of instruction is by no means sufficient to account.

In demonstrative and physical truth it is otherwise. There is here no previous submission of the judgment to the teacher, on moral considerations; no assent to his authority independently of proof, or beyond the willingness to try his experiments or refer to his facts and demonstrations. The intellect is satisfied on one point before it proceeds to the next stage of proof. There is no personal relation implied. The standard of truth is determined already, being purely *objective*, and rendered *sub-*

*jective afterwards*, by means of the intellect alone.

The instant, however, we touch on moral truth,—not only that which is exclusively so, but the instant the subject becomes not purely intellectual and abstract,—from that moment a different course becomes requisite for the perception of it; we then assign to the disciple, not the faculty to judge of truth, but merely the *capacity to form that faculty* under a given course of instruction. And although the standard in subjects of this kind is as satisfactory as in physics, though, unlike physics, existing in the decisions and minds of men, rather than capable of actual demonstration, yet we never, if we can avoid it, leave the learner to find out the truth for himself, nor take for granted that he possesses the power of perceiving it without the previous formation of habits. This is the case with all moral truth, pure or mixed—all which is not the subject of mere demonstration: we assume that the disciple possesses the innate seed of the faculty, which, however, does not grow into the faculty itself of perceiving truth,

except it be trained to do so, and formed into a habit. Consequently, being ourselves convinced, *as we believe*, of the truth, we scruple not to do what seems at first sight perfectly inimical to the very principle of investigation and free inquiry; we begin by telling him that such and such a course *is* truth, requiring him to receive this solely on our assertion; we then train him to think so, by placing before him every thing which may tend to confirm our assertion, and keeping from him whatever might lead to the risk of his thinking otherwise. And if any thing should happen to be brought in his way, calculated to warp or retard the growth of his judgment, we interfere to remove it, with an arbitrariness of decision and authority which will not for an instant admit the supposition of interference with our system.

Our defence of this apparently arbitrary proceeding, is our own conviction that we are ourselves right, confirmed by an appeal to the opinions and practices of others; and the certainty, that as soon as his judgment is matured and his opinions formed, our

disciple will adopt the same standard of truth.

It will be at once seen, that there is in this course an apparent fallacy—an apparent practical reasoning in a circle: we form the judgments of others in this decisive way, on the strength of our own convictions—and our own convictions would seem to have been the result, in a great measure, of a similar process exercised towards ourselves: so that, to an indifferent spectator, there does not appear at first any external standard, independent of our perceptions, to indicate any legitimate process of reasoning, proceeding from a fixed or definite principle. At present, however, I am only describing the practice, as generally adopted, and the impression it would naturally convey to one not concerned in it. Now this practice, this apparent reasoning in a circle, exists of necessity in the instruction pursued on all moral subjects—on all subjects, in fact, which are not purely intellectual and demonstrative. This will be seen at once in the highest and purest moral science, that which treats of the moral

nature of man, which may be regarded as a purely moral subject—all, in fact, which is comprehended in the term “Moral Philosophy.” It will also be seen in the lower and more mixed subjects, say, e. g., that of taste, which may be regarded in a great degree as an intellectual faculty, but which partakes in a degree of a moral character, and by virtue of that, is brought within the operation of the principle of prejudice and bias, just described as applying arbitrarily to all questions of a moral character in their respective degrees.

In moral philosophy, let us take the two first great principles in morals :

I. That relating to the developement and strengthening of the moral sense.

II. That the identity of our duty with our happiness and best interest, is only perceived by making the former our primary object—the latter being perceptible to those only who have so done — or if perceived before, it being only through faith in the means which lead to it—thus still leaving duty the primary object.

Now in developing the moral sense, and

in establishing a standard of right in the mind of the disciple, we learn from the science of Morals, that he possesses naturally not the full moral perception, but the capacity, under a certain course, to attain it—the germ in fact :—that this is liable to go wrong, and that it will go wrong if left to itself ; and that it therefore requires the earliest possible care and attention, to be arrested as soon as reason itself dawns, if not earlier, before it shall be overrun or destroyed by the growth of evil passions :—that for this purpose there is required in morals an unconditional submission of the will as well as the actions to some external authority, under which it is to be placed in a course of training :—that a young person, who has not gone through this course nor brought his passions under control, is not competent to form a judgment on morals ; that those only are competent to this, who have been brought up carefully under the guidance and authority of others in the way just described :—that this system of acting and thinking on the authority of others, is not designed to continue for ever ; but that,

in process of time, the sense will be fully developed, and the faculty strengthened, by which he will be able to judge for himself; so that, though trained in this way, and not allowed, for a time, to think for himself, (and if, either spontaneously or at the suggestion of others, he should think differently from *our* standard, we have no scruple in checking it by all the means in our power,) yet afterwards, in pursuance of the same principle of moral probation, he is compelled to think and act for himself, on his own responsibility. For it is part of the same principle of moral probation, which makes it necessary for him to trust *at first* to our older judgment, in opposition to his own passions and natural pride; and *afterwards* to be thrown on his own responsibility, at the period when he would naturally wish to be guided in matters of practical difficulty by the authority or example of others, and to shift the responsibility on them.

To one thus trained, the process is this: He believes a certain course of action to be right. For the truth of it he appeals to

his own convictions and those of others, as that on which no doubt exists; and this, not as a mere question of feeling or impulse, but as some acknowledged truth, having the force of a first principle, containing its reason within itself, the very mention of which seems to imply its claims to universal recognition. Those by whom he was thus trained would seem to have derived their principles from the same process, from having been brought up in the same way by persons entertaining similar principles, who, in their turn, derived theirs in a similar way: so that there appears at first to be a complete reasoning in a circle; each person training those under him on the strength of his own convictions, and himself possessing those convictions because he has been trained to think in this way.

How this seeming fallacy is explained will be shewn hereafter. Let us now observe the practice as a matter of fact, as a first principle in morals; merely noticing, at this stage that although there is this apparent fallacy, and although the system would seem open

to the objection that each might, by thus early prejudicing the mind, create a separate standard for himself, yet, as a matter of fact, such is not the case; that the standard of right, thus established and thus taught, is sufficiently uniform throughout the world to indicate its dependance on some general law; for the exceptions to it, which doubtless exist, furnish no argument against it, any more than the physical peculiarities of individuals or tribes would invalidate the general laws applicable to the species as a whole—and still less so, inasmuch as they can in most cases be accounted for on the very principle here contended for. It should be observed, moreover, that although the convictions and impressions of each individual might seem attributable to the particular system under which he has been trained, yet no one in practice ever thinks of referring them to this cause, but to some external standard, which both himself and others appear as little disposed to question as the laws which govern the natural world.

Here again is the same apparent reason-

ing in a circle in another shape: The standard is true, because all mankind (subject to the exceptions alluded to) agree in thinking so; and they all think thus, because they are brought up to think so.

Let us now take another case, lower down in the scale of morals, one of a mixed character, where, though much depends on the intellectual perceptions, yet the subject does not admit of demonstration nor of being reduced to rule; but a certain portion of moral perception is also implied; viz. that of *taste*—which appears to stand upon the confines of the moral and intellectual parts of our nature, and which, from not being purely intellectual, would fall partly within the province of morals, and become subject, in a proportionate degree, to its laws and provisions.

To take one branch of this by way of example. If we wish to form the taste of a young person in regard to works of art—say, e. g., sculpture or painting—and to enable him to acquire the faculty of judging for himself in these matters; what is the course we pursue?

Assuming his utter incapacity to judge for himself, we should direct his attention to what *we* conceive to be the best specimens of the art, and most conformable to what we believe to be its rules ; at the same time giving such theoretic instruction as the subject admitted, or the pupil was capable of receiving. But we should never for an instant assume that he possessed naturally the power of judging for himself, nor any thing beyond the *capacity* to form such a power of judging, under the course of instruction which we thought proper to give. We should assume that he possessed this capacity, analogous to the germ of the moral sense in Pure Morals ; but that the faculty itself requires to be developed and strengthened, as in morals, by continued exercise under the guidance and authority of others ; and that at a certain point, to be determined by age, natural capacity, application, and other circumstances, the faculty will be sufficiently formed to enable him to judge for himself. During this process, however, we require a complete surrender of his judgment to ours ; and hesitate not,

in the most arbitrary and determined manner, to remove out of his way every thing, whether in the form of rules, specimens, or associates, which may tend, in *our estimation*, to vitiate the judgment, or prevent the formation of what we believe to be a pure taste. This sounds arbitrary and exclusive enough, and utterly subversive of all freedom of thought. Yet such is the practice; and it must be remembered that the object of it is not to *discover* truth, but to *teach* it; it is assumed to be known and admitted on the part of the instructor. But we ourselves had our tastes formed by the same process, being brought up to think in this way. And yet we feel that we think so at this time, not simply because we were trained to do so, but because we possess an internal sense which declares to us, as clearly as our outward vision, that our judgments are based on truth, as such; that they have reference to laws as real as those which govern the natural world, though perhaps incapable of demonstration, or of being reduced to abstract rules; but which, at the same time, no demonstration of a

contrary nature could overturn ; and to the truth of which, testimony is borne by the concurrent decisions of those whom the universal voice of mankind has pronounced to be the most fit judges on this subject.

For thus it is that here, as in *Morals*, we get out of the apparent reasoning in a circle ; viz. by falling back on the uniformity of the standard thus established, which is referred, in the mind of each, to principles which he feels to be true and strictly philosophical, though perhaps not admitting of demonstration nor of being reduced to abstract rules ; confirmed moreover by the universal testimony and practice of mankind. For there is here, as in *Morals*, the same apparent reasoning in a circle, as is obvious on the most cursory view. If, for example, any one, after expressing his opinion on any work of art, were to be asked on what his judgment was founded, he would refer us to the rules of taste. If asked by what standard he formed his taste, his reply would be, that it was by studying the best masters, and making himself acquainted with the best productions.

If asked how he knew that the masters or productions referred to were the best, he would (unless he at once broke through the circle by referring to the general opinion of mankind) reply, that he had been *told so* by those who were *deemed* (which is another outlet from the circle in the same direction) the best judges. If asked again how these formed their judgment, the reply would again be, that it was by studying the best specimens and productions: thus reasoning apparently from the work to the rule; from the rule to the particular judgment; and from the judgment back again to the work; going round again and again in the same circle, in a way which in demonstrative science would be most illogical and absurd, and which doubtless appears so to those who would apply the rules of demonstrative science to moral subjects; but which in such subjects is neither illogical nor absurd, because in morals we step out of that circle on to a principle which, if it cannot be established by demonstration, neither can it be overturned by it; which, though it seem to rest on no surer ground than the testimony

of human feeling, is sufficiently uniform in its operation and results, to indicate design on the part of the divine Author of our nature; and which, if it be less demonstrable than the laws which he has given to the natural world, is at least better adapted to a state of probation, with which mechanical laws of demonstration would be utterly at variance, and quite in accordance with that fundamental feature of his dealings with us as moral and responsible agents, by which both our moral perception and our moral standard are made to depend on the obedience to the moral sense and the fulfilment of our moral relations, in which humility of character, and the willingness to learn according to his appointments, form an essential feature.

As an additional corroboration of the reasonableness of surrendering the judgment and submitting to the guidance of others, though such a course be opposed to our *immediate* opinions and wishes, we may appeal to the experience of almost every one, when, on looking back in after-life to the restrictions laid both on our actions and

opinions when young, we see that the advantage, still less the necessity of such restrictions, *could* not, by any explanation, have been made intelligible to us at that period ; and yet that now we are convinced, not only of their necessity, but that the opinions and tone of thought which they were designed to establish within us, are unquestionably true ; and this, not merely by the judgment of our own habits and feelings, but with reference to a standard obviously external to ourselves, but the perception of which we feel to be mainly, if not exclusively, owing to the course of training and discipline which we have gone through.

A supposed case should be alluded to here, on account of the application, to be made presently in the way of analogy, to a supposed case in regard to Christian doctrines. It will be admitted in regard to taste and works of art, that although incapable of being reduced to any very definite or abstract rules, yet there does exist a standard, external to and independent of the perceptions of the individual, sufficiently uniform

throughout the world, to indicate its dependance on some fixed principles or general law.

Now let us suppose for a moment that this knowledge was entirely lost;—that every individual possessing it was removed from the world, without having the opportunity of communicating it previously;—but that the works and specimens themselves remain, and that mankind were commanded, under a most severe penalty, to recover this knowledge. Let it be conceded that it is *possible* to recover this knowledge—to re-establish the standard. By what a long and tedious process must this be effected—at what a cost of time and labour—what a long and careful process of induction on the part of individuals—what an equally long and careful process of comparison of the judgments, first of those individuals one with another, in the same nation; next, of what might appear the collective judgment of each nation, one with another; and then of one age with another; before any thing like a determinate standard could be established. And

when at length the standard had been thus regained, it cannot, I think, be questioned, that, knowing how much was at stake, the experience of the difficulties encountered in its recovery, added to the conviction that it was the true standard, would lead to the establishment, by universal consent, of the principle, even now virtually established and generally adopted in practice,—that hereafter the study of such subjects should be preceded, first by the communication of such general principles as were capable of being reduced to rule; and next by a selection, made by those supposed to be competent judges, of such specimens and productions as were deemed the best; the disciple being assumed to possess nothing but the willingness to be thus instructed, and the germ of a faculty within him, capable, under a course of instruction like this, of being at length matured into the power of judging in like manner for himself.

Before applying the case here supposed, by way of parallel to a similar one in regard to the Christian doctrines, it may

be observed, that what has been above shewn to exist respecting both the principles and practice of mankind in morals and in taste, at least serves to shew that a prejudice or bias in conveying truth, or in forming the capacity to judge of it, is not the unreasonable thing which some would represent it to be, being neither unsuited to the nature of men, nor contrary to their practice. And here some might be content to leave it, being satisfied with having shewn that the principle, however loudly it may be condemned, is at least no more than is sanctioned by the universal practice of mankind, where opinions are to be formed and truth conveyed, on subjects not purely intellectual and demonstrative. The argument will, however, admit of being carried much further. We might fairly throw on our opponents the onus of shewing why a principle, observed in every other case of moral truth and moral instruction, should find its only exception in the greatest of all moral subjects. The popular fallacies on the subject arise, in fact, from overlooking the circumstance that

faith is a moral, not an intellectual question, concerned with moral evidence; and that its absence or defect is connected with moral causes. The practice described above, as universally observed in morals and in taste, as well as the principle to which it is referred for its defence, is, merely changing the terms, precisely that which, whether principle or practice, the Church has always maintained in conveying that truth of which she is the appointed teacher. So that even if the principle were not as scriptural as it is,—even if it did not necessarily follow from what the Scripture relates of the instruments and the mode of teaching the Christian verities, it would at least come recommended to us by the clearest analogy, and by such presumptive grounds of its adaptation to our nature, as would be furnished by the universal practice of mankind.

If any further argument in its favour were needed, it might be found in the practice of all those who profess to object to it as a principle, yet are practically unable to act in opposition to it.

They object to the Church's principle of instruction by means of Creeds and Catechisms and Formularies, generally on the ground that they prejudice the mind and prevent it from forming an unbiassed and unfettered judgment; denouncing as arbitrary and subversive of truth, any attempt to control the judgment or influence the will. This they object to; and as a juster course, and one better calculated for the attainment of truth, they prefer that each should read for himself, and make his own deductions from the sacred text. Yet what is their practice, when they have thus deduced their form of belief from the Bible, and that alone? They immediately proceed to teach it on the Church's principle: they thoroughly imbue the minds of their disciples and children with it, before giving them the Scripture; and having done this, they, like the Church, place the Bible in their hands, that they may know the certainty of those things in which they have been (would that we could say truly) instructed. The *deduction* is but for one generation at the utmost; thenceforward it

becomes a *tradition*<sup>a</sup>. Its origin is heretical; the means of its perpetuation, catholic. It is notorious that none are so rigid, so tyrannical, if we may use the expression, in their observance of the catholic principle in their instruction, in thoroughly prepossessing the minds of their disciples with their views before giving them the Holy Scriptures, as sectarians generally, especially those furthest removed from the Church catholic, as Socinians,—none so jealously vigilant lest the disciple, when he does peruse the Scripture, should exercise a free judgment, and question the views with which he had been imbued—none so intolerant, so vehement in their denunciations of hopeless error, if he should deem he found in Holy Scripture the certainty of other things, than those in which he had been instructed: so truly in this, as in other things, do the enemies of truth bear their unconscious testimony to it; and jus-

<sup>a</sup> What do Heretics and Sectarians, who profess to object to the use of Creeds, &c. mean when they speak of persons being educated in the *tenets*, e. g., of the Unitarian, or any other persuasion?

tify wisdom of her children, even by the testimony of them that hate her.

With this strong corroborative testimony, unwittingly furnished by the practice of the avowed opponents of the Church's professed principle and practice, we can hardly doubt what would be the probable, if not certain, course pursued in the supposed event— analogous to that supposed above in the case of morals or of works of art and taste— of the Christian doctrines being lost or forgotten; or if, which is expressing the same hypothesis in a different shape, the Christian Scriptures were suddenly introduced into a nation who had never before heard of them, nor were in possession, either before or given with the Scripture, of any knowledge whatever of the doctrines but such as could be gathered from the Scriptures themselves; so as to place the Church in circumstances analogous to those supposed above in regard to morals and taste.

It is not conceded that any such case has ever yet occurred, whatever may be contended to the contrary. Those who, in Christian lands, after having lived as in-

fidels, are recorded to have searched the Scriptures for themselves, and to have been brought to a knowledge of the truth, with no guidance but that of Scripture itself, and the assistance of the Holy Spirit sought in prayer,—these furnish no evidence on the point in question, because they have, by the terms of the supposition, previously lived among Christians; and therefore, not only must they be presumed to have had a degree of elementary knowledge, unless it can be specifically shewn to the contrary; but, as was observed in a former Lecture, a certain portion of knowledge is necessarily implied in the very notion of rejection and disbelief. Besides, it is not proved whether such persons ultimately possessed, after all, the doctrine of the Apostles, or merely that vague indefinite faith, which, in popular language, is denominated a belief in Christianity,—a faith to which the lowest grade of Socinianism lays claim <sup>b</sup>.

<sup>b</sup> In a notice of the death of a distinguished Asiatic in this country, not long since, it was stated that he had, since his arrival in England, renounced Paganism and embraced Christianity: that it was not known, however,

Nor, again, is any thing proved respecting the question, by the stated results of the circulation of the Scriptures alone among heathen people in our day; because it is well known that assistance of some kind, either from books or teachers, precedes, accompanies, or follows it. Neither in this case is sufficient known of the actual state of belief among such people, to say what portion of the Christian verities they are acquainted with, or of what they are ignorant.

If, however, we suppose a case, (and at present it can only rest upon hypothesis,) in which the Christian Scriptures could be suddenly introduced among a people till then in perfect ignorance both of them and of the doctrines they contain, accompanied by nothing, in the way of external instruction, which could convey any idea of their object and meaning; and if the people in question were told that they were to deduce a system of faith from the book, and

whether he had embraced any particular form (!) of Christianity; but that he was generally supposed to have adopted the Unitarian persuasion (!)

that their eternal interests were concerned in their deducing a right one, what do we suppose would be the result?

Without citing at full length, step by step, the several points of analogy to the case of morals and art supposed above, we may reasonably assume, that in their search after the meaning of that book, in making their several deductions, they would arrive in succession at the several persuasions and heresies to which men have arrived and daily do arrive, who read Scripture in this way and on this principle. This would be one necessary result. Whether they would arrive at that form of faith which the Church both receives and teaches as the Apostles' doctrine, yet for the proof of every article of which she refers to the same Scriptures, is a question which we cannot take upon ourselves to determine, on the authority of the experience of any age or country; nor, as has been observed before, on any authority of Holy Scripture itself. But this at least we may take upon ourselves to affirm: that if by any means they did succeed in deducing this pure form

of faith ; having now gone the whole cycle of truth and error,—having determined among themselves which was the best interpretation of Scripture, the best form of faith, and the system best adapted to promote the moral and spiritual welfare of mankind ; and having seen how materially the adoption of this or of any other system depended on the mind of the disciple being previously imbued with it and prejudiced in its favour,—since all were, in the judgment of their respective advocates, equally capable of proof from the Scriptures ; they would, whenever they were interested for the welfare of others, and had the power to reduce their interest to practice, take every precaution, before putting the Scriptures into the hands of their disciples, to prepossess and bias their minds in favour of those views of doctrine which they desired them to find in Scripture ; using for this purpose Creeds, or Catechisms, or such methods of preliminary instruction, written or unwritten, as they should deem best calculated to effect this object.

Surely then it must be admitted, that,

even were we not assured of the divine origin of the Church's principle, it comes recommended to us from its adaptation to our nature, and has incalculable claims on our veneration and gratitude from the provision it makes for our wants, the protection it affords us as a preservative from error, a protection against some of our worst enemies—ourselves, and our own corrupt hearts.

What if the form of sound words which we now hold, is not, down to its minute details and expressions, that of which the Apostles spoke as coeval with, nay antecedent to Scripture itself; but that portions of it, as doubtless is the case with some, are the result of later days, as the assaults of enemies from without compelled the Church to throw up, from time to time, those bulwarks of the faith committed to her keeping? What if the simpler forms of elder days are now succeeded by the jealously guarded definitions of the Athanasian Creed, when they who would steal the Lord's body from his people, have compelled the Church to guard his sacred form with holy jealousy, less needed in apostolic days, when

he walked more openly among them, and no man sought to lay hands upon him? What if, in later times, the corruptions of one branch of the Church, have caused the erection on that side, of those outwarks which are formed by the defensive and controversial articles of our own branch?

Every creed, every article thus formed, is an historical record of the errors and heresies of former ages. They are the marks which warn us of the shoals and quicksands on which others have aforetime made shipwreck of their faith. If we were to take up the buoys and destroy the light houses around our coast, and bid the deluded mariner find out for himself the shoals and rocks which endanger his course, or discover in the darkness of night "the haven where he would be," we should be acting as reasonably as those who, to the learner in the doctrine of Christ, would abolish all creeds or formularies which the Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, has established to warn from error, or to guide into truth.

What if attacks are made upon them by

an evil generation? what if we are told that all creeds are alike, that it matters little which creed we take, provided we are sincere? These attacks, as well as the presumptuous efforts of others to explain or reject what God designed to be a mystery, are but the natural efforts of human pride to escape from the restraint of doctrines which are irksome, chiefly because they involve motives which the heart refuses to acknowledge. Let us not regard them as restraints and burdens, but as pillars of faith on which we lean in hours of temporary darkness and despondency. Remember they have been the support of saints in every age—that martyrs who have died in their defence, have been in turn supported by them in the hour of trial. That bosom of the Church, which to the believer is a home and protection against the storms which endanger his faith, though far from designed to protect him in indolent ease or to prevent him from pursuing his course through a world of trial, may, by the rationalist or freethinker, be deemed a restraint and a prison. He may, like a wilful headstrong

child, break from his parents' roof, rush into what he may call a more liberal system of faith, and exult awhile in his imaginary liberty. But in the wide ocean of error, in vain will he seek a resting-place. He may traverse the dark waters free and uncontrolled; but he will there find no rest for the sole of his foot. And happy will he be, if, before night closes upon him, the merciful interposition of Providence should again bring him within sight of the ark, and the hand of redeeming love should be again extended to take him to his rest.

# LECTURE VI.

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APPLICATION OF THE FOREGOING ARGUMENT TO  
INFANT BAPTISM, NATIONAL EDUCATION,  
AND  
SUBSCRIPTION TO THE ARTICLES OF RELIGION.

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MARK x. 15.

*Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God  
as a little child, he shall not enter therein.*

**F**ROM the view which was taken, in the preceding Lecture, of the adaptation of the Church's principle to Human Nature, in prejudicing the mind and will in favour of the Christian doctrines before giving the proofs of them as contained in Holy Scripture, and the strict conformity of the practice with that pursued in conveying knowledge on all subjects not purely abstract and intellectual,—there follow important results, relating to the application of the

same principle in other matters of faith or practice, which are also supported by the same argument drawn from the adaptation of the principle to our moral constitution.

Among the chief of these results, is the defence provided for the institution and practice of Infant Baptism. Before entering on this, however, it should be here repeated, that according to the principle deduced in a former Lecture for determining the divine origin of this or other appointments in the Church, founded on the authority given to the Apostles for these purposes, with the promise of a divine sanction to what they should thus appoint, together with the absence of direct statements in Scripture respecting the time and manner of their appointment ;—it would follow that, in order to ascertain what was the appointment or practice of the Apostles on these matters, we shall look not only to Scripture, but to those records out of Scripture which, being either contemporary with the Apostles, or near to their day, might be assumed to afford the fairest testimony of

their institution, and record of their practice. And if, finding these institutions spoken of both as then existing and as of divine appointment, from these we turn to Scripture, and there find those notices and allusions to them, which would be satisfactory evidences on the assumption that they were supposed to exist at that time, and to be well known to the writer of the sacred text as well as those to whom it was addressed,—we should, in strict conformity with the spirit of the Sixth Article of our Church, and the known principle of the Reformers on the subject of the Catholic Faith, be quite content to rest the Scriptural defence of the Institutions upon such notices and allusions, where, on the assumption that Scripture was the only *guide* as well as the sole standard of faith, we doubtless should not be warranted, on the Socinian or Sectarian principle, in resting such momentous matters on such indirect and apparently imperfect proofs. It is on proofs of this nature that we must rest our defence of the divine appointment of Infant Baptism, the Sacramental character of the Eu-

charist, the Observance of the Lord's Day, Public Worship, Episcopal Ordination and Apostolical Succession, and those spiritual functions and powers with which the Church maintains that the Apostolic Priesthood has been ever invested. Nor should it be forgotten, that it is on proofs of a similar character that we are often said to rest the more fundamental and vital articles of our faith—the Divinity of the Holy Spirit ; the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity ; and we might add, the whole body of the faith once delivered to the Saints.

Our object at present, however, is to point out the argument in favour of the institutions and practices drawn from their conformity to the principle, which we have shewn to exist in the Church's teaching, of adaptation to our moral nature.

In regard, then, to Infant Baptism : this Institution would not only follow from the principle in question, but its absence would be an omission for which it would be difficult to account. We have seen that, on moral subjects, our perceptions and opinions depend on an early bias, and an early

training for the purpose of retaining it; that we begin by arresting the passions, and by enlisting the feelings and the will, as early as possible; that the opinions and views, in favour of which we thus prepossess the mind, are those which we ourselves feel to be right,—the only limit being the extent of our own conviction of their truth; that when our convictions are decided, and we feel ourselves responsible for the opinions of those committed to us, we do not hesitate to use all the means in our power to form them aright, not only by persuasion, but even consider it a duty to use the power, where we possess it, if not to make them think as we would have them, at least to put those things before them which may tend to that effect, and to debar them from access to those of an opposite tendency. We have seen that we do this at the earliest possible opportunity, as soon as reason dawns, or the capacity to receive moral impressions develops itself; and that if we do not this at an earlier period, it is *only* because this capacity does not exist, nor is the will capable of being influenced by us:

(though even here we do endeavour to create associations in favour of or against things we respectively approve or condemn.) If then we thus do all we can to create a bias and to engage the will, the only limit being—in point of time, the assumed incapacity of the recipient—or in point of degree, any possible misgivings on our part as to the truth of our own convictions;—if this is the theory of the formation of moral habits and impressions, as evolved by the science of morals, confirmed moreover by the universal practice of mankind, as far as the condition of human nature and the circumstances of human relations will admit of its being reduced to practice; (and we know that the result is comparatively defective only from the weakness and corruption of nature, and the want on our part of some power sufficient to meet and control that;) surely it would follow from this, that if a system be proposed as coming from God, which, besides adopting the principle and method prescribed by morals for the formation of moral habits and character, professes moreover to be supported by a super-

natural power, unlimited in its extent, of influencing the will, correcting the passions, and forming the habits,—infusing, in fact, an entirely new and divine principle of action into the heart;—if we believe in its efficacy for this object, and if, before the knowledge of this, or in matters which even now do not fall within its operation, the only limit to the period of our influencing the will, was the want of *human* power to reach it,—the want of such a power being an acknowledged though an unavoidable defect in the system;—surely we should expect that the all-powerful divine influence would at least supply this defect; unless it could be shewn that such a provision would be unsuited to the state of probation in which we are here placed. It were unreasonable to suppose that, professing to supply our wants, it should stop in its operation at that precise point where human power had stopped merely *because* it was human; that it should not follow up the principle, and commence at a still earlier period. It would be unaccountable if there were *not* this provision. To say that it is incompre-

hensible or irrational, is no reply. The whole doctrine of Divine grace is incomprehensible, and to human means, impossible. But if it is promised at all; if its influence is adapted to our nature, supplying our wants where obedience to the moral law without it had felt and declared those wants; it would have been unaccountable, on any acknowledged principle of God's dealings with us, if it did not supply that of which reason felt the want, and for which she did not provide, only because she could not, nor dreamed that in the inexhaustible storehouses of Divine love, a way had been provided by which it might be supplied.

Nor is it necessary, for this, to enter on the question of the *degree* of grace, vouchsafed to the new-born soul of one brought to Christ in infancy, and washed in the laver of regeneration. It is enough that it be commensurate with the reason and the will. If the one be but a germ, a mere seed, as yet latent and undeveloped, the other is not more. If the one be not perceptible, neither is the other: though he

would be rash who would take upon himself to determine when moral responsibility commences, even to those who are not under grace; still more, to fix it at that point where the evidences of it are first discernible to the eyes of others. All that is here contended for is, that if the influence of the Blessed Spirit be, in its operations, adapted to the nature of man, and calculated to supply, as far as was compatible with a state of probation, the wants which reason had pointed out; we should expect that it would begin with, (if sought in time through the appointed means,) and be commensurate with, the moral powers;—that if designed to purify the heart, correct the passions, and regulate the will, it would not wait for that period to which the operation of human power would necessarily be limited. We should expect that it would be implanted early, from the beginning, as seed, perhaps the smallest of all seeds; dormant awhile and undeveloped, like the germ of the moral sense and moral faculties; yet taking the lead of them; able to keep that lead, if duly cultivated and

watered by the refreshing dews of God's grace, sought through his appointed means; springing up in the goodly heritage, thus mercifully reclaimed from the waste and wilderness of sin; increasing day by day, utterly abolishing the whole body of sin, and bringing forth fruit unto holiness.

This *à priori* argument in favour of Infant Baptism,—or rather Infant Regeneration, against which the objections are urged,—would seem to follow from the mere revelation, in conjunction with morals, of a divine influence capable of supplying the wants of human nature, and of effecting that which the science which treats of that nature had pointed out, as wanted to enable it to fulfil its proper end. If the moral truth be admitted, as it must, that in order to fulfil the end of our being, the passions are to be subdued, and the affections engaged in a given course, limited in the period of its commencement, only by the limit placed to human powers; and if it be admitted that a divine influence is given, able to effect that which reason had pointed out as necessary, rather than as within her reach, for controlling our nature

and directing it aright; it rests with the opponents of Infant Regeneration to shew why the limits which nature places to unassisted human powers, should be made to circumscribe the operation of a divine power; or how they reconcile their position with the principle which pervades the whole of God's dealings with his creatures under every dispensation, in making them first feel their wants and weakness while *without* his covenant, and then shewing how, to those *within* it, he can mercifully and abundantly supply them.

Another important result of this defence of the Church's principle is, the answer it furnishes to the fallacy of what is, in popular language, termed *religious liberty*, and of supposing that men either possess the power by nature, or have any authority in revelation, for choosing a religion for themselves; as well as to the daring and unchristian assertion, that religion is an affair resting entirely between the conscience of each individual and his God, with which no other authority has any right to interfere. It is a charge alleged against the Church

in every country, that she has claimed the authority to preside over public instruction and national education, and to prescribe the course and the principle on which it should be conducted, demanding that the children of the state should be brought up in her creed. Now that the Church *sanc-tions* such a principle as this, will not be denied; which however is not the same thing with claiming its adoption as a matter of right, or enforcing it by civil penalties. But if we inquire further, we shall find that the authority is claimed by the State rather than the Church—by churchmen in their capacity of statesmen and civil legislators, rather than as churchmen. We shall find that the principle on which it is founded, existed in morals and in nature, before its adoption by the Church or by revelation; and that it is resolved not only into the first principles of morals, but those which actuate the universal practice of mankind, from the highest duty which can devolve on moral agents, to the lowest instinctive impulse of humanity or of self-preservation.

We learn from the science of morals, nay even from a less accurate observation than is required for philosophic investigation, that if to moral agents we wish to convey moral impressions, and to create moral habits, we must begin early; and that the degree of success which may attend our instructions, will depend mainly on the period at which we commence: that although, even then, the success is less than we could have wished or expected, it is at least more than we could attain by any other human means, and certainly an approach to that which we require. We learn too, from the same sources, that men, if left to themselves, will never attain to these habits; that they will never voluntarily subject themselves to the authority necessary to put them in a course of training, or to the discipline necessary to continue them in it and to form their character under it. Reason, philosophy, analogy, experience, every thing is against such a supposition. It is only by beginning in childhood that we can expect, on any acknowledged principles, that they can be

placed in a course of training and moral discipline, or derive, in any effectual degree, the formation of character and tone of mind to be produced under it. We might as readily expect that children would voluntarily find out and place themselves under the discipline, physical or moral, necessary for their present health or future welfare, as that men would voluntarily place themselves under those restraints, and that moral discipline, which is essentially necessary for the developement and strengthening of their moral and intellectual powers.

No one who pretends to the slightest knowledge of human nature will deny, that this is the case with men, considered merely as moral and responsible agents, apart from religious considerations, or the knowledge of motives and assistance derived from Revelation. If such was not the universal practice of ancient governments, it was at least their theory,—and a theory founded on deep and comprehensive views of human nature, and the science of man viewed in his moral and social relations. Such, too,

was the theory of whatever laid claim to the philosophy of man's nature; which was not reduced to practice, only from obstacles beyond the reach of control, and from the existence of spurious principles founded on the prejudices and ungoverned passions of mankind, which may at once be as far pronounced to have been unsuited to man's nature, morally and politically, that when measured by their consequences, spread over a sufficiently large surface of time, they are decided to have been intimately connected, in the relation of cause and effect, with the social degradation and moral deterioration of those who professed them.

Why a principle which formed so essential an ingredient in the moral and political philosophy of man, in its best days, when, in the absence of revelation, it must be regarded as an impartial description of human nature as it really is, — why this should be less advocated under the Gospel, which is so peculiarly adapted to man's nature, is a paradox not difficult to explain, but to which it would not be necessary to

advert at the present moment, further than to observe, that the rejection of it by many professing the Gospel, especially the reasons they allege for so doing when called upon to defend it, form the best testimony to the truth of the principle, and shew unconsciously what the adoption of it would be, under the Gospel, if truly and scripturally followed up.

It was observed, however, that the Church does sanction the adoption of this principle in civil government, as applied to the bringing up, by authority, the children of the state in her own creed, But then, as was also observed, the adoption of it originates with the state, the Church being only secondarily a party to it: the principle existed in our nature, and was recognised in the philosophy of government, long before it formed the ground of any connection between the Church and the civil power. And indeed, the principle itself being admitted, as it must on any acknowledged theory of human nature, unless it can be shewn that the Gospel is opposed to man's nature or calculated to defeat the end of

his being as a moral and responsible agent, the application of the principle to the Gospel, in the education of a nation, follows as a necessary consequence. Surely the common sense of duty, the common feelings of humanity—feelings strong as instinct could make them, which do not even wait for a process of reasoning to justify them to our minds,—these prescribe, that when we are interested, not to say responsible, for the welfare and happiness of others, we use, whatever power we possess, to promote them. Whether we have formed right views of what *will* conduce to their happiness and welfare, is a separate question: but such as our views are, if we have the *power* of carrying them into effect, on what principle should we hesitate to do so? If in morals a given habit of mind, or in religion a given form of faith, is in our estimation calculated, if not necessary, to promote these; and if we feel that we have the power of bringing them to it; in what relation can we suppose ourselves placed to them, which would relieve us of the duty of exercising that power? and

the more convinced we were of being ourselves right, the more sure we felt of success in endeavouring to conform their views to ours, the more determined and resolute should we be in our efforts to do so, however disagreeable at the time to them. We should do this, on the same principle that we should prevent a man from committing suicide, using even force if necessary; the only limit to the exercise of our power being, any defect in the conviction that we were ourselves right, and in the grounds we possessed for expecting success.

It will be seen that we are discussing the question, thus far, without reference to any particular form of faith, or any particular condition of mind; merely defending, as an abstract question, the duty of every state to educate its citizens in that particular mode, whether as regards religion or any other condition of mind or thought, which it is *itself* convinced is most likely to ensure their welfare and promote their best interests as moral and responsible agents; the only limitation being any

doubts they may have of the goodness of the mode, or of the success which may attend it. Now Revelation tells us, that in addition to the value of early impressions and early habits, a divine influence is capable of being implanted in the heart, to enable it to be born again, to be formed anew; and that provision is made for the cultivation and increase of this divine principle, so that it may grow with our growth, not only keeping pace with the growth of the evil passions it is designed to conquer, but maintaining the lead which was given to it at its commencement. It tells us how, to those who hold a certain faith, this divine principle is to be obtained—how increased—and likewise how it may be lost. Surely then, it must be admitted, on the commonest principles of reason, that one possessed of authority, whether an individual or many, who believed this, who was convinced that a particular form of faith was essential to the well being of those entrusted to him, would, on principles of humanity alone, use all the power he was possessed of, not indeed to force

conviction, as is unjustly charged against the Church, (that were irrational and unphilosophical, as well as unwarranted by any thing in God's word,) but to create conviction by early training, such as morals would prescribe, by exercising parental restraints, by removing, even by force, which he may here use if necessary, whatever is likely to injure what he conceives to be the best interests of those dependent on him, through vicious contamination, example, or other interference with the principles and general character, which he is desirous of forming within them. This he would do by the same right and duty as that by which he would prevent them from committing self-destruction. If force, to use the expression, is justifiable in the one case, (and where is the code of laws which would not recognise it?) why is it less so in the other? or rather, why not *more* justifiable, proportionately to the greater importance of the point at stake? The only limit to the exercise of this power would be that of his own convictions. If these are settled, if he is sure that these opinions

or belief are essential to the well being of his dependants; if he feels that the surest, at all events the most probable mode of establishing them, is by an early and exclusive course of training in them, and he has the power to enforce this; on what principles of reason or of common humanity would he be justified in hesitating to do so? If he doubts the truth of his own creed, the very fact of knowing that success can be ensured, under a divine promise, to the true faith, would lead him, if consistent, to find out, by every legitimate means, which was the true faith. This, even a wise heathen, legislating on principles derived from a knowledge of human nature, would prescribe for him; and if he delayed to enforce the authority he possessed, it would only be till this question had been determined. Any delay without such plea, were most unreasonable; and any delay founded on this plea, yet unaccompanied by the most active and careful inquiry for the purpose of removing it, would be a shameful betrayal of a sacred trust, for which the principles and practice of Heathenism, acting

by the light which had been vouchsafed to it, would rise in judgment against him. Let it be admitted, for argument's sake, that a question may fairly arise, whether the Church's Creed be the true one: then let him investigate the subject in the mode in which the subject itself professes to be capable of investigation, and determine which is the true creed. If those who object to the Church's creed, were to endeavour, with equal zeal, to substitute their own for it, they would at least be rational; but to be indifferent on the subject, or to remove the one without supplying its place, betrays a want of acquaintance with the nature and object of the Gospel, an ignorance of human nature, or a most culpable disregard of the claims of humanity. Nothing can be more unphilosophical, as well as unscriptural, than what is termed liberality in matters of faith. In moral subjects, no less than in demonstrative, of two contradictory propositions only one can be true at the same time. The truth may be more difficult to arrive at in morals and religion, than in physics, and therefore men

are more likely to dispute and differ respecting it. This we must expect; and did contending parties, retaining this obvious principle, join issue on the truth of their respective creeds, and contend for their exclusive adoption, they would be more difficult to reply to. The bigot, however erroneous his creed, has more of reason and philosophy on his side, than the (so called) liberal or the lukewarm. We can meet him on some common ground, and bring him to an issue; while the other proceeds on a principle disallowed alike by Morals and Revelation. Without fixing the limits to which charity may go in tolerating difference of belief, as soon as it is gravely maintained that of two opposite creeds both may be right, the proposition is too monstrous to be listened to. There may be rights of conscience, as they are termed, as well as rights of person; but there must also be admitted the right, where we possess the power, to save from ruin by the undue exercise of the one, as well as of the other.

But it will perhaps be said, that the protest against any interference in the forma-

tion of religious belief, is grounded, not on any assumed indifference to the claims of opposing creeds, but upon the difficulty of determining which, after all, is right: that since there is obviously, as daily experience shews, such great diversity of opinion acting on the same data, and no appointed authority to decide between the claims of each, it is a manifest injustice to assign the absolute precedence to any one, in such a way as to place a virtual prohibition on the exercise of the others: that this liberty may be contended for under the existing circumstances of the Christian world, without encroaching on the principle, otherwise admitted, of enforcing uniformity where the standard of truth is sufficiently determinate.

In reply to this, the Church claims the right to ask, whence and by what right exists this variety of opinion and belief? By what right is the principle assumed, the adoption of which leads to this contrariety of belief? For it will be at once admitted, that the variety in question arises from the fallacy, before spoken of, of supposing that

the Scriptures were given to us as that from which each individual or body was at liberty to *deduce* their own creed as they think best, without any external or collateral assistance: that the Scripture in fact is the *rule* and *guide*, as well as the *standard* of faith. The Church therefore asks, by what authority is this right assumed? For that it is not on the authority of Scripture itself, we have seen before; and the challenge may be here repeated to the deductionist, to produce any authority from Scripture itself, in favour of his principle of deducing his creed *from* the Scripture, instead of proving his creed, derived from some other source, *by* the Scripture.

The Church's principle, on the contrary, for determining the truth of Christian doctrine, viz., Antiquity and Catholic Tradition, in *conjunction with* Scripture—the one supplying its form, the other its proof—the one being the guide, the other the standard of faith,—was considered at some length in a former Lecture, together with the scriptural authority on which it rests. But, in reply to the otherwise formidable

objection to the attempt authoritatively to establish uniformity in a matter admitting of such contrariety of opinion, it must be here repeated, that it rests with our opponents to shew that, on the Church's principle of determining the rule of faith, any such contrariety of opinion would arise: and this principle, it will be remembered, was shewn to be perfectly scriptural, as well as philosophical, being founded mainly on the account which Scripture gives of itself and of its origin, and of its relation to the Christian verities. In this way the Church, while requiring uniformity, prescribes the mode by which it will be attained,—a mode too, not created by herself for the purpose of defending her practice, but one coeval with Christianity itself, completely confirmed by Scripture, and the testimony of those whose name and authority, though uninspired, the Church has ever held in highest reverence. If, therefore, the Church, while requiring uniformity of faith, provides a rule competent to effect this, and defends that rule against its opponents on the common ground of its scriptural origin, surely

it rests with the opponents to shew, either that it is unscriptural, or else, that though scriptural, it has in practice failed to produce a more uniform system of faith, than the direct appeal to Scripture alone without any intermediate or external guide: that persons adopting this rule, have arrived at a different faith from that which we hold. Till one of these two cases has been shewn to exist, viz., want of Scripture authority for the rule, or its failing to produce uniformity when fairly carried into practice; the objections to the principle of a compulsory education of the children of the state in the faith of the Church, founded on the assumed want of a sufficiently determinate rule of faith, are incapable of being sustained.

Now although the Church undoubtedly sanctions the practice here spoken of, yet the principle on which it is founded existed before, in the constitution of our nature, and is coeval with the creation of that nature.

Moreover it will be seen, that the practice, having reference to principles and

designed to meet wants which belong to man in every stage of his moral and social existence—wants which were acknowledged and attempted to be provided for by the adoption of the like principle, prior to the knowledge of the Christian Revelation,—it will be seen that the practice originates with the state rather than the Church, being rendered necessary to men in their civil and social, independently of their religious relations. A government founded on a proper knowledge of the moral nature of man, and of what is requisite to fit him for the end of his being, in his moral and political relations, would necessarily maintain the principle of educating its citizens in that tone of mind, and condition of thought, which it deemed best calculated to promote their true interests. And if it deemed that the principles and belief of the Church Catholic were best calculated for this end, it is difficult to say on what principle of consistency it could fail of adopting them; or with what plea of justice complaints could be brought against the Church itself, as assuming to itself a

secular authority, merely because the state, as an *independent* agent, holding itself responsible for the proper education of its children, and conceiving that the principles of the Church are such as it ought to prescribe for that object, uses its legitimate authority, not, as was observed before, to enforce conviction, but to provide that her people shall be trained in them, and to suppress, by the civil authority, whatever may have a tendency to cause them to offend and fall away from them. It is strange that men will overlook this obvious distinction in the functions of the Church and civil power respectively, in this connection, and cite, as an argument against the practice, our Lord's declaration, that "His kingdom was not of this world." This would be valid if the Church, *as the Church*, claimed the right of enforcing conformity to its faith and discipline by civil authority; but on what plea can it be urged as an argument to prevent the State, *as the State*, from educating those for whom she feels responsible, in that condition of mind and thought, by which she feels she can

best discharge to her own conscience that solemn obligation?

The Church itself rests on no human power for support: she relies on a divine agency—she trusts to a divine promise: she instructs in her faith and extends her covenanted blessings, by means and instruments appointed for the purpose by her Divine Founder; means consonant to reason herself, and which had previously received, as far as the tendency of unassisted reason could give it, the sanction of the best and wisest decisions of human philosophy. She claims no right to inflict punishment on men here, beyond that which, by the laws of nature, is inherent in every society,—the right to exclude from her communion, and whatever benefits may be connected with it, those who will not conform to her laws. If, from the circumstance of a civil power incorporating her principles with its own, the exclusion from her communion leads to an abridgment of what are termed civil rights; surely it were most unjust and unreasonable that this loss, which is purely *accidental* on the part of

the Church, should be charged on *her*, as though it were an essential part of *her* provisions. If the state should deem that some heretical creed were preferable, or more Scripturally true, and were to determine that her children should be educated in that creed, and that those only who profess it should be admitted to offices of trust and power, surely it were most unjust to charge on that creed, or the sect that professed it, the restraints or temporal disabilities to which men were made liable in a relation purely civil.

Doubtless the Church goes further than Sectarianism in sanctioning the principle; but it does so, because it is more in conformity with the principles which regulate human nature, to which men must, after all, revert in their theories of civil government, and from which, in Christian states, they are only frightened, paradoxical as it may seem, *because they are Christian*—because, if they act upon the principles most suited to human nature as such, those principles are so essentially those of the Church, that it is difficult to adopt the one

without the other;—and if the Sectarian spirit is possessed of sufficient secular power to prevent the principles of the Church from being acted upon in the State, the latter must, in abandoning them, abandon also those principles of legislation and government, which, putting revelation aside, would have been adopted, and were adopted, from the necessity of the case, as exhibited by the nature and actual condition of man, viewed in his moral and social relations.

Yet, surely, if the question is dispassionately considered, it will not be maintained, as it virtually is by those whose principles we are combating, that a statesman must betray his duty, *as a statesman, because* he happens also to be a churchman; or that a churchman is to renounce his principles as a churchman, *because* he happens also to be possessed of civil power. For example—if a statesman feels, as every wise one must, that it is his duty to train the children of the state in the best form of Christian faith, and to provide means for their continuance in it afterwards; is he, because

Christ's kingdom is not of this world, nor dependent on the arm of flesh, to neglect the duty incumbent on him, and the authority vested in him, in the parental relation of *civil* governor, to provide that those dependent on him shall be brought up in the fear and nurture of the Lord, and that no offence shall come to the little ones entrusted to him? What parent would act thus in regard to his own children? Why is the parental relation of the state less real, or its obligations less binding? why are the restraints and compulsions to be charged on the civil governor as a *Churchman*, which he exercises in his relation of *statesman*? Or, on the other hand, if a Churchman feels that he must, by the provisions of his faith, begin in infancy with those whom he would instruct in the faith of Christ, and that he cannot expect a blessing on his labours, unless he watch the seed which he has sown, and keep from it whatever, in the way of influence or example, may tend to injure it or impede its growth; if he acts thus in regard to his own children, and feels that, as civil go-

vernor, he possesses the power to act in the like manner towards the children of the state; is he, possessing this power, to disregard the claims of humanity, and to refuse to exercise it, on the principle that Christ's kingdom is not of this world? Will it be seriously and gravely maintained, even by the lowest Sectarianism, that our Lord's words can be applied to a case like this? that the authority to enforce a given course of education, is to be confounded with the attempt to force personal conviction when the habits and belief are already formed? or that the right to suppress expressions of opinion prejudicial to the eternal welfare of those for whom we are responsible, is to be confounded with the principle, which is not contended for, of punishing by human penalties, opinions, as opinions, without reference to their effect on the welfare of others when attempted to be propagated<sup>b</sup>? Because the Gospel, by the omnipotent

<sup>b</sup> The confusion of these two cases is as if a state were accused of punishing a man for his bodily infirmities, because it prevented him from spreading an infectious disease, or affixed civil penalties to those who should

power of grace, *can*, as it has done, triumph over all the evils which the craft or subtlety of the devil or man can work against it; is it therefore better that those evils should continue, and that no human power should be used to remove them? (which is virtually implied in the assertion, that the Gospel should receive no assistance from the civil power because in its divine strength it *can*, if needs be, do without it.)

Then might we on the same principle tolerate an infidel persecution, nor afford the Christian the protection of the law in the free exercise of his faith, because in the first ages (and we believe that the same result would ensue now under the like circumstances not of our own creation) the Christian faith increased in the midst of persecution, and grew abundantly when watered by the blood of martyrs.

It will be urged, however, against the principle in question, that this is the very principle objected to in the Roman Church, wilfully do so. The penal laws enacted in some countries respecting inoculation, furnish a case somewhat in point; as do also quarantine laws.

by which she endeavours, as a duty, to make all, nations as well as individuals, conform to her own creed; and that for this reason it is not considered safe to entrust with civil power those who profess it. In reply to which, it may be said that the *principle* of the Roman Church here spoken of, is, as a principle, right, whether referred to the decision of the Gospel or of reason; and were her doctrines also true, and her faith pure, according to the Church's acknowledged rule and standard of faith, her practice would be completely defensible. But the latter condition cannot be shewn to exist on the part of the Roman Church: we reply to her, (though this is not the place to enter on the subject,) that she is in error on points of faith, not only on the Sectarian principle that the Bible alone, without any external aid, is the guide and rule of faith; not only on the Church's principle, of Antiquity and Catholic Tradition in conjunction with Holy Scripture being the rule of faith; but even on her own avowed principle, that of Antiquity and Catholic Tradition, though unsupported

by Scripture. We tell her that her tenets will not abide the test even of Antiquity and Primitive Tradition; that, besides being unscriptural in their foundation, they are the interpolations of a later date, excrescences as it were adhering to the body of Catholic doctrine, thrown out by an unhealthy and anti-catholic state of the Church's system, the date of whose introduction, long since the Apostolic days, may be ascertained by reference to the doctrinal history of the Church. Knowing this, we do not regard her faith as pure, nor deem her a fit guardian of public instruction, or more fit to be entrusted with the formation and protection of a nation's creed, than the various sects who constitute the other extreme of heresy. But her *principle* of establishing conformity to the creed she professes to hold, we must admit on any acknowledged principles of Morals or of Revelation. In this consists the true theory of the connection between the Church and the State. This is the meaning of the prophecy in Isaiah, (xlix. 23.) "Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy

“nursing mothers.” Not, as is too commonly supposed, that they shall foster the Church itself, or that the Church either needs their support, or will surrender its independence to them; but that the civil power shall bring its own children to the Church, carry them in its arms, tending the children of the Church, but as a nurse (τιθηνὸς<sup>c</sup>), and in that capacity ministering, as servant, not as ruler, to the Church.

The connection of the Church with the State, thus established, originates, as a *principle*, with each in the same degree perhaps; with the State, as prescribing for the good of its members, on principles adapted to the nature and wants of men; while the Church, being in conformity with the same principles, cannot but sanction the same course, though possessed of a divine power and promise to effect her own object without human aid. The *exercise* of power, however, to produce conformity to the Church, originates with the State in her relation of guardian to her subjects, for

<sup>c</sup> Cf. Numbers xi. 12.

whose best and highest interests she is responsible. The objection, that the instant the two characters are united in the same person, force is used—in other words, that the instant the Church obtains civil power, she uses that to remove offences from her children; or that the instant the statesman becomes a Churchman, he uses his secular authority to promote the extension of his faith—this very objection is but the substance and fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy cited above: it points to the relation which, in a healthy state of things, the State will necessarily bear to the Church, as the nurse, so to say, of her children.

Another application of the same principle should here be noticed, which, although it does not fall so immediately within the province of these Lectures, yet is too intimately connected with the subject, as a branch of it, and of too great local interest, independently of its own intrinsic importance, to be passed over in silence. For it is on the same principle of biassing the mind in the formation of reli-

gious belief, as being in its nature essentially connected with our moral constitution, and in its results one to which we have the hope of success founded on a divine promise, save through our own fault in neglecting or abusing the means,—that we best defend our academical practice of subscription to the Articles of Religion—viewed, that is, as a religious question ;—for as a preliminary to a course of education in moral subjects, such as form our studies here, it rests on different grounds—those of necessity—from the circumstance that, from the very nature of things, there must exist in the pupil *some* bias, or tone of mind and thought, from their relation to which facts acquire an existence to his mind ; and that to expect a mind to be entirely devoid of it, would be little less unreasonable than to expect a vacuum to exist in nature : that therefore, in giving what we conceive to be a good condition of mind, we only preoccupy by good what must otherwise, in the very nature of things, have been preoccupied by some other, and perhaps a bad condition of thought.

Viewed, however, in relation to religious belief alone, the practice will find its best defence in the principle discussed in this and the preceding Lecture, respecting the formation of habits and moral perceptions. The objections urged against it, lie with equal force against every application of the principle, under which our moral habits and perceptions are necessarily the offspring, in the first instance, of bias and prejudice, and of a certain course of training under the guidance and authority of others. The objection that the persons subscribing may be, from ignorance or other circumstances, incompetent to form an opinion, would lie equally against the requiring from a child the confession of faith embodied in the Apostles' Creed, and involved in his repetition of the Church Catechism. It would lie against the demand which nevertheless we are obliged to make in all moral subjects, from the highest to the lowest, of the assent of the disciple to our judgment, without reference to proof, on the sole authority of our assertion.

It is not, however, an *opinion* which we require, but a *confession* of faith; made, if you will, in blind reliance on the authority and judgment of others,—not however on the authority of casual persons, but, which involves the whole question, on the authority of those towards whom there previously exists a relation, involving a moral obligation to obey and confide in them.

This childlike submission of the judgment to others for a time, which pervades the whole system of morals as well as Revelation, is completely reconciled to the minds of those who make the demand, by the conviction that they are themselves right, and that those of whom they require this, will assuredly, save through neglect of the necessary means, attain ultimately to the same mind, if they possess it not already. How far the views in favour of which we create this prejudice are right—in other words, how far the Creed of the Church is capable of defence and proof, is a question not necessary to enter into for the defence of the principle in question.

Now the application of the Church's principle in these several instances, it will be said, is bigotry, and opposed to every received notion of liberality and the rights of conscience. Probably it is. Truth is bigoted and exclusive, and it is its unbending character, its unchanging nature, that arms the prejudices of mankind against it, especially when it interferes with their passions or their interests. Moreover, popular ignorance on subjects of moral truth, enables men to assail it without laying themselves open, in the eyes of the many, to the charge of folly and ignorance whenever they assail it, as would be the case if they assailed in like manner the principles of physical and demonstrative science. The same assaults would be made, however, on demonstrative truth, if it interfered in like manner with their passions and interests, and *if* they could be protected in their folly by a similar degree of popular ignorance. A proof of this might be seen in the outcry which was raised at the first intimation of many discoveries in natural science, as long as the outcry was protected

by popular ignorance. However men's passions might have been at first excited by the contradiction supposed to be involved in these to the Mosaic account of the creation, yet popular knowledge has long since advanced beyond that point at which any such objection would be alleged, and the outcry has long died away.

On morals however, and on moral subjects, there is so much popular ignorance, that in ordinary society, and to ordinary readers, a man may boldly advance statements as unreasonable as the denial of the theory of the solar system, or of the principle of gravitation, without injuring the reputation for common sense or ordinary knowledge, of which every man would naturally be tenacious. We might mention, among other instances of this, the credence given, or at best the indifference shewn, to the assertion that we are not responsible for our opinions on moral and religious subjects; that our belief does not depend upon ourselves; the denial of the moral sense, or the doctrine of expediency, as gravely propounded by Paley and adopted by his followers now;

all of which are denials of elementary truths in morals, to which in demonstrative science would correspond, the denial of the fact that earth revolved round the sun, because to the eye it seemed otherwise,—or that the antipodes of the globe could be attracted to the same centre of gravity with ourselves. The popular knowledge on morals does not extend beyond the point, corresponding to that at which, in natural philosophy, these truths are proved. And an audience doubtless might be found among the uneducated, before whom one so disposed might successfully deny these very same truths in natural philosophy. The contempt, however, in which such miserable fallacies would be held by any educated person, would not exceed that felt by those possessed of a moderate acquaintance with morals or human nature, at the assertion of our irresponsibility for opinions and belief, the doctrine of expediency, or the denial of the moral sense: or if this contempt is not felt, it is from being absorbed in the deeper and more intense feeling of indignation at those who can thus trifle with

the eternal interests of those whom they mislead, with some admixture of pity at their own fatal blindness. But no human decision, no human changes, no human concessions to the passions and prejudices of men, can affect the immutable character of truth, physical or moral. No liberality of sentiment can change the laws of gravity, affect the relations of quantity, or alter the properties of matter. As little can it affect moral and revealed truth. No liberality of feeling can affect the unchangeable nature of the eternal Godhead. No liberality of faith can make the death of Christ an empty name, nor render the atonement of his precious blood needless to sinners: for surely this is implied in that unholy saying, which it was reserved for a superficial and irreligious age to produce—that “it matters little what faith we hold provided we are sincere”—in other words, that the atonement of the blood of Christ, and the regenerating influence of the Holy Spirit, are *unnecessary to those who deem them unnecessary!* If we believe a pure faith to be essential to everlasting salvation, no liberal-

ity can absolve us from the duty, where we possess the power, of training and keeping in it those dependent upon us. Let every man render an account of his own belief to the Searcher of all hearts. No human power will interfere with it, while he confines it to himself: he may then revel in his favourite maxim, that it is a question between his own conscience and his God; and confound eternal truth with the hallucinations of a perverted and reprobate mind. But when such men attempt to infect the minds of others for whose spiritual condition we feel responsible, the case is widely different: we then claim the right to interfere, not as upholding divine truth by the arm of civil power, but on principles of justice and humanity, for the protection of those committed to us by God.

When thus interfered with, men are too ready to cry out against the infringement on their religious liberty, and the interference with the rights of conscience; they complain of the injustice of being punished for their religious belief. They are *not* punished for *this*, but for mak-

ing those opinions, by giving them publicity, injurious to the eternal welfare of those whose spiritual condition we have it in our power, as a sacred trust, to promote; and for whom we are, to a proportionate extent, accountable. And any erroneous opinions which, in our estimation, are calculated to injure that, we do claim the right to denounce and suppress, on the same principle as that by which we should oppose the introduction of a contagious disease. The Christian statesman is not so ignorant of the moral nature of man, as to imagine that he can correct, by the exercise of civil power, inveterate habits confirmed by a long course of moral neglect. He is not so ignorant of the provisions of the Gospel of Christ, as to imagine that he can effect, by civil penalties, what it is reserved for divine power and mercy alone to effect—to reclaim the evil heart of unbelief brought on by continued resistance to grace and light. But as himself one of the household of Christ—as responsible for those whom God has entrusted to him, in however small a degree—as possessed of an

immortal soul, which must hereafter render account of the way in which he has discharged that solemn trust—he has a right to remember the awful denunciation which is addressed to him, if, having the power to promote Christ's kingdom, we fail to exercise it, and thereby become partaker with those who would offend the little ones whom Christ would have in part saved through his instrumentality,—“ It  
“ must needs be that offences come, but woe  
“ unto him through whom the offence  
“ cometh.”

## LECTURE VII.

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TRADITION AND THE WITNESS OF THE CHURCH  
ILLUSTRATED BY ANALOGY, AND  
ITS ADAPTATION TO OUR MORAL NATURE.

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ROMANS X. 10.

*With the heart man believeth unto righteousness.*

**T**HE defence of the principle asserted on behalf of the Church, of prepossessing the mind and will in favour of particular views of Scripture and of specific doctrines, before coming to the study of the Holy Scriptures themselves, is distinct from the question whether the views and doctrines thus instilled are themselves right; as it is also from the grounds on which the Church professes to have determined them.

Hitherto we have been defending the principle in question against those whose

objections to it are not framed with reference to any particular creed ; who, even if their own views of doctrine were admitted to be right, yet profess to object, as a principle, to prejudicing the mind in favour of them, however in practice they are led, as experience uniformly shews, to act in opposition to their avowed principle.

That some previous bias or prepossession would be designed by its divine Author, on the assumption that the Gospel was adapted to our moral nature, would appear from the principle and practice observed in regard to all moral truth, both in communicating it, and in forming the character and habits under it ; and from the improbability that God would have left us without the means of forming a similar preconception, and of giving a similar bias, in this the most important subject of all ; and this more especially, when it is admitted by all that that to which we must eventually refer as our standard and proof, is capable of various and opposite interpretations. To which may be added the testimony furnished by universal practice, even of those who professedly object to the principle in

question, all of whom nevertheless act upon it, and before they place the Scriptures in the hands of their disciples, prepossess their minds with their own tenets, though they reject those of the Church.

It should be remembered, however, that the argument in favour of the principle drawn from its adaptation to our moral nature, is quite independent of that involved in the fact, as related in the New Testament itself, that the Christian Church is, by many years, antecedent to the Christian Scriptures, and that the latter are addressed to those already instructed in the chief doctrines.

There are, then, three questions to be kept distinct one from the other.

I. The principle itself of biassing the mind, as such.

II. The rule by which we are to ascertain the views and doctrines in favour of which that bias is to be exercised.

III. Whether the views and doctrines which we profess to have determined by this rule, and in favour of which we bias the mind, can be shewn to be correct according to that rule.

It is necessary to keep these questions distinct, because many, while differing with us respecting the origin and descent of the Christian doctrines, yet hold them as doctrines, though on different grounds; and likewise admit the principle of prepossessing the disciple, and of biassing his mind in favour of them. In defending, therefore, the principle of a bias, and the practice of previous teaching, before giving the Scriptures to read, we make common cause with those who, while they agree with us in regard to doctrine and discipline, yet differ from us as to the rule by which they are to be tried, against the Sectarian and Rationalist, who protest against biassing the mind by any previous instruction, or fettering it by any restrictions whatever.

Of these three questions, then, the first we have considered already.

Of the other two, that which regards the specific proofs of our own creed, we may leave, as not falling within the scope of the present work, the object of which is not to defend the particular Creed of the Church, save indirectly, so much as to vindicate the

grounds on which we profess to receive it, and to defend the principle, which we maintain, of teaching it by Creeds and Catechisms and Formularies generally, and of thoroughly prepossessing the mind and will in favour of it, before referring to the proofs of it in Holy Scripture. The defence of the doctrines themselves, as regards our present object, would not be necessary, to the Churchman, who admits them, while together with him we have to defend our mode of teaching them; nor to the Sectarian, who, even were the doctrines admitted, would, if consistent, still deny the Church's principle of instruction.

In leaving this question, however, it should be observed, that if, to suppose a case, the doctrines in question should hereafter be proved to be untrue, that even this would not invalidate the principle here contended for, for determining the truth of doctrines; and that if we should be obliged to form an entirely new form of faith and body of doctrine, we should still have to form it on the same principle, and to abide by the same rule of faith.

It remains, therefore, for us to proceed with the question of Tradition, or the Testimony of the Church under whatever name, being an element in determining our rule of faith—subject, in all cases, to the ultimate appeal to Holy Scripture. Or rather it remains for us to meet some of the objections brought against it.

The Scripture argument in favour of it was developed at some length in the third and fourth Lectures. We may, however, here adduce, as was done in reference to the Church's principle of instruction, the collateral arguments furnished by analogy and its adaptation to our moral nature. And in doing this our argument is with all who deny it: we cannot, as in the question of a bias, make common cause with the orthodox deductionist; but are compelled to class him, for the time, with those who, on every other point, are opposed to him. In this case also, the argument will assume a twofold shape, as regards the degree of force of which it may be deemed capable in the estimation of different persons. It may be shewn, for example, that the

objections urged against Tradition, lie with equal force against other similar principles maintained by the objectors—that they prove too much. To those again who may be disposed to carry the argument further, it may be shewn, that the principle is no more than might have been expected antecedently, on the assumption that it would be analogous to that observed in parallel cases of moral evidence.

Now the objections alleged against Tradition are mainly these:—

That it is at best an uncertain and unsatisfactory guide, and one in no way adapted to a subject of this magnitude, though nothing definite were proved against it;—that as it is, it has come to us through channels admitted on all sides to have been in many things corrupt;—that it has in practice been grossly and notoriously abused, and been cited to substantiate doctrines admitted to be unwarrantable; and that it leads to Popery.

Before noticing these objections, we might be allowed to ask, what is the aim and object of Christian doctrines, as regards the

life and practice of those who hold them? What is the kind of faith by which they are received? Is it intellectual, or does it partake of, in any degree, a moral character? What is the kind of evidence and proof best adapted to, and calculated to exercise, that kind of faith, involving, as it does to a considerable degree, a moral probation? Is it demonstrative or moral? And, lastly, are the difficulties and objections in the way of Tradition, which are said to be against its use, such as are unsuited to that moral probation? On the answers to be given to these several questions, will mainly depend the force of the objections mentioned above.

Of the objections generally, it might be shewn that they prove too much; that they lie also against the proofs of the genuineness of Scripture, and likewise the testimony of miracles; both of which, as was observed in a former Lecture, rest on traditional evidence. In short, if pushed to their full extent, they would go to invalidate all testimony whatever of things past, if not human testimony generally.

As the objector is assumed to admit the genuineness and authenticity of the written Scripture, it would be sufficient, for the purpose of replying to him, to shew that his objections to Catholic Tradition lie also against the former. This mode of reply, however, might appear to some to be open to a serious practical objection on another ground, as tending, not so much to strengthen and confirm Tradition, as to weaken Scripture itself. Now even if it should have this tendency on the minds of some, it is no more than what all elenctic arguments must, from their very nature, be liable to. At the same time, if ever they should be found practically to be attended with this result, it might be shewn that they are the *occasion* rather than the *cause* of it; that the same habit of mind which would raise doubts on the parallel case to which they were designed to reply, would not, as a habit or test of character, be made worse by it, having already admitted the principle, which would not be affected in its moral character or responsibility by shewing its practical application; while on

the other hand, as a mere tendency, or the result of ignorance not formed into a habit, it may be checked, and may serve to suggest watchfulness and self discipline, by shewing that our thoughts may unwarily betray us into the admission of principles, from which our habits and feelings are as yet completely abhorrent. Strictly speaking, those who use arguments of this nature, are not responsible for the consequences to which they may lead. They merely take up their opponents' own principle, the tendency of which they have an unquestionable right, as it is also their duty, to point out; and whatever evils may possibly arise from this, are chargeable solely on those who first advance the position. If, for example, the argument by which Bishop Butler shews that the grounds of the Deist's objections against Revelation lead to Atheism, should ever, as has been objected, lead any one to that result, the responsibility would unquestionably lie with the Deist who first advanced those grounds, not with him who pointed out their natural and necessary consequence: the conclusion was

involved in the premiss previous to its development.

The same answer may be given to any objections which may be urged against shewing the application of the Sectarian's argument against Catholic Tradition, to the grounds of our belief in the genuineness and authenticity of Holy Scripture. At the same time, the justification of the use of an argument does not preclude us from pointing out any further positive benefits resulting from it, although its negative and refutative character might absolve us from any obligation to do so. In the present instance, it might be shewn that the alleged objections, which are asserted to lie alike against Tradition and the genuineness and authenticity of Scripture, so far from invalidating either, afford a presumption in favour of both, when viewed in reference to their object, the subjects with which they are conversant, and our own moral constitution. And further, that the resemblance of the two, in regard to the alleged objections against each, affords a presumption of their proceeding from the

same Author. We may therefore take the arguments against Catholic Tradition out of the Sectarian's hands, and apply them to our own purpose.

The evidence by which the Church establishes the identity of her doctrines with those of the Apostolic days, is, both in regard to its objections and its force, analogous to that on which we are compelled to rest the genuineness of the Christian Scriptures. Like that, it rests partly on probabilities independent of direct testimony; partly on tradition and historical testimony: like that, it is in its nature, *moral*, not *demonstrative* evidence: like that, it is defective and open to many objections to those *disposed* to find them—who require more demonstrative proof than the case either admits of, or would bear without defeating its object as a moral trial; and who want the moral state of the heart, which the subject itself avows to be an essential element in belief. Whatever may be alleged against the evidences of the one, lie against the other. And further, it may be contended that the pecu-

liarities objected to in the one, are no more than might be expected, on the assumption, which few would refuse to concede, that they would be analogous to those of the other. And here, in strict justice, we might be content to leave the question, as regards those who, while they unhesitatingly admit the genuineness and authenticity of the Scriptures on such evidence as the case admits of, and that evidence furnished by the Church's historical records, yet object to the very same kind of evidence, though furnished by the same authority, when applied to substantiate the genuineness of Catholic doctrines. Nor, as was observed before, if to any one the result of this mode of argument should be, to shake the evidence of Scripture rather than confirm that of the doctrines, does the responsibility rest with us, who merely take up our opponents own argument, and employ against them a weapon which they had previously put in operation against us.

We may, however, without incurring any risk of this kind, or of unsettling the minds of those who believe in the Christian Scrip-

tures, now take the argument entirely out of the hands of the Sectarian, and proceed to shew that the objections which might be alleged against the evidence in either case, lie with equal force against testimony of every kind, in subjects not purely demonstrative. And even beyond this, that the objections alleged are no more than might have been expected antecedently, on the assumption, either that the system pursued in either case would be analogous to that pursued in every other dependent on moral evidence, or that it would be calculated to promote its own object in reference to our moral trial, by suitable correspondent means.

Without going very deeply or at any length into the subject, it may be observed that, putting miracles aside, facts, of whatever kind, can only be known in two ways, by our *senses*, and by human *testimony*. *Past* facts, antecedent to our own memory, are of course excluded from the subjects of sense, and are therefore, in the absence of a miracle, referred to testimony alone. This at once involves a new principle and ele-

ment of belief, comprehending confidence in some other person towards whom there exists a relation demanding that confidence, and a state of mind willing to concede it, but which may, under circumstances, be induced to withhold it. The knowledge of our own informant may have been the result either of his own senses, or of a similar testimony from another, involving the like confidence and like grounds for believing. In short, the instant the fact in question is antecedent to the memory of those from whom we receive it, the testimony itself requires testimony; and the force of this testimony, supported by no other, will obviously be diminished, at each successive link in the chain.

Again, this testimony may be delivered either orally, such as would seem to have been the case with the knowledge possessed by those who lived before Moses, of the creation, the fall, the promise to Eve, the deluge, the call of Abraham, the promises made to his seed—in fact, of all the events which had occurred, save those which they had personally witnessed: or it might be

transmitted by some visible record, such as a book, or a monument, or an institution founded on it and designed to commemorate it, such as an annual or other periodical festival; or by one which, though independent of it, might be associated with it, and designed to transmit and perpetuate it.

Or again, the testimony might be transmitted by a method combining both of these, either successively or conjointly—e. g., it might be transmitted orally for a certain time, and subsequently committed to some record of a more permanent character, whether a book, monument, or institution; as is the case with the facts related by any historian, as having occurred previous to the period where he takes up the narrative of events of which he has been personally a witness: or it might be transmitted by a visible record or monument from the beginning, the genuineness of which is itself supported by an oral tradition running parallel to it.

The permanent visible record we are accustomed to regard, naturally, as more satisfactory than mere oral transmission,

being necessarily more continuous, and less likely to be changed;—and one made up of both of these successively, we regard as more satisfactory than the one, though less so than the other. Strictly speaking, however, they will not be so distinct, nor so widely different, nor so independent of each other, as might at first appear. For admitting that a fact has been committed to writing, or any other record, either at the time or subsequently, yet it is obvious that the genuineness of this record itself requires proof, which ultimately must be, for the most part, *oral* testimony—the circumstance that it was always regarded as such, and as such handed down. Or if substantiated by other permanent records, these latter again become the subjects of this oral traditional testimony. It is only shifted from one to the other, and placed a stage farther off in the chain of evidence. The genuineness of the written record must be supported by this traditional testimony, or by that which is so supported. Even a monument, lasting as the pyramids, cannot authenticate, unsupported, its own

origin and history beyond the memory of living witnesses: all prior to that, is a matter of tradition in some shape. Even the genuineness of the Law, preserved in the Ark, would only have been known by this testimony, in the absence of a miracle. Not that there is any objection to this,—it is the only testimony which *can* be provided of things past, except by a miracle; and it is precisely the kind of proof calculated for beings placed in a state of moral probation.

It is not necessary now to enter into the more subtle question how the permanent record and oral testimony support each other, and appear to alternate and to intertwine, as it were, so as to weave the sufficiently compact body of moral evidence which we have of things past; because we shall have occasion presently to refer it to another principle, which forms an essential element in determining a standard of truth. Let it be observed, however, that we possess, for the different parts of the Christian faith, each of the three kinds of testimony just described. The transmission of the

facts themselves, on which our faith is founded, rests on written record from the very commencement, as contained in Holy Scripture. Again, the genuineness of the written record itself has been transmitted by the other two. At first it was by oral testimony : soon however it was committed to writing in various ways. The genuineness of this testimony is again the subject of other testimony, now written—now unwritten—now running parallel—and together forming that body of proof which is best represented by the simple statement of our Sixth Article, the force of which will be at once felt and acknowledged by every sincere and humble mind, such as the Gospel requires.—“ In the name of “ Holy Scripture, we do understand those “ canonical books of the Old and New “ Testament, of whose authority was never “ any doubt in the Church.”

If then it be admitted that, in the absence of miracles, all testimony of things prior to our personal recollection must necessarily be traditional, there can be nothing derogatory to the sacred character of the Holy Scrip-

tures, and their sufficiency to salvation, to say that, from the very nature of the case, we are compelled to rest their genuineness on this ground. The question for our consideration would be, looking to the different degrees of probability and moral certainty attributable to each kind of Tradition respectively, whether that by which we defend the genuineness of Scripture and the Christian doctrines, is such as is adapted to the nature of the subject, and its relation to us in a state of probation; and whether it is calculated to exercise and promote the kind of faith which it is the aim and tendency of the Gospel to form within us: or, which is stating nearly the same thing in a different form, whether the kind of faith by which we should receive the Scriptures and the form of doctrine upon such evidence, is in its nature a saving faith.

Now it is here contended, that the degree of moral proof that attaches to the traditional evidence on which we receive the Christian Scriptures, and the Church's form of doctrines and ordinances, is not

only better than men are content to act upon unhesitatingly in other matters, even where they might by inquiry form at least a more satisfactory estimate, whether for the better or worse, of the evidence on which they act; but that it is adapted to the kind of faith which is peculiar to the Gospel, analogous to all the moral features of the Gospel itself, suited to the state of trial in which we are placed, and analogous to the proofs of moral obligation antecedent to revelation, which constituted the responsibility of the heathen world, and to which we must, to this day, ultimately refer the moral obligation to obey the Gospel as a religion of motives, even after the genuineness and authenticity of the Scriptures themselves have been admitted.

Before pointing out this more fully, we must connect this necessity of relying on Tradition for proof of things past, with another principle, now to be adverted to, in determining a standard of truth.

It must be observed then, that whatever may be the ground of our personal convic-

tions on any subject, or the process by which we arrive at them, the standard to which we are compelled to refer them, before we feel satisfied with them or proceed to act upon them, especially if it involves the compulsion of others, is the testimony, real or assumed, of mankind generally. Until we possess this, the stability for our own convictions is not to be depended upon, however strong they may appear for the moment. This appeal to the collective testimony of men, is not to be confounded with our personal perceptions. We feel that these are, in their nature and origin, independent of it, as shewn in a former Lecture; yet we feel that they are so far dependent on the support of this testimony, that unless we possess it, our convictions will be exposed to continual misgivings. This will be obvious at once in regard to moral subjects, where our perceptions are formed by a course of training under others who derived theirs by a similar process, and where we escape from the seeming fallacy of reasoning in a circle, which such a process involves, by falling back at once on the

concurrent testimony of mankind. Yet if pressed further, the principles will be found to hold also in demonstrative truth.

Here, our powers of perception, being purely intellectual, and not dependent for their origin on any course of moral training or restraint, would seem, if any, to be independent of every thing but themselves, and the objects of which they are cognizant. And yet, if we found that our convictions were opposed to those of the rest of mankind, we should, if we did not abandon them, at least be much staggered; and should either pause before we proceeded to act upon them; or, if we did proceed, should do so with much restlessness and misgiving: unless indeed it should chance to be that we were much advanced beyond the rest of mankind in the track in which they were already proceeding, and felt that we had, by such an advance, merely arrived at a point at which we were sure they would arrive by following the course they were now in, and by carrying out the principles on which they were this moment acting: but without this reservation, we should never

be able to act upon, or permanently abide by, even conclusions which would seem the result of demonstration, if opposed to the general voice of mankind. Nay, men have even been known to abandon the testimony of their own senses, when borne down by the unanimous decision of others, and to attribute their convictions to some delusion: so essentially necessary to our convictions, is the concurrence of mankind; and so completely are we compelled to appeal to this as an ultimate standard. So that, provided we are careful not to confound the essentials of truth with its accidents, or its substance with its proof; provided we retain the distinction between objective and subjective truth; we need not hesitate to affirm, as a rule, that the standard to which all truth must be referred, is the decision, directly or indirectly gathered, of the majority of mankind—or, which comes to the same point, of those to whom the majority might be fairly assumed to delegate their decisions, and who may be said to represent their sentiments.

Without, however, urging the extension

of this principle to demonstrative truth, which the argument does not require, let us confine it at present to moral subjects, where it is essentially necessary as regards the standard prior to any practical application of truth, though quite independent of our perceptions of it. It is obvious that, previously to obtaining the sanction of revelation, the most important truths, even the first principles of morals, must have been referred for a standard to the testimony of mankind as a whole; and we have now to observe, which is most important for the application to be made hereafter in regard to the Scriptures and the Christian doctrines, by what process that standard was determined, and that testimony collected. It was not a very easy task, because it required a comprehensive view; while there was the natural temptation to take a more narrow and cursory one, further increased by the conflicting testimony, offered by any survey which took a somewhat wider range, and went further into the subject, without going entirely through with it, and grappling with it as a whole.

In determining the laws of the moral nature of man, the process would naturally be an inductive one, similar to that pursued in determining the physical laws of the species; and, like that, would require to be conducted on an extensive scale, to afford any reasonable ground for believing its correctness. In either case, a partial view would be inefficient, or might even be made to support a paradox, or establish a theory utterly at variance with the truth. If a man, e. g., who had lived in a mountainous region, and another who had passed his whole time in a tropical climate, should proceed each to draw his conclusions respecting the human race as a whole, from the physical peculiarities of the species which had fallen under his own observation alone, they would be found not only to differ materially one from the other, but to be also far removed from the truth itself. The obvious reply to any such conclusions would be, that they were founded in ignorance, and on a narrow and superficial view, which a moderate share of knowledge would serve to correct. Nor is it likely that any

extensive or permanent error could arise from any such theory. The case is here adduced rather for purposes of illustration, and for its application to an analogous one in regard to the moral peculiarities of the species. For that a parallel error might arise in determining the laws of the moral nature of man, and arise too from a survey analogous in regard to its narrow and superficial character and its general ignorance of that moral nature, is not a case which rests altogether on hypothesis. Neither again is it merely hypothetical, that a false theory, founded on such a superficial view, should to a certain extent obtain credence among men who either had an interest in wishing it established, or had not the opportunity, from instruction or observation, of becoming acquainted with its folly. For we have an instance in the literature of our own country, of one who, eminent and good in other respects, yet actually did fall into an error of this description, in which he is followed by many at this very day, and was led gravely and seriously to deny the existence of a moral

sense, because he had observed cases where it appeared to be extinct; and this too, in the face of the declarations, not only of Scripture, but of philosophy of every age, and also of the circumstance, that the exceptions on which he seems to have founded his observations, are specially provided for in the economy of human nature itself, whether viewed in regard to its structure and constitution, as exhibited by philosophy, or in its relation to God, as set forth in his revealed word. We have also had abundant evidence of the credulity with which, either from ignorance or self-interest, such lamentable errors will be received and acted upon, both privately and publicly. The answer to such fallacies is similar to that by which we should reply to the supposed analogous case, in regard to the physical nature of man, as arising from a narrow and superficial view, and being founded in ignorance of our moral constitution.

It should be remarked, however, here, that however painful may be the contemplation of a mind like Paley's, falling into errors like this; however shocking to be-

hold the popular readiness with which such errors will be admitted and followed,—and this too, obviously from the plea which they afford for the removal of all moral restraints, and the denial of any standard of truth, but the will of the individual, or the flickering caprice of each generation; they are not without their use to us, as affording melancholy but valuable records of what even good men may fall into, who either delight in paradox, or are so far deficient in humility, as to set their own crude and shallow theories in opposition to the collective and unanimous testimony of centuries; and as shewing also, the extent to which popular fallacies may run, however preposterous, when they coincide with the passions of man; and how little the readiness with which such fallacies are received, is to be regarded as any test of truth.

The greater value however to us of a fallacy like this and of its grounds, and the purpose to which I would now apply it, is from the analogy which it bears to a similar one, which has obtained in regard to the Christian verities and the grounds on

which they rest. For this purpose, then, let us proceed with the inquiry into the mode by which, prior to revelation, the standard of moral truth was necessarily determined. This was said to be induction. And it is clear that the induction must have been an extensive one, both as to time and space, to avoid the fallacy we have just been exposing. The Philosophers felt that they had no standard but that of the opinions of mankind. They observed, however, that the popular opinions, on moral subjects, were opposed and fluctuating; each individual perhaps differing from his neighbours, — one nation differing from another, — one generation adopting a standard different from that which preceded it.

Without now adverting to the causes of this diversity, (which does not form part of the present subject,) it is clear, that if the opinions of any one nation or generation had been taken as the standard, no definite one could have been obtained, inasmuch as they would not have been found to agree in many points with those of another; nor would it have been satisfactory as far as it

went, inasmuch as the popular opinion on such subjects must have reflected, and have been materially influenced by, the ruling passion for the time being of the age or country. It was obvious that a more extended range was required, which could only be afforded by collecting the opinions of men as diffused over a larger portion of time and space. This was the problem—and it appears to have been solved by the following process.

They appear to have regarded the human species as *one*; and to have assumed, that although particular generations or individuals might be in error, yet that mankind as a whole, would, in the long run, be right; especially if *time* were allowed, and they had the opportunity of finding out by experience the practical evils of false principles; analogous, in some respects, to the experience of individuals,—but with this great difference, that while no individual's life would suffice to go the whole cycle of truth and error, and to see consequences which often fell at a remote distance from their causes,—to the race as a whole, *time*

would be no consideration. The process, however, by which the testimony of the race was collected, appears to have been by taking the decisions of those whom each age and country had pronounced to be good men and competent judges. It was observed, that however the individuals forming a generation or society might differ, yet that they agreed in their opinions generally of what constituted a good and wise man. It was observed too, that however different generations or nations might vary in their decisions, as shewn by a more cursory glance at the popular feeling of the day, yet that they agreed one with another in the character of those whom they designated as good men, and who might consequently be supposed to represent their sentiments on moral truth. It was further observed, that the several individuals who might thus be assumed to represent the opinions of each age or country, however they might differ in some things, yet were agreed in the foundations of morals<sup>a</sup>. In

<sup>a</sup> The parallel which this bears to the agreement of the Fathers, on essential points of doctrine, while differing on other and minor matters, will strike every one.

this way, making each age and nation send its representatives as it were to the congress or general council of opinions, they collected together the testimony of the whole race,—and finding, from the voices thus collected, an agreement on what were deemed essential points, and regarding this as the voice of mankind as a whole, they assumed this to be a determinate standard of Morals—not only the best which could be obtained, but a sufficient one, considering the nature of the subject, and the moral condition of man, with which it seemed essentially connected. The difficulties encountered in forming this standard, arose out of the very nature of the case; and its seeming imperfect character when measured by the laws of *demonstrative* truth, was only a necessary part of its nature as a *moral* question, and one relating to beings in their relation of moral agents. For the testimony of mankind thus gathered would not by itself be satisfactory, nor indeed of any value as a proof, except to strengthen and confirm the convictions of the individual, as formed by the process, (described in the fifth Lecture,) whereby our moral

perceptions are developed, and our moral habits formed. When this had been done, the testimony of mankind, thus gathered, would come in to give to these moral convictions the support, which our convictions on all subjects require, of the testimony of others; as though designed to confirm and sanction moral habits *when* formed, not to supersede them: the will and the affections were first required, in order to feel the force of this moral evidence of the truth of *Morals*.

This has its parallel in Christian doctrines. The will and the state of the heart are first necessary, before the testimony of the Church, here spoken of, will have any effect; being designed to confirm and strengthen the heart of belief, not to supersede it. The evidence is purely *moral*, and, as such, requires the moral preparation of the heart to render it effectual.

But, before applying this more fully by way of parallel to the testimony of the Church in favour of the genuineness of Scripture and of the Christian doctrines, and to the mode in which that testimony

is necessarily collected, let us note these three brief propositions :

I. If, in collecting the testimony of men, we may regard the human species as *one*, much more may we so regard the Church of Christ, which is emphatically spoken of by himself, and also by his Apostles, as *one* ; of which *unity* was to be the great characteristic ; and division most opposed to its nature, and destructive of its interests and existence.

II. That, viewed as a divine institution, there was an antecedent probability of its falling into error *for a time*, above that to which one of mere human origin would be liable, inasmuch as the latter would be fenced by all the preservatives of which it was capable, being limited only by the want of control over circumstances on the part of the founder ; whereas in divine institutions, which are also framed with reference to the moral probation of men for whom they are designed, these preservatives we should expect would be limited by the liability to error, necessary to constitute the moral trial and responsibility of men themselves.

III. Instead of the *assumption*, which in determining the standard of Morals we are obliged to make, of the probability that in the long run mankind will be right, we have, in regard to the Church, the express *promise* of our Lord, that he will abide with it to the end: so that, viewing it as *one*, in whatever country situate, or in whatever age, from the beginning to the present hour, we may regard its testimony, assuming it to be properly collected and correctly determined, as having the force of something beyond a mere human witness.

Now putting these three propositions together, in connection with what has been said above—that in the absence of a miracle, we *cannot* have any proof of things antecedent to living witnesses, *except* Tradition and human testimony—the result will be, that viewing the Church, from its commencement, as one undivided whole, no matter at what period viewed or where situated, we find that it has gone through a considerable portion of a cycle of error; those into which it has hitherto fallen being such as might have been expected

from the circumstances of each, and the liability to err arising from the relation of the Christian doctrines to Holy Scripture—a relation which would seem to have been framed with reference to our probation, and one which, from that very circumstance, necessarily implies temptation and risk. So that Popery, which was the first rock on which the Church split, and Infidelity, on which the danger is that in our day men make shipwreck of their faith, through Rationalism and Heresy, would seem but the natural result of the Gospel, with the liability to err alluded to, coming in contact with human nature, the one in a rude and dark age, the other in a refined and superficial one.

We find that the several branches of the Church have in turn erred; and that, grievously. Our Article, as though acknowledging this fact, and at the same time guarding against the inferences which some might be disposed to draw against the Church, as a whole, from the errors of particular branches, says, “As the Churches  
“ of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch

“ have erred, so also the Church of Rome  
“ hath erred, not only in their living and  
“ manner of ceremonies, but also in matters  
“ of faith.” (Art. XIX.)

We find, however, that though particular branches of the Church have thus grievously erred, yet that the Church has never been in error, as a whole, on any vital point; never, as a whole, denied any vital truth or doctrine. We find, that as in regard to the foundation of morals *without* the covenant, the human race, notwithstanding grievous exceptions in nations and individuals, always retained a witness of God speaking to them, and of his Spirit pleading through the conscience—never, as a whole, acknowledged sin as otherwise than sin—never, as a whole, denied any real virtue;—so, in regard to the foundation of Christian doctrine *within* the covenant, the Church, viewed as a whole, has, from the beginning, retained the signs of Christ’s abiding according to the promise; has never, as a whole, maintained any deadly heresy; never, as a whole, suppressed any essential doctrine. It is not merely to the

decisions, true or false, of the Church of Jerusalem, Alexandria, Antioch, or Rome alone, to which we should look, if required, for the testimony of the Church, whether on the subject of the Godhead or any other vital truth ; but to that which “ *the Holy Church throughout the world doth acknowledge him to be.*”

The mode again in which, if necessary, this testimony is to be collected, is analogous to that by which was collected the testimony of mankind to the truth of morals. Analogous also are the errors into which men have fallen from a partial appeal or limited survey. Men, when desired to refer to the testimony of the Church, for example, instead of taking the testimony of the Church *as a whole*, gathered up as it were from the Church in every age and country, will rather perversely turn to one particular branch which we acknowledge to have been in error, and to that period when it is acknowledged to have been *most* in error ; or will turn to the contradictions between the several branches of the Church, which doubtless exist, and which require

careful investigation and collation, in order to trace the agreement on the point to be proved, among so much confusion in other respects. They will do this, and thence argue to the impossibility of gathering any satisfactory information from an appeal to the Church, and deny the right of trusting to any appeal so gathered.

This impatience of inquiry, this superficial survey, and judgment from imperfect evidence, is but the parallel, in matters of faith, to Paley's error in morals, where, finding contradictory testimony furnished by different ages or countries—seeing that what was held in abomination by some, was deemed innocent by others, and even commendable by another class,—came at once to the conclusion that there could be no definite standard whatever. If, however, the rule of ancient philosophy, founded on the deepest and most comprehensive views, be deemed a better evidence on the subject than the superficial view and shallow reasoning of Paley; so may the principle of the Church, which, relying on our Saviour's promise of abiding to the end and of re-

taining the spirit of truth, looks for the fulfilment of that promise in the body of Christ throughout the world, in every age and every land,—be deemed a safer guide to the knowledge of the Apostle's doctrine, than the shallow superficial spirit of Sectarianism, which, if it ever extend its view beyond its own borders, it is but to see the spirit of evil rather than of good, and to recognise error in every disagreement with itself.

The result of the above investigation will be to establish these principles :

That for our proofs in this momentous matter, we must, from the very nature of the case, have had to depend, in the absence of miracles, on human and traditional testimony in some shape or other :—That the mode in which we collect this, is analogous to that by which we determine the standard of truth on all moral subjects<sup>z</sup> :—and that

<sup>z</sup> Although the case which has been here selected to illustrate this, is that of pure ethics, yet it will be found to exist in all subjects partaking in any degree of a moral character—i. e. not purely demonstrative—all those, in fact, where our perceptions require to be developed and strengthened by a course of training under the direction of others, as described in Lecture V.

the degree of certainty to which we attain, is not only sufficient for the purpose, but is probably the best we could have had, without encroaching on that principle of moral probation which pervades the whole of our relations to God, and without interfering with the need of the predisposition of the will and the affections, and that moral preparation of the heart generally, which forms an essential element in the perception of moral truth, and the power to receive moral evidence.

The teaching and authority of the Church afford a protection against the suggestion of our own corrupt hearts and wild fancies, without forming a rule, as it were a groove, too exact to allow room for moral responsibility. The Scripture, on the other hand, in regard to its proofs of what the Church teaches, is sufficiently indeterminate to require a moral preparation of the heart, so as to afford room for moral probation; yet sufficiently determinate to save those who read it in the way which God designed, from being blown about by every wind of doctrine.

If objections should be urged against what has been said, grounded on the alleged difficulty of investigating the testimony spoken of, and of determining by this rule, requiring a degree of care and labour for which the occupations of the majority of mankind would afford little opportunity, and an extent of time for which to many the longest life would seem barely to suffice; we must repeat what was before said in regard to a similar objection,—that this does not apply to members of our own communion, who are content with the result of all this as already collected and provided for them by the Church to which we belong, and brought home to their hands in the Creed, Liturgy, and Articles; and to whom the Scriptures are at the same time given that they may prove what they have been taught, and know the certainty of the things in which they have been instructed. It applies rather to those without, and to those who are disposed to reject or dispute about what the Church teaches. If Sectarians and Rationalists will take upon themselves to question what the

Church has ever held, and to claim the right, which is not denied them, of investigation and inquiry, we have at least a right to demand, on the other side, that they investigate in the way and by the means through which the subject itself professes to be capable of investigation. Nor will we concede to the Sectarian the right of judging by Scripture alone, in the face of the declaration of Scripture itself to the contrary; nor allow him to represent our principle as unscriptural, when it is supported by the fullest and most satisfactory testimony of Scripture; nor will he abandon our ground to the Rationalist, on his assertion that our principle is irrational and unphilosophical and unsuited to man's nature, when we find by inquiry that reason and philosophy are on our side, and that our principle has every presumption in its favour which can be furnished by analogy, and its adaptation to our moral constitution.

To the humble-minded Apostolic Churchman, however, there is furnished by the grounds of his faith, as developed above, a source of hope and comfort in the hour of

need, too important to be passed over, and which must be briefly alluded to before concluding this part of the subject.

There are periods in the life of all, when our faith is liable to be assailed by doubts and temptations to unbelief. It may please God that our trial should be to question the blessed verities directly, without any apparent intermediate cause. It may be that our faith in the doctrines shall be assailed through the medium of personal trials, whether of affliction or otherwise, in which we can be sustained only through divine grace, and by reliance on God's promises made to us in his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. But our hope of this grace, our trust in these promises, will depend much on our belief in the doctrines, in the truth of which we feel that they are involved:—say, e. g., the hope of forgiveness depending on the divine nature of our sacrifice, and the consequent sufficiency of his atonement, and the efficacy of his intercession; or our hope of sanctification, the need of which we feel, depending on the divine nature of the Sanctifier himself. Our belief in these

is assailed; the evidences which once came home to our hearts with such conviction, seem to have lost their force; the declarations of Scripture, which once seemed so clear and decisive, are powerless or explained away; gloom and despondency seem gathering around us; God's Spirit seems to be deserting us. Now in hours of darkness, trying as these are, what have they to rely on who have hitherto trusted to the vaunted privilege of private judgment; even assuming their faith itself, without regard to its grounds, to have been pure? That on which they have hitherto leaned, has given way; and what remains to support and cheer them? Not thus unsupported, in the like fiery trial, is the humble Apostolic Churchman. It is then that he feels the value of his previous littleness in the spiritual world. It is then that he feels the value of his membership in the Church, and the blessedness of the Communion of Saints. Instead of abandoning himself to despair or indifference, he falls back on the Church as a whole, and leans on the body of saints. And this,

not in blind confidence, as superseding his personal faith, or absolving him from his individual responsibility ; (that were Popery ;) but as interposing a suspensive power, a temporary refuge, to shield him till the tyranny be overpast. As an insulated being in the world of spirits, he would fall : but he turns to the Church—to the saints in the Church—and there sees that every thing is against his present doubts and fears, and they receive a check which, if it does not restore confidence, at least prevents despair and renews inquiry, and encourages him to pray and to hope. He looks to the Church, and there sees that this, of which he now doubts, has, from the beginning, been regarded as sacred truth ; that whatever he may now think, whatever he has heard ungodly men avow, that there at least, in the Church, the wise, the good, the saints of every age, have held it in unity of faith. That that Lord, whom he is now perhaps tempted to deny, the Holy Church throughout the world hath ever acknowledged to be the Father of an Infinite Majesty—the honourable, true, and

only Son—also the Holy Ghost the Comforter ;—hath ever confessed that Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ !—Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father.

What a check must this afford to a downward course of doubt and misgiving ! what an encouraging array does it present to cheer and animate him in resisting the tempter ! what a cloud of witnesses must he feel doth encompass about him ! I do not say that it would of itself restore confidence ; but it stands forth to suspend his misgivings ; it gives him time to rally and seek for strength and light ; it suggests the question whether, with so goodly a host of testimony against him, *he* may not be wrong in his doubts—whether there be not that which, if he seek again, he may find as they have found—whether, if he fight again, he may not conquer as they have conquered ; and thus, as to a fugitive flying from the field of battle, they present an array of power with ensigns of past victories, towards whom he may direct his course, from whom he may gain counsel and assistance while he rallies his strength,

and with whom he may find a refuge from his pursuing foe, till one mightier than he shall have disarmed him of the power to hurt him.

In truth, to the really humble-minded Christian—humble, that is, not only in regard to the written word, but also to the universal testimony of the Church; humble, not only in regard to God, but also in regard to men, (for both of these enter into the character of Christian humility;) to such an one, in every doubt, difficulty, or painful misgiving which may beset him, questions like these will come to his relief: is it likely that the holy Church, from the beginning, should have been in error on this point, built as it was on the foundation of the Apostles themselves? Is it likely that good and wise men of every age, should have been so grievously deceived? Is it not more likely, that such a host of witnesses, agreeing as they do in one faith, and that from the beginning, should be right, than my doubts, or the opinions of those who would lead me to a different faith? Such questions will come

to his relief. Not that they will of themselves convince and satisfy him—nor ought they: they are not meant to supersede Scripture—that were Popery; but to assist and guide him in the interpretation of it—that were Apostolical and Christian. They have this effect—to arrest doubts which are beginning, and to stop those which have gained some head. In the one case they prevent the commencement; in the other they interpose and exercise a suspensive power, leading him to distrust himself, and thus to seek that enlightening power of the Holy Spirit, which is not denied to the bewildered wanderer who seeks it in spirit and in truth—perseveringly and in faith.

How different is it with those who have relied only on themselves and their own private judgment in the interpretation of Scripture! What have they to look to in hours of darkness and difficulty? Scripture gives them no light—the promises bring no comfort when doubt seizes them—and that which should have been their friend, seems an idle tale. They cannot fall back and rest awhile on the bosom of

the Church, and see, in the uniformity of faith there, the silent rebuke to their own faithlessness, which makes them give up because of a passing trial. They have leaned on the boasted strength of private judgment: it has now failed them, and they know not whither to turn.

The Apostle Paul was no stranger to this. He knew the doubts which would assail members of the Church; and bids them, in their perplexities, find comfort in following the steps of the Apostles, and in deferring to the opinions of the Church: “Be ye followers together of me, and mark “them which walk so as ye have us for an “ensample.” He does not require us to follow him individually as an inspired Apostle merely, but those also who follow him, the saints in the Church; and mostly do we require this guidance, and mostly does it befriend us, when the holy light of Scripture seems for a time to be hidden from us. And such has been the rule of Scripture in the Church in every age.— “Tell me,” says the Scripture, “tell me, O “thou whom my soul loveth, where thou

“feedest, where thou makest thy flock to  
“rest at noon: for why should I be as  
“one that turneth aside by the flocks of  
“thy companions? If thou know not,  
“go thy way forth by the *footsteps* of the  
“flock, and feed thy kids *beside the shep-  
“herds’ tents.*” And it is our duty, no less  
than our privilege, thus to listen to and  
lean on the advice and opinion of the  
Church, at once an act of obedience and  
a source of comfort.

Surely then we may say and acknowledge  
with thankfulness, that He who knew what  
was in man, has consulted mercifully for us  
in the mode in which he has ordained that  
the witness of the truth should be left,  
though it should not be found to be such  
that he may run that readeth. If it be  
mercy and wisdom combined, to promote  
our probation and spiritual warfare, yet to  
have compassion on our weakness; to prove  
us, to exercise our faith through temptation,  
yet to leave us a way to escape which all  
who seek may find; to fit us for our end  
by training us, in childlike dependance,  
through the different stages of the spiritual

life to Christian manhood ; to provide for us, in our darkest hours of spiritual trial, a guide and refuge which, while it protects, serves to exercise our faith and dependance on Him, nor allows us to wax cold ;—all these have been provided for us in the constitution of the Apostolic Church, and in the relation in which it has pleased Him to place the Christian verities to Holy Scripture.

That these should prove an offence to the proud and self-willed, is not to be wondered at. That sometimes they should even be a snare to weaker brethren, is no more than might be expected from the general analogy of God's works. As different insects are said to extract honey and poison from the same plant, even so may it be with the mightier dispensations of the spiritual world, as well as in things of lesser magnitude, which may prove blessings or curses, according to the way in which we use them. It is in our power, with the means which God has given us, to choose the good and avoid the evil. But as an essential part of our probation here, as

inseparable from a state of trial, it is impossible to be free from danger—"it must needs be that offences come."

That it should be thus in regard to the Christian faith, and its relation to Holy Scripture, is but what the greatest revealed blessing has ever been liable to. And herein we see but a continuation of the same principle, by which in Christ crucified, which unto them that were called was Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God, the Jew could find but a stumbling-block, nor the Greek see ought but foolishness; and by which the same message of grace was declared to be a sweet savour of Christ in them that were saved, and in them that perish: to the one the savour of death unto death,—to the other, the savour of life unto life.

## LECTURE VIII.

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ARGUMENT IN FAVOUR OF THE CHURCH'S PRINCIPLE  
DRAWN FROM THE LANGUAGE OF ST. PAUL—FROM  
THE CONSEQUENCES OF ITS VIOLATION—THE ANA-  
LOGY OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT—THE ORIGINAL QUES-  
TION REVERTED TO—CONCLUSION.

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MATTHEW VI. 10.

*Thy kingdom come.*

**T**HE main features to be observed in the Church's principle of instructing in the Christian faith, as set forth and defended in the foregoing Lectures, will be found to be humility, submissiveness, faith, docility,—a willingness to learn and believe according to the direction into which the mind is turned and trained; not receiving things with suspicion and a feel-

ing of contentious disputation, regarding them as false, or even doubtful, till proved to be true; but with the feeling of child-like docility and affectionate obedience, wishing and hoping that they are true, till found to be false. And this, not so much from particular views furnished by the subject itself, as from a predisposition to rely on the persons from whom the instruction is derived; the latter being those towards whom there previously exists a relation involving a moral obligation to obey and confide in them; the first impressions and the first impulses towards belief being derived from the teacher rather than the thing taught—from persons, rather than from things.

This feature in the Church's principle was shewn to be that observable in all moral instruction, and in conveying knowledge on all subjects not purely demonstrative and abstract—partaking in any degree of a moral character. In these it was shewn that, besides the mere communication of knowledge, the sense or faculty of perceiving moral truth, corresponding to the in-

telleet in the perception of demonstrative truth, required first to be developed by a course of training under the guidance and authority of others, and gradually formed into a habit by which the disciple becomes possessed of the faculty of seeing and judging for himself: the principle adopted by our Lord in the constitution of the Apostolic Church, existed previously in the constitution of human nature. Of this principle, the leading features, as regards the disciple, may, for the sake of brevity, be comprised in one term—*docility*.

This statement would be further strengthened by referring to the term uniformly adopted by St. Paul in reference to the first instruction in Christian doctrine, as contrasted with its opposite, the term *heresy*, considered in regard to its meaning as well as its etymology, and the assumed liberty of *choosing* for one's self, which would seem to be denoted by it<sup>c</sup>.

The Apostle, on the contrary, in allu-

<sup>c</sup> The want of the concrete verb of *heresy* in English, and of the abstract noun, as well as of the verbal denoting the agent, of *παραλαμβάνω*, in both languages, must have

sion to the doctrines which the several Churches had learned, speaks of them as that which they had *received*<sup>d</sup> from him; as though *he*, with the credentials which he exhibited, were sufficient authority for demanding their acceptance of it. And the same term is uniformly applied, indicating at once the truth received, the relation of the parties, and the obligations arising out of it; comprising on his part the right to be heard, and on theirs the duty to obey. But in no case does he adopt a term which would seem at variance with this relation. In no case does he admit, directly or by implication, the right of choosing for themselves; nor does he speak of it, save to condemn it, or to point out its moral tendencies, and to advert to the moral deterioration which seems to form its natural and necessary consequence. Not that the Church would demand, any more than morals, a *continued* blind faith and ir-  
been frequently experienced by the theological student, in reference to the principles which they respectively denote.

<sup>d</sup> See in particular 1 Cor. iv. 7; xv. 1. 2 Cor. xi. 4. Phil. iv. 9. Col. ii. 6. 1 Thess. i. 6; ii. 13; iv. 1.

sponsible reliance on others, as is often unjustly charged against the principles of the Church Catholic; but for learning, for the formation of opinions, for the establishment of belief, the Church does, like reason and morals, require for a time an implicit reliance on the guidance of those under whom, as regards the subject to be learned, we are placed, either by the positive precepts of the revealed covenant, or by the moral obligations involved in relations previously existing in the natural constitution of things.

This demand for implicit reliance and submission to others, which has been shewn to be necessary for the developement of our perceptions in all cases of moral truth, and which is adopted into the constitution of the Church, and carried into effect by the various instruments through which the Church imbues the minds of her disciple with her own views, and engages his will in their favour before giving him the Scriptures to read,—is not to be confounded with a blind belief, resting solely on the word of others, at a time of life when the

disciple ought to be sufficiently advanced in Christian manhood and knowledge of the doctrine of Christ, to be able to see with his own eyes, to read and understand for himself, and, from the study of the Holy Scriptures, so to read, that he might know the certainty of the things in which he has been instructed. For though it is true, both in morals and religion, that one thus trained will agree with those by whom he has been trained; and though, by the appointments both of nature and of revelation, this agreement is in one sense the result of the course he has gone through, and perhaps he would not have thought thus without this, yet the course of training is the *accidental* not the *essential* cause of the agreement. For when he comes to examine his convictions and the grounds of them, he does not refer them to his course of education, but feels that they depend on grounds independent of his training, and on evidences external to himself; that his education has been the *occasion* rather than the *cause* of his thinking thus; and that what he has really derived from his edu-

cation, is the moral vision whereby he is enabled to perceive these grounds and this evidence, and the moral capacity to feel its force.

The essential connection of this principle of submission and docility with our moral constitution, and the provision for our wants exhibited by its adoption into the leading features of the Gospel, should be viewed in reference to another argument—that drawn from the consequences of its violation.

If instruction in Christian doctrine, by means of the Church under the Gospel, be analogous to that pursued in moral subjects generally, in respect of moral submissiveness on the part of the disciple, and a course of moral preparation before the mind is able to receive the truth; and if this submissiveness, preparatory to the perception of truth, be an essential part in the economy of our moral constitution, essentially belonging to man as man; we might expect, antecedently, that the violation of the conditions on which the efficacy of the instruction de-

pend, would not only be destructive of it, but be productive of pernicious effects on the moral character generally. How far this is realized in practice, how far the violation of this principle of submissiveness and docility does affect the character generally, it needs not an extended observation to tell, whether viewed in regard to its influence on political, social, and domestic relations, or its effects on personal character alone. No one who views in these relations the conduct of those who adopt the heretical principle, and who thereby throw off the docility which belongs to them as men, can fail to observe its effect on the whole character, when fairly carried out. It seems to derange the whole moral system; to remove as it were the keystone of the moral fabric; to take away from man's nature the barrier which protects it from what is most hostile to it—to subvert the whole man. Let any one read with an ordinary degree of attention the Epistle of St. Jude, and the second chapter of the General Epistle of St. Peter, and contemplate the character therein so vividly and

forcibly described. He cannot but be struck with the intimate connection of the character with the Socinian and Sectarian principle, and with the principle of resistance to constituted authority generally, from which it seems to flow, even had it not been specifically connected with it, and with the sin of Korah, by the Apostle himself.

“ But chiefly them that walk after the  
 “ flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and  
 “ *despise government*. Presumptuous are  
 “ they, *selfwilled*, they are not afraid to  
 “ *speak evil of dignities*. Whereas angels,  
 “ which are greater in power and might,  
 “ bring not railing accusation against them  
 “ before the Lord. But these, as natural  
 “ brute beasts, made to be taken and de-  
 “ stroyed, *speak evil of the things that they*  
 “ *understand not*.” . . . . “ For when they  
 “ speak great swelling words of vanity,  
 “ they allure through the lusts of the  
 “ flesh, through much wantonness, those  
 “ that were clean escaped from them that  
 “ live in error. While they promise them  
 “ liberty, they themselves are the servants

“ of corruption.” Thus St. Peter. To the same effect writes St. Jude.

“ For there are certain men crept in  
“ unawares, who were before of old ordain-  
“ ed to this condemnation, ungodly men,  
“ turning the grace of God into lascivious-  
“ ness, and denying the only Lord God,  
“ and our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . . Like-  
“ wise these filthy dreamers defile the flesh,  
“ *despise dominion, and speak evil of digni-*  
“ *ties. . . . . But these speak evil of things*  
“ *which they know not. . . . .* Woe unto  
“ them! for they have gone in the way of  
“ Cain, and ran greedily after the error of  
“ Balaam for reward, and perished in *the*  
“ *gainsaying of Core.*”

Now without making a closer application than Christian charity will allow, of this description of the two Apostles, to the enemies of the Church and the Church's principle in our own day, it would be impossible not to be struck by the close resemblance. And when the same Apostles so closely connect the general depravity of character with the contempt of dominion, the speaking evil of dignities, and the sin

of Korah cited by name, can we do otherwise than feel, that the fulfilment of the Apostles' description, brought to pass as it were at our very doors, conveys to us a warning involving a deep responsibility, to guard against the first approaches of that spirit of Antichrist here so visibly depicted, and to resist, at its commencement, the spirit of pride and contempt for authority, which, if unrestrained, we behold at a later stage leading to the fatal results which the Apostle has so forcibly described to us<sup>e</sup>?

Now that this principle of submissiveness and need of wholesome restraint in the formation of character, which is so suited to our nature in the proper sense of the word, should be offensive to the natural man, and to the pride of the human heart, is in no way surprising. It is not to be expected that men will approve it, much

<sup>e</sup> In fact, the Heretical and Schismatic spirit, is the violation of a *moral* as well as of a *positive* obligation. Even were there no rule on the subject in Scripture itself, it would still have been a sin, from its very nature. The consequences to which it leads in practice *denote and illustrate* its character, rather than *constitute* it.

less voluntarily place themselves under it, unless trained to do so from childhood. To say that it is for their good—that their moral constitution requires it—that it is necessary in order to fit them for the proper end of their being as moral and responsible agents,—all this would be of no avail towards reconciling them to it; nay, it would but further excite their hostility. Humanly speaking, such arguments would be utterly useless; and it would be unreasonable, and contrary to analogy and experience, to expect that any success would attend them—that is, when addressed to those who have not been brought up (or under the Gospel led by the Holy Ghost) to see and feel their force. With what prospect of success could any one advocate such principles to those who have not been trained to understand them? One who should so advocate them, against one who defended unrestricted liberty of thought, and maintained the unlimited right of private judgment, would labour under a similar disadvantage with one who should recommend the duty of submission to con-

stituted authority in secular matters, and denounce the sin of rebellion, before an audience who had just returned from listening to a demagogue enlarging on the evils of tyranny and the vices of kings, and expatiating on liberty and the abstract rights of man. Under such circumstances, and before such an audience, what chance of success could the advocate of submission to legitimate government have against the assertor of unlimited freedom? How easy would it be to denounce the one as the abettor of tyranny, and the enemy of liberty; and to uphold the other as the protector of the poor, and the defender of liberty and the rights of man. Such would be the natural result. Similar to this, is the position in which those are placed who, either in morals or religion, insist on the duty of submission to the judgment of others—nay, the necessity of doing so, preparatory to the full developement of our moral perceptions, and the formation of our moral habits. And the more will this be felt, if men have been suffering under the abuse and undue exercise of the

principle, as exhibited in popery; or if they fear, whether with reason or not, that they are in danger of so suffering. What chance of success, humanly speaking, would such an one have over the man who advocated the unlimited right of private judgment, denounced all interference with it as a violation of a sacred birthright, and professed to stand forward as the champion of Holy Scripture? How easy to represent the one as an enslaver of men's consciences, the extinguisher of human liberty, the defender of popery, and the suppressor of the word of God! How easy to uphold the other as the assertor of the rights of conscience, the friend of liberty of thought, the champion of Protestantism, and the defender of the word of God<sup>a</sup>!

<sup>a</sup> It is a matter of common observation, that, in civil matters, many, while in their hearts abhorring the spirit of democracy, and in nothing more than the tyranny and oppression which are its usual characteristics; and anxious to strengthen the hands of government, if for no other reason, at least for the security thereby afforded to the exercise of rational liberty,—are yet often deterred from expressing their sentiments as freely as they could wish, partly from false shame, partly from real fear—in

Such must be the result of the two principles respectively, when advocated before men who, from habits and education, or from

either case, from the unwillingness to be included in the sweeping charge made against all such by the insolence of the democratic party, and to be denounced and held up as abettors of tyranny and enemies of public liberty.

In like manner, in religious matters, from the arrogant assumption of the exclusive championship of Holy Scripture and of religious liberty, on the part of the advocates of ultra-Protestantism and the Sectarian principle generally, many, while condemning that principle—among other reasons, on account of the tyranny over men's minds, especially in the interpretation of Scripture, of which it is made the instrument,—and upholding the Catholic principle and the authority of the Church, from the protection and liberty thereby afforded in the perusal of Scripture, and the legitimate exercise of conscience,—yet are deterred from expressing their convictions openly, or resisting as they ought the opposite principle, by a dread of encountering the charge, so freely dealt out against them, of being abettors of popery, and enemies of Scripture and the rights of conscience.

In either of these two parallel cases, it requires no ordinary share of moral courage to stand up fearlessly for truth. But as regards the religious part of the question, those who are deterred from defending the truth against its assailants, through fear of the imputations to which it may expose them, would do well to consider our Lord's words, Mark viii. 3—8. Luke x. 16

vitiation by false teachers, are utterly incompetent to form an opinion on such subjects. But whether the decisions of men so situated are to be regarded as any test of truth, may be best answered by reflecting, in regard to the parallel case in civil matters, how far the voice of an ignorant and misguided populace, excited by the misrepresentations of a designing demagogue, and incensed perhaps by an imaginary sense of oppression, is to be regarded as decisive on the complicated questions of government and of laws, and the necessity, even on the lowest utilitarian principle, of surrendering in the social compact some portion of our natural liberty or acquired property, for the purpose of securing the remainder. Or to refer both of these to a third case to which they are strictly analogous, let us ask how far children are the best judges of the degree of restraint and discipline, bodily or moral, necessary for their future health and moral improvement; and how far we should, as their responsible guardians, stop to regard their objections, or consider the pleasure or pain attendant on the course

we thought it our duty to pursue, any rule of its fitness to attain our object, for their best interests and future happiness. The general analogy of nature, and the whole constitution of things as appointed by God, combine in declaring to us, if we will but open our eyes to see it, that the beginnings of all things conducive to our real good, must be attended with a temporary personal sacrifice; and a surrender of our judgment, for a time, to those who, from age and experience, from settled habits and opinions of their own, are competent to form ours. The object of such moral education is to lead us, by early impressions, by habits early formed and tastes early excited, to take pleasure in proper objects<sup>b</sup>. Our natural disposition is averse to such things; and our natural distaste for them, and the reluctance to encounter the course by which that distaste may be removed, varies, not only according to the different constitution and temperament of each, but also

<sup>b</sup> Διὸ δεῖ ἠχθαί πως εὐθὺς ἐκ νέων, ὡς ὁ Πλάτων φησὶν, ὥστε χαίρειν τε καὶ λυπεῖσθαι οἷς δεῖ ἢ γὰρ ὀρθὴ παιδεία αὐτῇ ἐστίν.—Arist. Eth. II. 3.

according to the period at which this course of training begins.

To this statement of our moral nature, as drawn out by the science of Morals, Scripture adds not only its own testimony, but beyond this, full revelations respecting our natural condition—the cause of it—our utter inability of ourselves to think or do any think acceptable to God without him—the need of a new birth, and the infusion into our nature of an entirely new principle of action: and following up, as it were, the voice of God speaking through the philosophy of former days, places the beginning of this new birth at a period earlier still than that which reason would prescribe for the work of renovation, because, acting through a divine power and under a divine promise, she is not circumscribed within those limits by which the powers of reason were necessarily bounded. And although, both in Morals and in the Gospel, the difficulties are greatly overcome by an early commencement, yet to the end, the nature of man remains the same. What is his best interest, must

ever, to a certain extent, be distasteful to him. Though under grace—though his condition is changed, his nature remains the same, and will be ever tempted to break through the barriers which have been placed before it. There is ever need of vigilance, mortification, self-denial, humiliation, deference to an authority and reliance on a power external to himself,—all those things, in fact, which may be said to militate most against what is popularly termed liberty of thought and the rights of conscience.

The heart of man ever requires a protection *against itself*; and in nothing does it require it more, in nothing is it likely to suffer more from the absence of it, than in the glorious privilege which God has given us of reading his will, and in tracing radiations of his heavenly glory, as revealed in Holy Scripture. This protection he has himself given us, in the constitution of the Apostolic Church, and in the relation in which he has made the teaching of that Church stand to Holy Scripture. And it is from violating this relation, as adverted to at

the commencement of these Lectures, that the evils have arisen which have hitherto defaced the fair body of Christ's Church ; nor is it otherwise than by preserving this relation, assigning to the Church and the Scripture respectively their office in the formation of a true faith, that we can ever hope to retain, in its primitive purity, the truth as it is in Jesus.

It is not necessary, at this stage of the subject, to revert, at any length, to the corruptions which have arisen from violating this relation and the harmony which ought to subsist between the Church and Holy Scripture—first, in the erection of Popery, from the suppression of Scripture ; next, in the reign of Sectarianism, with those which follow in its train—Heresy, Rationalism, Socinianism, Infidelity—arising from the suppression of the other divinely-appointed instrument, the teaching of the Church : but it would contribute to enable us to see this more clearly, if we advert briefly to the analogy in this respect between civil and ecclesiastical matters : for there is, in respect

of the points under consideration, a close analogy.

It was observed, that the heart of man requires protection against itself in moral and spiritual matters, as man requires protection against man in secular matters, and in the maintenance of civil rights. In civil matters, we are aware that unlimited liberty is utterly at variance with due security of life and property. The object of good government, and the result of the due observance of our social relations, with the duties involved in them, is to provide the greatest degree of liberty compatible with order, and the greatest security of life and property consistent with rational liberty. Without entering into political discussions, we are aware that, in human society, these objects are best attained by such relations being established between the executive and the governed, whether by popular representation or any other kind of charter, as may enable them to serve as a check one upon the other. What extent of power should be vested in each, is a separate question, depending on the advance each

state may have made in the capacity to bear civil liberty; but one not affecting the present argument, nor at all entering into the analogy, now under consideration, as regards the Church<sup>c</sup>.

Whenever, from the circumstances of a people, both of these are required, it is obvious that the suppression of either, or even the disturbing the balance and relative influence of each which the genius of the nation requires, would be attended with evil consequences either to order or to liberty: that the suppression of the charter must lead to despotism; that the suppression of the government must lead to licentiousness, and thence, by a different road, to tyranny.

To these two, in secular matters, will correspond, in spiritual and ecclesiastical ones, the Church and the Scripture,—not

<sup>c</sup> There is nothing, in the relation of the Church to Holy Scripture, corresponding to the principle which, in civil government, regulates the relative influence of the crown and popular control according to the circumstances of each state, and its capacity to bear civil liberty: a caution to be carefully observed in tracing analogies of this nature. The analogy does not extend to this.

as regards any general analogy, but as regards the questions of government, protection, and the principle of mutual check. The Church is the depository and trustee of Christian doctrine, the appointed instrument for the conversion of the world and the instruction of sinners in the way of life—the executive<sup>d</sup>, so to say, of Christ's kingdom on earth, as well for other acts of government and protection, as also for excluding by spiritual outlawry, and depriving

<sup>d</sup> It must not be forgotten that, in another sense, the Church is also *legislative* and *judicial*; and likewise that, as an independent society, it has its own executive, legislative, and judicial branches, distinct one from the other.

Viewed, however, as executive or legislative in relation to Holy Scripture, Scripture will assume to it the relation—in the one case, of a charter of liberty—in the other, of a coordinate branch of legislature.

This is better expressed in the words of our Church :—  
 “ The Church hath power to decree rites or ceremonies,  
 “ and authority in controversies of faith : and yet it is  
 “ not lawful for the Church to ordain any thing that is  
 “ contrary to God's word written, neither may it so ex-  
 “ pound one place of Scripture, that it be repugnant to  
 “ another. Wherefore, although the Church be a witness  
 “ and a keeper of Holy Writ, yet, as it ought not to decree  
 “ any thing against the same, so besides the same ought  
 “ it not to enforce any thing to be believed for necessity  
 “ of salvation.” Art. XX.

of the privileges and benefits of its community, (which is the limit of its penal powers, as such,) those who will not observe its laws and obey its rulers. It is but a delegated power indeed, as Christ's vicerent, yet having full power from him, with the promise that whatsoever it should bind on earth he would bind in heaven. This power, however, has a limit and a check, in another instrument, also appointed by our Lord, to which the acts and decrees of the Church must be referred, before they are deemed essential to the salvation of its members. That instrument is Holy Scripture. To this have the members of the Church the liberty of appeal; and beyond this the Church cannot go.

The Scripture, on the other hand, while providing this appeal, and furnishing as it were this charter of our Christian liberties, does not profess to originate measures; does not undertake to teach, as doctrine, whatever the wildness or caprice of individual fancy may suggest; but to *prove* to the disciple of Christ what the Church has already taught him—to shew to him the

certainty of the things in which he has been instructed;—to stand forth as the jealous guardian of his liberties on that side, as the Church is on the other. The union of these two sacred instruments in their due proportion, where each retains its relative influence, is like those happily mixed constitutions in civil matters, which combine, as far as human corruption and waywardness will allow, protection and liberty. It gives protection against the human heart, with the exercise of such liberty as our nature can bear; and by its appeal to Scripture, under certain limitations, it affords liberty, without the licentiousness and lawlessness arising from the undue indulgence of the right of private judgment. Now of these two instruments, the suppression or weakening of either, is most prejudicial to the whole fabric of the Christian faith. The suppression of Scripture leads to corruption and tyranny like Popery: the suppression of the authority of the Church leads no less certainly to licentiousness, proceeding through the various grades of heresy, to rationalism and infidelity; and thence back,

perhaps, by a different road, to Popery. These will correspond respectively to despotism and democracy, caused by the suppression,—in the one case of the charter,—in the other of the government.

Popery is despotism in religion, effected by the suppression of our charter, Holy Scripture.

Sectarianism is democracy and republicanism in religion, brought about by the suppression of the Church.

Of the one, we have the exemplification and the proof in the whole history of the Papacy, from which the protecting mercy of God, in his own good time, gave us deliverance.

Of the other, if the history of our own times does not afford the like exemplification, it is because we are in progress to it, rather than have as yet fully arrived at it. May God, of his infinite mercy, grant that our eyes may yet be opened, to see the path into which the judicial blindness, which our sins have brought down, is fast leading us.

The connection, however, between the

two, is not merely one of *analogy*, but also of *principle*.

The principle of Popery is the despotic and servile principle on the part of the ruler and governed respectively: the principle of Sectarianism, is the democratic and republican principle, equally despotic and servile in another shape<sup>e</sup>. Hence arises that union of the two characters, which almost universally presents itself to our notice in individuals, and frequently in nations also. It is not mere accident that unites Popery with despotism and arbitrary government; sectarianism and infidelity with republicanism; and true Apostolic principles with a mixed constitution like our own. And it requires but a moderate acquaintance with the history of our own country to see, that as

<sup>e</sup> From this approximation of extremes to each other, it will not be difficult to trace likewise the parallel, as well as the identity of principle, between the spirit which, in secular matters, has associated nominal republics with despotic governments in their attacks on the liberties of free states; and that which, in religion, has exhibited the corresponding apparent paradox, in our own times and in our own country, of the union of sectarianism with Popery for the overthrow of the Church in these realms.

popular influence has increased and gained strength, so has the authority of Scripture had more influence in determining points of faith. This, to a certain point, was just, and restoring a balance unduly violated previously. But the same history also informs us, that at the time when the spirit of rebellion was at the highest, and the democratic influence most paramount, the authority of the Church in spiritual matters sank with that of the government in secular ones; and that Scripture and the name of God on the one hand, and liberty and the name of the people on the other, were used as pretexts for some of the foulest deeds which pollute the annals of our country.

And to those who are disposed to follow out the analogy further than the time would now allow me to do here, many striking points of resemblance, or rather of identity, will present themselves, of the principle of democracy with that of sectarianism and dissent. Both profess to abide by, while they abuse, the sacred name of liberty. As the one professes to be the sole champion of public liberty, so does

the other profess to be, of the rights of conscience. As the one arrogates to itself the sole claim to the title of friend of the people, so does the other that of the advocate of Holy Scripture, and the honour of God as involved in that. As the one denounces its political opponents as the abettors of tyranny, so does the other charge those who oppose it with favouring Popery. As the one uses the name of liberty and the people, to establish its own power on the ruins of that which it would overthrow, so does the other use the name of Scripture, the plea of conscience, and the right of private judgment, to establish a spiritual despotism, more oppressive, if possible, than the tyranny of Rome<sup>f</sup>.

<sup>f</sup> Unhappily, our own times and country furnish us daily with too many instances of this, to render it necessary to do more than merely allude to them for the purpose of proof and illustration. This will be obvious to any one who has observed with an ordinary degree of attention the jesuitical attempts of sectarians to advance from toleration, through equality, to supremacy and universal dominion; as also the tyranny and oppression exercised over their own members, which, to those enjoying the liberty afforded in the Apostolic Church, seem scarcely credible. To shew how far the same was real-

This is the last point of analogy to which the time would now allow us to advert.

ized in past times, when, for once, sectarians did obtain supremacy, would be but to transcribe the history of the Rebellion and the Commonwealth. For a summary, however, of the events of those times, exhibiting in its true colours the persecuting spirit of sectarianism, the reader is referred to the chapter on the "Sufferings of the Clergy," in the *Life of Hammond*, by the Rev. W. Hone, in his interesting work on the *Lives of Eminent Christians*, in which the subject is forcibly and feelingly treated.

The faithfulness of the following portrait, in its main features, will be readily recognised even in our own day.

"In truth, the furious outcry raised by the Calvinistic faction of that age against Archbishop Laud, as a *Popish* persecutor, furnishes us with a singular illustration of the deceitfulness of the human heart, or of the hardness of the human forehead. For, of all the repulsive peculiarities of the holy discipline, as it exhibited itself in his time, there was none perhaps so remarkable, as its coarse, hard-featured resemblance to that very Popery which was the object of its professed abhorrence. The Presbyterian system was, in its original principles, as sternly and avowedly intolerant as the pontifical chair. It extended no hope of salvation beyond the pale of its own communion. It affected a dominion paramount to all earthly magistracy. It proclaimed a war of extermination against heresy. It was ready to compass earth and sea for proselytes. Violence and terror were employed to establish its claim to infallibility. And if Popery had its Council of Trent, Calvinism had its Synod of Dort. If it abjured the idolatry of the mass, it may fairly be

And here, as in others, it will be seen, from the protection which the constitution of the Apostolic Church affords us, both against ourselves and against the tyranny of self-appointed teachers, how mercifully it has been framed with reference to our wants.

In reverting, in conclusion, to what was advanced at the commencement of these

“said to have found a substitute in the ordinance of  
 “preaching; for, to the Presbyterian, the sermon was  
 “almost as much the life and soul of public worship, as  
 “the sacrifice of the Eucharist was to the Romanist. If  
 “it renounced the *merit* of ritual observances, it seemed  
 “to indemnify itself by setting up instead the *merit* of  
 “neglecting them. If the Pope claimed power to hurl  
 “monarchs from their thrones, the Presbytery, in like  
 “manner, held itself commissioned to denounce them as  
 “traitors to the majesty of the people, and enemies to  
 “God. If the Pope could proclaim, that to keep faith  
 “with heretics was to be false to the Church, the Pres-  
 “bytery could declare, precisely in the same spirit, that  
 “oaths were nullities whenever they tended to the detri-  
 “ment of the holy cause. Nay, if the Pontiff grasped  
 “the keys of St. Peter, the Presbytery wielded the  
 “sceptre of Christ himself. And, lastly, to complete  
 “the similitude, if the Romish discipline transferred the  
 “care of his own conscience from the sinner to the  
 “priest, very similar to this was the effect of the system  
 “of Geneva.”—*Life of Archbishop Laud, by C. W. Le Bas,*  
*M. A.*

Lectures, respecting the subject of them, and the circumstances which rendered it important to be considered at the present time, a few remarks remain to be offered both for our encouragement and caution, and with reference to the bearing of such discussions on the present and future prospects of the Church.

It was observed, that the circumstances in which the Church is now placed, call upon us to take some decisive measures with reference to the laxity of the principles of the day on ecclesiastical subjects, and to arrest the rapidly increasing corruption of pure doctrine, and the no less rapid increase of heresy and heretical principles generally, as well as of Socinianism and Socinian principles in particular; that we are placed in a situation analogous to that in which the Church was placed previous to the Reformation, in respect of departure from true principles; (practically, at least, for we still profess to hold them;) but with this difference in our time, that whereas the evils then arose from the suppression of Scripture, those of our day arise from

the virtual suppression of the teaching of the Church, and the denial of the Church's authority. The helps which formerly availed against the corruptions of Popery, now, from change of circumstance, no longer avail us against the spirit of heresy and rationalism. In former times, when there were few who were not Catholics, and the claims of the Church were admitted, there was little need, while asserting the authority of Scripture, to contend much for that of the Church. Not that the English Reformers lost sight of the latter, as is obvious from their own declarations on the subject; nor, had they said less on that subject than they did, would it have affected the question, considering the circumstances under which they were placed. But that they fully admitted and acted upon those principles, is clear, not only from their own declarations, but from the circumstance, that while asserting the sufficiency of Holy Scripture, and the right of appealing to it for the proof of the things to be believed, they were content with proofs in Scripture, indirect and by implication, against which

objections are *now* urged, both as being insufficient in themselves, and as having, moreover, against them the antecedent improbability of being designed so to teach and prove, on the assumption that Scripture was designed to be the teacher as well as the proof of Christian doctrine. The barrier which they thus erected of Scripture was, on their principle, sufficient for the purpose of purifying the faith of the corruptions which had defiled it. It served to throw off whatever would not pass its ordeal, though it allowed to pass, on proofs indirect and by implication, such articles of faith as could exhibit the stamp of Catholic antiquity, and might be assumed to have been sufficiently familiar to the sacred writer and those whom he addressed, to account for those indirect and apparently faint allusions, which would not be allowed the same force of proof, if the *first intimation*, as well as the *proof*, was to be gathered from Scripture alone. In this way, while the anti-catholic and anti-scriptural corruptions of Popery were discarded, there were allowed to pass the test, Infant Baptism,

Baptismal Regeneration, the sacramental efficacy of the Eucharist, Episcopal authority, and Apostolical succession. To which we might add, in the judgment of many, the divinity of the Word and of the Spirit, and the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity.

Things however are now changed. The Sixth Article no longer serves to protect us; since all will admit it, even while denying the points of faith which the Church receives on its authority. They will not allow the Church to read her own Article, and interpret her own declarations, in her own sense §. First, there are those,

§ In a note appended to a former Lecture, (p. 150.) allusion was made to the inconsistency and unfairness of those who, while professing to abide by the Sixth Article of our Church, yet always overlook or disregard the clause “In the name of the Holy Scripture we do understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church” —which involves an admission of their entire dependence on the Traditional testimony of the Church for the genuineness of the Scriptures themselves.

A similar instance of unfairness and inconsistency occurs in the case now under consideration, in which they take upon themselves to interpret the clause, “Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation,” as predicating of the Scripture, that it is the *guide* as well

even within the communion of our Church, to our shame and sorrow be it said, who will deny that Baptismal regeneration will pass the test of the Sixth Article, or episcopacy, or the sacramental efficacy of the Eucharist. Well then—the erroneous principle of conciliating by conceding points of difference leads to the abandonment of these. Then, following up the principle, others will complain that we allow the divinity of the Son and Holy Spirit to pass the test, and will deny that it can do so; as was stated in the passages from Milton and the modern Socinians, quoted in the second Lecture: and how these latter are to be replied to, if the argument of the former class be admitted, it as the *standard* of faith: whereas, would they but go on to the remaining clause of the sentence, viz., “so that “whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved “thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should “be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation”—which assigns to the former its proper force as declaratory of the sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for salvation—they would see the meaning and intention of the framers of the article, in erecting this, as it were, the barrier on the side of Popery, as the testimony of the Church is on the side of Heresy and Sectarianism. The first clause enunciates the decision of the Reformers; the second defines its meaning.

is not easy to say. After these follow others, protesting against allowing the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity to pass the barrier, and denying that it can do so. In the train of these follow others, each denying the sufficiency of proof in Scripture, for such articles of faith, as his fears or interests lead him to wish to be untrue. Thus the body of Christ, in its passage through the Sectarian band, is torn limb from limb, deprived of its vitality, the residue, after these successive mutilations, being but a dead unmeaning nothing, to which all or any may lay claim, without indeed involving any difference or dispute, inasmuch as there is nothing of shape or substance on which a difference of opinion could arise. Yet all these, the while, call themselves Christians! Their faith they term a belief in Christianity! They all profess to concur in the Sixth Article of our Church!

And what has occurred to produce this? The virtual suppression of the Church's teaching; the denial of the Church's authority in matters of faith; the losing sight of the circumstance that the Christian

Scriptures are written *for* Christians, and addressed *to* Christians, and that they presuppose, in the reader, at least elementary instruction in the doctrines of which they speak, and therefore speak in the way of allusion, as to things so far known and familiar; and that, on this principle, we are content with allusions and proofs by implication, where, on the supposition that Scripture was our first instructor and only guide, we should, with the Sectarian, and on his principle, not feel satisfied without more full and direct statements.

These evils then having arisen from the suppression of the Church's authority and teaching, and the undue *relative* preponderance assigned to Scripture, as the *teacher* of doctrine, distinguished from its authority as *proof subsequently*, our object must be to restore the balance between the two sacred instruments, and to assign to each its due office in the formation of a pure faith. This is no easy task, because we have arrayed against us the Sectarian and the Rationalist, as well as many adopting their respective principles within the pale of the

Church—the one maintaining that our principle is unscriptural, and derogatory to the sufficiency of the Holy Scripture; the other, objecting to it as irrational, unphilosophical, unfavourable to the progress of truth and free inquiry, opposed to the nature of man, and hostile to the development and full exercise of his moral and mental powers. In reply to these, it has been attempted to be shewn, in these Lectures, that the Church's principle of biasing the mind before giving the Bible to read, is perfectly Scriptural, conformable to the general analogy of things, adapted to the moral nature of man, and conformable with the principle observed in all moral instruction; while the identity of the views, in favour of which the Church now prejudices the minds of her children, with those asserted to have been taught by the Apostles themselves, and with reference to which their writings were penned, was alleged to be proved by that on which we are compelled to rest the genuineness of Scripture itself, viz. the universal testimony of the Church: that the objections

urged against the one, lie against the other also; and that the seeming objections against both, only served to denote in both their analogy and conformity to the laws of moral evidence, and to mark their adaptation to our moral nature, and their suitableness to our condition as moral and responsible beings.

Nor need it be thought an objection, that the Church be deemed the object of defence, rather than Christianity itself. It is upon the Church, and not upon Christianity generally, that the attacks are made by the Rationalist and Sectarian: and this, for a very obvious reason. In former times, Christianity and the Church were nearly synonymous terms; and in attacking the Church, Christianity itself was also assailed. Now, however, from the multiplicity and daily increasing number of Sects, all of whom, no matter how far removed from the Apostles' doctrine, still call themselves Christians, it happens that those to whom the main or any doctrines of the Gospel are a stumblingblock, have no need to object to Christianity itself, or renounce it in name, there being always some Sect to

which they can profess to belong, and in which they can retain the name of Christian, however virtually they may have forfeited their claim to it: and generally speaking, men are not disposed to go the whole length of opposing the opinions of the generality, if it can be avoided. But in the midst of this apostasy, the Church, continuing to hold the primitive Catholic faith, in all its purity and entireness, receives the brunt of the assaults, which were formerly directed against Christianity itself. And since Scripture alone, from the nature of the case, will not defend her faith against those who conceive they have formed theirs by that rule, and since she therefore professes to have another guide, which, together with Scripture, forms her rule of faith,—this other guide becomes the object of attack on the part of her enemies; which it has been my object to vindicate in these Lectures. It does not therefore rest with ourselves, whether the attention of men shall be called to what are termed Church principles; that being already done by the attacks made on our faith, which

can only be replied to, against the Sectarian and Rationalist's argument, by a declaration of the principle on which we defend it, and which forms the specific feature which distinguishes us from them. We are compelled, therefore, to call the attention of men to these principles, even though the only object to be attained by it were our own defence. We may, however, hope that other benefits, and those of the greatest moment to the progress of evangelical truth, may flow from the discussion of them, which the last few years have witnessed. Two of these in particular should be mentioned.

I. As regards many nominally in our communion, as well as many without, there can be no question that, for a long period prior to the close of the last century, real evangelical preaching was at a very low ebb in the Church in this country. Without entering into the causes which led to a revival of spiritual religion, it is well known that attention was much called to it by those who had separated from the communion of the Church. From this, it was not

unnatural that spiritual religion should by the unreflecting and ignorant be identified with dissent. When further taken up by men, not indeed out of our communion, but men whose principles approximated materially to those of Sectarians, it was not unnatural that spirituality even *in* the Church, should be associated with the idea of laxity on the subject of Church discipline and Apostolic authority; and that orthodoxy and Church principles should, by those ignorant of their nature, be deemed lifeless and devoid of spirituality, as political rather than ecclesiastical or spiritual: and this impression has, from various causes, too long prevailed. Those, however, who have given their attention to orthodoxy and Church principles, are aware that they are the most inspiring, invigorating,—the most spiritual and evangelical; not robbing men of those spiritual views which dissent and latitudinarianism profess to open to them, but giving these views, only more spiritual, offering in a purer form, that which the other could but offer in a spurious one.

Without passing any judgment on those

whose efforts first seemed to lead the way to more active Christianity, or defending those whose lifeless professed orthodoxy is said to have been the cause which called them into being, we may ask, what will be the probable effect of the revival among us, of pure Church principles in the true and Apostolic sense of the word? Nay, what does not experience begin to suggest, in addition to the antecedent probability of it? That it will purify the Church,—that it will try the spirits of men,—that those who, either wholly or in part, departed from Catholic principles under the impression that they were lifeless, unspiritual, political rather than religious,—that these, when they find that true Church principles, fairly carried out, are more spiritual, more evangelical, more supporting in the hour of need, than the spurious excitement produced by dissent and Sectarian principles, will come back with heart and soul to the bosom of the Church, and that much zeal and piety now lost to the Church, may, under grace, be won back to it. While on the other hand, those who

adopted Sectarian views from motives of pride, as is frequently the case—first, as involving the assumed right of judging and choosing for themselves, so acceptable to the pride of the natural man ; next, as affording the means, which in the Church they could not have possessed, of acquiring notoriety and influence as the leaders of a party, the little popes as it were of a little circle,—these will naturally be exasperated at the establishment of principles, which would extinguish their undue importance by merging them in the great body of the Church catholic, and put an end to their spurious influence, by removing that on which it rests ; like the political demagogue, who, while inveighing against bad government, is still more afraid of good government, which, by correcting abuses, removes, with them, the foundation of his influence.

Another important result, to which we may not unreasonably look forward, from the revival and re-establishment of true Church principles, is one which regards the members of the Roman Catholic Church, and its probable influence in recalling

them to a purer faith. To this must every sincere Christian look with deep interest. As yet, little has been done towards their reformation; to which many causes have contributed, over which we may have had no control. But may it not be owing, in a great degree, to the manner in which their creed is spoken of by many, and which, indirectly at least, receives our sanction? Let us not palliate what is really sinful and opposed to God's word; but let us regard the matter impartially, and place ourselves in imagination in their position:—convinced that they hold much that is true; that we ourselves allow it to be so: that we admit their orders and succession, while we repudiate those of Sectarians: that, as to Israel, however they may have abused the privilege, to them were committed the oracles of God: that our own Reformers, by whom we profess to stand, held much in common with them, which we *profess* to hold, but which in *practice* we virtually renounce: that they are assailed by every violence of language, having things imputed which they disown; having charged

upon them, as sinful errors, things which even we nominally hold : that many things which we hold in common with them, yet if we avow openly, are, from popular ignorance, charged on us as sin also : and that many, far more removed from us than they are, in corruptions of the faith, are yet received by us as brethren, though joined to us by hardly any other bond than the negative one of difference with them ; nay, that we reckon among these, many of whom the Apostle would have said *Anathema maranatha*. Let us consider all this calmly and dispassionately ; and can we wonder that they should look with coldness and suspicion on those who place themselves in such a relation to them ?

Can we expect that they will forego their chivalrous devotion to their own Church, and renounce hereditary feelings and prejudices for that cold selfish Sectarianism, from which every thing noble and generous would seem to be excluded ? Can we wonder that they should prefer their own faith, with all its corruptions, to that unmeaning ultra-protestantism,

which, having little more in common with us than with them, has no distinctive feature in itself, nor bond of union between its several members, but that of disagreement with them? that they should prefer even the superstitions and vanities of their own creed, where Christ is still worshipped as God, and the sacraments deemed channels and pledges of grace, to that profane indifference to Apostolic doctrine, and disregard of Apostolic injunction, which, while denouncing them as Antichrist, hails in bonds of Christian fellowship those who deny the Lord that bought them, and of whom they are told in the Scripture, which we also *profess* to hold in reverence as the word of God, that they receive them not into their house, neither bid them God speed? When they behold in *us* such inconsistency and contradiction between profession and practice, may they not find in this a plea to do the like, and content themselves with the reflection, that *their* profession, whether error or not, is, like *our own*, not always in practice acted upon? Is it too much to believe that there

is yet in the bosom of the Roman Church a Fenelon or a Pascal;—that there is yet many an one who, though aware, in a great degree, of the errors of his Church, yet regards them through the medium of filial reverence, and with the leniency of filial affection;—that he sees whatever therein is fair and good, and loves it too well to be abandoned for that of which he knows not the value, or even the nature; and will therefore wait for better times, and a better spirit towards him than that he now experiences? Can we expect him to renounce the faith in which he was born and educated, in which his fathers lived and died, without offering what is to him a better and purer one? And it must be remembered, that those principles are so absorbing, whether right or not, that one who holds them at all, will retain them in error, rather than embrace a system which embodies them in no shape whatever.

Looking at the associations avowedly formed for their conversion, and for promoting what are erroneously termed the principles of the Reformation,—the spirit

by which they are actuated,—the persons of whom they are composed,—not even necessarily baptized persons;—in other societies, the official seat at their board, and the official voice in the direction of their operations, assigned to the authors of heresy and schism, (from which we *profess* daily to pray for deliverance,)—could we judge harshly of the Romanist, if he recoiled, with feelings of something beyond mere distrust, from such advances? Could we blame him if he experienced, in reference to his Church and its self-styled reformers, the feelings which elicited from the eloquent and patriotic statesman, in reference to his country, the sentiment that “to avoid the evils of inconstancy and versatily, ten thousand times worse than those of obstinacy and the blindest prejudice, we have consecrated the State, that no man should approach to look into its defects or corruptions, but with due caution; that he should never dream of beginning its reformation by its subversion; that he should approach to the faults of the State, as to the wounds of

“ a father, with pious awe and trembling  
“ solicitude. By this wise prejudice, we  
“ are taught to look with horror on those  
“ children of their country, who are  
“ prompt, rashly to hack that aged parent  
“ in pieces, and to put him into the  
“ kettle of magicians, in hopes that, by  
“ their poisonous weeds and wild incan-  
“ tations, they may regenerate the paternal  
“ constitution, and renovate their father’s  
“ life.”<sup>h</sup>

But if we, without relaxing the great principle of the Reformation—the right of appeal to Holy Scripture—would but carry out the principles which we profess to hold, and which our Church did also in practice hold, till puritanism, and the profligate age which succeeded it, dealt such deadly blows against them; if we admit the legitimate authority of the Church—that with which Scripture itself records it to have been invested—our limit being the concurrence of the written word; if we listen patiently to the presumptive claims

<sup>h</sup> Burke, *on the French Revolution*.

of Antiquity, not as to be implicitly received, but with respect due to the voice of Antiquity, as such, still reserving the right of comparing it afterwards with Holy Scripture; and if, in our differences with the Romanist arising hence, we are content to argue with him on his own ground, not disputing the claims of his church, as such, but questioning the grounds on which he would here apply them; proceeding in a Christian spirit; beginning, if he wishes, with the claims which his church ought to have on her children from her mere existence, till found to be false; trying this, and tracing with him the stream upwards, shewing him how and when it became polluted,—that his present error was not held by those whose authority he professes to take; and thus, while removing his false prop, giving, by gentle hand, a better, a surer testimony of Antiquity, crowning it by the testimony of Holy Scripture;—is it altogether visionary to hope that he may be led to reconsider his errors, and that his branch may yet be reabsorbed into the purer portion of the one Holy Catholic

Church? § If such a blessed result may not be looked for, we shall at least have done that which the word of God warrants, and which Christian prudence would suggest, as affording the greatest room for expecting to reclaim him. And, what is of no less moment for us to consider, we shall have done much towards removing from our own souls the guilt, which there may be too much ground to fear now lies against them, of confirming him in error by our treatment of him, and the exhibition of our own inconsistency, and of making ourselves thereby partakers of his sin.

Whether or no, however, any of these beneficial results may flow from the revival, in a pure form, of sound Church principles, our duty and course is independent of that result. Let us do our best, and leave the issue, however discouraging, in God's hands. At the same time, the prospect of success

§ The reformation of individual Romanists, to which this refers, leaves alone the question whether the Roman Church will ever be reformed *as a Church*, and as such record its reformation by any formal decree or solemn act of renunciation; or whether, as a Church, it stands irrevocably committed, as some think, by its own decrees.

should not be left out of the account in shaping our views, were the time and mode of acting left to our own discretion. But here, as was observed, we have no choice : the course is forced upon us by the circumstances in which we live. Still we may, as we should, be cautious and wary, combining the wisdom of the serpent with the simplicity of the dove. There will ever be those who either want the mind to understand our principles, or the honesty not to misrepresent them. By these we shall be accused of leaning to Popery, and of weakening the reverence for, and detracting from the authority of Holy Scripture. That they should do this, involves no objection to the principles themselves, because, as was observed, pride brooks no restraint ; and to the lovers of license, any restriction on their interpretation of Scripture is an offence, as the restraint of civil powers is a grievance to the turbulent and self-willed. But if any sincere and humble minded weak brother should be offended, let us deal tenderly and charitably with him, standing fast indeed in our Christian liberty,

but taking heed, lest, by any means, this liberty of ours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak.

But as to any charge of undervaluing Scripture, because the circumstances of our day require us rather to advocate, *in comparison*, the authority of the Church,—on that principle St. Paul might be accused of making light of good works, or St. James of denying the doctrine of justification by faith, because the circumstances in which they respectively wrote, required them to urge in particular the points they respectively enforced. If we do not doubt that the two Apostles agreed in that great doctrine, and that each would have expressed himself as the other did, had their circumstances been reversed, as little can we doubt that those who, at the Reformation, advocated the authority and sufficiency of Scripture, and those who now advocate the authority of the Church and the Church's teaching, had the same object in view, and would have expressed themselves each in the same way, had they been placed in the same circumstances.

Still we require caution, and every exercise of Christian prudence, that we do not defeat our object, nor eventually retard the cause of truth by being too precipitate; lest, from haste or want of judgment, we cause offence, and thence create a reaction in favour of sectarianism, analogous to that caused by the violence of Popery, from the effects of which we are even yet suffering. These liabilities to error we cannot utterly avoid; to the end it must be, while the agents are human; nor is it any objection to a system, that it is liable to it. Our duty is to guard against it as much as possible, both by checking our own personal tendencies, and, which is no less important, by taking heed lest we personally cause offence—lest we create in the minds of others, by our own temper or conduct, a feeling which almost unavoidably in their minds will transfer itself from us to the principles we advocate. Our personal life and conversation, our mode of advocating and recommending our principles, will have an influence in advancing or retarding them, for which we shall be responsible. The tone

and temper necessary for this, is only to be obtained by cultivating Christian principles, by holy living, by watchfulness and prayer, by frequent study of Holy Scripture, and imbibing from it its spirit. Herein is one of the many blessed advantages of reading Holy Scripture, beyond the mere proof of doctrines. Against the heretic and sectarian we are obliged to assert the authority of the Church, and to guard with some jealousy the relation in which, by our Lord's appointment, as declared in Holy Scripture, that Scripture stands to the Christian doctrines. But to those truly in communion with us, the war of controversy may cease; and we may turn to Holy Scripture, not with a jealous fear, lest weak, unstable, or proud, they should wrest it to their own destruction—not merely to prove a doctrine or refute error—but to trace out its practical relation as exhibited in Holy Scripture—to deepen the impression on our hearts—to purify our souls—to imbibe its spirit—and especially, in reference to the present subject, that spirit of charity towards the ignorance, prejudices, and way-

wardness of others, which “suffereth long  
“and is kind; that vaunteth not itself, is  
“not puffed up, doth not behave itself un-  
“seemly, seeketh not its own, is not easily  
“provoked, thinketh no evil, beareth all  
“things, hopeth all things, endureth all  
“things.”

For, lastly, another consideration which ought to weigh much with us in enforcing the duty of patience and moderation in the establishment of our principles is, that the faults which led to the errors into which men have fallen, are our own work, i. e. that of the Church, of which we, as members, and communicating one with another, are partakers: we must therefore bear with much, as though we were bearing with ourselves and our own sins. What if we think ourselves less culpable than those who have gone before us? We know not if we are; and even were it so, it is but in harmony with all God's dispensations, natural and revealed, that we suffer without reference to that. Judah was carried into captivity for sins which their fathers had committed, but the penalty of which they seemed to

suffer. Yet if they filled up the iniquity of their fathers, why should not we? Certainly, in the mysterious counsels of God, the human race seems regarded as *one*; and his object seems attained, if it be fulfilled to one generation. It was thus in reference to the flood, the captivity, the filling up iniquity; and thus also will it be in the fulfilment of the prophecy, that “the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.”

But be that as it may, we do participate, through this mysterious partnership, in sins which we have apparently not committed, and in blessings which we certainly have not earned. Others have laboured, and we have entered into their labours; and, by the same appointment, we must be content to labour, though others shall enter into it and reap its fruits? Let us be satisfied that our Lord's kingdom *does* come, content to receive the blessing through faith, and enjoy it through the communion of saints. If time is no object in God's counsels, why should we be impatient

to see the termination of the work of our own little span of life? If four thousand years were not deemed too much to prepare the way for the fulness of time, before the coming of the promised Deliverer; if four hundred years were not too much for the fulfilment of the promise to the Patriarch, that his seed should inherit the land; on what principle shall we justify impatience, or think that God has forgotten us, or that his promise has failed and come to an end? If the Patriarch could look forward in faith to the period when in his seed the nations of the earth should be blessed; if, through the vista of centuries—in number even more than have since witnessed its fulfilment—he could see that day and be glad,—how does this not rebuke the sluggishness of our faith? Let us rather reflect—and while we do so, it may serve to nourish and increase our faith in the ultimate triumph of the kingdom of Christ,—that while, with those of former years, it has been given to us to hear and see those blessed things which prophets and kings had in vain desired to hear and see,

we have also a blessedness, which even the Apostles shared not on earth, save through faith—the experience of eighteen centuries, attesting the faithfulness of the promise, that He is with us always, even to the end of the world.







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