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THE CONFIRMATION OF FAITH

BY

REASON AND AUTHORITY.

THE HULSEAN LECTURES,

PREACHED BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE IN 1852.

BY THE

REV. GEORGE CURREY, B.D.,

PREACHER AT THE CHARTERHOUSE,
FORMERLY FELLOW AND TUTOR OF ST JOHN'S COLLEGE.

CAMBRIDGE: JOHN DEIGHTON;

MACMILLAN & Co.

LONDON: F. AND J. RIVINGTON.

M.DCCC.LIII.

TO THE

REV. RICHARD OKES, D.D.,

PROVOST OF KING'S COLLEGE,
AND VICE-CHANCELLOR IN THE YEAR 1851—1852,

TO THE

REV. WILLIAM WHEWELL, D.D., F.R.S.,

MASTER OF TRINITY COLLEGE,

AND TO THE

REV. RALPH TATHAM, D.D.,

MASTER OF ST JOHN'S COLLEGE,

THESE LECTURES

DELIVERED BY THEIR APPOINTMENT

ARE RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED.

THE REV. JOHN HULSE, M.A., by his will bearing date July 21, 1777, founded a Lectureship in the University of Cambridge, to be held by a Clergyman in the University of the degree of Master of Arts, and under the age of forty years: the Lecturer to be elected annually on Christmas-day, or within seven days after, by the Vice-Chancellor, the Master of Trinity College, and the Master of St John's College, or any two of them: the subject of the Lectures to be as follows; "The evidence of Revealed Religion; the Truth and Excellence of Christianity; the Prophecies and Miracles; direct or collateral proofs of the Christian Religion, especially the collateral arguments; the more difficult texts, or obscure parts of Holy Scripture;" or any one or more of these topics, at the discretion of the Lecturer.



CONTENTS.

LECTURE I.

MODERN INFIDELITY.

EPHES. VI. 12.

	PAGE
<i>We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.</i>	1

LECTURE II.

REASON AND AUTHORITY.

ISAIAH XLIII. 8, 9.

<i>Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears. Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled: Who among them can declare this, and shew us former things? let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified; or let them hear and say, It is truth.</i> . . .	30
--	----

LECTURE III.

THE WORD OF GOD.

JAMES I. 21.

<i>Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.</i>	59
--	----

LECTURE IV.

INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE.

2 TIM. III. 16.

	PAGE
<i>All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.</i>	84

LECTURE V.

THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH.

2 TIM. I. 12.

<i>I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.</i>	113
---	-----

LECTURE VI.

SIN.

S. MATTH. IX. 13.

<i>I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance</i>	144
---	-----

LECTURE VII.

THE INCARNATION.

S. JOHN I. 14.

<i>The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.</i>	174
--	-----

LECTURE VIII.

THE ATONEMENT.

JOHN I. 29.

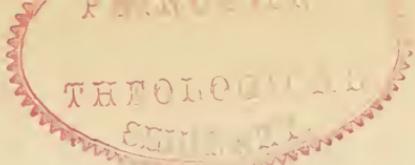
*Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of
the world.* 204

LECTURE IX.

GRACE.

S. JOHN XVII. 17.

Sanctify them through thy truth. 240



LECTURE I.

MODERN INFIDELITY.

EPHES. VI. 12.

We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

THE passage with which my text is connected carries us back to the time when the Apostle was engaged in the conflict here described, when he “fought with beasts at Ephesus¹,” and preached the word to the Thessalonians “in much affliction²,” when he approved himself a minister of Christ, in labours, in stripes, in prisons, and in deaths³; “troubled on every side, yet not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed⁴,” when tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, and the sword; when principalities and powers conspired, yet conspired in vain, to separate the first preachers of the Gospel from the love of Christ Jesus

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 32.

² 1 Thess. i. 6.

³ 2 Cor. xi. 23.

⁴ 2 Cor. iv. 8, 9.

our Lord¹. But we shall have a very imperfect appreciation of the passage we are now considering if we limit its application to the times at which S. Paul wrote. He speaks therein of a battle which was then raging, of a warfare in which he himself bore part; but the very nature of the conflict is sufficient to convince us that it neither commenced nor ceased with the Apostle and his contemporaries, for they wrestled, as our text informs us, with the ruler of the darkness of this world, and with the evil spirits in the regions of the air: for such is confessedly the sense of the latter words in the original (*τὰ πνευματικὰ τῆς πονηρίας ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις*).

The history of mankind will shew that this warfare has been going on from the earliest ages, and our own experience will convince us that it is going on now. Therefore may we with confidence derive from the inspired language of the Apostle instruction as to the mode in which we are to do valiantly, support amid the labours of the contest, and assurance of ultimate triumph over our foes.

The great aim of the adversary is at all times to cut us off from Christ, to whom we are united by faith, but the plan of his attacks is very varied. At one time, he would turn

¹ Rom. viii. 35.

aside and entice us by the lusts of the flesh, and by demoralizing, unchristianize, the world—for “the carnal mind is enmity against God¹.” At another time, by the subtleties of vain philosophy he would delude and mislead, if by any means he may draw us off from the wisdom which is not of this world. Or again, by the introduction of heresies and schisms would perplex and distract us, and substitute envyings, railing, and accusation, for the righteousness, and peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghost, which characterize the kingdom of God. He appeals in turn to our appetites, our reason, and our passions, for he knows that every part of the soul is obnoxious to temptation. And as every individual is in the course of his life to some extent subjected to each of these classes of temptations, but not to each in the same degree; the chief trial of one, being to master his appetites, of another, to discipline his reason, and of a third, to control his passions: so we observe that at different periods of the Christian Church the heat of the battle has been sustained at different parts of the field, while lesser engagements have been taking place in other quarters. The main point of attack is not very long the same. Now it is reckless licentiousness and

¹ Rom. viii. 7.

bold lawlessness, and now cold indifference and decent scepticism, which obstruct our path. We are called upon to defend, at one time the more mysterious doctrines, at another the very elements of our faith. But there is also a striking alternation in this respect. The battle is again and again renewed where for a time it seemed to slacken, and the efforts of the combatants are required again and again where the battle has been already fought over, and (it may have been thought) decided. In all worketh the same "mystery of iniquity¹," to the condemnation of those who believe not the truth, and have pleasure in unrighteousness. The Christian warrior must then put on the whole armour of God, that he may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil, to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked, to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand².

These remarks may not inappropriately introduce a course of Lectures like the present, the subject of which is, to a certain extent, limited by the terms of the foundation. The discussion of the Evidences of Christianity has of late, it must be confessed, failed to awaken the same interest which it created at the time at which the founder of this Lec-

¹ 2 Thess. ii. 7.

² Eph. vi. 13.

ture made his bequest. It has been deemed a more pressing need to substantiate the claims of the peculiar form in which we embrace Christianity, than to examine the common basis upon which our Church and all national Churches stand, or at least to dwell more upon the constitution and authority of the Church Catholic, than upon the evidences of the faith of which this Church is the depositary. Interesting as these questions are, and closely connected with the prescribed subject-matter of our enquiry, it must be a very hasty and superficial view of the times we live in, which fails to discover tokens of a coming necessity for conducting our warfare with the powers of evil upon a somewhat different footing. The weapons which have been wielded so successfully by Cudworth, Butler, Paley, and others, must ere long be brought forth into common use, and the battle which they fought renewed. This consideration may well induce the friends of religion to close up their ranks, and, waiving minor differences, march on in firm and united ranks against the common enemy of our faith.

The last half century has seen infidelity assume in a neighbouring country the most varied forms. The shape now most prevalent is that of a pantheistic philosophy, which

views the universe as a manifestation of the Deity, and recognizes no essential distinction between the animate and inanimate creation, no fundamental difference between good and evil, but merges all individuality in the operation of one mighty whole. Nor has the extravagance of speculation stopped even here. There has sprung up in Germany a class of writers professing open hostility to the Christian religion; nay, to the very name of religion itself. Writer has succeeded to writer, each exceeding the other in reckless impiety. Even the rule of love to man has been abandoned, and no principle left but self-love to be the guide of all man's actions—nothing of hope beyond the exercise of this principle during the few years of a mortal life! I have set before you this appalling

¹ “As Strauss thought to rescue his countrymen from a myth which they deemed history, and Bauer to free them from ‘developed Christianity,’ so Feuerbach would deliver them from the dream of religion in general. One negative spirit soon outstripped another. Feuerbach had not long appeared, before he, like Strauss, found himself outbid. Max Stirner came forth with his book on ‘The Individual and his Property,’ and rates Feuerbach as a bigot, for still holding to an idol, in preaching ‘Love to man.’ Even this religion must fall down before—Egoism! The installation of this principle is as yet the final result of our process of criticism, destitute alike of real depth of thought, and of an active, healthy tone of moral feeling.”—Hundeshagen's *Deutsche Protestantismus*, Frankf. 1850, p. 207.

picture, drawn by one of their own countrymen, because the influence of such opinions must inevitably soon reach, if they have not already reached, our own land. The literary labours of one nation have at all times had some effect upon its neighbours. In the present day the means and opportunities of circulating all writings are so multiplied that we have good reason for apprehending a rapid and wide dissemination of all that may touch upon any topic of common interest, provided it be put in a novel and popular form.

And further, an advanced state of civilization will at all times bring with it increased intellectual activity, and extended diffusion of knowledge. These blessings (which when rightly understood we cannot value too highly) are not pure and unalloyed. For the enemy is at all times permitted to sow tares among the wheat. In times of ignorance it seems that morality is alone at stake, and that men are little disposed to question the doctrine which they will not obey. But the moral and intellectual perceptions are so intimately connected that the one cannot be disturbed without the derangement of the other; and immorality which ignores the truth has ever been found to lead swiftly and surely to infidelity which denies it.

The ignorance and immorality in which great masses of the population of this country are growing up have long been subjects of deep anxiety to all thoughtful men, and we cannot pretend that the remedies which have been applied or proposed have adequately met these great and crying wants. Still, knowledge of some kind is extending itself to all classes of society, and it is needless to say, how ill-prepared the minds of those whose education has been neglected must be to discern the nature of the intellectual food set before them. And, besides those who have been left absolutely without education there is a large class of the half-educated, who have received a certain amount of mental instruction, accompanied by little or no moral training, to whose hearts religion has not been brought home as an essential element of education. Persons whose minds have been awakened from partial or total inactivity are generally inclined, in the first instance, to doubt and deny. They have seen reason to give up many previous notions. They have become acquainted, it may be, with proximate causes of phænomena, which they once ascribed to the immediate interposition of Divine agency. They begin to examine and enquire for themselves. And while all

enquiry, fully and honestly carried out, must ultimately advance the cause of truth, superficial enquiry may, for a time, have the contrary effect. And these enquiries cannot, at first, be otherwise than superficial, and are therefore very apt to foster vanity instead of teaching humility, unless the mind has been previously furnished with some solid and substantial principles, by which to regulate and control the exercise of the reason and the imagination. But in minds which are not only unfurnished with truly rational principles, but have been perverted by habitual disregard to moral obligations, and have never practically learnt the sacredness of duty, it may well be conceived that doubts on religious subjects will arise, which their habits and lives will incline men to covet rather than shun. And thus questions of the most vital concern will often be freely entertained, and readily discussed and determined, by persons quite incompetent, and an intellectual infidelity will grow up and extend its baneful influence to the masses of the community. There are unmistakeable tokens that in our own country these influences are at work. Already, in our large towns, it is far from uncommon to find among the illiterate many who can argue subtly, as well as deny

boldly, and are prepared with cavils and objections that can only be refuted by skill and knowledge.

We must also remember that the literature, whether of a whole people or of a particular class, takes its tone from the modes of opinion and thought already prevalent, and at the same time contributes much to perpetuate and extend them. So that the intellectual evils of the present day are not so much to be attributed to the abundance of immoral and infidel publications, as the existence of such publications is to be taken as evidence of the unhealthy appetite which they supply. But if they indicate they also increase the evil. By their means is poured upon the minds of those to whom they are most likely to prove prejudicial a flood of poison elaborated in many a school of error, gathered together by perverse ingenuity and set out in an attractive form, while the author of the mischief, like the sophist of Bithynia¹, retires unquestioned from the confusion

¹ Ταῦτα εἰπὼν ὁ Θρασύμαχος ἐν νῶ εἶχεν ἀπίεναί ὡσπερ βαλανὸς ἡμῶν κατατλήσας κατὰ τῶν ὤτων ἄθροον καὶ πολὺν τὸν λόγον...καὶ εἶπον ὦ δαιμόνιε Θρασύμαχε οἷον ἐμβαλὼν λόγον ἐν νῶ ἔχεις ἀπίεναί πρὶν δίδαξαι ἰκανῶς ἢ μαθεῖν εἴτε οὕτως, εἴτε ἄλλως ἔχει. ἢ σμικρὸν οἶε ἐπιχειρεῖν πράγμα διορίζεσθαι ἀλλ' οὐ βίου διαγωγὴν, ἢ ἂν διαγόμενος ἕκαστος ἡμῶν λυσιτελεστάτην ζωὴν ζώῃ; Plat. Rep. Lib. i. p. 344, E.

which he has created. The false idols erected from time to time, by men of distorted intellects and diseased imaginations, are placed in imposing array at the very threshold of the temple of knowledge, and they who have scarcely ever thought before are required at once to single out the true from the false objects of homage and veneration. And as the devil ever finds among the sons of men agents who industriously perform his work, and delight to propagate the delusions which he originates, the emissaries of falsehood are in the present day both numerous and active. The communication of scientific knowledge is not uncommonly made the vehicle for the inculcation of unbelief. The truths of science, which when fully known are most effectual to defend and confirm our faith, are often half told, and so contribute to unsettle

Books which present science in a popular form, and take occasion thereby to throw out doubts on the most solemn and momentous subjects, come precisely under the censure which Plato so well passed upon similar productions of the sophistical school of Athens. Speaking of Theuth, the supposed inventor of letters, he says, in the person of one Thamus: *οὐκ οὐν μνήμης ἀλλ' ὑπομνήσεως φάρμακον εὔρες σοφίας δὲ τοῖς μαθηταῖς δόξαν οὐκ ἀλήθειαν πορίζεις· πολυήκοοι γὰρ σοι γενόμενοι ἀνευ διδαχῆς, πολυγνώμονες εἶναι δόξουσι, ἀγνώμονες ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πλῆθος ὄντες καὶ χαλεποὶ ξυνεῖναι, δοξόσοφοι γεγονότες ἀντὶ σοφῶν.* Plat. Phædr. p. 275. See Van Heusde Init. Philosoph. Platon. Vol. II. p. 120.

the minds of those who must take at second-hand all that their instructor details to them, while that instructor is insidiously labouring to undermine their belief in Christianity. And amidst the forms under which infidelity is continually presenting itself to our notice, there are arising monstrous forms of superstition taking fast hold of minds unoccupied by truth. The extended, and it is to be feared, extending influence exerted by what is called Mormonism, is the most obvious proof of this assertion, and affords a striking illustration of the connexion between infidelity and superstition, which has been observed in all ages of the world; as if these two were content, by a mutual compact, to share a divided empire over the hearts of mankind, or as if they were, as in truth they are, servants of a common master, who by different measures are furthering the same cause, and are employed by him, in virtual league, though often with mock hostility, to lay waste and desolate the fair places of the earth.

The inspired Apostle has described the last days in terms which seem to deserve peculiar attention in times like the present; for he there predicts the simultaneous growth of immorality, infidelity, and superstition.

“For men shall be lovers of their own selves ...heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God: having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof...ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth....Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived¹.” And I am disposed to refer to this chapter of Holy Writ upon the present occasion, for two reasons: because it forms part of an Epistle especially addressed to ministers of the Gospel; and because it is followed by instructions as to the mode of meeting the dangers which it foretells. For in alluding to the spiritual condition of our people, I cannot forget that I am addressing a body of men whose duty and calling it is to counteract these evil tendencies. I cannot forget that the corroboration of the faith was a primary object with those benefactors to whom we owe the various foundations in this our University; that theological studies are those which should here be most carefully fostered, and can here be most effectually pursued; and that from hence there goes forth yearly a large proportion of those who bind themselves, by the special vows of ministers of our Church, to do battle as cham-

¹ 2 Tim. iii. 2—13.

pions of the faith under the great Captain of our salvation. I cannot forget that I am addressing many who will ere long be actually engaged in encountering those moral evils which I have thus attempted to describe. And this portion of Scripture will also suggest to us the method in which we are to meet our perils. "Continue thou," says S. Paul to Timothy, "in the things which thou hast learned and been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus¹." This often-quoted passage may yet be advantageously repeated, in order that we may be impressed with the necessity of seeking the assurance of faith, in a careful and patient study of the sacred volume, a serious regard to the sources from which instruction comes, and a recurrence to those principles upon which the faith has been established, and by which alone it can be maintained and secured. The tendency to negation which we observe in superficial enquirers must be met by the exhibition of positive truths. The doubts circulated by false teachers must be invalidated, not merely by the refutation of

¹ 2 Tim. iii. 14, 15.

them as they arise, but by the supply of such information as will be likely to render them harmless. The efforts of the adversaries increase the need of skill and learning on the part of all who would defend the faith. For such a purpose it is very desirable that we should acquaint ourselves with the labours of past generations, in answering objections and establishing the evidences of Christianity, for we shall find that errors are constantly reproduced. The same tendencies in the human mind will of themselves lead to the same results; and nothing is more common with those who would overthrow Christianity, than to make use of objections brought forward long ago, as though they were now for the first time discovered and promulgated¹. The freshness of originality has generally a peculiar charm, and the power of dressing up old and often-repeated doubts has not unfrequently won attention for an author which the real strength of his arguments little deserves. To

¹ This is seen most remarkably in Mr F. W. Newman's *Phases of Faith*: where every one of the objections he states as newly occurring to himself, and as insuperable, have been brought forward and discussed over and over again, both by infidel and Christian writers. It is evident how much force these objections would have lost had they been stated as they really are, as difficulties which had been raised, not to say answered already, by other men.

be able to shew that there is, after all, no novelty in what has been urged, that the very same questions have received the attention of men of thought and power in times past, who have left recorded either the solution of the difficulty or a declaration that it has in no way shaken their faith, will of itself go far to invalidate the effect of objections so unfairly insisted upon.

And, moreover, it is of infinite consequence that we be provided with positive arguments in support of the cause which we espouse. For if we weigh against the objections which are so constantly brought forward, the mass of evidence attesting the truth of that against which these objections are urged, the comparison of the former with the latter will make them appear paltry and insignificant, though they might by themselves have seemed by no means inconsiderable. The most powerful mode of denying falsehood is by asserting truth. How necessary then is it, even to our own stability and peace of mind, that we should acquaint ourselves with the history of the past, that we may know by experience the weapons by which error has been successfully controverted, and may be furnished with the numerous arguments for the truth which the learning of other ages has supplied.

It is thus that the labours of the good and great live after them, and they being dead yet speak.

But it were indeed a fallacy to suppose that faith can be built up upon mere learning. One of the chief weapons in the Christian armoury is "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God¹." "The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart²." It is the first and highest duty of the minister to apply the word of God, as the Apostles applied it, to the hearts of men—to convince them of sin—to awaken their consciences from dead works to serve the living God, to exhibit to them their responsibilities as moral agents and as servants of the Most High, to set before them the mysteries of godliness, the justice and majesty of their Almighty Creator, the tender love of their compassionate Father. It were hopeless to expect that learning and research should be the sole or even the principal means of winning souls to God. Knowledge and holiness must grow up side by side. Ignorance and impurity are alike incompatible

¹ Eph. vi. 17.

² Heb. iv. 12.

with faith. We must render our bodies a living sacrifice—we must be transformed by the renewing of our minds, that we may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God¹.

It might have been deemed superfluous to say even thus much of the distinction between the inward apprehension of religious truth, and the study of its history and its evidences—a distinction which has been uniformly maintained by our divines, and is practically enforced by every preacher of the Gospel throughout the land. But it has been attempted of late to cast a reproach upon our Church, by representing that she is endeavouring to convert a population sunk in ignorance and heathenism by no other means than the use of logical and historical proofs. And the inference has been drawn that all systems of theological learning are not only useless, but actually antagonistic to the true spirit of Christianity². We may appeal to the ho-

¹ Rom. xii. 1, 2.

² The same writer, to whom I have alluded in a former note, Mr F. W. Newman, has dwelt upon this topic in his book on "The Soul," entirely overlooking the practical teaching of all our parish-priests, and speaking with great contempt of the use of theological learning to defend the faith. How this can be reconciled with his own logical attempts to overthrow Christianity, or how such attempts are to be met without learning, does not appear.

noured names of the past as affording the best refutation of such an assertion. Has the learning of a Ridley, a Hooker, a Beveridge, or a Wilson, made them ineffectual ministers of the Word of God? Has the flame of piety burnt less brightly when human learning, human industry, and human research, have been employed upon the objects of faith, and consecrated to the service of God?

The attempt to separate absolutely religious feeling from intellectual culture, is connected with a form of error, which seems to possess for some peculiar attractions¹. The name of Christianity has been preserved, the spirit of Christianity has been insisted upon, sometimes with eloquence and apparent feeling, but it has been represented as essential to the true development of this spirit that we should abandon the form. We have been told, that if we are to imitate the early preachers of Christianity, we must propose our appeal to the faith of others, to be tested by the inward and spiritual evidence; then,

¹ This has been seen on many different occasions. The Pietists of the 17th century in Germany afford an instance of this feeling, arising in the first place from the genuine earnestness of Spener, but degenerating into ignorant fanaticism. The Pietists were, however, truly Christians, and would have sympathized very little with such spiritualists as those of our own day.

and then only, shall we be upon the Apostles' track; that religion can never resume her pristine vigour, until she becomes purely spiritual, and, as in apostolic days, speaks only to the soul; that the problem for all who wish to save cultivated Europe from pantheism, selfishness, and immorality, is to extract and preserve the heavenly spirit of Christianity while neglecting its earthly husk¹.

Now although we recognize a broad distinction between any mere human teaching, and that teaching which based its authority upon miraculous gifts and supernatural communications, yet we may gather sufficient to inform us of the method of apostolical teaching so far as it is proposed for our imitation. And the examination of the Epistles for this purpose will shew how widely the spirituality of the Apostles differs from modern spiritualism. The Epistles of S. Paul, remarkable as they are for spirit-searching appeals to the inner man, are equally remarkable for logical reasoning, and arguments in which another inspired penman tells us there were things hard to be understood². And if S. Paul lays less stress upon historic proof, it is plainly because he was addressing those by

¹ Newman on "The Soul," p. 207.

² S. Peter.

whom his facts were undisputed. For while the Apostle does not deem it necessary to prove particulars which no one pretended to gainsay, he uniformly makes the facts of our Lord's history the groundwork of his admonitions. To give witness of the Resurrection was the professed commission of an Apostle¹. And the Epistle to the Romans sets out with the Resurrection as furnishing an attestation to our Lord's Divinity: "Paul, a servant of God, called to be an Apostle, separated unto the Gospel of God (which He had promised afore by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures,) concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead²." Again, in the first Epistle to the Corinthians, he introduces his discussion on the Resurrection by a brief summary of the evidences³, and proceeds to confirm it by logical arguments. And so throughout his Epistles there is a constant reference to the great facts of our religion, as furnishing the very keystones of the spiritual temple, which he is commissioned to aid in rearing. Indeed, there is not an Epistle which does not bear direct evidence

¹ Acts i. 22.

² Rom. i. 1—4.

³ 1 Cor. xv. 4—8.

to the assertion, that historic facts and logical proofs are the starting-points of all apostolical spirituality.

But the different direction of the apostolic and the modern spiritualism is most clearly seen in their ultimate divergence. To glory in the Cross of Christ, to be absorbed in the contemplation of the mysterious and solemn acts by which man was redeemed, was the wisdom of those who became, in the Apostles' sense of the word, perfect. It is melancholy but instructive to observe the different issue of modern spiritualism. For we find the same persons who would thus reduce religion to mere feeling, are ever ready to raise objections to its system, as making demands upon the reason which cannot be supported—repeating afresh the old objection of Celsus, that the faith of the Christians is an unreasoning and unreasonable faith¹. Those who have begun by professing allegiance to the spirit of Christianity, without deeming it necessary to insist upon the form, have abandoned one by one all its doctrines, all its facts. And then they seem impelled not only to desert but to disprove, not only to neglect but to attack, the system which they have abandoned. The pains bestowed to effect

¹ Neander's Ch. Hist. Vol. i. p. 97. Eng. Trans. Lond. 1850.

this purpose can scarcely be explained by any other supposition, than that they have begun to hate that which they have ceased to love. The weapons of logic so depreciated as weapons of defence, are used with eagerness as weapons of attack. Learning and ingenuity, which were deemed so unworthy assistants of the champions of the truth, are unscrupulously employed to overthrow it. It is sad indeed to contemplate the progress of such speculations; to mark the pains with which every possible objection is sought out and brought together; the disingenuity with which old questions are stated anew, while all reference to their having been considered and answered is suppressed; to observe how one by one every Christian principle is given up; until the beneficial results of Christianity, which have been hitherto unquestioned, are assigned to foreign causes utterly inadequate to account for them; and the demoralizing and debasing system of Mahometanism is elevated to the disparagement of the religion of Christ; and all this accompanied by a profession of abiding by the spirit of Christianity¹.

¹ It has frequently been remarked that infidels have always had a peculiar predilection for Mahometanism. There is a curious illustration of this in an anecdote given of himself

These unhappy conclusions may teach us the inseparability of the spirit and the doctrines of Christianity, and may convince us that a sober and serious study of its external features is not only not inconsistent with, but is greatly conducive, if not absolutely necessary, to a just appreciation of its internal excellence. And while the attacks which proceed from these quarters are the best proofs of the necessity of being armed at all points, of neglecting no study, no branch of learning which may throw light upon the

by Mr F. W. Newman, who tells us that while he was at Aleppo, he one day got into religious discourse with a Mohammedan carpenter, which left on him a "lasting impression." After Mr N. had addressed him, the Mohammedan replied, "I will tell you, Sir, how the case stands. God has given to you English a great many good things. You make fine ships, and sharp penknives, &c.; all this is of God. But there is one thing which God has withheld from you, and has revealed to us: and that is, the knowledge of the true religion by which one may be saved." We can scarcely be surprized at any conclusion to which a person arrives who at a time at which he imagines himself a most zealous Christian, allows his faith to be shaken by a "lasting impression" from such a common-place remark as this. This same author, after having accumulated together and admitted as unanswerable every objection against Christianity, dismisses the positive arguments in its favour very summarily; *e. g.* asserting that "the moral advantages which we owe to Christianity have been exaggerated by the same party spirit;" and instancing the social elevation of women and of the sanctity of the marriage tie as having their origin, not in the diffusion of Christian principle, but in "*Germanic soundness of heart!*"

foundations of our faith, lest we be found, like the philosophers of old, with a sword, but without a shield¹—while these attacks, combined with the other circumstances to which I have referred, prove that for mere self-defence the study of the Christian evidences is imperative upon every Christian minister, they may suggest to us that this study need not be barren of spiritual interest, or unproductive of spiritual improvement. And as we observe, that for the edification of the infant Church God was pleased to appoint diversities of administration, to set some apostles, and some prophets, some teachers, to institute miracles, gifts of healing, helps, governments, and diversities of tongues; the nature of such offices denoting that an appeal was made to the senses, to the heart, and to the understanding; so it is evident that there are still many members, but one body, that every member has its own office, and that the weakness of one is felt by all the rest. We must have learning as well as piety, sober thoughtfulness as well as energetic vigour. And every office rightly performed in the cause of the Church of Christ is honourable to men. Let those who are looking forward to the time

¹ “*Gladium habent, scutum non habent.*”—*Lactant. Div. Inst. Lib. iii. § 4.*

when they shall enter upon the sacred profession of the ministry be careful honestly to perform the task now before them. There are offered to them here opportunities (which will never again be within their reach) of strengthening their minds by earnest study, and of acquiring knowledge which will be invaluable to them in their future career of active usefulness. And may I be permitted to address one word to those who have already undertaken the sacred office, and are exercising it here as teachers and governors. None can be insensible of the influence which the general tone of thought and opinion among the older members of the University exercises upon their younger brethren, and through them upon the nation at large. Of how vital importance is it that there should be maintained here a school of sound theology, formed by careful and patient study of all the branches of that chief science, and confirmed by the just apprehension of literature and of science, which may be expected to find their place in a body like our own. Only let each of us gird himself to his peculiar task with a remembrance of the truth which S. Paul so constantly impresses upon all, that there are diversities of administrations, but it is the same Spirit who worketh all

in all. Let none approach to his work unconscious of the presence, or unmindful of the assistance of the Holy Spirit. "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation¹."

The student or the teacher of the Word of God must ever bear in mind on how holy a subject he is engaged, and not presume to approach it with cold indifference, as if, on the one hand, there were no danger in error, and on the other, he had nothing to lose or gain in the issue of his labours. The frequent entreaties of S. Paul for the prayers of his converts, that he might be strengthened for the work in which he was engaged, may teach us in what spirit we should enter upon all our enquiries which have reference to the truth of that scheme which we have been taught to receive as a revelation from the Most High: neither laying aside nor overbearing our understanding, but applying it to those objects, and those alone, which are properly within its reach, judging spiritual things by spiritual, and besides, giving all diligence to

¹ Rom. xii. 6—8.

add to our faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge¹.

The remarks which I have made upon the nature of the opposition offered by the enemies of the Gospel may suffice to convince us of the importance of that department of the Christian ministry to which it is the especial purpose of these Lectures to invite your attention; namely, that of weighing and considering the foundations of our faith. And it has appeared to me to bear upon questions of great interest in the present day, to attempt to determine the relative force of the two principles of reason and authority, in sustaining the assurance of faith.

The two principles have too often been arrayed one against the other, but in their legitimate exercise furnish mutual support. Authority must often appeal to reason, and reason prompt submission to authority. And we shall endeavour, upon a future occasion, to shew that it is the characteristic of Christianity, that it brings both into harmonious action, and that any disturbance of this harmony by an undue exaltation of one or the other principle has an injurious effect upon the integrity of our faith, and the purity of our religion.

¹ 2 Pet. i. 5.

May God grant unto me such a measure of His grace, that I may speak nothing which is not in conformity with His will ; and that my words, feeble and imperfect though they be, may conduce, in some degree, to the end for which the Apostle made request in every prayer in behalf of the disciples at Philippi, that your love may abound yet more and more, in knowledge and in all judgment ; that ye may approve things that are excellent ; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ ; being filled with the the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God¹.

¹ Philip. i. 9—11.

LECTURE II.

REASON AND AUTHORITY.

Preached on Easter Day.

ISAIAH XLIII. 8, 9.

Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears. Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled: Who among them can declare this, and shew us former things? let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified, or let them hear and say, It is truth.

THE crowning miracle of Christianity in commemoration of which we this day keep high festival, is one which is very significant of the nature of our religion. The triumph effected over sin and death when the Son of God burst the barriers of the tomb was typical of the triumph of His Church over the powers of darkness. And the testimony upon which the Resurrection was established is the same in character as the testimony offered in behalf of the whole scheme of Christianity.

It was predicted by the word of God, announced by celestial messengers, confirmed by sensible evidence, and promulgated by human testimony. It was received, not

without reluctance and incredulity, but doubts and slowness of heart were made to contribute to the assurance of faith. And not only were there direct evidences to support it, but the effects which followed, the power of God making itself manifest in supernatural gifts, in moral excellency, and in spiritual fervour, proved to the satisfaction of thousands that the cause was of God. The witnesses were brought forth, the preachers justified, and the multitudes heard and said, It is truth.

Reason and authority combined to establish the hopes which result to us from the resurrection of our Lord. Upon these two principles must all truth be built up; and it is a proof of the divine origin of Christianity, that in calling upon us at the same time to think and to believe it appeals to principles deeply seated in our common nature, in a manner undiscoverable in any other system of religion or philosophy.

Every form of Paganism with which we are acquainted was propounded to the multitude for absolute and unconditional acceptance. If hidden truths lay beneath external signs (such as ingenious men have discovered even in the most revolting symbols), the common people neither recognized nor suspected them. They were neither taught nor per-

mitted to scan the purport of the rites which were adopted, or to question the authority upon which they were received. And although intellectual culture commonly originated with a priestly caste, and the first efforts of thought were directed to sacred subjects, yet the nature of these efforts among the heathens was such as to further the separation, not to promote the union, of reason and authority. The priests made no attempt to explain the principles of their religion to those who were to be brought under its influence, but reserved what was retained of truth for the initiated alone. Thus did the priests in public call upon the multitude to listen to authority without reason, while in private they guided their own speculations by reason without authority. The philosophers proceeded openly in the latter direction. For they, not being bound by interest and profession to the externals of religion, disregarded it altogether in their search after truth, conforming merely so far as was necessary to escape persecution and disgrace.

In India, the religious system contained in the Vedas was at first adopted with blind submission. This unreasoning reception was infringed by the subtle and allegorizing commentaries of the Mimansa, and soon followed by an abandonment of those books upon

which the earlier speculations had proceeded, and to the establishment of a system of philosophy, whose very denomination avowed that it recognized no God¹.

In Greece the Orphic mysteries were the results of the first exercise of thought in the same direction as that which had been taken by the school of the Mimansa. But the separation between religion and philosophy was yet more rapid and decided. It is not impossible that Thales conceived it to be no wide deviation from the popular belief, when he derived the gods of his countrymen from the primal element in which he sought the origin of all things. But the various schools of philosophy which soon arose in Greece, whether they inclined to Pantheism, Deism, or Atheism, had this in common, that they entirely disregarded, if they did not openly controvert, the tenets of the national religion. And when for physical speculations enquiries were substituted concerning more intimately the nature and well-being of man, the philosophers had the less prospect of success because they were cut off from one of the sources from which the truth they sought was to be derived. The sophists denied boldly the

¹ Nir-Iswhara Sankhya : SANKHYA SINE DEO. See Cousin, *Histoire de la Philosophie*, Lect. 5.

existence of any standard, whether of knowledge or of virtue, and arrived at conclusions so absurd and immoral as to evince the unsoundness of their hypothesis, while their great opponent, who was ever labouring to establish fixed principles, looked to pure reason for their discovery. His well-known maxim, *Know thyself*, referred to a scientific knowledge of the nature of the soul in general, not to a studious self-examination of the individual heart; and it was the groundwork of all his teaching, that if the understanding were once really informed, immoral acts would be impossible. But it is very instructive to observe, how the master-minds of old, with their exaggerated estimate of the intellectual powers, yearned after external revelation. Divination, prodigies, and oracles, were caught at by Socrates, as supplying, in some sort, those authoritative communications the want of which was felt and confessed¹. And Plato based whatever hopes remained to him of rescuing his countrymen from the corruption and ignorance in which they were involved, upon the possibility that there might arise some teacher perfectly instructed in all the highest truths of morality, to reorganize the state upon new principles, and command

¹ Xen. Mem. i. 4, 15.

by position and character the respect and obedience of the community¹. But, destitute as they were of this aid, the philosophers had little choice but to seek by reason alone the truths which concerned the happiness of mankind. Thought thus uncontrolled, naturally took different directions, and this diversity evinced the inefficacy of the methods pursued. The result was, that profession of uncertainty, which appeared among the New Academicians, expressive of doubtfulness as to the conclusions of other schools, and little or no certainty in the opinions adopted by their own².

Side by side with this system of mere probability, there was yet one school which took higher grounds, and reached, perhaps, the farthest point attainable by the unassisted efforts of man in the determination of the principles of morality. The Stoics resolutely maintained the absolute sufficiency of pure reason to arrive at knowledge adequate to the wants of the human race. And in the Stoicism

¹ Plat. Rep. vi. pp. 491—502, where he discusses the cause τῆς τῶν πολλῶν πονηρίας, and the possibility of their improvement. "Optime Plato horum nihil sciri posse dicebat sine oraculo." Grot. de Ver. Christ. Rel. III. 12.

² Fiducia illi (Ciceroni) defuit ignoranti veritatem, quod ipse simpliciter in eodem opere confitetur. Ait enim facilius se posse dicere quod non sit, quam quod sit; hoc est, falsa se intelligere, vera nescire. Lact. D. I. 1. 17.

of Epictetus and M. Aurelius we discover a purity and depth that may well command our approbation. But notwithstanding a few cases such as these, the general condition of mankind proved the necessity of other weapons to combat the passions and inclinations. And while Stoicism had attractions for the loftier spirits, the antagonistic system of Epicurean self-indulgence gained many more votaries ; a system virtually renouncing reason and authority alike, and holding out to every one the gratification of his peculiar tastes and inclinations ; a philosophy little deserving the name, but exhibiting the issue of the abnegation of authority in atheistic impiety and unrestrained licentiousness¹.

The natural tendency of man to seek an authoritative guide was evinced by the formation of schools of philosophy, wherein the disciples in general were content to accept the dogmas of their master as the groundwork of speculation. The few who professed to proceed upon original and independent enquiry grasped, as we have before said, at the shadow of authority. The greater num-

¹ Epicuri disciplina multo celebrior semper fuit quam cæterorum : non quia veri aliquid afferat, sed quia multos popolare nomen voluptatis invitat. Nemo enim non in vitia pronus est. Propterea, ut ad se multitudinem contrahat, apposita singulis quibusque moribus loquitur. Lact. D. I. III. 17.

ber, even of philosophers, were fain to attach themselves to a mightier name than their own, and to seek credit and find assurance in the appeal to some one who had preceded them.

Meantime, the wants of the great mass of mankind could not but make themselves felt. If the philosophers could have satisfied themselves with reason, the multitude would have craved for authority. And however perverted might be the expression of their craving, it gave token of an actual want, that demanded and was intended to be supplied. “*Nullum vitium ita contra naturam est, ut naturæ deleat etiam extrema vestigia*¹.” The very abominations of idolatry were connected with a genuine impulse of human nature, dictating the necessity of having some objects of faith and reverence. Accordingly the impiety of the philosophers (that is, their unceremonious disregard of the common notions of the gods) met with little sympathy at the hands of the populace. Those whose religion had no influence upon their lives, and occupied a small place in their thoughts, were ready to put to death any who dared to impugn the credit of the legends they had been accustomed to accept without question. But blind submission, unaccompanied by moral conviction, led,

¹ S. Aug. C. D. xix. 12, 2.

as might have been expected, only to falsehood. The truths derived from primitive tradition, or from the instincts of nature, were more and more obscured by new superstitions, and religion lost all but her outward shape, and that deformed and hideous beyond description. And here the voice of reason again made itself heard. There was a limit to the submission of the many as there had been to the independence of the few. Thus, when in the closing days of Paganism, the principles which had been acting independently came into open collision, and reason was employed in detecting the hollowness of assumed authority, the extremes of each, reckless atheism and blind superstition, stood forth to shew the insufficiency of previous systems, and to prepare men to receive some better scheme, under which reason and authority should find each its proper place in the advancement and confirmation of the truth.

The expostulations in my text exhibit the method adopted by the Providence of God for the subversion of error and idolatry. The nations are gathered together, the people assembled. The eyes of the blind are to be opened, the ears of the deaf unstopped. They are called upon to see and hear the witnesses who stand before them. Then, having been

convinced, by experience, of their own ignorance, and by reason of the authority of Him who addresses them, they are required to hear and say, It is truth. And who are the witnesses upon whose testimony the truth is to be received? First, the chosen people, declaring to the nations the Unity and Majesty of Jehovah; and then the chosen messenger, announcing more clearly and fully the attributes of the Most High: "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no Saviour. I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when there was no strange god among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God¹." The nature of the appeal, and of the testimony, proclaim to us that the true religion is both to be believed and to be understood. And if we examine the scheme, whether of the Old or of the New Dispensation, as promulgated to the Jews or to the Gentiles, we shall find that union of reason and authority which was wanting in all other religions.

¹ Isai. xliii. 10—12.

To a people before whom the visible tokens of God's power were continually set forth there was less occasion to insist upon the conviction of the understanding. Yet we do not find the reasonable nature of the imposed service forgotten or disregarded. In the recapitulation of events of past years, throughout the book of Deuteronomy, Moses urges the experience of former acts of God's power and love, as affording proof that He is great, and greatly to be feared. There is a continual appeal to the reason of those whom he addresses. "Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons¹." "Ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from the one side of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it? Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live? Or hath God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, by signs,

¹ Deut. iv. 9.

and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that the Lord he is God; there is none else beside him¹.” Religion having been first promulgated by sensible tokens of Divine authority, these tokens become the subjects of subsequent reflection, and are proposed as evidences to future generations of the doctrines which they are called upon to believe. The same method is observable in the inculcation of practical precepts. The king who in Ecclesiastes depreciates human learning, and bases wisdom upon the fear of God, is inspired to transmit in the Proverbs a body of divine morality wherein perpetual reference is made to the judgment of reason. “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding².” But, “if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and

¹ Deut. iv. 32—35.

² Prov. iii. 5.

searchest for her as for hid treasures ; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God¹." And so, in the prophets, all flesh are commanded to be silent before the Lord², they are also summoned to reason together³ with Him, to come near together to judgment⁴.

But the harmony of God's works is constantly interrupted by man. The Scribes and Pharisees aimed at establishing unlimited command over the consciences and understanding of the people. Blind as they were themselves, they pretended to be leaders of the blind. And the vicious straining of authority produced a reaction which did not confine itself to the demolition of the spurious additions to the truth, but went equally wrong in the opposite direction. The Sadducees not only disallowed traditions, but refused to accept the system which the word of God prescribed. Adopting reason as their guide, they accommodated Revelation to it; while the Pharisees strained Revelation to the support of their unfounded claims to authority. So that in the corruption of religion there was again a disjunction of the two

¹ Prov. ii. 1—5.

² Zech. ii. 13.

³ Comp. Isai. xliii. 26 ; Jer. xii. 1 ; Ezek. xviii. 2 ; Mic. vi. 2.

⁴ Isai. xli. 1.

principles, on the combination of which true religion ever rests.

The reformation of this corruption was the work of Christianity, which not merely restored but perfected the harmonious action of these two principles; propounding greater mysteries to be received, declaring more truths to be understood. The precepts and the promises of the Gospel were to be received upon the testimony of Him who delivered them, and spake with authority, and not as the Scribes. But our Lord was also pleased to convince those whom he commanded to listen. Even when He spoke in parables he proclaimed, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." And it was because they closed their eyes and their ears that light was withdrawn. But with those who came to Him in an honest although ignorant spirit, He vouchsafed to reason; to convince their understandings as well as illuminate their heart. He explained the difficulties and removed the doubts of enquiring disciples; and when they were slow of heart to believe all that the prophets had written, "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself¹." And,

¹ Luke xxiv. 27.

besides the reasonable nature of His words, there was a proof of His authority offered to all in the works which He wrought. These works were evident to the senses, and the mind must have been perverted which failed to draw the inference which the blind man in the Gospel drew upon the recovery of his sight. "Why herein," said he to the cavilling Pharisees, "is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes. Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing¹." For miracles are in their very nature an appeal to the understanding through the senses; and so our Lord represents His words and His works as removing every pretence for disbelief, and shews that after such evidence the rejection of Him must be attributed only to moral causes. "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man

¹ Joh. ix. 30—33.

did, they had not had sin : but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father¹.”

The Apostles received a commission from their Divine Master to continue the work which He had begun ; and were entrusted with similar powers. And while they insisted upon their claims to attention, they habitually referred to the understanding of those to whom they preached. S. Paul maintains the dignity of his apostleship without reserve. “Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord²?” “I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand ; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received³.” “I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord⁴.” But he also strengthens his power, and confirms his assertions, by argument and by reasoning. He appeals at various times to the facts of the Gospel history⁵, to miraculous gifts⁶, to his own disinterested labours⁷, to the success of his

¹ Joh. xv. 22—25. ² 1 Cor. ix. 1. ³ 1 Cor. xv. 1—3.

⁴ 2 Cor. xii. 1. ⁵ 1 Cor. xv. 3—8. ⁶ 1 Cor. xii.

⁷ 1 Cor. ix. 19.

preaching¹, to spiritual longings², to inward convictions³, to self-searching enquiry⁴. Thus was it that the converts of the Apostles received the word which they heard of them, not as the word of man, but, as it was in truth, the word of God⁵, because their testimony among them was believed⁶. And the prayer offered by S. Paul, in behalf of the Ephesians, stands as a record and pattern of the true principles of the teaching of the Gospel. "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling⁷."

A review of the history of the Christian Church will shew that it was through deviation from these principles that error was introduced. In their early conflicts with idolaters the defenders of Christianity had mainly recourse to the weapons of reason; and their assaults upon the crumbling edifice of Paganism were completely successful. The fables of mythology, and the morals of

¹ 2 Cor. iii. 2. ² 2 Cor. v. 4. ³ 1 Cor. ii. 10.

⁴ 2 Cor. xiii. 5. ⁵ 1 Thess. ii. 13.

⁶ 2 Thess. i. 10. See Pearson "On the Creed," Art. 1.

⁷ Eph. i. 17, 18.

heathendom, were provided with no barriers against their enemies. The method of explaining away by allegory that which could not be defended by argument was now resorted to, and it was far from uncommon for the Christian writers to make use of the same weapons as their opponents. The uncontrolled use of such weapons produced within the Church heretical opinions, which demanded the interposition of authority to check the extravagance of speculation. The great champions of the faith who were made instrumental in conducting the Christian Church through the struggles of the first four centuries were thus continually called upon to make use of both the principles given to man for the elucidation of the truth¹. But in a subsequent age, when the inroads of barbarism had destroyed nearly all the vestiges of past civilization, and confined what yet remained of learning within very narrow boundaries, authority began to exercise extravagant sway. The great mass of the people were, in truth, little capable of independent thought, and received implicitly that which was proposed to them. But among the few who were capable of it, thought would yet find its place. The schoolmen, who aided

¹ See Athanas. Ep. ch. I. § 2. Libr. of the Fathers, Vol. viii.

so much in forging the chains for reason, found room for the application of their intellectual powers. Hedged in within the limits of councils and decretals, they enjoyed within these limits free licence of speculation. Starting from an infallible standard, they made deductions, sometimes ingenious and true, but often fanciful and unreasonable. And these deductions were adopted by their successors as equally incontrovertible, and became the foundation of other arguments and conclusions, the less rational as they receded further from the original source. Thus was reason converted into logic, and the understanding tyrannously overborne by mere authority. Nor were there wanting in these darker ages men of genius and power to protest against the slavery to which the intellect was subjected: men but half emancipated, perhaps, from the thralldom against which they declaimed, or rushing into the opposite extreme to that which they were endeavouring to avoid.

As knowledge became more general the conflict was carried on with greater ardour, and reason reasserted with continually increasing strength the rights of which she had been so long debarred.

The climax of the struggle was the Re-

formation of the sixteenth century. Authority had overstrained her power, and had brought about, as before, a violent reaction. Restricted from her legitimate operation, reason had exercised a silent influence, which had produced the most fatal consequences. Scepticism and immorality pervaded all ranks. Even the highest ecclesiastical personages were all but professed unbelievers. The heroic spirit of Luther, whose work it was to emancipate reason, did yet greater service in fanning into a new flame the dying embers of vital religion. But the liberation of the human mind was not achieved without violence and evil. The war which Luther waged so successfully, and upon the whole so moderately, was soon taken up by men of far less pretensions, who turned liberty into licentiousness; and Luther was himself compelled to enter the lists on the side of authority when those who called themselves his followers would have trampled her under foot.

The revival of letters brought with it new illustrations of the truths of Christianity; but the explosion of past systems, and the discovery of the corruptions by which religion had been disfigured, led adventurous minds to build up by philosophy a system professing

to be independent of revelation. The attempt, which was so unsuccessfully made by the Emperor Julian in the last days of Paganism, has been renewed in various forms, from time to time, since the Reformation. The Deism of Lord Herbert of Cherbury, the Atheism of Hobbes, and the Pantheism of Spinoza, were all the results of such endeavours. And the scepticism of the French school of philosophers was connected with a similar struggle, the movement in this case being as much political as religious. The despotic exercise of the power of the state to extinguish civil liberty, and to banish Protestantism from France, was followed by a corruption so palpable as to excite the attention of many who became bitter adversaries of religion, because it seemed to them to enslave the intellect, and to let loose the passions. But they who led on the assault upon the Christian faith discovered little of that earnestness which is the best warrant of sincerity. They took up a position purely negative, and instead of correcting the moral evils against which they declaimed, made them a theme for satire and raillery, ridiculing the best and holiest principles of action, and substituting nothing for that which they took away. But views which are purely negative

find no permanent favour with mankind, whose very nature prompts them to believe. They leave behind to the future enemies of truth a pernicious legacy of doubts and difficulties, but in general men are not attracted by them, but rather cling closer to authority when reason is thus abused.

The latest efforts to dispense with authority have been by no means confined to negative views. They have been made in a country of whose literature it is eminently characteristic, to weave together, the results of laborious study by some novel and ingenious hypothesis. This practice has been of late years carried on with the utmost freedom in speculations upon Christianity. Theology has been deemed a science requiring new development, and admitting of new discoveries, in the same manner as the sciences which have been evolved by human thought; and the authority of Revelation has been more and more disregarded. And we can scarcely fail to discover in these efforts of rationalism a principal cause of the increased energy and power, which it cannot be denied that the Church of Rome has, of late years, in some respects displayed. Many whose faith has been shaken by the disproportionate exercise of pure reason, have sought refuge in their perplexity in a system

from which reason is all but absolutely discarded, and authority alone is made the anchor of faith.

Yet if we would draw a right inference from the observation of the method of the Divine Revelation, and from the history of the past, we may detect the errors of either extreme, and find safety in the middle course adopted and prescribed by our own Church.

We shall absolutely distrust those who bid us set out upon our search after truth unincumbered by any preconceived opinions, without reference to those who have gone before us, without endeavours to guide our steps by any external aid. To speak of natural religion from which revelation is excluded, is to speak of a religion which is in reality contrary to our nature; and the profession of any religious system, that it is founded upon authority, is a presumption in favour of rather than against its truth.

But we shall equally distrust those who bid us make an entire surrender of our reason, and look to authority alone. On this principle we shall be left without any means of comparing the relative worth of conflicting systems when they offer themselves to our notice. We shall be Pagans in a Pagan land, Mahometans in a Mahometan, Christians in

a Christian, and shall in each case be professors, and not believers. But is it necessary that all or most men should be familiar with the various forms of belief, or should be able to discuss formally the evidences of our religion, and examine critically the objections which may be urged against it? Far from it. Such enquiries and discussions are in the power only of a few, and in all cases require to be undertaken with caution and seriousness. Such studies form part, as we have already said, of the business of a teacher of the Gospel, and the circumstances of the times make it necessary that he should not neglect them. But every one who pursues them must do so in earnest; for nothing conduces more to unsettle our own minds and those of others, than to entertain doubts and difficulties hastily and superficially, instead of dismissing them at once, or else sifting to the very bottom the questions which have been raised. If careful and minute investigation be out of our power, we need not dwell on isolated difficulties, but we are not on that account called upon to resign our reason. Coleridge has drawn a distinction between the faculty by which we argue, and that by which we comprehend, and has said that it is the latter by which most men must

receive the truth. This faculty is cognizant of the broad features that characterize a religion. The superiority of Christendom to all the rest of the world, in science, civilization, and power—the adaptation of our religion to the wants of men—the external testimony we possess from numerous sources—the internal marks of truth and divinity—and the combination of these and all other proofs, called by Bp. Butler the general *effect* of Christianity, are appreciable by all, unlearned as well as learned, and unite to establish the authority of that sublime and superhuman scheme to which we are required to bow our reason when we have thus convinced our understanding.

But we should ill appreciate the wants of men and the fulness with which they are supplied, if we sought for the confirmation of the authority of which we stand in need in mere external evidence or in mere conviction of the understanding.

Faith is the apprehension of external authority by the inner man, not only to the satisfaction of the reason, but also to the information of the heart. The want of the recognition of this inward consciousness constitutes an apparent defect in the well-known axiom of Locke: "Whatever God hath re-

vealed is certainly true; no doubt can be made of it; but whether it be Divine Revelation or no, reason must judge." Wherein he seems to make Divine authority to rest exclusively upon human reason.

In all the systems of Paganism the spiritual apprehension of truth was necessarily wanting, but its want was both felt and deplored. Christianity recommended itself to the heathen in that it declared that unknown power which they had in blindness sought after in vain. Nor was this absent in the Jewish Church. The outpourings of the Psalmist, and the voices of the Prophets, were anticipatory of the more frequent appeals to man's inner spirit which pervade the inspired writings of the New Testament. We have before remarked upon the exclusive reference to man's spiritual faculties, which has led some to disregard and to deny the facts and doctrines of our faith. Such men seek, indeed, an authority superior to reason. But they seek it within themselves, and are led into hopeless delusions which from their very origin can scarcely be dispersed. But as the inward faculty must be exercised upon outward objects, so must the outward objects be apprehended by the inward faculty, in order to such reception as is properly to be denomi-

nated faith. The inward apprehension no more dispenses with the outward truths than the faculty of intelligence with the things to be understood, the power of sensation with the objects to be perceived.

The authority we seek as Christians is external but is supernatural, and must therefore be apprehended by the spirit, while its testimony at the same time is subjected to the examination of the reason. "Wherefore," to adopt the language of one of the most philosophical of our divines, "mere speculation and dry mathematical reasoning in minds unpurified and having a contrary interest of carnality and a heavy load of infidelity and distrust sinking them down, cannot alone beget an unshaken confidence and assurance of so high truths. As it is certain also, on the contrary, that minds purged from vice may, without syllogistical reasonings and mathematical demonstrations, have an undoubted assurance of these things according to that of the philosopher, *ἡ κάθαρσις ποιεῖ ἐν γνώσει τῶν ἀρίστων εἶναι*, 'Purity possesses men with an assurance of the best things;' whether this assurance be called a vaticination and divine sagacity (as it is by Plato and Aristotle), or faith, as in the Scripture. For the Scripture faith is not a mere believing of historical

things, and upon inartificial arguments or testimonies only, but is a certain higher and diviner power in the soul that peculiarly correspondeth with the Deity. Notwithstanding which, knowledge or science added to this faith (according to the Scripture advice) will make it more firm and stedfast, and the better able to resist those assaults of sophistical reasonings that shall be made against it¹."

Thus the objection that has so often been urged by the impugnors of the truth, that Christianity commands its votaries to believe, while *they* give a reason for all things—idle and vain as is the boast—is turned at once against those who urge it. For the instinct of man, as history itself proves, teaches that of every system of religion authority must form an important ingredient, and that the proposition maintained of old by S. Augustin, against the Manichees is true, that it is impossible to enter upon true religion without first believing those things which shall hereafter be experimentally known to the honest believer, and without some reverent submission to the grave empire of authority².

Let us, my brethren, never dream of believing without love, or of loving without

¹ Cudworth's *Intell. Syst.*, Pref. p. xlv.

² S. Aug. de *Util. Credend.* ch. ix.

belief. But as the Apostles of faith and love ran together towards the sepulchre of their risen Lord, and though now one and now the other was beforehand in the race, yet both entered into the place where the Lord had lain¹, so in our Christian course let Faith and Love advance together, and each lend to the other strength and support; Love provoking by its speed the more tardy footsteps of Faith, Faith pointing out to Love the tokens and evidences which surround us, both purging the mental vision of all that can obstruct and retard it, and attuning the heart to the harmony of divinest mysteries, that we may see, understand, and believe.

¹ John xx. Gospel for the Day.

LECTURE III.

THE WORD OF GOD.

JAMES I. 21.

Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

WHILE Christ and his Apostles were upon earth they proclaimed the will of God as known to them by direct communication with heaven. Our Lord was himself the way, the truth, and the life. The Apostles were appointed to declare the truth as it is in Jesus, and were guided by visions and revelations to a perfect knowledge of that which they delivered to the saints. The Church of Christ was commissioned to convey to future generations the message originally entrusted to Apostles and Evangelists. But there was no longer need of the same extraordinary interposition to accredit the preachers of the Gospel. The miraculous powers of healing were withdrawn, when the standing miracle of the propagation of Christianity supplied the required evidence of its Divine origin. The miraculous communication of the Divine will was no longer vouchsafed when the

records of the past contained the Revelation of God to man. There was from this time forth required only some recognized channel for the streams of grace already flowing from the living rock of salvation, some faithful witness of truths already enunciated.

The standing authority which is to supply the place of Christ upon earth is the word of God enshrined in a written volume, and committed to the custody of the Church, in the same way as of old the finger of God engraved the commandments upon tables of stone that were laid up for a perpetual testimony within the ark of the Sanctuary. For the Almighty has not left the expression of His will either wholly or partially to the uncertainty of oral tradition. The written volume presents itself to our notice as complete and absolute. The Law exhibits Jehovah uttering His sacred ordinances and righteous decrees. The Prophets pronounce themselves divine messengers. The Gospel sets before us a glorious and perfect ministration. The word transmitted by the Apostles is denominated the word of God¹ which the Gentiles received², and cities and rulers desired to hear³; which grew mightily and prevailed⁴.

¹ Heb. xiii. 7.

² Acts xi. 1.

³ Acts xiii. 7 and 44.

⁴ Acts xix. 20.

For the preaching of the Apostles is said to be the very Gospel of Christ, from which to differ was to be liable to a curse¹, their mission, the fulfilling of "the word of God, even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints²." The writers of the New Testament advance the same claims for the sure word of prophecy³, for all scripture⁴, and for their own words, setting their seal to the whole of the Sacred Volume as the Book of Divine authority, passing their condemnation upon those who corrupt⁵, blaspheme⁶, or deceitfully handle⁷ it, and representing it to be the part of a minister approved of God rightly to divide the word of truth⁸.

Such is the character in which the Holy Scriptures present themselves to us. It remains to be seen whether their claims are made good, whether we may justly look upon them as the sole depository of infallible truth. Accordingly I propose upon the present occasion to consider, how reason and authority combine to confirm the testimony upon which we receive the Holy Bible as the rule of faith.

¹ Gal. i. 8.

² Col. i. 26.

³ 2 Pet. i. 19—21.

⁴ 2 Tim. iii. 16.

⁵ 2 Cor. ii. 17.

⁶ Tit. ii. 5.

⁷ 2 Cor. iv. 2.

⁸ 2 Tim. ii. 15.

It has been represented by some that our acceptance of the Scriptures must rest upon the authority of formal decrees, that Councils duly convoked are under the immediate guidance of the Holy Spirit, and that their resolutions have the force not merely of sure testimony, but of Divine law. And as this power has been conceived to be inherent in the Church, and to remain unchanged in every age, the Church of Rome, which is ever ready to assume the prerogatives of the Church Universal, has appropriated its exercise to herself, and would persuade us that the recognition of her power is necessary to an assured possession of the word of God. This claim was formally advanced at the Council of Trent, in which every determination was prefaced by a declaration of the Divine influence under which the Council met and resolved. And the Synod not only assumed the right of including in the Canon of Scripture books that had not been recognized by earlier Councils¹, but ventured to assert expressly the inspiration of the Latin Vulgate², which confessedly differs in many particulars from

¹ The Council of Laodicea determined the Canon as our Church receives it, excepting that it admitted Baruch, the Epistle of Jeremy, and the second book of Esdras.

² Concil. Trid. Sess. IV.

the Scriptures as they are transmitted to us in the original languages. So that according to this system the question of the reception of the Scripture is removed entirely from the cognizance of the reason, and made to turn upon the acknowledgement of a living authority which deliberates and decrees for mankind.

We need not however hesitate to adopt the well-known maxim of S. Augustin, upon which Romanist divines have so strongly insisted : “ Non crederem Evangelio nisi me Catholicæ Ecclesiæ commoverat auctoritas¹,” “ I should not believe the Gospel, were I not moved to do so by the authority of the Church Catholic.” But a definition of the terms here employed is necessary in order to enable us to understand the true scope of the principle thus enunciated. First, The authority is that of a witness or messenger, with no power of changing the message which he is commissioned to deliver ; and secondly, the Church which exercises this office is in the true sense Catholic or Universal.

It is plain that from the first the Scriptures were recognized as the rule of faith. “ Ye know,” says Clement, “ and it is well that ye know the Holy Scriptures, and have looked

¹ Melaneth. Disp. in Luth. Op. Tom. I. fol. 439.

narrowly into the oracles of God¹.” “Thus says the Holy word²,” “The Scripture saith³,” is ever with him a conclusive argument. “The Gospel,” says Ignatius, (meaning thereby, as Bishop Kaye has shewn, the written gospel,) “is the perfecting of immortality⁴.” And again: “We should abstain from such things, and not speak of them, but give heed to the Prophets, and yet more to the Gospel, in which our suffering has been set forth, and our resurrection perfected⁵.” “As Abraham,” says Justin Martyr, “believed the voice of God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness, so we Christians have believed the voice of God, spoken both by Apostles and by Prophets, and have suffered the loss of all things even to death⁶.” So Tertullian: “I adore the completeness of Scripture. But in Scripture I read nowhere what Hermogenes and his school would teach. If it be written, let them shew it; if it be not written, let them dread the woe pronounced upon those who add to or take away from the word⁷.” And Irenæus,

¹ Clem. ad Cor. i. 53.

² Ibid. ch. 56.

³ Ibid. ch. 34 and 35.

⁴ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἀπάρτισμα ἀφθαρσίας, Ignat. ad Philad. c. 9. That εὐαγγέλιον means a written Gospel, is shewn by Kaye, Just. M. p. 137.

⁵ Ignat. ad Smyr. c. 7.

⁶ Just. M. Tryph. p. 347, E.

⁷ Tertull. adv. Hermog. ch. 22.

“ In such things ought we to submit ourselves to God, knowing well that the Scriptures are perfect, as having been spoken by the Word and the Spirit of God¹.” It is therefore but reasonable to suppose that some agreement must have been come to, whether by formal or by virtual assent, determining the authority to which appeal was to be made. And accordingly the testimony of any ancient writer has far more weight than that which is to be attached to an individual witness. Not only is such testimony valuable as given by one who from the time at which he lived must have been well fitted to judge of the external evidence upon which particular documents were accepted or rejected, but his decision can be regarded in no other light than as an expression of what was generally received by the Church of which he was a member; while the visible communion maintained amongst the various branches of the Primitive Church adds to the collective force of the testimony derived from the assertions of individual writers. We thus arrive at the mind of the early Church upon this momentous question by records independent of any formal determination; and it is remarkable,

¹ Iren. ad Hær. II. 47. Comp. v. 30, where he quotes the same verse as Tertullian. See also IV. 69.

that the earliest synodical decrees upon this subject, those of the Council of Laodicea, were drawn up in a form which clearly implies that there was a general agreement in the Church as to the books of Holy Writ accounted canonical. The list of these books is appended to the 60th canon of the Council, in order to leave no ambiguity in the preceding canon, wherein it is prescribed that none but the canonical books be read publicly in the churches¹.

While, however, we are of necessity carried back to the earliest days in our consideration of the testimony borne to the authority of holy Scripture, we are not to suppose that the Church has ceased to perform in the present day the office of a witness and keeper of Holy Writ. The realization in one organized body of the Idea of the Church Invisible, perfectly joined together under its Divine Head, may well be the subject of holy aspiration and spiritual longings. We know not how far this glorious consummation may hereafter be brought about upon earth ; but the actual con-

¹ Baron. Annal. Vol. iv. App., gives what seem to me valid reasons for fixing the date of this Council at A. D. 320. The 59th Canon runs thus: *Quod non oportet privatos et vulgares aliquos psalmos dici in Ecclesia, nec libros non canonicos sed solos canonicos Veteris et Novi Testamenti.*—*Concil. Laod. Canon. in Labbei Concil. Gener. Vol. I. p. 1508.*

dition of the world wherein we live discovers to us the Visible Church in a less commanding attitude. And we must beware of narrowing its boundaries by any preconceived notions of what may be looked for in a state of ideal perfection. It may be doubted whether attempts to define with logical precision the limits of the visible Church have ever been very successful¹. Most of such definitions, when pushed to their consequences, have led to results which it has not been found easy to reconcile and explain. Error in doctrine, or defect in constitution, must of necessity in some degree check the flow of life to the particular branch where it occurs; but it seems more in accordance with Christian humility and charity, which hopeth all things, to leave to God the judgment of churches as well as of individuals, than to apply any formula of man's deduction to determine the amount of error, or the degree of viciousness in constitution, which shall warrant us in

¹ The definition given in Art. xix. seems purposely to leave a certain degree of indefiniteness in its determination. The language of it was borrowed, as in many cases, from the theological definition of Melancthon :

Est itaque Ecclesia congregatio sanctorum in qua Evangelium docetur, et sacramenta administrantur.

Ecclesia non est πολιτεία constituta ordinationibus humanis sacrificiorum sacerdotii et rituum.—Disp. Melanc. in Luth. Op. Tom. 1. fol. 439.

pronouncing any branch to be cast forth and withered. We can see throughout the world a Body of believers, separated indeed by diversities of doctrine or of discipline, but united by a recognition of the sacraments of Christ's institution, and by a common profession of faith in Christ as the propitiation for their sins, and the author of their salvation. We need not undervalue the pure doctrine and Apostolical constitution of our own Church because we include all who hold these common principles in that Body to the members of which salvation is set forth according to the New Covenant: "It shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved¹." While then we gather, in the first instance, the testimony of the Primitive Church, which, not only from its antiquity, but from its purity and integrity, is deserving of peculiar regard, we may also derive confirmation from the witness borne in the present no less than in past ages by the Visible Church of Christ—the congregation of believers.

We look to the past, and see issuing forth from the obscure huts of some of the humblest inhabitants of an insignificant country, a scheme which overbears opposition and ad-

¹ Acts ii. 21.

vances onward to take possession of the whole world. We see the ancient idols of mankind fall down before it, while it gathers fresh vigour from the ruin of empires. If at times it is partially obscured by error, or benumbed by inactivity, its strength is dormant, not extinct. It awakes to fresh conquests and fresh triumphs, proving its divine origin by gathering to itself every day nations and kings hitherto unsubdued to its yoke. The watchword with which it has gone forth to conquer is the Word of God. The system has been built up upon the recognition of the divine authority of the Scriptures, and its success affords a strong presumption that the foundation is not unsound. The very existence of the Church of Christ is a standing miracle accrediting the Sacred Book, which is the title-deed of its inheritance. And, moreover, the testimony is ever most valuable, whether it comes from earlier or later times, which is obtained from men who have given evidence, by their lives and by their deaths, of their sincerity and zeal. The holy lives and holy deaths of martyrs and confessors invest their confession of faith with peculiar interest; and although it is not every one that has ventured life for his cause, whose cause is necessarily good, yet when many have

given similar tokens of their assurance of the same faith, there arises a presumption in favour of their cause, of which it is never easy to dispose. The Visible Church has been set as a city upon the hill, as a beacon to give light to the world. And holy men are the light of the Church. The fruitful evidence of holy living reflects upon the testimony offered to our acceptance a light which adds continually to the illumination of mankind. Let us apply these considerations to the subject of the Holy Scriptures, and we shall see how we may bring to bear upon the question the wide diffusion of the Christian name, and the zeal which has animated in all ages professors of the religion of Christ.

We are surrounded by the glorious company of the Apostles, the noble army of Martyrs, the Holy Church throughout the world. We are compassed with a cloud of witnesses, who speak to us not merely historically but morally, with the power of those who have devoted to God's service the talents which He has given them, with the authority of those who have proved their sincerity by the sacrifices which they have made. The learning and piety of former times is a perpetual possession to the Christian. The labours of the servants in their Master's cause

are not in vain. The remembrance that men of the profoundest learning, and of unquestionable integrity have accepted, not without patient study, the claims of the Scriptures to be the written revelation of God's will, cannot fail to influence the sober judgment as well as affect the heart. We naturally seek the support of authority. Can there be authority more legitimate than this? It is no mere prejudice, as infidels delight to style it, which disposes us to believe. It is a presumption supported by reasons so manifestly just and valid, that to neglect it were in truth to neglect a principle which has, and ought to have, weight with all the thoughtful among mankind. "*Credo Evangelio, quia me Catholicæ Ecclesiæ commovet auctoritas.*"

Nor need we hesitate to give due and proper weight to the decision of the Church to which we belong. We do not, indeed, like the Romanists, recognize an infallible authority which once accepted precludes the exercise of individual thought concerning subjects upon which a determination has been pronounced. But we do not forget that our Church can point to its martyrs and confessors who have sealed their testimony with their blood. We do not forget the reverent care with which our reformers preserved pri-

mitive doctrine while they removed spurious additions,—the united learning and zeal for which their names are honoured. We do not forget the piety and intellect which have grown up, and have rendered back to the mother which nurtured them a goodly return of service and of love. We do not forget the activity which our Church is now displaying both at home and abroad, giving the truest proof of vitality by winning souls to Christ. Far be it from us to make boast of what has been done. But when with these credentials our Church points to the Bible as the source of all truth, and bids us receive this Book at her hands as the sure evidence of the promises and covenants to which through her we have been admitted, we may listen with reverence as to an honoured parent whose instruction we first receive in faith, and then make our own by reflection.

It is thus, in fact, that most men do receive the word of God upon a reasonable presumption of its truth. And it is the neglect of this presumption, the substitution of what is called pure reason for reason supported by such authority, which has unhappily led some to reject the Scriptures. They have deemed themselves at liberty to subject the evidence and the contents of Scripture to

the same logical investigation which they are wont to exercise upon any other composition; and with the utmost confidence in the certainty of the process which they adopt, they have accepted the conclusion without hesitation, sometimes even with a willing alacrity, which seems to indicate a predisposition hostile to the Christian faith. But if there be no such hostility, the very indifference is a fault. It assumes that the appreciation of the evidences of our religion is to be looked for in the reason alone, that the Revelation of God to man will be established by logical proofs, and will contain nothing but what it falls within the province of reason to judge. When we are conducting any mathematical investigation with the principles and laws of the science fully impressed upon our minds, if we arrive at a result which seems to be at variance with these principles, we feel assured that there has been some error in the process which we have adopted. We retrace our steps, we examine our deductions, and often find considerable difficulty in discovering where the error lies; and if we had not faith in our first principles, we should be inclined to pronounce them improperly assumed; but this faith makes us look closer into the question before us, and

we generally at last detect the fallacy, and the conclusion is found to confirm the principles which it appeared at first to controvert. A neglect of general principles established by facts otherwise inexplicable has been the main cause of the rejection of the Scriptures as the word of God. When a conclusion has presented difficulty, men have forgotten to question the process by which they have arrived at it, because they have not set out with that faith in their general principles which might have led them to distrust themselves.

Authority supplies in the first instance the laws upon which our reasoning is to proceed ; and although the considerations by which these laws have been established may be fitly brought under review, they are not at once to be overturned because the consequences which we deduce from them involve apparent contradiction. We must ascertain first whether our method is correct, and next whether it is legitimately applied to the subject before us.

One instance will best illustrate our meaning. The ingenuity of modern criticism has by the application of distinguished learning discovered the errors of early chroniclers of profane history, and by copious knowledge derived from other sources has to a consider-

able degree reconstructed the history of an ancient people. Even in such a work few would maintain that all the conclusions are equally well founded, or that the commonly-received narrative has in no case been abandoned upon insufficient grounds. But these speculations concern questions in themselves indifferent, and are based upon an acknowledged absence of original documents. To apply therefore, as has been done, a similar system of critical investigation to the subject of Sacred History, is to ignore the existence of well-attested documents of authentic history, and to forget that this question involves our most sacred duties and obligations. How serious then is the responsibility incurred by one who ventures to press forward an ingenious hypothesis, the result of unassisted imagination, which is at variance with opinions sanctioned by learning and antiquity, and connected with the highest hopes and loftiest aspirations of mankind. "It is the love of Virgil," says S. Augustin, "engendered in our minds by the commendation bestowed upon him by our forefathers, that prepares us to listen to the numerous disquisitions upon his poetry with minds ready most to approve of those who best exhibit the excellence of the master, and to impute any failure in the ex-

planation to the defect of the teacher, not to the fault of the poet. Surely we should approach in a similar spirit to those whom the voice of antiquity has proclaimed to have been moved by the Holy Ghost." And yet, says he, in terms which, spoken as they were of the Manichees, read a striking lesson to the rash broachers of infidel theories in modern days—"Yet are these young men of intelligence so unrivalled, of powers of discovery so wonderful, that with little deep study of the Scriptures, with no help from instruction (for they have never sought it), with no disposition to allow even moderate understandings to the recognized witnesses in favour of the Sacred Volume, they have boldly expressed their disbelief in its contents, moved by the voices of adversaries who, under the specious pretence of reason, require an assent to assertions far more incredible than the records which they endeavour to disprove¹."

But let us not suppose that the appeal to authority upon which we insist, disparages or even dispenses with reason properly so called. The remarks already made have been directed to shew the reasonable nature of the authority which they attempt to establish. And the authority being that of a witness, not

¹ S. Aug. de Util. Credend. ch. vi.

of a judge, the testimony must of necessity be subjected to the cognizance of the understanding. The competency and the honesty of the several witnesses, the extent and force of their testimony, its individual and aggregate value, the decision, whether explicitly or implicitly pronounced by persons whose position and character has enabled them to judge—are all submitted to human reason, whose especial province it is to judge of external evidences. But there is a very prevalent disposition among men to be guided more by internal than by external evidences. The collection and the review of the former is a laborious task, and demands so much of industry and research that few are willing to undertake it. To estimate aright internal evidence does in reality require no less preparation. But the need of it is less obvious. There are certain common topics of morality, probability, and analogy, of which men in general deem themselves fully competent to judge. And the majority of mankind are too much accustomed to read hastily books, for the real comprehension of which they are ill-prepared by previous information, and to pronounce freely and sometimes dogmatically upon the value or the meaning of their contents. This rash spirit has been productive of the most

unhappy results in handling the books of our religion. Therefore is it well perhaps to lay more stress upon external than upon internal evidences, because in them we are less liable to be deceived by prejudice or misconception. But the examination of internal evidence is also an important province of reason, and the fulness of Scripture will here too give us abundant matter for thought and investigation. The purity of the precepts delivered—the knowledge of human nature displayed—the accordance of historical description with the times described—the elevation of the principles set forth above the habits and thoughts of the age—the simplicity and yet dignity of style—the coincidences and harmony of the narrative—its fidelity as confirmed by comparison with profane historians;—these and various other topics present large scope for the exercise of our reason. Indeed, if we view Scripture in its historical aspect as a book embracing events that extend over a space of time exceeding four thousand years, in which there are references to the fortunes of nearly every nation that has taken a prominent position upon the earth, references often brief and incidental yet found to correspond with what we know of these nations from other sources, and this more apparently as

fresh discoveries daily open to us fresh sources of information ; if we observe that, occupied as it is with objects so manifold, no plain and palpable error has been made out—or if we view it in its moral aspect, and trace the germs of a morality far surpassing that of all other nations, evident in the rudest ages, gradually unfolding themselves with the advance of time, until they attain full maturity, as developed by the preaching of Christ and His Apostles, so that the Bible is the repository of all the purest and noblest principles of natural religion—or once more, if we view it in its doctrinal aspect, and see throughout all its parts one consistent and intelligible scheme shadowed out, predicted; and revealed, observing how the new revelation has illustrated and cleared up the obscurer portions of the old, and marking the perfect unity of the whole volume though composed at various times and by so numerous writers—if we view it, I say, in each and all of these aspects, we see a subject fitted for the contemplation of the most profound philosopher, for the exercise of the most exalted intellect, and can triumphantly retort the charge of unreasonableness on those who, notwithstanding these multiplied evidences, suffer special objections to outweigh general proof, and by an exclusive

contemplation of what seem to them dark spots, lose all sense of the transcendent brightness of that word which endureth for ever in the heavens, which has gone forth from one end of the earth unto the other, rejoicing as a giant to run its course.

But while we thus allude to various considerations which tend to establish the authority of the word of God upon the foundation of reason, which seem sufficient to repel the assaults of the adversary, and calculated to produce in those who profess to disbelieve it, a serious apprehension that it may be true, we must not forget that the conviction which begets assurance in the individual is the gift of God. The word that is to save our souls must be engrafted in the heart. And perhaps this is all which Calvin meant when he said that “men cannot by any *argument* be brought to believe the Scriptures¹.” There have been some who have made the language and style of the Scriptures themselves the test and touchstone of their genuineness—maintaining that they bear about them an unmistakable impress of their divine origin.

¹ Inst. Christ. Relig. i. 8, 10, quoted by Jones on the Canon of the New Test. Pt. i. ch. 7; who remarks that Calvin does in his next chapter make use of many arguments taken from testimony and tradition for this purpose.

Nor would I deny that they possess intrinsically a very peculiar force, which displays itself in the most varied operations. By an arrow from this quiver the heart of the unbeliever has been pierced asunder, by a word from this volume the blasphemer and the profligate have been arrested in their career, the careless has been awakened, the waverer confirmed, the mourner comforted, the broken-hearted healed. Many have felt its living energy rushing upon them as with a mighty wind. For the wind bloweth where it listeth, and we hear the sound thereof, yet cannot tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth¹. Yet were it idle to look for means of critical discrimination in a property of Holy Writ, which has reference to the heart alone. The brightness of the Word of God does not illuminate the vision of all upon whom it shines. The companions of Saul saw indeed the light, but it was Saul alone who heard the voice speaking unto him². The inward consciousness of God's presence in His word is not intended to take the place of intellectual apprehension, but it furnishes that which learning and intellect cannot supply, without which learning and intellect are vain. It is in general the reward and effect of a patient,

¹ John iii. 8.

² Acts xxii. 9.

humble, and devout study of the Holy Scriptures, with an honest desire to discover therein instruction for our ignorance, support for our weakness, relief for our weariness, reproof for our folly, and pardon for our sins. The soul that after long thirsting in a barren and dry wilderness where is no water, has found the well that springeth up unto everlasting life, cannot doubt the source from which these living waters flow. Experience must imbue the soul with a love for God's word, and teach the true value of the riches which it contains. Where our treasure is, our heart will be also. It is vain to meet the questions of cavillers by an appeal to the internal testimony which is not appreciable by those whom we would answer or convince. Nor dare we say that the Holy Spirit gives to man a power of discerning between this or that book, or authorizes any determination founded upon internal perception of manner or of style.

Yet for the full apprehension of Holy Scripture the heart must be convinced. The testimony is good and true to those who have learnt its value. Nay, it is the crown to all belief which without it is necessarily imperfect. The historical, the logical, the moral, must be informed and animated by the spi-

ritual. Thus shall the words of our Saviour become to us that which He Himself declared them to be, spirit and life; for "it is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing¹." Thus if we continue in His word, we shall become His disciples indeed, and shall know the truth, and the truth shall make us free², and the God of hope shall fill us with all joy and peace in believing, that we may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost³.

¹ John vi. 63.

² John viii. 31, 32.

³ Rom. xv. 13.

LECTURE IV.

INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE.

2 TIM. III. 16.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.

I HAVE spoken of the foundation upon which the authority of the word of God rests. The nature of this authority deserves some particular consideration. For the advance of infidelity has commonly been anticipated and promoted by doubts and objections connected with this subject. In the first attacks upon Christianity it was attempted to destroy all credence in the Holy Scriptures by representing them as mere forgeries and impostures. But research soon demonstrated the weakness of such representations, and fresh evidence was continually brought in to shew that the several books of Holy Writ were the production of the age and country usually assigned to them, and that their authors were neither hypocrites nor enthusiasts, but honest and pious men, who spoke the words of sincerity and truth. But Scripture

having been in one sense acknowledged, its divinity and infallibility became the objects of attack, while the question seemed to be raised among believers themselves as to the sense in which they were to understand the Scriptures to be the word of God.

This circumstance renders it imperative upon us to examine, in the first place, what Scripture itself professes; and the very first glance at the contents of the Bible conveys to us its supernatural character. The description of the creation of the world, of the fall of man, of miracles performed, whether by the ministry of angels, or by the direct interposition of Him who created and sustains the universe—the unfolding of the counsels of the Most High by act and by prophecy—the denunciation of Divine vengeance upon sinners, and the proclamation of Divine mercy to the repentant—the promulgation of a scheme foreordained by the wisdom of God for the abolition of transgression and the recovery of mankind, manifestly imply a miraculous communication from God to man. The declarations of Scripture to this effect are plain and unmistakeable. The statutes which Moses set forth before the people are called by him “the words of God,” “the voice of God.” The sweet Psalmist of Israel, the anointed

of the God of Jacob said, "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue¹." "He (the Lord God) spake by the mouth of his holy prophets which have been since the world began²," said Zacharias, himself (as the historian tells us) being filled with the Holy Ghost and prophesying³. "The Holy Ghost," says the historian of the Acts, "by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas⁴;" and again, "These things God before had shewed by the mouth of his prophets⁵." Not to multiply passages repeating the same expressions, S. Peter speaks distinctly in his second Epistle: "No prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation: for the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost⁶." And whether we adopt our authorized translation of my text, which seems most in accordance with the original, or that which we find in the Latin Vulgate, "all divinely-inspired Scripture is also profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness⁷:" there is the same

¹ 2 Sam. xxiii. 2.

² Luke i. 70.

³ Luke i. 67.

⁴ Acts i. 16.

⁵ Acts iii. 18.

⁶ 2 Pet. i. 20, 21.

⁷ It is scarcely necessary to notice the singular application of this passage by Tertullian to prove the authority of the Book of Enoch:

assertion that the Holy Scriptures (τὰ ἱερὰ γράμματα) referred to in the preceding verse are to be regarded as expressive of the Di-

“Et legimus omnem Scripturam edificationi habilem divinitus inspirari.” The Complutensian Edition in 1514 has “Omnis Scriptura divinitus inspirata utilis est ad docendum.” An edition of the Vulgate, published by Isidore in 1557, alters the translation to “et utilis,” but the Vulgate of Sixtus V. recurs to the Complutensian reading, and this has been preserved in all succeeding editions.

Mr. F. W. Newman eagerly adopts this interpretation, and says that “the spirit of this remark is perfectly *apologetic!* Despise not, O Timothy, (is virtually his exhortation) the Scriptures that you learned as a child. Although now you have the Spirit to teach you, yet that does not make the older writers useless—for *every divinely-inspired writing is also profitable for instruction,*” &c. Phases of Faith, p. 141. It is difficult to understand how *πᾶσα γραφὴ θεόπνευστος καὶ ὠφέλιμος* can be thus rendered without assuming a very forced and unnatural construction. But even if this be the real meaning, what possible grounds are there for Mr. Newman’s paraphrase? It is inconsistent with the whole tenor of the passage. The Apostle thus commences this portion of his Epistle: “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come,” ch. iii. ver. 1. He proceeds to give the signs of the times by a description of the men who shall then appear, vv. 2—9. Then turning to Timothy he says, “But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience, persecutions,” &c. vv. 10—12. Again recurring in v. 12 to “evil men” he turns again to Timothy, “But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for

vine will, and the writers as under the influence of the Spirit of God.

It seems to be in accordance with this character of Holy Writ that the various writers are so seldom brought forward. In many cases their names are known only by tradition, or by inference derived from some remarks which, humanly speaking, would seem to have been casually introduced. Thus in the Pentateuch, which constant tradition among Jews and Christians has ascribed to Moses, that lawgiver is continually spoken of without intimation that he is himself speaking. "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth¹." And again, "Moses wrote their goings out according to their journeys, by the commandment of the Lord²." A similar mode of writing led in early times to a discussion whether the book of Job was to be considered as composed by that patriarch himself; and an ancient writer remarks, that since it was

instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." Now is there here the remotest reference to the possibility of Timothy's dispensing with the Scriptures? We can scarcely conceive such a notion coming into the mind of any one, unless he was seeking about for some mode of evading so plain and explicit declarations as those contained in vv. 14—16.

¹ Numb. xii. 3.

² Numb. xxxiii. 2.

certainly written under the influence of the Holy Spirit, the question is of comparatively little importance, and that in general "the writers of Holy Writ being full of the Holy Ghost were lifted above their own nature, and as it were put out of themselves, and in this manner deliver sentiments about themselves as though about other persons¹."

This method is to be traced yet more distinctly in the book of Psalms, where the Psalmist constantly addresses himself to the people, assuming, as it were, the person of the Most High, "Hear, O my people, and I will testify unto thee: O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto me²." "Give ear, O my people, unto my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth³." And in the Gospels it cannot have escaped our observation, that with the exception of the brief preface to S. Luke's Gospel the Evangelists are kept entirely out of sight; that of two among them no action or speech is recorded; that S. Matthew in the account of his own conversion makes no allusion to the circumstance that he is himself relating it; that S. John, who took so distinguished a part in the events which he relates, discovers his authorship by omission, and not

¹ S. Gregor. Moral. in Job. Pref. § 3. Eng. Transl.

² Psal. lxxxi. 8.

³ Psal. lxxviii. 1.

by description, denoting himself as “that other disciple¹,” “the disciple whom Jesus loved²;” and that the most direct assertion as to his position has reference to the validity of his testimony: “He that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe³.” So in the Acts the writer is designated merely by the preface, which carries us back to the Gospel of S. Luke; and his presence is on certain occasions intimated by a change of the pronoun employed in the narrative: while the Epistles, which from their nature are more concerned with the circumstances of the writers, contain constant declarations that the words are not to be regarded as the utterance of mere men. The promise of special assistance made to the Apostles by Christ⁴, is there exhibited in its fulfilment. We are told that God hath shined in their hearts, that they had the treasure in an earthen vessel, that the excellency of power might be of God, and not of them⁵—that Christ speaketh in them⁶—and that Paul hath written according to the wisdom given unto him⁷. “The

¹ John xx. 3.

² John xiii. 23.

³ John xix. 35.

⁴ Matth. x. 19.

⁵ 2 Cor. iv. 7.

⁶ 2 Cor. xiii. 3.

⁷ 2 Pet. iii. 15.

‘Apostles,’” to use the words of S. Chrysostom, “came not down like Moses from the mount with tables of stone in their hands ; but bearing about the Holy Spirit in their hearts, and pouring forth a kind of treasure and stream of doctrines, graces, and all good things, they went abroad, having been made by grace living books and living laws. Thus they converted the three thousand, thus the five thousand, thus they drew to themselves the nations of the world, God speaking through their voice to all that came unto Him. Thus was it that being filled with the Holy Ghost, they have written what they have written. Nor need we disguise the humble character of their occupations: for so is made more manifest not only their excellency, but also the grace of the Holy Spirit¹.”

But further, the subjects of inspiration were commonly fitted to be the organs of revelation by preparation of the heart², and by instruction of wisdom. In the days that the word of the Lord was precious, the Lord called unto Samuel, because he was in favour both with God and also with men³. The Spirit of the Lord came upon David, because the Lord looked at the heart⁴. And they who

¹ S. Chrys. Hom. in Matth. Hom. i. p. 4. C.

² Prov. xvi. 1.

³ 1 Sam. iii. 1.

⁴ 1 Sam. xvi. 7, 13.

were to exercise the functions of prophets, or men of God, were under the old dispensation trained in schools, and collected in companies of prophets¹—the special grace not dispensing commonly with the necessity for those attainments which were capable of being acquired by ordinary methods. For the case of Amos was manifestly an exception, who was no prophet, neither a prophet's son, but a herdsman, and gathering sycamore fruit, when the Lord took him as he followed the flock, and said unto him, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel². And although under the New Dispensation the Spirit was poured out in fuller measure upon all flesh, this informed, but did not destroy the original character, sanctified, but did not abolish the feelings of the heart; while the example of S. Paul (to appeal to no other), and his instructions to Timothy, prove, to use the words of Bishop Bull, that “even divinely-inspired persons and ministers of God did not so depend upon Divine inspiration but that they made use also of the ordinary helps and means, such as reading of books, and study and meditation on them, for their assistance in discharge of their office³.”

¹ 1 Sam. x. 5—12.

² Amos vii. 14, 15.

³ Bull's Serm. on 2 Tim. iv. 13.

We find apparent in the books of Holy Scripture exactly such a character as might have been expected under an economy like this. The culture of the human intellect and the exercise of human thought have left their impress on the several books of the Old and New Testament; while human feelings and human affections, which have play even in those on whom the Spirit rests, find their utterance in the compositions of inspired writers. Individuality of manner, style, and expression, derogate not from the substantial authority of the Sacred Volume. The prophecies, whether expressed with the majestic imagery of Isaiah, or in the pathetic strains of Jeremiah, are equally the words of God. The loving fervour of S. John, the dauntless energy of S. Paul, the eager vehemence of S. Peter, have been permitted to affect in various ways the characters of their respective Epistles. And more particularly the Epistles of S. Paul seem to reveal to us the character and feelings of the very man—working with his own hands, that he might be chargeable to no man¹—earnestly zealous for the salvation of others, his heart's desire for Israel was that they might be saved², so that he could even write himself accursed

¹ 2 Cor. xi. 9.

² Rom. x. 1.

for his brethren's sake¹—feelingly solicitous for his converts, lest their minds be corrupted², lest by any means he had bestowed labour upon them in vain³—conscious of his sincere love for Christ, from which he was not to be separated⁴, yet tremblingly alive to the possibility of becoming a castaway⁵,—despising death, yet broken down by a brother's tears (“what mean ye to weep and to break mine heart⁶?”)—longing affectionately for the society of his friends⁷—sensibly alive to sorrow (for he writes out of much affliction and anguish of heart⁸), yet rejoicing in tribulation—firm to withstand even a brother Apostle when he was to blame⁹, yet willing to become all things to all men if so be that he might win some—ready to be offered when his time was come, and humbly confident in the crown of righteousness laid up for him with the Lord¹⁰. For Paul was a man partaking of the same nature with us, who exhibits himself in his Epistles so that we may fancy him all but present to our sight, and behold him as it were conversing with us, and may be aroused and animated by a voice which being human would kindle

¹ Rom. ix. 3.³ Gal. iv. 11.⁵ 1 Cor. ix. 27.⁷ 1 Thess. ii. 17.⁹ Gal. ii. 11.² 2 Cor. xi. 3.⁴ Rom. viii. 35.⁶ Acts xxi. 13.⁸ 2 Cor. ii. 4.¹⁰ 2 Tim. iv. 6, 8.

our emulation, crying aloud, "Be ye imitators of me, as I am of Christ!"

The observation of this twofold character of Holy Writ, wherein the Divine and the human are blended together, might have sufficed for every purpose, had man been contented simply to read, mark, and learn; to gather the instruction, admonition and reproof thus conveyed. The doubts and questionings that have arisen upon the subject of Inspiration have been generally owing to the partial and one-sided views of men, who having dwelt exclusively upon one class of facts observed, have given little or no heed to the other.

The scholastic practice of arguing syllogistically from isolated texts had thrown into the background those peculiarities which distinguished one part of Scripture from another. But the development of various branches of critical and exegetical learning at the time of the Reformation soon produced a reaction; and men of originality delighted to bring to bear upon the explanation of Holy Writ the fresh and varied acquisitions of science and literature. The discovery of a new field of speculations, and the sense of liberty now

¹ 1 Cor. xi. 1. See the noble panegyrick upon the character of St. Paul, as discovered in his Epistles, by St Chrysostom in his Preface and Conclusion to his Homilies upon the Romans.

freshly awakened, naturally inclined theologians of the new school in the contrary direction to the method of the old divines. But among the reformers there was no want of reverence for the word of God, no forgetfulness of its inspired character. Indeed, it was to the Scripture in its simplicity that they appealed against the unauthorized innovations of ecclesiastical tradition. But while the decision of the Bible was with them final, their mode of arriving at that decision was very different from that of bygone ages. The Master of the Sentences, or the Angelic Doctor, had little weight with them; and they felt no scruple in opposing their own opinion to writers hitherto held all but infallible. The result was a far more comprehensive view of Scripture than had hitherto been obtained; and most valuable additions were now made to the means of a right interpretation. But the free exercise of human intellect upon sacred objects was not without its danger. The supernatural was sometimes lost sight of in the contemplation of the natural, and criticism, proud of its ingenuity, was often rash and self-sufficient. This became apparent when the reformed Church had won for itself an independent position, and its divines were less occupied with combating Roman-

ists, than with reducing their own views to a system. The question of the Inspiration of Scripture was one constantly discussed, and while one party were inclined to make too free use of their reason, the other were more and more disposed to confine speculation within narrow limits. This gave rise to definitions not merely expressive of the Divine character of the revealed word, but also descriptive of the mode of the Divine operation. And so questions were raised and discussed less by a reference to what had been declared, than by arguments based upon some determinate theory framed by preconceived notions as to the nature of Divine Inspiration. Thus it was ruled that "if *all* Scripture be inspired, there must be nothing in the Scriptures which was not suggested and inspired to the sacred writers: for if there were but *any particle* of Scripture derived from human knowledge and memory and thought, all Scripture could not be said universally to be inspired of God¹:" and that "not only the matter, but also the words and syllables, were inspired²."

The obvious difficulties in the way of ac-

¹ Calovius, quoted by Pusey in his Enquiry into the Cause of the Rationalistic Views in Germany, Part II. p. 70.

² Non res solum sed et omnia verba et syllabas esse inspiratas. -Ibid. p. 71.

cepting such a theory of verbal and literal dictation were quickly brought forward, and the advocates for free examination of Holy Writ, as of an ordinary book, had this advantage, that more was advanced by their opponents than could be maintained. And accordingly there arose a school of interpreters who derived every characteristic of the Sacred Volume from the individualities of the various writers, and sought therein for an explanation of all its contents.

It has not unfrequently been represented that the question as to the Inspiration of the Bible admits of only two alternatives; that we must either maintain a dictation of such a nature as to exclude all exercise of thought in the writer, and to leave him little more freedom than the pen which he holds, or else reject the notion of any Divine superintendence to secure him from errors in fact, or unsoundness of argument.

Yet supposing God to have revealed Himself through the instrumentality of man, the twofold character of the communication, to which we have referred, seems what we might have looked for. The Almighty has enabled man to influence his fellow-mortal by vigour of expression, earnestness of thought, depth of feeling, and power of reasoning. And we

might have expected that these gifts would be employed to the glory of God. It is natural for man to think and feel; and we can almost as easily conceive an address made by an Apostle without the use of his tongue as without the exercise of his thought. The character thus found to exist in the spoken language, would not unnaturally be impressed upon the written language. This is, however, perfectly compatible with such an exercise of controlling influence by the Holy Spirit as to render the written word the very word of God: in the same manner as the words spoken by Apostles had the sanction of Divine authority. "It is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost¹." The structure and authorship of a particular portion of Holy Writ may have been permitted to assume a character determined by the individualities of the writer, and by the circumstances of those for whom he was guided to write, and yet the matter of the narrative be made up of facts presented to him from without².

The employment of human thought and feeling in the work of revelation has certainly served a purpose, though it may be a subor-

¹ Mark xiii. 11.

² See an admirable note on this subject by Dr. Mill, on the *Genealogies*, p. 142.

dinate one, in furnishing room for evincing upon human principles the fidelity of the narrative and the veracity of the narrators. Most of the arguments regarding the Evidences of Christianity are founded upon an examination of the several books as human compositions; which examination by no means implies a forgetfulness of their higher value and more sacred character, but endeavours to establish their human authority as a first step to lead up to the Divine.

But without confining ourselves to the consideration of evidences, we may remark in this dispensation a merciful adaptation of the word of God to the wants and to the nature of man. It has been my endeavour to shew that for the assurance of faith man needs to be confirmed by a reference both to reason and authority. The human element, so to call it, of the Divine Word affords exactly that opportunity for the exercise of the reason which is suitable to our nature, while its Divine character asserts authority such as man is not only capable but desirous of acknowledging. So that here, as elsewhere, the external corresponds to the internal. The sphere in which man is placed answers to the capacities with which he is endowed: the objects seen or heard, to the eye or to the ear which perceives

them—the things to be understood, to the power of understanding them. “Well,” says S. Chrysostom, “but what says the enemy of truth? Is it in vain that God gives us the power of reasoning? Is it in vain that we have received the faculty whereby we judge? We are bound by reasoning to scrutinize our faith, and not leave our religion unexamined. But let the Divine Oracles be the limit and guide of our examination, and the rules therein laid down the rules of our religion. But thou transgressest these rules, walking not by the divinely-inspired Scriptures (*ταῖς θεοπνεύστοις γραφαῖς*), but prying into the Divine counsels, dost violence to the truth, preferring to follow even the incongruities of reasoning, rather than submit thyself to faith¹.”

We must however constantly bear in mind, and there never was a time at which it was more needful than the present, that the application of critical knowledge to the contents of the Sacred Volume must not be pushed beyond its proper limits. It must be remembered, 1st, that its claims are established upon external evidence, that it professes to possess extraordinary properties, and that the effects produced corroborate this profession;

¹ St Chryst. Hom. in Matt. xxi. 23, quoted by Fabricius, Ver. Christ. Relig. ch. xxiv. p. 491.

that thus it has an authority peculiar to itself, controlling, but not precluding, the exercise of reason. 2d, That consequently we cannot adopt without qualification the ordinary methods of examination, which we employ in the investigation of other books. 3d, That we do not know beforehand what a Revelation would contain, and are not at liberty to raise objections because it contains things different in substance or in arrangement from what we should have expected. 4th, More particularly in the case of the four Gospels, (which are so frequently brought under discussion,) that the variety observed constitutes one branch of evidence, and that it is precisely such as is most calculated to convince us of the truthfulness of the several narratives. 5th, That these books were evidently not intended to be complete or regular histories, and that there is no reason to suppose that the chronological order of events recorded was accurately preserved. 6th, That many apparent difficulties might be easily cleared up by a knowledge of the times and of the persons brought under notice. 7th, That when a particular fact is recorded by more than one writer, the insertion or omission of some circumstances by one, and of other circumstances by another (all these circumstances having actually oc-

curred), may give a variety of narrative more apparent than real : and 8th, That in any arrangement we may adopt of the various accounts so as to form one narrative, we can seldom be sure that we have arrived at the true order ; for there are often two or more arrangements equally consistent with the information handed down to us.—“ These supposed contradictions,” says Luther, “ are questions, and remain but questions, which I will not solve, nor do they much signify, though there are many people so over-curious and sharp-witted that they must needs bring up all sorts of questions, and would fain have accurate accounts given of them. But if we have a right understanding of Scripture, and the right Articles of our belief, that Jesus Christ the Son of God died and suffered for us, it is no great loss if we cannot answer all other questions which may be asked. If a discrepancy arises in Holy Scripture, and we cannot reconcile it, then let it go¹ :” remarks which by no means imply that Luther sought a solution of these difficulties in the errors, ignorance, and forgetfulness of the writers, but that, accepting the whole Scriptures as the true word of God, he deemed it superfluous to exaggerate the importance of circumstantial details, and was content to receive the

¹ Quoted in Pusey's Enquiry, p. 68.

facts upon Divine authority, even though he could not explain all the circumstances of the narrative.

We accept the Holy Scriptures then as the word of God. We believe that we possess those books which the Holy Spirit caused to be written for the reproof, for the correction, and for the instruction of mankind. We acknowledge the facts no less than the doctrines as incontestably true, and believe that in the selection of facts, and in the manner of relating them, the narrators were subjected to the Divine guidance, in order that these sacred pages should form, when collected into one, a sufficient harmonious and complete account of the scheme of man's redemption, and of his consequent obligations. And although we do not assert that accuracy of transcription has been secured by a perpetual miracle, yet we recognize in the institution of a Church, and in other circumstances attending the promulgation of Christianity, divinely-appointed means partly natural and partly supernatural, for preserving to us the copies of Holy Writ free from material error:—so that we have the deliberate testimony of a great master of criticism, that of all ancient books none has suffered so little as the New Testament from errors of transcribers; that the real text of the sacred writers is competently exact

even in the worst manuscript which we possess; and that not one article of faith or moral precept is perverted or lost in them¹. The aspect of the Scripture with which we are most concerned is that wherein we find no discrepancy; and it was not ill said by Bucer, that the sacred writers were prompted to touch lightly upon particulars in themselves of no great moment, in order to draw us to subjects more serious and solemn, and send back the too curious enquirer into matters not necessary to be known to the study of the Sacred Volume itself².

The supernatural character of the Holy Scripture has been made from the earliest days a subject of dispute. The Ebionites received so much of the historical facts as was consistent with ordinary experience; and without disputing the authenticity and genuineness of the several books, endeavoured to explain away all that was miraculous, referring the events related to natural instead of supernatural agency, and conceiving that the writers were mistaken not in their facts, but in the causes which they assigned to them. The Gnostics, equally disallowing the

¹ Bentley's Phil. Lips. Part 1. § xxxii.

² Quoted by Spanh. D. E. Pars 1. p. 37. Comp. S. Chrysost. Homil. in S. Matth. Hom. 1. p. 5.

divine authority of the Scriptures as they were commonly explained, resolved all the miraculous and supernatural parts of the history into mythical narratives, intended as mystical not actual representations. These two forms of error have been of late years reproduced, the former being exhibited in the earlier, the latter in the more recent school of German Rationalism. The forced explanations necessary to support the theories of Semler, Paulus, and Eichhorn, have been already exploded. New error has at least been serviceable in demolishing the old. Theory after theory has been produced destructive of each other, but all based upon the common fallacy of allowing in Scripture nothing beyond the province of reason.

The assailants of Scriptural authority in the present day would dispose of all that is supernatural by a reference to myth and allegory. Mysticism has ever had its admirers. Many of the early Fathers of the Church were inclined to give considerable weight to this method of interpretation. But the orthodox differed from the heretics in this, that the former preserved the utmost reverence for the word of God, and maintained the literal together with the mystical sense; the latter insisted upon the mystical, to the denial of

the literal¹. It is the latter kind of mysticism which has lately re-appeared. Uncontrolled by that reverent regard to authority, which kept in check even the most imaginative among the Fathers, it has proceeded to the examination of the Scripture eager to discover some new thing. There is no attempt, as among the earlier Rationalists, to account for miracles by natural causes, but every portion of Scripture which contains supernatural events is at once pronounced mythical, not perhaps without its hidden meaning, but this widely removed from the obvious sense.

It is not my purpose to enter upon any detailed examination of these speculations. We may observe in general, that the idea of mythical narration is quite foreign to the age and country in which the Gospels appeared. Had the Evangelists lived in the ancient days of Grecian song there might have been some colour for the hypothesis. But the time of their appearance when historians were so much more critical than imaginative, when every statement was subjected to the jealous scrutiny of opposing parties and sects, was as unfavourable to the substitution of myth for history, as the simple and unaffected style

¹ See this subject fully discussed, with passages from the Fathers, in Tract 89—Tracts for the Times.

of the narratives themselves is opposed to such a theory.

These vague speculations, however, seem to have charms for some minds which the cold and barren disquisitions of early Rationalism never possessed: and we have had unhappy instances in our own day, and in our own country, of those who have been misled by the haze of this false philosophy. The historical evidence has been depreciated, and the historical difficulties have been exaggerated. Miracles have been represented as repugnant to our reason, and the moral purpose which gives them credibility has been overlooked. The emphatical assertions of the Apostles, that they had the Spirit of God, have been either represented to denote mere consciousness of sincerity and earnestness of spirit, or have been attributed to false views of psychology; while the necessity of some such inspiration in order to any Divine Revelation has been entirely forgotten. But the conclusion drawn has not been that Christianity is absolutely false and delusive, but that it is a spiritual power independent of all the facts and circumstances of its promulgation.

We have been told by one¹ who has re-

¹ Mr. F. W. Newman.

corded the stages of belief or unbelief through which he has passed, that he has given up the letter of the Bible, that he recognizes no historical certainty in the facts which it records, that he sees in the Apostles no more than human teachers, with neither accurate knowledge nor correct powers of reasoning; nay, that he acknowledges not the Divinity of the Messiahship, the perfection or the authority of our blessed Lord Himself; and yet that nothing of this ought to blind us to the truly spiritual and holy development of historical Christianity.

Such is the melancholy result of paying no regard to outward authority, and trusting to "the inward instincts of the soul." Surely if every distinctive fact of Christianity is to be given up, if all its characteristic doctrines are to be thrown aside, it is more reasonable to adopt the bolder assertions of early sceptics, and stigmatize the whole as an imposture, than thus to shelter ourselves beneath a name which we will not have to be more than a name. But if Christianity stands before us as a fact which cannot be denied, if its documents are recommended by overwhelming evidences, external and internal, if we cannot deny that every advance of the Religion has been based upon these documents, if these documents profess to contain the mes-

sage from God to men, if their morality is inseparable from their doctrines, their doctrines from their facts,—we may well accept them in a humble and reverent spirit, ready to believe no less than to understand, to trust for our knowledge of divine things to what has been thus proved to be God's Word. "Why was it," asks Justin Martyr, "that the heathen philosophers were so at variance with each other, and so inconsistent with themselves? It was because they would not learn from those who had knowledge, but thought themselves able by human ingenuity to know clearly the things of heaven, though they could not master even those on earth." The difficulties which lie before our feet in the world wherein the Creator manifests himself to His creatures are neither fewer nor less serious than those which are to be found in His Word, wherein He declares Himself to His children. In each case much must be taken on trust. Reason is not supreme, nor is she intended so to be. She is the handmaid, and yet the support, of authority. She must bow before the sovereign whom she has aided in establishing upon the throne.

The painful controversies arising from a neglect of due authority have not been without their benefit. In the land wherein they have principally prevailed they have called

forth an array of learned and earnest men who have contended, and are contending, for the faith once delivered to the saints. We need not accept all that these champions of the Truth maintain, because we recognize their zealous services in a warfare of no common interest. And if we mourn the baneful influence exerted by anti-christian writers amongst ourselves, let us hope that these efforts will only be productive of increased activity in the defenders of the faith. Let us hope that the warning will not be lost upon others who are inclined to step beyond the bounds assigned to them by God's watchful care, that they will search more constantly that treasure-house of Divine Truth whence they have been taught to seek wisdom—abjuring all idle endeavours to separate those things which God has joined together, the letter and the spirit of Christianity.

May the Holy Spirit impress upon the hearts of all, especially of my younger brethren, a deep sense of the reverence with which we are bound to enter upon any study of the inspired word of God. Let not this holy word be made the subject of careless discussion, wherein love of paradox, and desire for victory, may haply suggest arguments, half believed by him who produces them, but injurious both to himself and to all who hear

them. And may no specious appearance of spiritual feeling incline you to view with less suspicion the writers who would make light of the facts and doctrines of our Religion. The testimony borne by one who was of all men most able to estimate history, and has certainly never been suspected of credulity, deserves to be impressed deeply upon all singleminded enquirers after truth. "The man," says Niebuhr, "who does not hold Christ's earthly life, with all its miracles, to be as properly and really historical as any event in the sphere of history, and who does not receive all points of the Apostolic Creed with the fullest conviction, I do not conceive to be a Protestant Christian; and as for that Christianity which is such according to the modern philosophers and Pantheists, without a personal God, without immortality, without individuality of men, without historical faith, it may be a very ingenious and subtle philosophy, but it is no Christianity at all. Again and again have I said, that I know not what to do with a metaphysical God, and that I will have no other but the God of the Bible, who is heart to heart¹."

¹ Niebuhr quoted in Neander, Pref. to Life of Christ, p. xx.

LECTURE V.

THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH.

2 TIM. I. 12.

I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

THIS passage has been variously understood. The majority of commentators have adopted that interpretation which is most in accordance with our authorized version—considering the soul as a sacred deposit which God had as it were accepted at S. Paul's hands, and was able to keep against the day when He shall reckon up His jewels, and none shall be wanting.

The repetition of the word (*παρακαταθήκη*, or as some read, *παραθήκη*) in the fourteenth verse, "That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us," inclines us to assign to the same word in the twelfth verse the same meaning, while the reference in the context to the appointment of S. Paul as "a preacher and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles,"

and the direction to Timothy, "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus," seems to point to the sacred deposit of doctrinal truth committed by the Holy Spirit to the Apostle's keeping, such as that to which the same Apostle elsewhere refers: "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust (*τὴν παρακαταθήκην*)¹."

Some light is thrown upon my text by the phraseology of Jewish writers, who make mention of two deposits of God, the lamp within us which is the soul, and the lamp without us which is the Law, (or, as Philo expresses it, *Θείων παρακαταθήκην ὀργίων*, the deposit of the divine mysteries,) and who introduce the Almighty speaking thus: "My light or lamp is in thine hand, and thy lamp which is thy soul is in mine. If thou shalt diligently keep my lamp, I will keep thine; if thou extinguishest mine, I will put out thine²." We may probably conclude that reference is intended by S. Paul to both these sacred deposits, that in committing his soul to the hands of Him that gave it, the Apostle was not forgetful of that precious truth through which death was abolished, life and immortality brought to light³, and that his sure and

¹ 1 Tim. vi. 20. ² Whitby in loc. ³ Ver. 10.

certain hope of the Resurrection from the dead was bound up with the Gospel; that he was quitting the scene of his labours confident that the cause would prosper, and that He in whom he had believed was able to keep the sacred deposit, when the Apostle himself should be removed from the scene of his earthly labours.

Adopting this view of the passage before us, we may conceive that S. Paul is herein expressing his confidence that the truth which is in Christ Jesus, the truth which is to make men free, will prove superior to all the opposition which may be set up against it—that the vain imaginings of the nations, and the furious rage of the heathen, shall be brought to nought—that the gates of Hell shall not prevail against the Church purchased by the blood of Christ—that our Saviour's promise will find its sure fulfilment, "I am with you always, even unto the end of the world¹."

The diffusion and maintenance of Christianity in the world is the fulfilment of this promise; for Christianity (properly so called) and Christian truth are absolutely inseparable. However much it may have been the fashion with some of late years to distinguish between the form and spirit of Christianity, the Scrip-

¹ Matt. xxviii. 20.

tures recognize no such distinction. We find indeed frequent declarations of the deadness of the form, if the animating spirit be absent—we find no abstraction of the spirit, to the abandonment or even the disparagement of the form. The description of the danger of being carried away by strange doctrines¹, of being spoiled through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after God², and of the deadly character of heresy³, preclude any idea of indifference as to dogmatic truth. But further, we find the importance of such truth expressly and constantly insisted upon. “Take heed to thyself, and to the doctrine⁴.” “Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine⁵.” “I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine⁶.” “God our Saviour will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth⁷.” Nor can we doubt what this doctrine and this truth is, when we observe that “the

¹ Heb. xiii. 9. Comp. Eph. iv. 14; 1 Joh. iv. 1, sqq.; 1 Tim. iv. 1, sqq.

² Col. ii. 8.

³ Gal. v. 20; 2 Pet. ii. 1; Tit. iii. 10.

⁴ 1 Tim. iv. 16.

⁵ 1 Tim. iv. 13.

⁶ 1 Tim. i. 3.

⁷ 1 Tim. ii. 4.

mystery of His will¹," "the mystery of God²," "the mystery of the Gospel³," are the significant appellations of the things made known to them to whom it was given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom⁴, and are synonymous with "the mystery of godliness," explained to be "God manifested in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory⁵." And so the essential characteristic of those who have their fruit unto holiness is said to be, that they have ceased to be servants of sin, and have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered unto them⁶,"—the original expression rendered "form of doctrine," (*τύπον διδαχῆς*,) corresponding substantially, though not verbally, with an expression already cited, "the form of sound words⁷," (*ὑποτύπωσιν ὑγιαίνοντων λόγων*)—both indicating in some degree, the latter more decidedly, a kind of summary or abridgment of doctrines to be received and believed by the disciples of Christ⁸.

¹ Eph. i. 9.

² Col. ii. 2.

³ Eph. vi. 19.

⁴ Matt. xiii. 11.

⁵ 1 Tim. iii. 16.

⁶ Rom. vi. 17.

⁷ 2 Tim. i. 13.

⁸ Est autem ὑποτύπωσις adumbratio et institutio brevis quæ ὡς ἐν τύπῳ fit sive τυπωδῶς ut loquitur Suidas in ὄρος et accuratiori uberiorique tractationi opponitur, ut pridem magnè

The religion of Christ, then, was propounded in the Gospel in a distinct form, containing definite doctrines, and the preservation of the religion was authoritatively connected with the preservation of these doctrines in their original purity. In these lay the rule according to which the Church was to be fitly framed together upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone¹. And the Church thus built up was to preserve and keep alive religion in this form, as being “the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth².”

Of the province of the Church to be a witness and keeper of Holy Writ I have already spoken at large³. Of the part assigned to this Body in the maintenance of doctrinal truth I have now to speak—this part no less than the former representing that union of reason and authority which it is my object throughout these Lectures to exhibit and illustrate.

Casaubono observatum notis ad Theophrastum *περὶ εἰρωνείας*. Itaque ut passim Sextus negat se prolixius posse singula persequi propter *πρόθεσιν, χαρακτῆρα, et τρόπον ὑποτυπωτικόν τῆς] γραφῆς* et quoniam *ὑποτυπωτικῶς* h. e. ut infra cap. 14. loquitur *συντόμῳ λόγῳ* ac compendio omnia tradere instituit. Fabric. ad Sext. Empir. apud Wolf. ad 2 Tim. i. 13.

¹ Eph. ii. 20.

² 1 Tim. i. 15.

³ Lect. III.

The eccentricities and extravagances to which the individual reason is readily led astray is a matter of common observation and constant experience. The necessity imposed upon us by our nature and our condition to connect ourselves in some society is a corrective to this liability in the ordinary affairs of life. Law, whether express or implicit, supplies the authoritative restraint necessary for our well-being. And not only are our wills controlled, but our opinions are materially influenced, by the relation in which we stand to the community. So that the Church viewed as Scripture represents it, in the light of a body composed of individuals bound to have respect to the general good, and to subordinate individual interests and individual will to the common weal, is an institution, if not necessarily arising from, at least strictly harmonizing with, the very first principles of our nature, and the first conditions of our existence. And as it would be monstrous for any individual to pretend to abjure all obligations to the community to which he belongs, and yet it is indisputable that he cannot thereby evade individual responsibility on the plea of the sanction of society for deeds which his conscience condemns, so it is plain that every Christian, responsible though he be for his

actions and for his belief, cannot separate himself from obligations to the authority of the body of which he is a member. The proposition, that a man's religion is a matter between himself and his Maker, if it means to assert more than that the individual must be judged by God alone, is false and delusive. Let a man be isolated from his fellows in his religious capacity, and he is no more in a normal state than the wild man of the woods, whom it was once the fashion to esteem as the representative of humanity in its most simple and abstract form. He is debarred from the highest exercise of the faculty of association ; nor is individual piety likely to flourish, if cultivated upon a principle opposed alike to the natural and scriptural desire of being comforted together with mutual faith¹. But if piety is to be fostered in a religious community, there must reside in this community some authority and some control. There must be some law to call into harmonious action the variety of individual wills and individual opinions.

This principle of authority was necessarily most clearly manifested in the days when the disciples were not only of one soul by holy concord, but actually constituted one society,

¹ Rom. i. 12.

organized by common laws and common ceremonies no less than common faith, when the civil constitution of the world forwarded the complete amalgamation of the disciples of Christ, widely separated perhaps in locality, into one body under one government. The known world then presented the spectacle of one vast empire, acknowledging one chief, in the midst of which was the body of believers gathering to itself continually fresh members, and absorbing the vast mass to a new confederation, until the emperor having given in his adherence, the whole empire became professedly Christian, and the Church attained its highest degree of external unity. What were even then the conditions to this external unity, how far it was answered by internal union, and how far the profession of Christian principles carried with it their actual exercise, it is not necessary now to enquire. Internal corruption in all cases leads the way to dissolution ; and it is an invariable law of nature, that decay is productive of new life, commonly under an altered or modified form. Such was the case with the Church soon after its union with the Roman State. The breaking up of the empire itself led to the greater independence of national Churches, and the introduction of error caused serious and lasting

division. So that the Universal Church soon existed only in that form, in which we recognize it at present, in branches more or less separated from each other, more or less varying in doctrine and in discipline, but all possessing a common band of union in the worship of Christ, and in the acknowledgment of His Gospel. One of the direct consequences of this subdivision was that certain portions of the authority originally exercised by the Church in common devolved upon the several Churches in particular : such as the power of appointing rites and ceremonies in themselves indifferent, which power is claimed by our Church in her XXXIVth Article, and is necessary to the preservation of good order in any society. But this is far from the chief portion of the Church's authority, nor is it this with which we are at present concerned. To hand down pure Christianity from generation to generation is the great office of the Visible Church of Christ, and each particular Church performs this office as a branch of the Church Catholic, and so far as she executes the task faithfully is deserving of reverential regard. "The Church hath authority in controversies of faith¹." We need not deny the sufficiency of Holy Scripture, or disparage the clearness

¹ Art. xx.

with which the doctrines of salvation are therein set forth, because we maintain that men need to be instructed in the principles of the doctrine of Christ, in order that they may go on to perfection¹. Indeed, the whole system of the Apostolic Church, the careful appointment of evangelists, prophets, and interpreters, the earnest exhortations to Timothy and Titus to maintain the truth by imparting sound learning, and the constant language of the Apostles themselves, prove beyond dispute, to those who acknowledge the Scriptures, the necessity of authorized instruction in order to keep alive the knowledge of Christ. The instincts of our nature confirm it. Man will seek instruction, the false if not the true; and those who most rudely rebel against the Church's authority seldom fail to band themselves together in little companies with appointed teachers, while they draw, often unconsciously, from the wells which they depreciate, the most salutary waters they possess, although these pure waters are diminished and defiled by the broken cisterns which they have hewn out for themselves. It is observable that in his controversies with heretics, Irenæus more

¹ Heb. vi. 1.

than once appeals to the “*traditio apostolica*”¹ as the security for the preservation of the truth ; meaning thereby not additional knowledge derived by word of mouth from the Apostles, as supplemental to the written law, but the transmission of the great truths evidently contained in Scripture, through an unbroken succession of bishops and presbyters, commencing with the Apostles themselves. It is obvious that such a succession, whether essential or not to the existence of a Church, must conduce greatly to the preservation of identity of doctrine, as well as to the safe custody of the documents of which the Church is the keeper. And if a confirmation of this opinion be needed, it may be found in the departure of those who have neglected it from the ground first occupied, so that it has not unfrequently come to pass that original seceders are represented in process of time by persons professing tenets repudiated by the founders whose names are still preserved, although their principles have been forgotten. It is well known that many nonconformist associations have lapsed into Unitarian doctrine. And the great separation which took place in the Church of Geneva some few years back was upon the alleged ground that

¹ *Iren. adv. Hæc.* III. 3, 4.

the teaching of the establishment had become Socinian¹. The important service rendered to the cause of Christianity by a national Church as a depository of Christian doctrine has been recognized indeed by the most pious and learned of the nonconformists themselves, who while differing in point of discipline or in minor points of doctrine, have yet looked to the national Church as the bulwark of the national faith². It is then an admitted fact, that a national Church is calculated to perform, and does perform, a very important part

¹ In this secession some of the most eminent and able ministers joined. The recollection of the part which Calvin acted towards the unhappy Servetus makes this position of the Genevan Church the more remarkable.

² A very memorable instance of this is to be found in the writings of some of the original movers of Methodism in Wales. See an Article in *Quart. Rev.* No. CLXX. Williams of Pantycelym thus writes in one of his last letters, after fifty years' experience :

"Believe me, dear Charles, the Antitrinitarian, Socinian, and Arian doctrines gain ground daily. Our unwary new-born Methodist preachers know nothing of these things : therefore pray much that no drop of the pernicious liquor may be thrown into the divine fountain of which the honest Methodist drinks. Exhort the young preachers to study next to the Scriptures the doctrines of our old celebrated Reformers as set forth in the Articles of the Church of England, and the three Creeds, the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian. They will see there the great truths of the Gospel set forth in a most excellent and suitable manner : they are a most sound form of words on the highest spiritual things of God."

in the maintenance both of the name and of the form of Christianity. The fact supplies a presumption in favour of its authority. But it remains to be seen in a particular case whether the authority is legitimately exercised, what are its limits and conditions, and how we are to distinguish true from false claims upon our obedience. The Church is a witness of the truth, as she is a witness of Holy Writ. It is her office to hand down what has been delivered to her: not to decree new Articles of Faith upon the authority whether of so-called General Councils, or of a supposed earthly head.

The publication of the peculiar Creed¹ of the Church of Rome furnishes a lamentable instance of the unlawful exercise of authority by a Church professing to be Catholic. For, to lay aside the objections which naturally arise from the irregularity of its enactment by the mere decree of the Supreme Pontiff, and the presumption of setting up additions as of equal authority with the original articles of the ancient Creeds, after a lapse of more than 1200 years, even were these additions merely expressive of truths having the support of Scripture and antiquity, the examination of

¹ The Creed of Pope Pius IV., published on Sunday, Dec. 9, 1564.

the Creed of Pope Pius, accompanied by a reference to history, will convince us that the origin of every one of the added articles is to be found in a comparatively late age, and that the propositions can only be maintained by the assumption of inherent power in the Church to decree Articles of Faith upon her own authority¹. For example—The Sacraments of Baptism and of the Eucharist are plainly

¹ This authority is expressly claimed for the Church by Mr J. H. Newman, who bases upon it what he himself calls the *Deification* of S. Mary, arguing that the Church assigned to her the position which the Arians had given to Christ, "all but confessing that Christ was the Almighty, but leaving him a creature;" and arguing by the strangest possible logic: "The votaries of Mary do not exceed the true faith, unless the blasphemers of her Son come up to it. The Church of Rome is not idolatrous unless Arianism is orthodoxy;" i. e. there is no such thing as idolatry except the object of it be declared to be the Supreme and Almighty God. What then was the heathen worship of heroes and of men? How will Mr Newman reconcile this with the account of the origin of idolatry in Wisdom ch. xiv. which he as a Romanist must acknowledge as Canonical Scripture. Late proceedings in the Roman Church in reference to the "Immaculate Conception of the Virgin," prove the assumption of this power by the Pope alone. On Feb. 2, 1849, the present Pope issued from Gaeta an encyclical requesting the clergy to inform him if the faithful wished him to pronounce on the Immaculate Conception. See Eng. Review, Vol. xi. pp. 238, 240. The extraordinary way in which this was received by the French bishops is described in Eng. Review, Vol. xii. pp. 226—235. The provincial council of Avignon expressly declared its desire to have the Immaculate Conception made an article of faith. Eng. Rev. Vol. xiii. p. 241. This

declared in Scripture to have been instituted by our Lord: the institution of the other five Sacraments, which is equally ascribed to our Lord in the third Article of this Creed, is nowhere stated in Scripture; and its assertion must therefore rest upon independent authority. The transmutation of the bread and wine into the substance of the body and blood of Christ¹ is, as is well known, a doctrine not introduced before the eleventh century², nor formally decreed until the thirteenth³. The

is not yet done, but there are manifest tokens that *it will be*. And at all events all this shews the acknowledgment of the power of the Pope to do it.

¹ Art. v.

² At the Council of Placentia, A.D. 1095.

³ At the Council of Constance, A.D. 1215.

It has been said that the Romish doctrine of Transubstantiation has been much misrepresented, and that the word *substance*, which, like the Greek *ὑπόστασις*, was intended to represent the scholastic *form* supposed to belong to every object independently of its *accidental* qualities, has been misunderstood to bear the sense which substance usually bears in common language, and so that the doctrine of Transubstantiation has been attacked for an absurdity which does not belong to it. It is true that the origin of the word Transubstantiation was scholastic, and that the terms in which it is maintained in the Tridentine Canons (Sessio XIII. de Eucharistia) seem to have been cautiously worded in order to admit of the scholastic interpretation. But the numerous legends authorized by the Roman Church of the Wafer seen to assume the shape of a child, &c., are contradictory to the more subtle and scholastic interpretation. And the actual teaching of the Romanists on this head is proved by a statement of Dr. Wiseman in reply to

doctrine of Purgatory is one which we can trace through various changes from the time when Origen first propounded his theory of a middle state, until the belief of the efficacy of the prayers of the living to release the dead found its ultimate issue in the monstrous propositions of Tetzels¹, and the scandalous sale of Indulgences, the efficacy of which is main-

Dr. Turton. "In stating the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist we use every term in precisely the same meaning as we attribute to it in John vi., and believe the Jews to have attributed to it; the four cardinal words *eat, drink, flesh, blood*, have, in our doctrine, the same simple, literal, usual sense, which they every day bear,—which they have, as the primary radical signification, in every dictionary,—and which the Jews, in listening to our Lord's discourse, attributed to them. By his *flesh*, we mean that sacred body which, born of Mary, was nailed to the cross, after it had been buffeted and scourged; by *blood*, we mean that very stream, which, flowing from his blessed wounds on Calvary, redeemed the world; by *eating* and *drinking*, we understand, the actual oral participation of these most precious and adorable gifts. Can any thing be more literal than this? Was what the Jews meant more so? Nay, was it not precisely the same?" Wiseman's Reply, p. 125.

¹ These are thus summed up by Luther in his letter to Albert, Abp. of Mentz and Magdeburgh, dated 1 Nov. 1517: *Credunt infelices animæ si literas Indulgentiarum redemerint se securas esse de salute sua. Item quod animæ de Purgatorio statim evolent, ubi contributionem in cistam conjecerint. Deinde tantas esse has gratias ut nullum sit adeo magnum peccatum etiam (ut aiunt) si per impossibile quis matrem Dei violasset quin possit solvi. Item quod homo per istas Indulgentias liber sit ab omni pœna et culpa.*—Luth. Op. Tom. 1. p. 93.

tained in this same Creed of Pius IV.¹ The honour and observation due not merely to those whom images represent, but to images themselves, propounded in unqualified terms², brings before us the remembrance of the painful struggles without which this innovation was not effected. We cannot forget how one of the earliest Councils expressly prohibited the use of images³, how the judgment of Gregory the Great even in allowing their use, disallowed the abuse of rendering them worship or veneration⁴, how the formal sanction of them by the second Council of Nice⁵ was procured by the infamous Irene—a sanction actually condemned by other Councils⁶.

The Articles thus adduced being plainly without the sanction of Scripture or of Primitive Antiquity, their very promulgation implies the assumption of authority differing not merely in degree but in kind from that which we claim for the Church. And this is expressly asserted in the first two Articles of this Creed maintaining the authority of Ecclesiastical no

¹ Art. IX.

² Art. VIII.

³ The Council of Illiberis in Spain, A.D. 305.

⁴ Hoare's Eccl. Hist. p. 74.

⁵ A.D. 786, called indeed the 7th General Council by the Latins, while the Greeks call the 4th Council of Constantinople (A.D. 754) the 7th General Council.

⁶ Council of Frankfort A.D. 794, and Council of Paris A.D. 824.

less than Apostolical Tradition¹, and the absolute right which the Church has held, and does still hold, of judging of the true sense and interpretation of the Holy Scripture². To decree new Articles of Faith such as these is in the power not even of the Church Catholic itself, if the sense of the whole Church could in any way be taken, much less of a particular branch, least of all of one that lays claim to a dominion illegitimate and unscriptural.

The voice of the Catholic Church to which attention is due is very different from this. The often-quoted maxim of Vincentius of Lerins³ was highly valued at the time of the Reformation, and deserves attention at all times. It is true that there are few cases in which it holds absolutely that there is scarcely any truth which has not been controverted by individual perverseness. Nor are we to expect to obtain from this rule a solution of all difficulties. When we have accepted it there remains the task of discovering what may be deemed generally received truth, and the task requires the exercise of calm and dispassionate judgment, and very often we must at last be contented with something far less than universal acceptance, and must there-

¹ Art. I.

² Art. II.

³ "Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus."

fore take the approximation to such acceptance as a weighty presumption rather than an indisputable proof.

The subdivision of the Church to which we have already alluded makes it impossible that its present decision upon any point should be formally enunciated. Yet are there great and leading truths, which may lay claim to something like universal acceptance, and which gain for themselves a hold upon the mind of every Christian, though many find it more easy to feel than to define them. Even in the present distracted state of Christendom in which particular Churches have so widely erred, there is not wanting a basis of common truth. But in our enquiries after Catholic truth we are naturally carried back to the times more near to the Apostles, when the external unity of the Church was undisturbed. And besides the records we possess in the writings of pious and learned men, whose names have ever been had in honour, we have also testimonies more formal and authoritative.

There are three chief sources of such testimony,—Creeds, Councils, and Liturgies.

I. It is worthy to note how soon the Church was assailed by error under the most varied forms, as is testified by the Epistles of S.

Paul, S. Peter and S. Jude. And while we discover herein a melancholy proof of man's corruption we cannot but regard it as a Providential dispensation working good out of evil, that the truth was so exercised as to shine forth more pure and bright by reason of the fiery trial to which it was early subjected. The Primitive Church has bequeathed to succeeding ages the precious legacy of the Creeds not only speaking to us of past error overcome by the abiding Spirit of God, and comforting us with the assurance that truth is mighty and will prevail, but also furnishing a safeguard against future error, which is constantly raising afresh its many heads when they had seemed to be cut off for ever. We have already spoken of "the form of sound words" mentioned by S. Paul, and have said that the original implies a sketch or summary of doctrine. Such a summary is the Creed commonly called the Apostles' Creed, whose composition if it cannot be assigned to the Apostles themselves, may at least be traced back to ages very near the Apostolic; some of the main Articles being collected by S. Paul as that which he had received and delivered¹, while traces of a similar method of inculcating doctrine are discoverable in other

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 4.

parts of Scripture¹. To this Creed the Nicene and the Athanasian Creeds add no new Article of belief², but expatiate upon those therein contained, guarding the several Articles against heresies which had since arisen and created so much discussion and danger in the Church—heresies over whose ashes we walk as over an extinct volcano, losing the recollection of the fires that once raged, in the beautiful harmony and order, the ultimate issue of past havoc and devastation.

II. If a promise has been made in Holy Writ, that if any man lack wisdom let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him³, much more may we appropriate the same promise to a body of Christians met together to learn God's will. But as the individual must ask faithfully, so must the assembly seek wisdom from above in pure and godly simplicity. It is not the mere external condition that makes the decrees of a Council valid and binding. Had the Council of Trent possessed every requisite of a general Council as to its formal constitution, the intrigues of worldly interest and ambition

¹ 1 Tim. iii. 16.

² Taylor's *Liberty of Prophesying*, p. 75. Lond. 1702.

³ James i. 5.

that influenced its decision would have been sufficient to destroy all its authority. So that were we to admit to the full the authority of general Councils, we should still be at a loss for any external test to determine the obligations of particular decrees. It was a saying of S. Gregory, that he had the first four Councils in esteem and veneration next to the Evangelists. "I suppose it was," says Bishop Taylor¹, "because he did believe them to have proceeded according to rule, and to have judged righteous judgment. But why had he not the same opinion of other Councils too which were celebrated before his death? for he lived after the Fifth General; not because they had not the same authority, for that which was warrant for one is warrant for all, but because he was not so confident that they did their duty nor proceeded so without interest as the first four had done, and the following Councils did never get again that reputation which all the Catholic Church acknowledged due to the first four." To this it may be added, that the recognition of the four Councils alike by Eastern and Western Churches brings them out in marked pre-eminence and dignity as compared to those which have been disputed—and that the

¹ Taylor's Liberty of Prophesying, p. 139.

general acceptance of their decrees by the Christian world for so many ages is itself a voice of the Catholic Church claiming no little consideration.

Upon the whole, I would by no means deny the importance of considering the *external* circumstances of a general council, but we must not consider them alone. The *internal* circumstances must also have their weight; and so our acceptance of the decrees rests not upon mathematical certainty, but upon that moral evidence which is in all cases the guide of life.

III. That which contributes mainly to the maintenance of pure doctrine no less than of pious feeling among a people is the Public Office of Religion. It is herein that knowledge and piety grow together. The precious legacy of ancient devotion is not only valuable to keep alive religion in our hearts, to make us sensible of communion with saints of old in uttering the prayers and singing the praises which they uttered and sung, but is a testimony perhaps more valuable than all others, because less formal, of the doctrines of the ancient Church. And accordingly S. Augustin, when arguing with those who were as yet slow of heart, would quicken their understandings by referring them to the prayers

which they themselves daily use, which the Church has always possessed, and will possess even unto the end of the world. "For these truths," he proceeds, "which we are now compelled not to advance but to defend, have been ever uttered in her prayers, although not drawn forth into formal propositions so long as no enemy assailed them¹." It is true that we must beware of making false deductions by insisting exclusively or mainly upon one particular portion of these formularies. The analogy of faith, the harmony of Christian doctrine, wherein each part bears its due proportion, and so helps to convey a correct idea of the whole, is here to be especially regarded. To depress or to exaggerate one feature is to distort the whole figure. But when this precaution is adopted, an examination of Primitive Liturgies is an admirable method of ascertaining the opinions of the Primitive Church, and therefore of setting us onward in our honest search after truth.

Having thus considered the means of obtaining the sense of the Church Catholic we may look to our own branch of it, and ascertain with what voice she speaks to her sons: and we see at once that she opens all these sources of antiquity. She upholds the

¹ S. August. de *Dono Perseverantiæ*, c. XXIII.

ancient creeds, abjuring the added errors. She maintains the decrees of the first four General Councils, and respects though she does not idolize the Primitive Fathers. She puts into our mouths a Liturgy wherein the utmost care has been bestowed to preserve all that is truly primitive, and reject what is spurious and additious. And while her doctrines are pure and primitive, the manner in which she recommends them is no less primitive and pure. They are set forth indeed with authority, but this authority is accompanied by a rule establishing all that is recommended. The supremacy of Holy Scripture is not forgotten. There is no mention of things left unsaid in the written word to be maintained by oral tradition; but nothing is asserted without the declaration that it can be proved by Holy Writ. This is the method constantly adopted by the ancient Fathers, on whose authority the Church of Rome so strongly insists. And if we refuse to accept implicitly particular opinions stated by individuals among them, we are justified by these very writers, who claim no more than we are willing to concede¹. Hear as one among many the

¹ Vos autem qui me multum diligitis, si talem asseritis adversus eos quorum malitia vel imperitia vel intelligentia reprehendor, ut me nusquam scriptorum meorum errasse dicatis,

words of Origen : “ We ought therefore for the testimony of the words we produce in doctrine to produce the sense of the Scripture, as it were confirming the sense that we expound.” And the same writer mentioning the practice of S. Paul in this respect, “ But afterwards, as it is his custom, the Apostle will confirm what he has said from the Holy Scripture, setting also before the doctors of the Church an example that in those things which they speak to the people they do not utter what is presumed upon in their own opinions, but what is strengthened by Divine testimonies. For if he such and so great an apostle did not believe that the authority of his words would be sufficient unless he shews that what he saith is written in the Law and in the Prophets, how much more ought we, the weakest of creatures, to observe this, that when we teach we should not produce our own, but the doctrines of the Holy Spirit¹.” And S. Augustin, when he was strongly tempted by the course of his arguments to pronounce upon a question not decided in Scripture, forbore to do so,

frustra laboratis non bonam causam suscepistis, facile in ea me ipso iudice superamini. Quoniam non mihi placeat eum a charissimis meis talis esse existimor qualis non sum. S. Aug. Ep. 143 ad Marcellinum, quoted by Neand. Ch. Hist. Vol. iv. p. 384.

¹ Origen quoted by Beveridge on Art. xx.

assigning as a reason, that “where Scripture gives no certain testimony human presumption must beware how it decides either in favour of one side or the other. If it were necessary for man’s salvation to know anything on these points the Scripture would be more explicit on them¹.”

In examining the authority of Creeds, Councils, and Liturgies, we have seen that we are in no case provided with absolutely certain external tests: we have found it necessary to make limitations and qualifications, and have therefore seen that to maintain authority is far from precluding reason. Just so in the most important mode of testing Church authority. The appeal to Scripture necessarily implies an appeal to reason, and shews not merely that each individual may exercise his judgment, but that he is bound to exercise it, and responsible for exercising it right. It implies that a mere unthinking reception of Divine truth is not that reception which God requires of a reasonable creature, that these

¹ This passage is adduced by Neander (Ch. Hist. Vol. iv. p. 353), who remarks, that S. Augustin gave a striking proof of his self-denial in not insisting upon anything which the Scriptures do not assert, that he expressly refused to decide upon the question of the Traducianism or Creatianism of souls, though the former theory would have so manifestly strengthened his theory of original sin.

are to be appropriated as well as acknowledged. This is in fact the chief province of the reasoning faculty of man. Nor does the legitimate exercise of this faculty approximate to the cold spirit which professes to consider all subjects with like indifference, and allows of nothing peculiar to the sacred volume, or nothing extraordinary in its contents. To overlook its supernatural character, to overlook its spiritual import, is the abuse and not the use of reason. It is to apply laws where from the nature of the subject they are only partially applicable. It is to neglect elements of calculation, which manifestly exist. And the starting point being false, the most elaborate reasonings and careful deductions only disguise the fundamental error which vitiates the whole process. And in the same way it is unreasonable to pay no regard to those safeguards with which God has fenced round His people, because we are to examine the strength of the bulwarks that close us in.

The mode of the transmission of Religion in a doctrinal form, by means of an organized Body, and its formularies, appears natural and reasonable. But it is supernatural too. The truths transmitted differ in kind from those of which the natural reason is cognizant. So is it in accordance with the general scheme,

that supernatural aid and supernatural blessings should rest upon those channels through which it is conveyed.

Let it not be thought that in thus enlarging upon the question of Church Authority, we have departed from the general topics of the Evidences for our Religion. We may not neglect any of the methods by which God has appointed us to be guided into truth. It has been found that the attempts to undermine the edifice of our faith have been very commonly directed against Church authority and Church formularies. And the attempt to destroy the outworks has been invariably followed by an onset upon the citadel.

Scripture and antiquity are both to be examined carefully and without prejudice; but the latter is to be kept in subjection to the former. Reason and authority must each have their place, but both must be illuminated by the Spirit if they are to lead to faith. And above all, while we remember God's promises to the Church, we must remember that they were to the Church Catholic, not to a Church particular. We may not doubt that the Christian Church will stand firm whoever may be its assailants. The Holy Spirit will never forsake her—But the candlestick of a parti-

cular people may be, as it has before been, removed. Its preservation with ourselves will depend upon the use made of the blessings received. But if our candlestick be removed, whether for lukewarmness, for pride, or for contentiousness, it will not be that God is unable or unwilling to save, but that we will not embrace salvation. If we keep His word, He will keep our souls. His lamp will burn brightly within us if we purchase the oil of devotion, of submission, and of love, or rather if we take freely of those hallowed stores which the Spirit of grace will open to us, faithfully trusting in Him in whom we have believed, and confident that He will keep that which He has committed unto us against that day.

LECTURE VI.

S I N.

S. MATTH. IX. 13.

I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

HAVING endeavoured in my previous Lectures to describe the method by which Christian truth is to be discovered and maintained, I proceed to apply this method to the doctrines which constitute the very foundations of Christianity, and have therefore been most determinately assailed; the misapprehension of which has at all times paved the way for the inroads of infidelity.

The essence of Christianity lies in the revelation of a remedy against sin—a remedy obtained by that which Christ has wrought for us and without us, and applied by that which He worketh in us through the Spirit whom He hath sent unto us from the Father.

The topics to which we are thus led are Sin, the Incarnation, the Atonement, and Grace; and these I purpose to bring successively before your notice.

It will require no arguments to prove that

the words of my text were intended to express not a limitation as to the persons called—for God “will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth”¹—but a definition of the state of those to call whom Christ came; and the moral lesson connected with this enunciation is, that they who do not recognize their real condition will not participate in the benefits which this condition has provided. It is the office of the Comforter to reprove the world of sin, because they believe not in the Son of man². And as unbelief produces sin, so does sin beget infidelity; and while a consciousness of guilt naturally inclines us to seek Him who can remove it, the absence of this consciousness keeps us aloof from our Redeemer.

The same which is true as to the sense of our own particular guilt holds also in regard to the general perception of the sinfulness of human nature and of the heinousness of sin. And the subject acquires fresh interest, because it is closely connected with the views propounded by modern infidels in the country where the greatest efforts have been made to mould infidelity into shape and consistency. The Pantheistic theory sees in evil no more than the shadow which necessarily accom-

¹ 1 Tim. ii. 4.
C. H. L.

² Joh. xvi. 9.
10

panies and brings to light good¹, and merging the parts in the whole loses sight of individual responsibility, and therefore of the possibility of guilt. Accordingly those who have been immediately engaged in the conflict have seen it to be of the first importance to recognize distinctly the Idea of Sin². And this renders it not unsuitable for us to dwell for a time upon this topic, lest by some vain deceit we be spoiled of our part in the faithful saying, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners³.

The acknowledgement of personality in God and man must carry with it some sense of the relation of man to God, some consciousness of actions inconsistent with these relations, and consequently some perception of sin. Yet how faint and inadequate are such perceptions in themselves may be seen in the history of the heathen world. Glеams,

¹ This, like many other Pantheistic notions, is a revival of old Gnostic errors. Tertullian says of Hermogenes, *Expugnat quorundam argumentationes dicentium mala necessaria esse ad illuminationem bonorum ex contrariis intelligendorum*. Tertull. adv. Hermog. c. 15. quoted by Neand. Ch. Hist. Vol. II. p. 278.

² This is constantly the aim of Neander and Tholuck. We may refer to the recent work of Julius Müller, *Ueber die Sünde*, as treating this subject systematically with an especial view to modern Pantheism.

³ 1 Tim. i. 15.

indeed, of the truth were not wanting, and partial as these were they shed radiance on philosophy, giving rise to all that was most valuable in the speculations upon the nature of man. The full knowledge of sin is a truth of revelation declared authoritatively to man. Let us consider in what manner this is done.

I. Upon this head Scripture is full and explicit. In the brief notices of the early history of mankind, sin stands recorded both in its acts and its consequences. A brother slain is among the earliest and most practical proofs that sin lieth at the door; and the brief description of the antediluvian world speaks decisively to this point: "God saw that the wickedness of man was great upon the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually¹." But lest there should be a doubt how hateful sin is to the Almighty, its nature was further revealed by its consequences. A world deluged by the waters, and cities swallowed up amid the fires of heaven, are fearful testimonies to its destroying power. Its ravages are traced in blood by the conquerors of Canaan dealing out wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon the nations of whom the land was defiled; dealing them out not

¹ Gen. vi. 5.

as the outburst of human passion, but as the expression of Divine indignation against sin, which man's interests and inclination were constantly leading him to neglect or extenuate. We observe them in the history of the chosen race no less than in that of their enemies ; in their repeated subjugation to foreign princes, in their defeats no less than their triumphs, in their famines and in their pestilences, in their captivity and in their dispersion. And Scripture itself makes the application which other history leaves us to make for ourselves. "For so it was, that the children of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God . . . therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight¹." And, "The Lord spake by his servants the prophets, saying, Because Manasseh king of Judah hath done all these abominations, and hath done wickedly above all that the Amorites did which were before him, and hath made Judah also to sin with his idols ; therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Behold, I am bringing such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah that whosoever heareth of it both his ears shall tingle²." Nor were the punishments of individual sins less conspicuous and instructive. The judgments in-

¹ 2 Kings xvii. 7—18.

² 2 Kings xxi. 11, 12.

flicted upon Cozbi, upon Korah, upon Achan, upon Hophni and Phinehas, the miserable deaths of Ahab, Jezebel and Athaliah, were all examples of the just severity of God, who had proclaimed by the ministration of condemnation, "The soul that sinneth it shall die¹."

The Mosaic Law announces formally that which God's dispensations proclaimed practically. The enactments of the Law exacted severe retribution, pronouncing death without pity upon sabbath-breakers, murderers, adulterers, thieves, perjurers, and undutiful; nay, stopping in some cases the natural inlets of compassion in the minds of relatives and friends, that all Israel might hear and fear, and do no more any such wickedness². Thus did sin, that it might appear sin, work death; that sin might by the commandment become exceeding sinful³. And while the Law ordained the penalty for sin, God's messengers were employed to waken the corresponding consciousness of guilt. In the Psalms we are admitted to an intimate acquaintance with the man after God's own heart, and witness the working of those deep feelings of humiliation which won for David a free and gra-

¹ Ezek. xviii. 20.

² Deut. xiii. 6—11.

³ Rom. vii. 13.

cious forgiveness, in answer to his simple confession, "I have sinned against the Lord¹." And in the Prophets we have at the same time the enforcement of the Divine laws, and the sense of sinfulness produced in those who were commissioned to declare the heinousness and the punishment of sin. The revelation of the glory of the Lord of Hosts which shook the posts of the door, and the foundations of the house, made the spirit of Isaiah to tremble, and discovered to him the corruption of man through the manifestation of the Majesty of God. "Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts²." The sin of Judah was seen by Jeremiah written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond—not merely upon the horns of their altars, but also upon the table of their hearts, so that the Prophet learnt from it the true conclusion: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked³." The coming desolation of the nations cries out against pride, idolatry, treachery and cruelty, such as they were stained with, and the last promise of the last prophet predicts the fore-

¹ 2 Sam. xii. 13.

² Isai. vi. 5.

³ Jer. xvii. 1 and 9.

runner of Messiah's kingdom in the character of Elijah, the fearless reprovcr of sin, turning the hearts of the fathers and of the children, lest the Almighty come and smite the earth with a curse¹.

The legal and the prophctical were but preparatory to the evangelical demonstration of sin. The Baptist commenced the office assigned to him by Malachi with uncompromising denunciations of all who would not confess and put away their sins. And He whose shoes' latchet John was unworthy to loose came to baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire—throughly purging his floor, gathering the wheat into his garner, but burning the chaff with fire unquenchable²; being set, as the holy Simeon had declared, that the thoughts of many hearts might be revealed³. The tenderness with which our Blessed Lord treated sinners, so inexplicable to the self-satisfied Pharisee, was part of that perception of the nature of sin, which He who alone knew it as it was, perfectly possessed. His touching forbearance to the adulteress, accompanied with the exhortation, "Go, and sin no more⁴," must have struck her conscience with a more piercing wound than the loud

¹ Mal. iv. 6.

² Luke iii. 16, 17.

³ Luke ii. 35.

⁴ Joh. viii. 11.

condemnations of those who were constrained to retire in confusion when He whom they had constituted their judge said, "He that is without sin among you let him first cast a stone at her." The words with which He addressed his disciples and the multitude penetrating beyond the acts to the motives of the agents, were all directed to awaken in his hearers the consciousness of sin that had so long slept in their hearts: as He closed the controversy upon the blind man's cure (a miracle so significant in its nature and in its circumstances) "Jesus said, For judgment am I come into this world, that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind. And some of the Pharisees which were with him, heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also? Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin; but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth¹."

Nor can we fail to observe the mysterious connexion discoverable in Scripture between physical and moral disease. Not only in the dæmoniacs, where as of old with Job Satan was plainly permitted to exercise extraordinary powers, but also in what appear mere ordinary cases of sickness, there are intima-

¹ Joh. ix. 39—41.

tions of such connexion. The Evangelist's application of a prophecy in Isaiah which represents the cure of diseases as one of the modes in which Christ took away the burden of sorrows caused by transgression¹; the employment of the same word to describe the rescue from disease and from sin²; the requirement of the same condition (faith) in each case; the words with which our Lord healed the paralytic, "Thy sins be forgiven thee³," and those employed by Him in reference to the woman who had "a spirit of infirmity," "Ought not this woman, being a daughter of Israel, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, to be loosed from this bond⁴?" S. Paul's description of his own thorn in the flesh as "the messenger of Satan⁵;" discover a link between the disorders of body and of soul, correspondent to the proposition that sorrow and death have entered into the world by sin. And while the higher uses of affliction guard us against mistaking the chastisement of love for the outpouring of wrath, and teach us that in a state of probation both temptation and trials may have their perfect work⁶

¹ Comp. Matth. viii. 17, with Isai. liii. 4.

² *σώζειν*, Luke viii. 50, she shall be made whole, *σωθήσεται*.

³ Matth. ix. 2. ⁴ Luke xiii. 16. ⁵ 2 Cor. xii. 7.

⁶ Comp. James i. 2, and observe that the same Greek word

—this interchange in Scriptural language of ideas connected with the diseases of body and of soul, harmonizes with the affinity between mental and physical disorganization, so palpable and so mysterious, and with the interpenetration of sin and suffering throughout the whole constitution of the world we live in.

The more systematic exposition of the nature of sin—of its derivation from Adam to his posterity, and the misery in which it involves the whole human race—was entrusted to S. Paul, who was likewise inspired to depict the struggles of sin within the breast of one who had been aroused to a sense of its enormity. The well-known delineation in the seventh and eighth chapters of the Romans of the state of wrath and the state of grace, are doubtless of universal application. But the ascription of the various emotions to himself is surely more than a mere rhetorical figure employed to heighten the force of the language of the Apostle. Surely we may believe that S. Paul, when awakened from his day-dream of obstinate intolerance, felt acutely the power of sin which had hitherto lain unsuspected within his breast—that Satan did not relinquish his hold without a struggle—

expresses the external trials of suffering, and the internal temptations of lust.

that the future Apostle found out experimentally the fierceness of the war between his members and his better mind, and that the pathetic cry for the delivery from the body of this death was uttered by him not as personating an imaginary character, but as summing up the agony through which he had himself past before attaining the well-grounded hope of one for whom there is no condemnation in Christ Jesus. Full of warning, full of instruction, full of encouragement is this representation of a victory over sin, leading us to the recognition and appreciation of the fact that "Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe¹." Such is the testimony of the Scripture upon this point—gathered not simply from such brief notices as have been here drawn together, but running through the whole—the very keynote to the strain. What likelihood then is there that those who approach the subject of Christianity, with their eyes shut to this fundamental principle, will arrive at the knowledge of the truth?

II. Let us endeavour to ascertain the sense of the Church on this subject. Here, as in other cases, so long as controversy slept,

¹ Gal. iii. 22.

the expression of opinion was less definite, and our conclusions must be inferential rather than positive. Yet in the writings of the earlier fathers we have sufficient to guide us to the opinion of their times. Polycarp condemns hastiness of judgment on the ground that all are debtors to sin¹. Justin Martyr speaks of the evil concupiscence inherent in our nature², of the subjection of the race of mankind to death, and the deceit of the serpent from the time of Adam³; and tells us that men work out for themselves death by imitating the disobedience of Adam; and that though they have power to be the sons of God, are worthy, each for his own sin, of judgment and of condemnation⁴. And Tertullian with equal distinct-

¹ μὴ ἀπότομοι ἐν κρίσει, εἰδότες ὅτι πάντες ὀφειλέται ἐσμὲν ἁμαρτίας. S. Polyc. ad Philip. c. 6.

² σύμμαχον λαβόντες τὴν ἐν ἐκάστῳ κακὴν καὶ πρὸς πάντα ποικίλην φύσει ἐπιθυμίαν. Apol. i. p. 58, E.

³ καὶ οὐκ ὡς ἐνδεᾶ αὐτὸν τοῦ βαπτισθῆναι ἢ τοῦ ἐπελθόντος ἐν εἶδει περιστερᾶς πνεύματος οἶδαμεν αὐτὸν ἐληλυθῆναι ἐπὶ τὸν πόταμον, ὥσπερ οὐδὲ τὸ γεννηθῆναι αὐτὸν καὶ σταυρωθῆναι ὡς ἐνδεῆς τούτων ὑπέμεινε, ἀλλ' ὑπὲρ τοῦ γένους τοῦ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ὁ ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἀδὰμ ὑπὸ τὸν θάνατον καὶ πλάνην τὴν τοῦ ὄφeos ἐπεπτώκει παρὰ τὴν ἰδίαν αἰτίαν ἐκάστου αὐτῶν πονηρευσαμένου. Tryph. p. 316, A.

⁴ καὶ οὗτοι ὁμοίως τῷ Ἀδὰμ καὶ τῇ Εὔα ἐξομοιούμενοι θάνατον ἑαυτοῖς ἐργάζονται ἔχέτω καὶ ἡ ἐρμηνεία τοῦ ψαλμοῦ ὡς βούλεσθε, καὶ οὕτως ἀποδέδεικται, ὅτι Θεοὶ κατηξιώνται γενέσθαι, καὶ υἱοὶ ὑψίστου πάντες δυνάσθαι γενέσθαι κατηξιώνται καὶ παρ' ἑαυτοῦ καὶ κρίνεσθαι καὶ καταδικάζεσθαι μέλλουσιν ὡς καὶ Ἀδὰμ καὶ Εὔα. Tryph. p. 354, A. We must observe

ness lays down, that all men have sinned, that Christ alone is without sin¹.

But these informal expressions were soon succeeded by more precise and accurate definition. The Oriental notion of darkness existing separately from and antagonistically to the light, was embraced by heretical teachers, and spread widely in the Christian Church under the form of Manicheism; and the reaction which followed was among the main causes of the errors promulgated by the Pelagians, who constantly branded their opponents with the name of Manichees, in consequence of their views as to the nature of sin. It was given to S. Augustine to be instrumental in bringing out in a consistent form the true Catholic doctrine, removed from either of the extremes, into which the one or the other party

that the Pelagian notion of the sin of men consisting in *following* Adam, had not then been broached, or probably Justin would have expressed himself on this point more precisely; but the acknowledgment of the universality of sin is at all events most clearly declared, and the sinfulness of man contrasted with the sinlessness of the Redeemer.

¹ Proinde qui illum æmularis donando delicta si nihil ipse deliquisti, plane patere pro me: si vero peccator es, quomodo oleum faculæ tuæ sufficere et tibi et mihi poterit? Habeo etiam nunc quo probem Christum. Tertull. de Pudic. c. 22, quoted by Bp. Kaye (Tertull. p. 318), who adds other references, and remarks the agreement of Tertullian with our fourth article, and his opposition to the notion of the impeccability of the Virgin Mary.

had fallen. The life and temperament of this remarkable man fitted him admirably for his task. The headstrong and impetuous youth who had given loose to the wild passions that stirred within him, had been arrested in his course of unbridled indulgence, and had tasted the bitterness of the cup which he had drained even to the dregs. The natural vehemence of his disposition contributed to heighten his remorse for past transgressions and to quicken his sense of the deformity of her whom he had wooed with unrestrained ardour. Sin had become to him exceedingly hateful and hideous, and he was eager to tear the mask from her features lest she should seduce others by her false exterior. The promises of teachers who pretended to shew the mode of rescuing the soul from the trammels of impurity, and separating the light from the darkness—who professed to discern and to teach the essential difference between good and evil, attracted the reclaimed prodigal to wander for a time in the by-paths of Manichean error. But when he found that notwithstanding all their boasts, they were practically unacquainted with sin's real character, and often claimed a licence of indulgence in those acts which he had learned to loathe—the same earnest conviction which once caused him to seek their

company, now disjoined him from them for ever. No sooner however did the reactionary movement indicate superficial views of man's corruption, and of the sinfulness of sin, than he pressed eagerly forward to correct such a tendency, and to impress the mind of the Christian world with a sense of the blessedness of Redemption by pointing out the depth of misery into which man had fallen. This keen perception of sin made him recognize so clearly the scope of our Saviour's exhortations, as to the letter and the spirit; maintain so earnestly the universality of sin (Christ only excepted), insisting upon the corruption of our nature, and the derivation of sin from Adam to his posterity¹.

The depravity of human nature was too apparent, and man's sense of guilt and weakness too prevalent, to leave these declarations of S. Augustine without support and approbation. They recommended themselves to the consciousness of those to whom they were addressed, and therefore were the efforts of Pelagius and Cœlestius (both probably earnest though mistaken men) effectual only to promote the establishment of the truth in contradiction to the inadequate views they had been too ready to propound.

¹ De Pecc. Orig. c. 32.

The same spirit which gave birth to Pelagianism has manifested itself in various forms in the subsequent history of Christianity, and has been met from time to time by the energy of spiritual life, always subsisting, though sometimes less apparently active, within the Church of Christ. The external penances imposed upon sinners, painful and real as they were at first, may be conceived to have originated in a sense of the heinousness of sin; but the application of outward remedies, and the endurance of outward hardship, required to be watched and spiritualized, lest it should beget reliance on man's own exertions and sufferings. This notion did in fact spring up, and being fostered by the interests and passions of different parties, resulted in a kind of bargain with the offended Deity, at first of physical pain, and at last of pecuniary loss for moral guilt. The gradual deadening of the conscience confirmed the system by which it was produced, and engendered, as its inevitable consequence, the most fearful corruption both of principle and of practice. The treasures of literature and art which adorned the Vatican in its days of splendour were a poor substitute for the spirit of religion that should have lived and flourished in the central home of Christi-

anity. The glittering pageantry of the Medicean court cannot conceal from us the absence of true principle, nor can the polish of literary culture disguise the baseness of the material in which religion and morality had no part¹. But while rulers in high places by their hypocrisy and immorality spread the poison of infidelity through Christendom, there were yet men of a more earnest spirit constantly arising in different localities to cry out against the vices which surrounded them, and to testify their conviction of sin—a conviction genuine and true, though often clouded by delusion and fanaticism². In these irregular and eccentric movements we recognize the impulse of true life within the Church, a spirit that penetrated beneath the surface

¹ “Go to these ceremonial prelates, they have ready the fairest words. Complain to them of the present needs of the Church, they will answer you, ‘True, we cannot live, unless God renews us—faith is on the decay.’ But in their hearts they cherish their iniquity, and make the Table of the Lord the table of devils. One says to another, ‘What think you of our Christian faith? Why do you believe?’ And he makes answer, ‘Nay, you are but a simpleton—faith is a dream fit only for mad monks, and foolish women.’” Savonarola, quoted by Hundeshagen, *Deutsch. Protestant.* p. 56.

² Such was the origin of the new monastic orders, the Minorites, the Beguins, the Brethren and Sisters of the Free Spirit in the thirteenth century, of the Bohemian Brethren and the Picards or Beghards in the fourteenth century, and such the actuating principle of such men as Wiclif, Wesselus, and Savonarola.

down into the very depth of human nature, and finding the whole head sick, the whole heart faint, sought out some new and efficacious means of applying the remedy which had been provided by the Author of their religion for the healing of nations. It was the work of Luther to give effect to these and similar endeavours which had hitherto been repressed and overborne. Nor are we to ascribe his success simply to his individual energy and power. The times in which he lived were no less fitted for him than he for the times. Religious principle, though hidden for a time, had worked silently and powerfully, and had already done something towards leavening the mass. Luther was raised up to carry on this process, and mould the rude material into a goodly form. The writings of the great doctor of his order may well be supposed to have exercised no inconsiderable influence with the Augustinian monk. But the similarity of temperament in Luther and S. Augustine seems to have been that which led them both to the same intimate knowledge of the human heart. Arrested by an incident¹ closely resembling that which had so striking an effect upon S. Augustine, Luther's

¹ The death of a friend by lightning at his side. Compare the account of the death of Nebridius in S. Aug. Confess. Book iv.

impetuous heart beat with no common earnestness when it began to know its own bitterness. The fiery trials through which he passed while at the monastery in Erfurt, the temptations to doubt and despair that so vehemently assailed him, were the struggles of a true and ardent spirit wrestling with sin. Upon this spirit dawned at last the dayspring of peace, through the sense of reconciliation with God through Christ Jesus. Sin was not less hateful than before; his unassisted powers to overcome it were not more effectual; but he learnt that Christ had died to put away sin; he learnt that by faith he could become partaker of the benefits thus procured, and to thank Him who giveth the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord. But Luther's work was not then ended, but begun. His warm love for his fellow-creatures, his earnest sympathy with sufferings of which he knew the intensity, urged him on to help others in the storm through which he had happily passed. The question of indulgences was the occasion rather than the cause of his entering the field. We can scarcely doubt that with his convictions he would have found some other occasion had this been wanting. He had already raised his voice against the scholastic theology as insufficiently representing the cor-

ruption of human nature, and the necessity of divine grace antecedent to any good works¹. And here was an act most suited to move him, sin weighed in the scales against a few poor coins, and the beam of the balance declared to be even between the two. Well might this be revolting to one who had found out so much of the heinousness of sin. This monstrous traffic was but one form in which the corruption of the head-quarters of Christianity was made apparent. Luther's visit to Rome had prepared him for his work, and while it was only step by step that he withdrew himself from the Papal yoke, he seemed at every step to be actuated by real feeling for the people of Christ, spoiled and laid waste by those who should have fed and sustained them. The affecting account of his inward struggles in detaching himself from

¹ In a sermon on the first Commandment preached at Wittenburgh in 1516, Luther inveighs against the worship of saints, and then proceeds to condemn the scholastic theologians for nonrecognition of the principle of sin, "qui pro vero Deo idolum sapientiae et justitiae suae colunt." "Igitur sicut supra diximus, cum simus juxta B. Augustinum una massa perditionis, nemo justificatur nisi per puram sine meritis gratiam Christi." This sermon was preached before Luther broke with Rome, and he evidently considers that his exhortations to the people are quite compatible with his being a member of that Church. It therefore gives evidence of the predominating feeling of his mind, before he was brought into collision with authorities.

those associations that once had so firm hold upon his affections, speaks, no doubt, in the language of truth, the feelings of his heart¹. And if in the course of his resistance to power unduly strained, personal feelings had their weight with one little inclined to brook oppression, we cannot doubt that the mainspring of his opposition was his perception of sin, and of the inadequacy of the remedies authoritatively proposed for this terrible disease. Luther's mind was not naturally much given to the logic of the schools. He made use, indeed, of the controversial weapons of his day, carrying on his disputations in the form in which alone they could then proceed, and displaying therein the force of an original and educated mind. But he was disposed to depreciate rather than overvalue logical conclusions. One strong and overpowering feeling had possession of his soul. The people of God are bound with the chain of sin, and they who should loose them are forging additional fetters for their limbs. He felt within himself an impulse (not unaccompanied by a sense of power) to strike off these fetters. His soul yearned towards his brethren. And as he deemed a knowledge of sin to be the very essence of Christianity, and considered

¹ See Preface of Luther to his 95 Propositions.

that this knowledge had been obstructed and obliterated by the imposition of formal works and laborious penances, the watchword of liberty which he proclaimed to the world was Justification by Faith. The appreciation of this doctrine has been impaired by those who have dwelt upon it rather as a logical formula than as a living principle. The exclusion of good works properly so called from the cycle of Christian duties conditional to salvation was never contemplated by Luther, and was abjured by him so soon as it was propounded. His desire was to deduce good works from the true source, and shew that no acts can be approved of God excepting as they spring from a good principle, and that the good principle which can alone combat sin in its manifold forms must be none other than the grace which is sent into the heart by the Holy Spirit, transforming, renewing, and restoring the fallen nature of the man of wrath into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. The voice of Luther found an echo in the hearts of thousands who had felt but could not express their want. It was not merely his lofty and manly spirit, nor his warm love to the people; it was not merely his high endowments, and unrivalled eloquence in his mother-tongue, which drew after him the hearts of so

many ; it was that he so thoroughly knew the wants and spoke home to the consciences of the Christian multitude, who, with little comprehension and less care for the subtleties of the schools, felt their wretchedness, and pined for delivery.

The Reformation was the great issue of the consciousness of sin ; but the history of the Church presents other though less movements arising from the same cause. I have before alluded to those which preceded and ushered in this great climax ; and we trace in subsequent events the operation of the same principle even among those who had little sympathy with Luther himself. The protests of this Reformer were not without their influence upon his most resolute opponents. The hollow system of practical infidelity was shaken to the base, and many who defended the old cause allowed that it needed reform and examination. And although the Church of Rome has unhappily reasserted all those abuses which either occasioned or were occasioned by moral corruption, it must be allowed that in many parts of it a more lively sense of religion has sprung up since the time of the Reformation. The convictions of Ignatius Loyola and Xavier were doubtless deep and real, and the influence which they exercised

arose from their recurrence to the common feeling of individual and universal corruption. For when their successors were led to encourage the pride of human nature, the response which the appeals of Jansenius and his followers received from pious and earnest men, goes far to shew how deeply rooted in the heart of Christianity is the consciousness of sin, a consciousness which chimes in with the external testimony we possess that the Church of Christ has in all ages maintained as the starting point of all her doctrines, the universal prevalence of sin, expressing it in every prayer which she offers to the throne of grace, and asserting it in her Creeds by the declaration not so much of its existence, which is presupposed, as of its remission and forgiveness.

III. Faith requiring from its very nature much to be taken on trust, may in all cases avail herself of the corroboration of reason. And we may bring together from this source many topics to confirm the doctrine which we are at present concerned to establish.

1. The existence of sorrow and suffering in a world abounding with so multiplied contrivances for the happiness of its inhabitants, is an anomaly that has arrested and must still arrest the attention of reflecting beings. Some have accounted for it by supposing the

existence of a malignant Power independent of the beneficent Creator, whom it is prudent and serviceable to appease by offerings and worship ; but the more general belief of heathendom has attributed it to the anger of the gods for sacrifices withheld, worship neglected, and duties unperformed. Frivolous as were often the supposed causes of calamity where the conceptions of duty were unworthy and low, this belief recognized in sin the transgression of law, involving guilt in the transgressor. And if we put aside the notion of a multiplicity of gods, which will be readily allowed to be unreasonable, and substitute that of One Almighty Being, the Creator and Governor of the Universe, it is difficult to render any account of the existence of pain so rational, as that which connects its origin with the violation of that Being's laws.

2. But further, the God of nature has in many ways connected suffering with a certain course of conduct : not that all who suffer have earned their reward, or that all who thus act, suffer. But actions of a certain kind very constantly, though not invariably, find out the agent, and carry with them their own condemnation as productive of distress and misery. And if the prevalence of certain habits produce in a society confusion and dis-

order, this opposition to the principles of social organization bespeaks a contradiction to the will of Him who gave man a social nature apt for political combination under the protection and sanction of law.

3. The condition of the heathen world at the time of Christ's coming affords an illustration of the practical working of sin, its deadly harvest of calamity and woe. "What fruit," asks the Apostle of the converts from Paganism, "had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed¹?" And do we not observe now, that so far as heathen vices are indulged in a community nominally Christian, heathen degradation follows? The spectacle of a community struggling with misery occasioned by the conduct of its members (a spectacle to be beheld in every age) awakens at once the idea of guilt and of retribution,

¹ Rom. vi. 21. Tholuck, in an "Essay on the Nature and Moral Influence of Heathenism," sets forth these corruptions very fully, remarking at the same time that nothing but a sense of the evil results which have been produced by attempts to gloss them over through a wrong predilection for heathenism, could have induced him to enter into such revolting details, and that much yet remains untold too impure to be brought forward by a Christian writer. If any of my readers should unfortunately be actuated by any such predilection for heathenism as that which Tholuck mentions, it is enough to refer them to the abovenamed treatise. May no admiration for the arts and literature of the heathen induce us to close our eyes for an instant to the corruptions amid which they lived!

and forces us to consider laws imposed and violated.

4. But further, there is a witness in the hearts of men recording the condemnation of certain actions, and these the same in general as those against which the course of Providence reclaims. Men know the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death¹. Conscience or the moral sense tells us that there is a right and wrong, and that if we choose the wrong it is sin. And conscience not only witnesses that there is a law, and therefore transgression, but instructs us in the law, and by its sharp stings reminds us of the heinousness of neglecting it. The general belief in a state of punishment after death is no weak and dreamy imagination, but the natural concomitant of a conscience, a true voice of a true monitor. But this voice is not at all times or to all persons equally clear and full. The moral sense, like all other senses, is quickened by use, and deadened by neglect. The idolater is answered according to the multitude of his idols², of whatever nature these idols be. The true perception of sin is reserved for the spiritually-minded. "Fools make a mock at sin³." He who has striven against it, can alone know its power. Thus is

¹ Rom. i. 32.

² Ezek. xiv. 4.

³ Prov. xiv. 9.

it that the most fervent expressions of the corruption of their nature, of the deceitfulness and wickedness of their hearts, have often been uttered by those who have most earnestly contended against their evil passions, and devoted themselves most entirely to the service of God.

Is it not true, my younger brethren, that such records of Christian experience often sound harshly in your ears, and that you are yourselves very slow to make such confessions of sinfulness? Partly it may be from the unwillingness to lay bare the feelings of the heart; a reserve not unnatural nor reprehensible, so long as you conceal not from yourselves that which you shrink from detailing to others, nor fling recklessly the charge of hypocrisy on those who more openly and freely announce to you what they feel.

It is however to be feared that the distaste for the acknowledgement of guilt, arises at least as frequently from an inadequate apprehension of sin. And this defect constantly produces speculative doubts, which trouble but little the truly penitent sinner, whose anxiety to be forgiven is too sincere to allow him to question his need of forgiveness.

Let us not regard the question of the nature of sin as merely doctrinal—or rather

let us regard it as doctrinal in the true Christian sense—fraught with duties not to be severed from it: and therefore let us look closer into our hearts, that our consciences may speak the truth within us, telling us of our misery and therefore of our happiness—for our misery has constituted our claim to a Saviour's redeeming love, and will furnish us with our best plea in that dreadful day when the righteous scarcely shall be saved, and yet the pardoned sinner may appear¹.

¹ 1 Pet. iv. 18.

LECTURE VII.

THE INCARNATION.

S. JOHN I. 14.

The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

IN interrogating the Scriptures as to the doctrine of the Incarnation, we naturally turn to that part of Holy Writ wherein this central truth of our religion seems to be most fully set forth, the introduction to the Gospel of S. John. But this introduction throws us back at the very outset to earlier records. The evident reference in the opening words to the Mosaic account of the Creation introduces this verity not simply as one declared in the Gospel, but as entering into the whole constitution of the Church of God from the beginning of the world. The revelation of the One True God as opposed to the many gods of the nations, is accompanied even in the Old Testament by a reference to His Word and Wisdom; expressions plainly employed to indicate far more than the utterance of His will, or the depth of His counsels. To the

Word of God are attributed all the communications made to man ; by the Word of God we are told the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth¹. The man that came out of Judah to Bethel, came by the Word of the Lord², was charged by the Word of the Lord³, it was said to him by the Word of the Lord⁴. To the Prophets the Word of the Lord came⁵, and the vision of Christ's Kingdom is the Word that Isaiah the son of Amos saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem⁶; the common usage of *word* (דבר) to denote a thing revealed, intimating, perhaps, the Author of such revelation. Again, the description of Wisdom in the Book of Proverbs goes far beyond a mere personification of one of the attributes of the Most High. For after the ascription of the might of kings, the honour of princes and of nobles to the presence of wisdom, follow the remarkable words: "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old . . . When he prepared the heavens, I was there ; when he set a compass upon the face of the deep ; when he established the clouds above ; when he strengthened the foun-

¹ Ps. xxxiii. 6.

² 1 Kings xiii. 1.

³ 1 Kings xiii. 9.

⁴ 1 Kings xiii. 17.

⁵ Jer. i. 4, et passim.

⁶ Isai. ii. 1.

tains of the deep; when he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment; when he appointed the foundations of the earth; then I was by him, as one brought up with him; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable parts of his earth, and my delights were with the sons of men. . . . Whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord¹." At the same time that the Word or the Wisdom of God are proclaimed to be the agents through whom He reveals Himself to men, the Messiah is foretold as the Everlasting Son of the Father, the King who should rule over all the world, the Judge who should execute Divine judgment, the Prophet who should declare the Divine will. So that the identity of the Word of God with the Son of David, whom David in spirit called Lord, was intimated not obscurely in the writings of the Old Testament; and this should have proved a safeguard against carnal notions of Messiah and Messiah's kingdom. That the idea of the personality of the Word or Wisdom of God, indicated rather than revealed in the Canonical Scriptures, had through them become familiar to the Jews, is made manifest by the Chaldee

¹ Prov. viii. 22—35.

paraphrases, and the apocryphal books of Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, and Wisdom. Wherever in the original the presence of God in the world is more or less clearly represented, the paraphrasts Onkelos and Jonathan substitute for the name and the person of God, "the Angel of the Lord," "the Majesty of the Lord," "the Shechinah," or "The Word of the Lord" (מִיְמָרָא יְהוָה). And this is done in so marked a manner, as to leave little doubt as to the opinions of those who employed such terms upon the subject of the separate existence of the Word¹.

The son of Sirach pursues and enlarges upon the description of Wisdom given in the Book of Proverbs²; and Baruch speaks of the revelation of Wisdom to Jacob in terms very striking and peculiar: "Who hath gone up into heaven, and taken her (Wisdom), and brought her down from the clouds? Who hath gone over the sea, and found her, and will bring her for pure gold? No man knoweth her way, nor thinketh of her path. But he that knoweth all things knoweth her, and

¹ Lücke (Comment. über Evang. Johann.) upon the Prologue of S. John's Gospel gives an account of the Jewish and Alexandrian notions of the Logos. I disclaim all agreement with this commentator's own views upon this subject.

² Ecclus. i. 1—20; iv. 11—19; vi. 18—31; xiv. 20—27; xv. 1—8; xxiv.

hath found her out with his understanding : he that prepared the earth for evermore hath filled it with fourfooted beasts : he that sendeth forth light, and it goeth, calleth it again, and it obeyeth him with fear. The stars shined in their watches, and rejoiced : when he calleth them, they say, Here we be ; and so with cheerfulness they shewed light unto him that made them. This is our God, and there shall none other be accounted of in comparison of him. He hath found out all the way of knowledge, and hath given it to Jacob his servant, and to Israel his beloved. Afterward did he shew himself upon earth, and conversed with men¹.”

And in the Wisdom of Solomon she is thus described : “ For wisdom, which is the worker of all things, taught me : for in her is an understanding spirit, holy, one only, manifold, subtil, lively, clear, undefiled, plain, not subject to hurt, loving the thing that is good, quick, which cannot be letted, ready to do good, kind to man, steadfast, sure, free from care, having all power, overseeing all things, and going through all understanding, pure, and most subtil spirits. For wisdom is more moving than any motion : she passeth and goeth through all things by reason of her

¹ Baruch iii. 29—37.

pureness. For she is the breath of the power of God, and a pure influence flowing from the glory of the Almighty: therefore can no defiled thing fall into her. For she is the brightness of the everlasting light, the unspotted mirror of the power of God, and the image of his goodness. And being but one, she can do all things: and remaining in herself, she maketh all things new: and in all ages entering into holy souls, she maketh them friends of God and prophets. For God loveth none but him that dwelleth with wisdom. For she is more beautiful than the sun, and above all the order of stars: being compared with the light, she is found before it¹."

It may indeed be doubted whether these expressions are so nearly coincident with the declarations of the Gospel as at first sight appears: they at least shew that the idea of a Personal Word was evolved, and that the passages now appealed to by Christians were similarly understood by the Jews some centuries prior to the coming of our Lord. But after the Captivity the Jews lost sight of the identity of the promised Messiah with the Word of God, and so learned to expect in the Messiah a temporal ruler, and to recognize the Divine Word in the creations of

¹ Wisd. vii. 22—29.

Oriental or Hellenic imagination. This separation may have been less decided among the Jews of Palestine, of whose opinions we possess little accurate information. But we know that the Alexandrian Jews did thus deviate from the truth. For although Philo applies to the Word many of the titles by which S. John and S. Paul designated Christ, as Archangel, High Priest, Son of God, the Man of God, the First-born, the Only-begotten, the Image of God, the Life, the Light, although he plainly conceives of the Word as personally existent, and attributes to Him the creation of the world, yet it is manifest, after due examination, that the Word thus conceived is entirely different from the very Word of God. The mixture of Oriental, Hellenic, and Jewish philosophy, makes itself felt in the introduction under a Jewish appellation of the Archetypal Idea of Plato, and of the Light of Orientalism emanating from the Deity. Thus Philo made his Word consubstantial with the Father, yet possessing a real and independent existence: but the contrast between this and the true Word is seen by the comparison of the words of my text, "The word became flesh," with those of Philo, "The heavenly man being born after the image of God is incapable of partaking

of a corruptible, and in short, earthly substance¹." It has not been unusual to seek an explanation of the introduction to S. John's Gospel in the opinions broached by Cerinthus, against whose pernicious teaching it is known that the Evangelist so strongly protested. And without denying that the refutation of these and similar errors lay within the scope of this part of Holy Writ, we are carried back by the terms employed to the original system from which Cerinthus borrowed them, and thus arrive at a more comprehensive sense than if we suppose the passage to have been merely directed to controvert a particular heresy. For it implies an assertion of the identity of the Messiah with the Word of God in one who, possessing all the attributes assigned by Jewish philosophers to the Word, fulfilled at the same time all the prophecies of the Messiah, by taking upon Him the nature of men in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. In this reference to Alexandrian conceptions we are confirmed by the use of the word "dwelt," or rather "tabernacled," (ἐσκήνωσε), a term carrying the mind at once to the Shechinah once

¹ ὁ οὐράνιος (sc. ἄνθρωπος) ἅτε κατ' εἰκόνα Θεοῦ γεγονώς φθαρτῆς καὶ συνόλης γεώδους οὐσίας ἀμέτοχος. Alleg. 1. § 12. quoted by Lücke.

visibly resident among the Jews, by the repetition of the words "grace and truth," the attributes of the Almighty, (*πολυέλεος και ἀλήθης*¹) in the seventeenth verse, ascribing to Jesus Christ the qualities ascribed in my text to the Word, and by the connexion of the eighteenth with the seventeenth verse, wherein Jesus Christ is identified with the Only-begotten, (i. e. the Word) whose office it is to declare God to man. "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him²."

The passages in the Epistles and in the Revelation which illustrate the portion of Scripture we have been considering, seem also to contain allusions to the Jewish notion of the Word of God, and to be concerned with the identification of the Word with Jesus Christ: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) that which we

¹ Exod. xxxiv. 6.

² Joh. i. 17, 18.

have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ¹." So the same Apostle makes it the test of spirits whether they are from God: "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God²." And in the Revelation describes himself by reference to this mission, as "John who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ³." With the same significance S. Paul speaks of "Christ who is the image of God⁴," and leads the Hebrews from previous manifestations of God to the final manifestation of His Son, the heir of all things, by whom He made the worlds, the brightness of His glory, the express image of His person, upholding all things by the word of His power⁵; and having shewn the singular dignity with which He invested His Son, exalting human nature through Him, S. Paul brings all to the conclusion: "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus⁶." And so in the Colossians, an Epistle especially cor-

¹ 1 Joh. i. 1—3.

³ Rev. i. 2.

⁵ Heb. i. 1—3.

² 1 Joh. iv. 2.

⁴ 2 Cor. iv. 4.

⁶ Heb. iii. 1.

rective of Jewish errors, S. Paul ascribes to Christ Jesus the attributes assigned by the Jews to the Word of God, "who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature: for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist¹,"—warning and teaching every man in all wisdom, that he might present every man perfect in Christ Jesus².

These considerations will, I trust, make plain what the Evangelist meant by such striking passages as my text. And while we observe the Providential dispensation by which the conceptions of philosophy were made to prepare the way for the truth, and to shadow out, as it were in outline, some of the excellencies of the Incarnate Word, we remark also that the enumeration of the properties of Him who was deemed the Emanation from the One God, personally existent, and described in the language of philosophy as the Second God (*ὁ δεύτερος Θεός*), removed every pretence for the theory broached in modern days, that S. John is merely speaking of a

¹ Col. i. 15—17.

² Col. i. 28.

Divine influence, and that the creation ascribed to Jesus is the moral creation of the new heart—and renders it what might almost be called incontestable, that we cannot hold to the Scripture without accepting in its plain and literal meaning the scriptural truth, that “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.” And it were well if those who, without denying the Scripture, advance the objection of the Jews of old, “It is incredible and impossible,” would listen to the answer of Justin Martyr: “If I asserted it upon mere human arguments you would rightly refuse your acquiescence, but if Scripture be on my side, to deny it must be from hardness of heart¹.”

II. We have in the witness borne by the Church strong confirmation of our interpretation of Scripture. The doctrine of the Incarnation is impressed upon the history of the first four centuries, enunciated with ever-increasing clearness, as misconceptions arose and were removed, misstatements were made and were corrected. This sublime mystery did indeed from the first present obstacles to the reception of Christianity among Jews and Gentiles; but the preachers of the Gospel did not on that account suppress or qualify it. Of

¹ Tryph. p. 292, E.

the method in which Jews were addressed the dialogue with Trypho is a specimen, where Justin presses upon the Jew, as two distinct truths, the Messiahship and the Divinity of Jesus¹. In the demonstration of His Divinity, the course pursued seems to have been pointed out by the Alexandrian and Jewish notions of the Word. The Christian Apologist details the manifestations of the Deity in the works of creation, and in those communications with the patriarchs wherein the paraphrasts and Alexandrians discover the Word of God. He produces from the Proverbs the description of Wisdom, to which I have referred, maintains that the Word begotten before all creatures was the Wisdom, the Power, and the Glory of the Father², and shews that prophecy indicated distinctly that this Word should take our nature upon Him, and be born of a virgin—and appeals to Daniel as the predictor of the Son of man inheriting the everlasting Kingdom—of the stone cut without hands (i. e. not begotten by man) growing unto a great mountain—and adduces from Isaiah, for the ineffable character of Messiah's birth, "His generation who shall declare³?" Whatever be the value of Justin's arguments

¹ Tryph. p. 267, B.

² Tryph. p. 284, D.

³ Tryph. p. 301, B.

(and they were repeated by his successors as the common topics of persuasion to the Jews), the dialogue at least evinces the opinion not only of the writer himself, but by inference of the Church of the first and second centuries. Again, Tertullian in recommending Christianity to the Heathen sets forth most distinctly this its fundamental truth, which he illustrates indeed by the instance of the creative word of the Stoics, but does not evacuate or explain away, but pronounces clearly that He whom the Jews had at first deemed man on account of His humility, and afterwards a magician on account of His works, did by these works shew Himself to be the Word of God, i. e. the Word which was in the beginning, the First-begotten, accompanied by His power, and His presence, and upheld by His Spirit, the same who by a word both did and had done all things¹.

As we advance we find Irenæus dealing not with the objections of the heathen, but with the misconceptions of heretics within the Church; and accordingly disallowing, as partial and insufficient, illustrations adopted by Justin Martyr and Tertullian for the persuasion of unbelievers². But the whole aim of the writings of Irenæus is to exhibit the true

¹ Tertull. Apolog. ch. 21.

² Tryph. p. 284, C. Tertull. Apol. ch. 21. Otto (in Tryph. l. c.) quotes Tatian. Orat. c. Græc. c. 5, and remarks that Irenæus, II. c. 13, disallows such analogies.

doctrine as to the Word of God, that doctrine which through Polycarp he must have received from S. John, and which he constantly maintains to be not his own, but what the Church holds, and has ever held, as derived from the Apostles themselves. We observe, moreover, that Justin Martyr and Tertullian are the representatives of what may be called different schools of theology—and it has been with justice remarked, that “if the idea of the Word of God had not a connexion with Christianity resting on the authority of an apostolical type, and ought rather to be considered as a fusion of Platonism or of the Alexandrian-Jewish theology with Christian doctrines, then its wide diffusion, as testified by its reception by Church Fathers of otherwise the most opposite tendencies, could hardly be accounted for. If in such a case it might have recommended itself to teachers in whom the Platonic element predominated, still those who looked with suspicion on every thing that came from that quarter must for this very reason have been prejudiced against it¹.”

While this mysterious truth that He who had appeared upon earth in the form of man was verily the Eternal Word, who was with God and was God from the beginning, was assailed from the first by the adversaries of

¹ Neand. Ch. Hist. Vol. II. p. 290.

his religion, it is worthy of observation, that the earliest heresies within the Church were concerned with the denial rather of the humanity than of the Divinity of Christ. S. John speaks in his Epistles of those who deny that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh¹; and the multitude of Gnostic sects, varying as they did in particular tenets, and designated by different appellations, had this in common, that they supposed the person of Christ to be invested with a peculiar emanation of the Deity, some conceiving this emanation to have joined itself, but only for a time, to the man Jesus; others regarding His human acts, sufferings, and person, to be apparent, and not real; some imagining that in Him Divinity stood in the place of a human soul: all missing the true conception of the substantial union of the two natures, but all maintaining, though in erroneous forms, the Divinity of our Lord. This agreement even among heretics affords incidentally the strongest proof how firm a hold this doctrine possessed upon the Christian mind in the ages nearest to that in which His mighty and marvellous works had testified His power.

But as the subject was again and again brought under discussion, human reason from time to time raised up difficulties and doubts requiring further and more particular exposi-

¹ 1 Joh. iv. 2, 3; 2 Joh. 7.

tion. Speculations upon the nature of man, and upon the nature of God, arguments resting upon the Unity of the Godhead, questions as to the mode of union of the Divine and human natures, furnished successively subject-matter for thought and deliberation. Hence arose the instinctive desire to employ the collective wisdom of the members of Christ's Body, and to obtain formal records of the general sense of the Church upon these topics. Each of the first four General Councils were called together in order to guard the truth of the Incarnation against opinions broached by different heresiarchs. And it is illustrative of the remarks made on a previous occasion as to the province of Councils, that the great Council of Nice was preceded by three local Councils which were occupied with the same questions, and that in the second of these it was especially set forth that the fathers there assembled "said that which they had learnt," and that "all the Catholics agreed with them." There was indeed no necessity, and therefore no attempt in the four Councils, to lay down any new truth. The purpose was to detect and obviate the consequence of erroneous modes of apprehension¹. It was of the

¹ The first two were directed against the Sabellian tenets of Noetus and of Beryllus, the third against Paul of Samosata. See Wilberforce on the Incarnation.

utmost importance to point out and condemn the tenets of Arius, of Eutyches, and of Nestorius, because they subverted either directly, or consequentially, the truth of the Incarnation as contained in Scripture, and received by the Church; but the heretics themselves started from the assumption of the doctrine in name, which they would in fact have explained away. And although they were subsequently compelled to reject parts of Scripture, as too plainly opposed to them, they at first proceeded merely to theorize upon the scriptural declarations. So that the Councils not only in their decrees, but in the incidental testimony which they supply, bear witness to the Catholic truth, that the Word was made flesh.

We proceed to the other sources whence we derive evidence of primitive truth.

Of Creeds, we bear in mind not merely the three, that together furnish so complete an exposition of this doctrine, but also the shorter and still earlier expressions of faith, less formally drawn up, and handed to us in many cases in a fragmentary form. Many of these are preserved in ancient writers as the confessions required of candidates for baptism, and adopted by particular Churches in times antecedent to the Nicene Council. Of these summaries of Christian doctrine we possess very copious information. Irenæus,

Origen, Tertullian, and Cyprian, have handed to us various forms to which the assent of catechumens was required, differing from one another in words, but agreeing in substance. And there have been preserved to us the ancient creeds of Jerusalem, Cæsarea, Antioch, and Alexandria. All these testimonies have been collected by the learned Bingham, and to his valuable work it is sufficient to refer, noting only that none of these summaries fails to declare Jesus Christ as the Son of God, or, which is the same thing, the Only-begotten, of one substance with the Father¹.

The well-known statement of Pliny, that the Christians met together upon a stated day to sing a hymn to Christ as God², introduces us at once to the ancient Liturgies of the Church. And while we have in Pliny an unimpeachable witness to the divine honours rendered to Christ, we also possess sufficient information as to the Liturgies themselves to

¹ Bingham, *Antiq.* Book x. ch. 4.

² Plin. *Epist.* Lib. x. Ep. 101. This is confirmed by Tertullian who incidentally alludes to some liturgical forms, among which is one distinctly recognizing Christ's Divinity. "Quale est enim de Ecclesia Dei in Ecclesiam diaboli tendere? de cœlo (quod aiunt) in cœnum? illas manus quas ad Dominum extuleris, postmodum laudando histrionem fatigare? ex ore quo Amen in Sanctum protuleris, gladiatori testimonium reddere? εἰς αἰῶνας ἀπ' αἰῶνος alii omnino dicere nisi Deo Christo?" *De Spectac.* c. 25.

shew the full force of his declaration. The common doxology ascribing Glory alike to the three Persons of the Godhead—the form of Baptism prescribed by our Lord Himself, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, imply an equality in those who are thus brought together. And Justin Martyr, in his account of the public prayers of the Church, connects the petitions offered in the celebration of the Eucharist with the commemoration of the Incarnation of our Lord¹. When Paul of Samosata propounded notions respecting Christ “low, grovelling, and contrary to the teaching of the Church²,” the letter condemning his heresy charges him with having discontinued the ancient psalms sung in honour of Christ Jesus our Lord, and introducing in their stead new hymns, the composition of recent authors³. And in reference to a yet

¹ Just. M. Apol. i. p. 98, A. See Bishop Kaye’s remarks on this passage, Kaye’s Just. M. p. 87.

² *ταπεινὰ χαμαιπετῆ παρά τὴν ἐκκλησιαστικὴν διδασκαλίαν φρονήσαντος.* Euseb. E. H. vii. 27. The letter referred to is given by Euseb. E. H. vii. 30.

³ We have a striking illustration in the attempt made by Dr Clarke and others in the beginning of the last century to substitute for the accustomed form of doxology in the singing Psalms another more conformable to their own persuasions. Van Mildert remarks that “this attempt gave occasion for a more full investigation of the primitive doxologies, as bearing testimony to our Lord’s Divinity.” *Life of Waterland*, p. 64.

earlier heresy of a similar kind, Eusebius quotes from an ancient author, whose name he does not profess to know, words declaratory of the opinion of the Church, and appealing expressly to liturgical forms: "They say indeed that the earliest Christians and the Apostles taught the same doctrines with themselves, and that the truth was maintained till the time of Victor, but perverted by his successor Zephyrinus. These assertions might seem more probable were not Scripture against them. But besides we have the writings of fathers earlier than Victor's time, addressed both to unbelievers and to Christians, Justin, Miltiades, Tatian, Clement, and many others, in all of which Christ is declared to be God. And who knows not the books of Irenæus, Melito, and the rest, pronouncing Christ to be both God and man? And how many psalms and hymns, written by faithful brethren, celebrate as God, Christ the Word of God! How is it possible then, when the sense of the Church has been so many years declared, to pretend that those who were before Victor maintained what these maintain¹?"

Again, if we examine the testimony afforded by the Church in subsequent times, we remark that for many centuries controversies

¹ Euseb. E. H. v. 28.

about Christ's Divinity ceased entirely in the Western Church, except in a few isolated cases, while in the Eastern the Nestorians differed indeed from the orthodox, but *professed* to maintain this Catholic doctrine pure and unimpaired. In a later age, when the re-action produced, and the corruption caused by the overstrain of ecclesiastical authority, led some to the contrary extreme of trusting all to human reason, the lamentable errors of Servetus and the Socini were advanced in a form that if rightly considered gave evidence of the general sentiment of the Church¹.

¹ See Mosheim's History of the Socinians, in his Ecclesiastical History, Cent. xvi. Pt. 2. ch. iv. The opinions of Servetus seem to have been rather Gnostic than what were afterwards called Socinian: but his system was so visionary that it is difficult to ascertain accurately his meaning. Mosheim has brought to light a very curious Catechism or Confession of Faith, drawn up at Cracow in 1574, which gives us information as to the early opinions of the Socinians previously to the publication of the Racovian Catechism. It is remarkable that the title expresses that it was set forth "in the name of Christ Jesus our Lord, who was crucified and raised from the dead." Even in this early Catechism the rulers of that sect had adopted it as a maxim that nothing incomprehensible or mysterious was to be admitted in their religious system—and fundamental errors as to the nature of our Lord were propounded. But the caution with which these views were put forth is seen in the frequent application to our Lord of those titles, which had been always adopted as expressive of His Divinity. Thus in the preface, "To all those who thirst after eternal salvation the little and afflicted flock in Poland, which is baptized in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, sendeth

With such caution did the first founders of the Socinian heresy proceed, glossing over their errors with language that might have seemed to assert the truths it was their main purpose to deny. And although in recent days the denial has been more boldly made, and the modern Unitarians have on many points gone far beyond the old Socinians, their opinions have at no time recommended themselves to the multitude. For the few who have refused to accept any mystery, there have been many in whose hearts the belief in an Incarnate Saviour has struck deep root and brought forth abundantly, there have been more to whom it has been given partially to comprehend what they do not with sufficient earnestness embrace, and the popular voice of Christendom has ever been on the side of those who own a Divine Redeemer. And if in particular places the vitality of this belief has declined, the consequence has invariably been a corresponding declension in piety and in love. But no sooner has life been partially restored, and devotion in some degree rekindled, than the most earnest promoters of such spiritual

greeting and praying most earnestly, that grace and peace may be shed upon them by the One supreme God and Father, through His only-begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ, who was crucified."

revival have dwelt upon the Incarnation of the Son of God as the mainspring of all their energy. No longer are men content with the general assertion of Almighty Power and All-ruling Providence, but their love to God craves its fitting object in Him who first loved us and gave Himself for us, that we might have life in His name—yearnings these of the highest part of our nature testifying of the truth which can alone satisfy them by realizing to the utmost the earnest expectation of the creature that waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God¹.

III. But in a subject so manifestly miraculous what room is there for the exercise of reason?

1. The early Apologists of Christianity, when dealing with the heathens who did not acknowledge the authority of the Scriptures or of the Church, were wont to press them home with the tales of ancient mythology that bore some seeming resemblance to the Christian mystery. The descent of gods upon the earth in human form, and the reception of mortals after death into the number of divinities, furnished many a topic in their reasoning with Pagans. Such comparisons were not unfitly employed to remove objec-

¹ Rom. viii. 19.

tions urged by the heathen against the unreasonableness of the Christian Religion¹. No doubt there were then many who believed in no religion, but they did not profess such unbelief. They strove to prop up the tottering edifice of Paganism, which was crumbling to pieces before the growing Temple of Christianity. So that the issue to be tried was, which is true? . And for this purpose the appeal to mythology is valid. In the present day the champions of the Faith among ourselves have rather to hold their ground, than transfer the war into the country of their enemy. Each assailant has his own theory, and has no respect for that of his confederate in arms. So that in general the Christian warfare must be defensive; and this must be borne in mind in the selection of our weapons. Such topics as those to which I have alluded have ceased to weigh much, and I cannot but think that forced resemblances, nominal rather than real, have sometimes been injudiciously insisted upon, and a depth of meaning been discovered in absurd fables that really little belongs to them. If we may conclude anything from Grecian story, or from Hindoo

¹ See, for instance, *Just. M. Apol. i. p. 67.* Tertull. *Apolog. ch. 10.* Magee (on the Atonement, *Dissert. LXIX.*) makes some judicious remarks as to the use of such comparisons.

fable, wherein such resemblances have been often too freely admitted, it must simply be that the notion of intimate connexion between God and man is not foreign to man's natural reason, or that the vestiges of an original revelation are discoverable among the monstrous superstitions with which it has been overlaid.

But reason will dictate to us that in a subject such as this it is absurd to estimate objections as in a matter of ordinary experience, and that its probability must be tested not by its internal features considered by themselves, which are past man's power of estimation, but by external evidence, and by the harmony of the doctrine with the natural wants of man, and with the whole of God's dispensations. Each of these considerations lies within the region of human thought.

The accumulation of external evidence is briefly and powerfully drawn out by S. Chrysostom from the assertion of S. Paul, that Jesus Christ was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power¹. "Whence," asks he, "is it plain that this Incarnate Person was also the Son of God? First, it is from the

¹ Rom. i. 3. See Chrysost. Hom. in loc.

prophets; wherefore he says, *which he had promised afore by the prophets in the Holy Scriptures*. And this way of demonstration is no weak one. And next also from the very way of generation, which also he sets forth by saying, *of the seed of David according to the flesh*; for he brake the rule of nature. Thirdly, from the miracles He did, yielding a demonstration of much power; for *in power* means this. Fourthly, from the Spirit which He gave to them that believe upon him, and through which He makes all holy; wherefore he saith, *according to the Spirit of holiness*. For it was of God only to grant such gifts. Fifthly, from the Resurrection of the Lord from the dead; for He first alone raised Himself, and this Himself too said to be above all a miracle sufficient to stop the mouth even of them that behaved shamelessly; for, *Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up, and when ye have lifted me up from the earth then shall ye know that I am He*; and again, *This generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given unto it but the sign of the prophet Jonas*. What then is the being declared? The being shewn, being manifested, being judged, being confessed by the feeling and suffrage of all, by the prophets, by the marvellous birth after the flesh, by the power

which was in the miracles, by the Spirit through which He gave sanctification, by the Resurrection whereby he put an end to the tyranny of death."

Again, in his natural desire after communion with his Maker man has ever sought out mediators. Prayers were addressed by the heathen to their inferior deities that they would propitiate and persuade the mighty Jove. And the link between man and God was supplied by demigods partaking of man's nature, and therefore more accessible to man. It is a want which the Incarnation of the Son of God has alone supplied. It has given us a "Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus¹," a High Priest who for ever sat down on the right hand of God, and yet can be touched by our infirmities, through whom we may come boldly to the throne of grace.

Once more, if we regard man as a mere unit among the multitude of created beings, we are impressed with his insignificance and confused by the thought that God has thus regarded him ; but if we investigate his nature more closely we find traces of a dignity not insignificant of such high regard. The qualities of the Almighty as indicated by His works are answered by their images in the

¹ 1 Tim. ii. 5.

nature of man. Our condition calls upon us to exercise functions corresponding in some sort to those of the Governor of the Universe—to convey life, support, instruction and assistance to others; and a voice within us urges us to be like unto Him by judging righteous judgment, doing justice, shewing kindness, by assisting the needy, and being merciful unto all men. Thus we discover rudiments as it were of excellence, indicating man's capacity for higher things, and pointing out the perfection of his nature to consist in the imitation of the Divine perfection. In Christ, and in Christ alone, was this realized, and so the highest aspirations of our nature were fulfilled in the Incarnate Son of God.

Lastly, of the Divine economy connected with this mystery we must be content to know in part. Yet the parts disclosed to us are recognized by our reason as consistent and harmonious. For Scripture represents the renewal of the image of God in man, to be the process through which he is fitted for eternal glory, "for in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven¹." And this renewal is effected by Him who has shared and exalted our nature—whereby are given to

¹ 2 Cor. v. 2.

us exceeding great and precious promises, that we might become partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust¹.

To put on Christ², to become a new creature in Christ³, to be members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones⁴, these are the scriptural terms to express the union by which we are thus to be renewed, and the inference that we are not only bound, but empowered to attain unto holiness, is natural and obvious. For we learn in this economy how reasonable and how practicable are the requirements of the Divine word. It invites us to holiness by making us partakers of the holiness of Christ. It holds out to us immortality in Him who is the life of the world. It calls us to become the children of God, as joint-heirs with Christ, forasmuch as He took part of the flesh and blood whereof children are partakers⁵. For it tells us that we are the temple of the living God, and therefore bids us be separate from the unclean thing, as having become entitled to the gracious address of the Father of our Lord Jesús Christ: "I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty⁶."

¹ 2 Pet. i. 4. ² Rom. xiii. 14. ³ 2 Cor. v. 17.

⁴ Eph. v. 30. ⁵ Heb. ii. 14. ⁶ 2 Cor. vi. 18.

LECTURE VIII.

THE ATONEMENT.

JOHN I. 29.

Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

SUCH were the terms in which the Baptist introduced to his disciples the mightier Teacher who was to follow and supersede him, an introduction indicating truths but partially comprehended, yet pointing out with sufficient clearness the provision of a sacrificial remedy for sin, and speaking words which since the event has interpreted the prediction, can scarcely be misunderstood. Thus at the very outset the peculiar doctrines of Christianity were not unremembered. Its morality presented a bright contrast to heathen impurity and Jewish hypocrisy; but this was not all. It was a new revelation of things otherwise undiscoverable, and as such it was promulgated to mankind. There have, indeed, been some who have professed to allow the one part without the other, to see in Christianity the purest system of morals, and so far to concede to it a Divine origin, but to reject all its peculiar doctrines as human inventions

undeserving of credit. It is this attempt to escape from the unphilosophical and unreasonable position, that the greatest blessing man ever received is the product of falsehood and imposture, which makes it necessary to recur to the form in which our Religion overcame the world;—that if victory bespeaks strength, we may assign it to Christianity, as it was and is, not as vain philosophers would have it to be. Hence it follows that the examination of Scripture is valuable, not merely as inducing conviction in those who own its authority, but also as supplying a refutation of those who would substitute a system of their own for the Religion of the Bible. We take the general ground of proving the authority of Scripture, and thus calling upon men to receive its witness; and we take the special ground of setting forth what Scripture says, and so reduce our opponents to the alternative of rejecting absolutely Religion and its documents, or of accepting it freely with all its essential elements.

I shall accordingly proceed with the subject of the Atonement, as I have already done with the Incarnation, gathering the sense of Scripture and of the Church, and confirming by reason the conclusion to which we have thus been led.

I. The idea conveyed by the word Atone-ment implies, in the first place, the reconciliation of God with man after an estrangement; and in the second, that this reconciliation has been effected by an operation extraneous to ourselves; that operation being no less than the Passion and Death of the Son of God.

These two notions are constantly presented by Scripture in close connexion. The history of the original estrangement of mankind from God through Adam's transgression is immediately succeeded by the account of Abel's sacrifice. After the wickedness of the antediluvian world had been swept away by the general Deluge, the renewal of God's blessing upon earth and earth's inhabitants followed upon the acceptance of a sacrifice offered by Noah in behalf of himself and his family. And when the descendants of Noah again separated themselves from the favour of the Lord, the selection of one family to be a peculiar people marked a restoration of forfeited privileges to those who were called from out of the world: a restoration ratified in the most solemn manner after the exhibition of Abraham's faith in the significant act of offering up his son as a lamb for the burnt-offering. In the nation which proceeded from this patriarch, separated as it

was unto the Lord, there was still kept up a remembrance of the need of further reconciliation. Let us study the law by which the Israelites were organized, and formed into a body politic, and we shall find the idea of reconciliation pervading its statutes, ordinances, and ceremonies. And it may tend to give us juster notions of the Divine character of Holy Writ to observe that particular portions of it have ceased to be of perpetual obligation without ceasing to be of perpetual interest. The Levitical statutes are not dead or obsolete, although they bind us not by formal enactments. They form an essential part of the scheme of Revelation, and as such yet speak. The peace-offerings, the meat-offerings, the wave-offerings, the heave-offerings were intended, without doubt, to express men's thankfulness to the Lord by rendering the first-fruits of those good things wherewith He had blessed them. But even in these the idea of Atonement had place, and much more in the trespass-offerings, sin-offerings, and burnt-offerings. They were often made a substitute for the life of him who presented them; being appointed means for removing the penalty of death. And if in most cases such offerings provided rather for legal uncleanness and involuntary transgression than

for moral guilt and wilful sin, an examination of the system of which they form part will shew that even such provision bears directly upon the general purpose of reconciling sinners with God. The congregation of Israel was all holy; to be cut off from it was to be severed from the Lord; to be readmitted was to be restored to His favour. The very vessels and other furniture were sanctified by formal rites, as if naturally unfit for His service, but capable of having that unfitness removed. Thus were priests, people, and things continually sanctified from their uncleanness, such sanctification being commonly effected by sacrifice, that they might cease to bear their iniquity, and might be accepted of the Lord.

As we ascend to the more important rites of the Law we find this scheme of reconciliation more fully developed. The great day of expiation, and the sacrifice then performed, at once suggest themselves to our mind. It is not my intention to follow the numerous particulars wherein we may discern in this solemnity the shadow of better things to come¹. I will but refer to certain considerations which shew that Atonement

¹ This subject is fully treated in Patrick's notes on Leviticus ch. xvi.

was the prevailing principle throughout the whole celebration.

1. The entrance into the peculiar place of the Presence of the Almighty, permitted only upon this day to the High Priest as the representative of the people, betokens an act of renewal of their union with Him who had declared that He would be their glory.

2. The preparations for this entrance were strictly enjoined, and very significant. The priest who was to perform this high office was to be sanctified not only by repeated washings, but by the sacrifice of a bullock and a ram for his own sins and for the sins of the priests and Levites¹, in order that the ministrants in holy things might first be reconciled themselves, before they should make reconciliation for the people. And with the same purpose, it seems, was the blood of the bullock sprinkled in the sanctuary before the mercy-seat², as a preliminary purification of the place wherein the chief sacrifice was to be made. 3. The Atonement was extended not merely to persons, but to things. There was an atonement for the holy place, an atonement for the Tabernacle of the Congregation, an atonement for the altar³, in order

¹ Lev. xvi. 3 and 6.

² Lev. xvi. 14.

³ "Reconciling the holy place and the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar," Lev. xvi. 20.

to remove any defilement that might arise from involuntary transgression of the law by priests or people, that they may be clean from all their sins before the Lord¹. But 4, while this solemn reference to legal uncleanness was calculated forcibly to remind the Israelites of their natural estrangement from God, the atonement made for the people had a further reference. Over the head of the scapegoat were to be confessed "all the iniquities of the children of Israel, all their transgressions in all their sins²," the three words being employed to include the various kinds of voluntary and involuntary offences. 5. Further, in the admonition, "afflict your souls³," we are reminded of the rebuke uttered by Isaiah for the perversion of such solemn fast-days into mere formal ceremonies, in words that carry our thoughts at once to the day of expiation, and indicate the true nature of the prescribed affliction: "Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul?...Is not this the fast that I have chosen, to loose the bands of wickedness⁴?" 6. The two goats form together but one sacrifice, both are presented before the Lord; on the head of the one the sins of the

¹ Lev. xvi. 30.

² Lev. xvi. 21.

³ Lev. xvi. 31.

⁴ Isai. lviii. 5, 6.

people are solemnly imposed, and he is sent into the wilderness to bear them away from the congregation; the other is slain and the blood sprinkled before the mercy-seat, the place of propitiation (*ἱλαστήριον*)¹. So that the two goats represent the two parts of atonement, the removal of guilt from man, and the oblation of a propitiatory offering to God. And 7, from this twofold sacrifice the Jews gathered that the imposition of hands implied a confession of sins, (for imposition of hands, they say, belongs to confession²), and that the sprinkling of blood denoted a remission of sins: for S. Paul only spoke the commonly-received opinion when he said, “without shedding of blood is no remission³,” and Moses expressly connected the two in reference to this very sacrifice: “For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul⁴.”

The most important rite of all, that of the Passover, may seem at its first appointment to differ from sacrificial institutions. The lamb was to be slain in each household, and the

¹ Lev. xvi. 15 and 21.

² Patrick on Lev. xvi. 21.

³ Heb. ix. 22.

⁴ Lev. xvii. 11.

continuance of the festival was to commemorate the deliverance of the Israelites out of the house of bondage. But this was far from all. Even at its celebration in Egypt there was the blood-sprinkling indicative, as we have seen, of atonement, and it was called prospectively the *sacrifice* of the Lord's Passover¹. And after the appointment of the ritual, each day of the paschal week was celebrated with meat-offerings, sin-offerings, and trespass-offerings², and the place of celebration limited to the spot wherein the Lord should choose to set his name³; while the custom observed by the Jews, of bringing the paschal lamb to be slain in the temple and there sprinkling the blood, supplies a comment as to the light in which this solemnity was regarded. The observation of the passover under Hezekiah represents, however, most fully the import of this festival. The object was to reunite the remnant of Israelites under their proper king, and to bind anew the whole people to the covenant the terms of which had been so often violated. They are told that "the Lord your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away his face from you if ye return unto him⁴." They are prayed for: "The good Lord pardon every

¹ Exod. xii. 27.

² Numb. xxviii. 15—21.

³ Deut. xvi. 2.

⁴ 2 Chron. xxx. 9.

one that prepareth his heart to seek God¹." And they "eat throughout the feast seven days, offering peace-offerings, and making confession to the Lord God of their fathers²." So the decree of Darius for the rebuilding of the house of God mentions especially that the burnt-offerings and sacrifices might be performed therein³; and after the dedication of this second temple we are told that they "killed the passover for all the children of the captivity, and for their brethren the priests, and for themselves;" and that they who did eat "had separated themselves from the filthiness of the heathen of the land, to seek the Lord God of Israel⁴."

The prophets (including the Psalmist), the moral and spiritual interpreters of the Law, take up the received system of sacrificial propitiation. They speak of God being pleased with the sacrifice of righteousness, with the burnt-offerings and oblations, with the offering of bullocks upon the altar⁵, of their burnt-offerings and sacrifices being accepted upon the altar⁶. They reprove their countrymen for the irregular, careless and profane way in which these services were performed⁷. But

¹ 2 Chron. xxx. 19.

³ Ezra vi. 10.

⁵ Ps. li. 19.

⁷ Mal. i. 7, 8, 13.

² 2 Chron. xxx. 22.

⁴ Ezra vi. 20, 21.

⁶ *Isai. lvi. 7.

they insist also upon the moral qualifications required in those who should offer before the Lord. They depress the value of the formal rite in comparison with the spirit in which it is celebrated¹. This is however so far from depreciating sacrifice in itself, that it revives the remembrance of its import, and by consequence raises its true value. It was not simply an offering to the Lord, it was an acknowledgement and propitiation for sin. They who forgot the latter part, forgot the very essence of sacrifice, imagining that they were appeasing the Lord by material offerings, instead of representing some mightier work by which this was to be effected. Therefore while the prophets were employed to correct low views of acts so mysterious, they were inspired to point to the substance of which these were the shadow. The sacrificial terms employed by Isaiah in his 53d chapter viewed in this light are full of meaning—the figure of the Lamb brought to the slaughter—the chastisement of our peace upon him—the iniquity of us all laid upon his head—cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of the people—his soul made an offering for sin;—all these bring the mind to the circumstances of the legal sacrifices, and

^{*}
¹ See Isai. xliii. 23; Ps. l. 12—15.

indicate some person who should hereafter supply the place of the victims slain and offered upon the material altar. And the pure offering foretold by Malachi¹ leads to that in which were summed up the less perfect offerings of the law; while Daniel, to whom it was given to predict most clearly Messiah's kingdom, foretells the finishing of the transgression, the making an end of sins, the making reconciliation for iniquity, the bringing in of everlasting righteousness, the sealing up of the vision of the Most High—the cutting off of Messiah, but not for Himself².

A study of the sacrificial system of the Mosaic Law, and a knowledge of the rites and of the conception of atonement which the Jews grafted upon it, will explain the force with which the Gospel annunciations of the Christian Sacrifice must have come home to those to whom they were spoken. What ideas would the words of my text at once awaken in all who were familiar with these notions: "The Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world"? Would they not call to mind the offering of a lamb for a trespass offering in the purification of lepers³, and in the cleansing of a Nazarite from the defile-

¹ Mal. i. 11.

² Dan. ix. 24, 26.

³ Lev. xiv. 12.

ment of a corpse, in which defilement the remembrance of the contamination of sin was preserved and expressed, the priest being required to make an atonement for him, "for that he sinned by the dead"¹? Would not the thought of pardon, of reconciliation, and of expiation, so bound up with the Paschal lamb, arise at once in their breasts, and might not the expectation that He in whom the Father was well pleased was to supply the place of the great sacrifice, dawn upon them so as to prepare their minds for the time when our Lord should proceed to unfold the amazing truth that He must suffer many things²?

The position of those who were addressed by prophets and evangelists illustrates the meaning of the terms employed. Let us bear in mind the imposition of sins upon the victim, the connexion of pardon with bloodshedding, of the renewal of the Covenant with sacrifice, and then determine in what possible sense but one such passages as the following would be applied and understood: "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit,

¹ Numb. vi. 11, 12; see Grot. de Satisf. Christ. Op. Tom. iv. p. 333.

² Matt. xvi. 21.

that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, 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. For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him¹." But not only is our Lord set forth as the Reconciler of mankind, but His life is said to have been a ransom for many², and He is called the propitiation for sins; the original word (*ἰλασμός*) being the same as that employed in the Septuagint to indicate sacrificial remedy. "If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation (*ἰλασμός*) for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world³;" a truth which the same Evangelist delivered in reference to a saying of Caiaphas, where, in other words, the reconciliation of man to God is conspicuously displayed⁴. Again, the connexion between salvation and propitiation

¹ 2 Cor. v. 18—21.

² *λύτρον*, Matth. xx. 28; *ἀντίλυτρον*, Mark x. 45; *ἀντίψυχον*, 1 Tim. ii. 6.

³ 1 John ii. 1, 2.

⁴ John xi. 51, 52.

is explained in the same Epistle: "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins¹." And the same truth is maintained by S. Peter, "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you²." And by S. Paul, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace through the faith that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation³

¹ 1 John iv. 10.

² 1 Pet. i. 18—20.

³ *ἰλαστήριον*. Although the words *ἰλασμός*, *ἰλάσκεσθαι*, are elsewhere used in the LXX. and Greek Testament, *ἰλαστήριον* itself is only used twice in the Greek Testament, viz. Rom. iii. 25, and Heb. ix. 5. In the latter passage it is applied to the covering of the ark, the mercy-seat: a term which seems to have arisen from the rendering of the Heb. כַּפֶּרֶת, *covering*, in the LXX. by *ἰλαστήριον ἐπίθεμα*, which was thence adopted in the Latin. The particular word may be uncommon, but the frequent application of the derivatives from *ἰλάσκεσθαι* in the sense of propitiation can leave no doubt as to the force of the expression in the Romans. See Michaelis' *Introd. to New Testament*, and Marsh's *Notes*, Part I. ch. iv. sect. 14. Michaelis quotes from Josephus a striking instance of the use of the word: "Josephus having previously observed that the blood

through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God¹." And in a passage most striking of all: "It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; and, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself²."

But lest it should be possible to mistake the application of sacrificial terms to Christ, one whole Epistle is devoted to the comparison of the ordinances of the Law with the dispensation of the Gospel, and to the demonstration that all those sacrifices were types of the one great sacrifice once offered³.

The attempts to explain away these and similar passages have been so unsatisfactory as to require little comment. To represent the scriptural reconciliation with God to be simply the natural consequence of our abandoning our sins in obedience to the moral teaching of Christ, or to suppose that Christ takes away the sins of the world only by

of the martyrs had made atonement for their countrymen, and that they were ὡσπερ ἀντίψυχον (victima substituta) τῆς τοῦ ἔθνους ἀμαρτίας, continues as follows: καὶ διὰ τοῦ αἵματος τῶν εὐσεβῶν ἐκείνων, καὶ τοῦ ἱλαστηρίου τοῦ θανάτου αὐτῶν ἡ Θεία πρόνοια τὸν Ἰσραὴλ διέσωσε.

¹ Rom. iii. 23—25.

² Col. i. 19, 20.

³ Heb. ix.

preserving us from the commission of future sins, or by giving evidence and earnest of God's forgiveness, or to maintain that the death of Christ is a requisite for the pardon of past sins, only because it was necessary to set before us the pattern of obedience even unto the end, in order to stimulate our faith and quicken our repentance¹:—these hypotheses leave entirely unexplained the whole system of sacrifice, and can only preserve the word in a most constrained and unnatural sense. Nor will it be necessary, after what has been said, to enter into any further refutation of them. The plain meaning of scriptural language is preserved, and the harmony of the Law and Gospel secured, only by the doctrine which is asserted in our second Article, that “He who was very God, and very man, truly suffered, was crucified, dead and buried, to reconcile His Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for all actual sins;” or in the brief and forcible words of the Homily on Salvation, “He for them paid a ransom by His death².”

II. In collecting the opinion of the Church

¹ These are the principal hypotheses of the Socinians and Unitarians. See Grot. de Satisf. Christ. Tom. iv. p. 336.

² Homily on Salvation, first Part.

upon this subject, the only difficulty is to make a selection out of the numerous testimonies which offer themselves to our notice. It has indeed been pretended that we look in vain for the doctrine of the Atonement in the writings of the earlier fathers. But it seems to require the utmost ingenuity to evade so plain a statement as that of Clemens Romanus: "Let us look steadfastly to the blood of Christ, and see how precious is His blood with God, which being shed for our salvation has obtained the grace of repentance for the whole world¹," where we observe that this reference to our Saviour's blood stands at the head of the promises of remission of sins set forth to the Corinthians as an inducement to repentance. What again can be more clear than the words of Ignatius, who, having recounted the sufferings and death of Christ as real and not apparent, adds, "All this he suffered for our sakes, that we may be saved"²? Or those of Polycarp, "Let us abide without fail in our hope and earnest of righteousness, which is Christ Jesus, who bore our sins in His own body upon the tree, who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth, but endured all things for our sakes,

¹ S. Clem. ad Corinth. c. 7.

² Ignat. ad Smyr. c. 2.

that we may live in Him¹”? How distinct is Justin Martyr! “By Christ’s stripes we are healed²,” “by His stripes all are healed who approach the Father through Him³,” “by His blood all who believe in Him are purified⁴,” “the Father willed that He should bear for the whole human race the curse due to all⁵,” “He endured the servitude even of the Cross in behalf of the various races of men, having purchased them by His blood and by the mystery of the Cross⁶.” And not less dis-

¹ S. Polyc. ad Philip. c. 8.

² Tryph. p. 366, D.

³ Tryph. p. 234, E.

⁴ Apol. i. p. 74, A.

⁵ Tryph. p. 322, E.

⁶ Tryph. p. 364, D. All these passages from Justin M. are quoted and put together by Kaye, Just. M. p. 77. I have adduced them on account of Dr Priestley’s assertion that the doctrine of the Atonement is not found in the apostolical Fathers. The work of Dr Priestley, “Corruptions of Christianity,” is indeed now less read than it once was, yet as his fallacies are often repeated in the present day, it will not be inappropriate to subjoin a few remarks as to this portion of the work, which is directly connected with the subject before us. Dr Priestley, in order to prove his point, attempts to explain away the passage in Clemens R., endeavouring to gather from the context that the apparent meaning is not the real, but that the passage is equivalent to the statement in the Acts, that Christ was *exalted as a Prince and Saviour to give remission of sins*. Bp. Bull remarks on this passage of Clemens. “Digna mihi semper visa sunt hæc verba, quæ aureis literis exarentur, atque a veræ theologiæ studiosis æternæ memoriæ mandentur, utpote quæ maxime genuinam satisfactionis Christi notionem ab apostolorum *συμμύσθη* explicatam contineant.” Exam. Censur. vii. § 24. Dr Priestley

tinctly Tertullian declares the whole weight and benefit of the Christian name to be “ the

quotes a passage from S. Barnabas as to the spirituality of the new Law, and says that this is not substituting the sacrifice of Christ but moral virtue itself, in the place of the sacrifices under the Law, and omits all reference to such passages as this: *εἰ οὖν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ μέλλων κρίνειν ζῶντας καὶ νεκροὺς ἔπαθεν ἵνα ἡ πληγὴ αὐτοῦ ζωοποιήσῃ ἡμᾶς πιστεύσομεν ὅτι ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ οὐκ ἠδύνατο παθεῖν εἰ μὴ διὰ ἡμᾶς*, S. Barn. Ep. ch. vi. He says nothing of the quotation of Isai. liii., as applicable to Christ, of the parallel drawn between Christ and the goats offered on the day of expiation, where S. Barnabas says expressly, that Christ was the goat offered on the fast for all sins, *ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀμαρτιῶν*—and finds an appropriateness in the vinegar given our Saviour to drink, putting in his mouth these words: *ἐπειδὴ ἐμὲ εἶδον ὑπὲρ ἀμαρτιῶν μέλλοντα τοῦ λαοῦ τοῦ καινοῦ προσφέρειν τὴν σάρκα μου μέλλετε ποτίξειν χολὴν μετὰ ὄξους*. Ep. S. Barn. ch. vii. He omits entirely the testimonies of Ignatius and Polycarp given above; and passes over the Apologies of Justin M., Athenagoras, and Tertullian, as saying nothing on the point; he never alludes to the existence of the Dialogue with Trypho, which exhibits the doctrine so distinctly; or hints that Tertullian in other of his works speaks plainly out. Dr Priestley does not mention the name of Irenæus, whose testimony see below (p. 237, n. 1), but passes on at once to Lactantius, and enlarges upon the absence of this doctrine in this writer as conclusive evidence that up to the time of S. Augustine it was unknown. We cannot allow that Lactantius entirely fails to recognize the Atonement. He speaks of Christ as the Lamb without blemish of whom the Paschal Lamb was the type: “*Hebræi soli signo sanguinis tuti fuerunt, non quia cruor pecudis tantam in se vim gerebat ut hominibus saluti esset, sed imago fuerat rerum futurarum. Nam agnus candidus sine macula Christus fuit, id est innocens et justus et sanctus, qui ab iisdem Judæis immolatus saluti est omnibus qui signum sanguinis, id est crucis quæ sanguinem fudit, in sua fronte con-*

death of Christ, which the Apostle so impressively lays down as especially true, making it the main foundation of the Gospel of His preaching, and of our salvation¹." Enough

scripserint." D. I. iv. 26. It may however be allowed that the philosophical Lactantius insists more especially upon the moral effects of Christ's death as affording an example of patience and obedience ; but this does not shew that he did not acknowledge the other effects. Nor if a single writer in the fourth century laid little stress upon the Atonement does it prove that the doctrine was unknown to the early Church, in face of the numerous passages from early fathers which can be adduced to establish the contrary. As to S. Augustine, of whom Dr Priestley also asserts that he did not know of the doctrine of the Atonement, I will only adduce one passage from his sermons (Serm. 152), which seems as conclusive as words can be: "Prorsus, prorsus Christus Dominus noster, Jesus Salvator noster, Redemptor noster, peccatum factus est, ut nos essemus justitia Dei in ipso. Quomodo? Audite legen. Qui noverunt, sciunt quod dico: et qui non noverunt, legant vel audiant. In lege peccata vocabantur etiam sacrificia quæ pro peccatis offerebantur. Habes, cum victima pro peccato adduceretur, dicit Lex, *Ponant manus suas sacerdotes super peccatum*, (Levit. iv.) id est super victimam pro peccato. Et quod est aliud quam Christus sacrificium pro peccato? *Sicut et Christus*, inquit, *dilexit vos et tradidit semetipsum pro vobis oblationem et hostiam Deo in odorem suavitatis* (Eph. v. 2). Ecce de quo peccato damnavit peccatum: de sacrificio quod factus est pro peccatis, inde damnavit peccatum." Surely there can be no reasonable doubt as to the opinions of the early Church upon the question of the Atonement.

¹ Tertull. adv. Marc. lib. iii. c. 8, quoted by Kaye (Tertull. p. 316), who also cites, "Non sumus nostri sed pretio empti. Quo pretio? sanguine Dei." Ad Uxor. lib. ii. c. 3. "Atque si exinde quo statim vertit (caro) et in Christum tincta induit Christum et magno redempta est, sanguine scilicet Domini et Agni." De Pudic. c. 6.

seems to have been said to shew what was the doctrine of the early Christians. Nor does it detract from the force of their testimony, that the earlier fathers confine themselves very much to the language and expressions of Scripture. The constant reference to the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah alone speaks volumes¹. If it was long before logical definitions were introduced, it was on account of the unanimous agreement which subsisted for so many centuries. And one of the opponents of this verity makes a memorable admission, that there was nothing like a controversy on the subject of this doctrine in all the Western Church down to the Reformation; and that we find nothing of this kind in the Greek Church, except that in the twelfth century the Emperor Emanuel Comnenus exercised himself and his divines with this question, "in what sense it might be affirmed that an incarnate God was at the same time the offerer and the oblation²." Surely if we couple this admission with such passages as those which we have quoted, and which might so easily be multiplied, we can

¹ Besides numerous citations of particular passages in reference to Christ, this chapter is referred to at length by S. Barnabas, S. Clemens Romanus, and others.

² Dr Priestley's *Corr. Christ.* i. p. 258.

scarcely with reason come to any other conclusion, than that the doctrine of the Atonement was held in its essential features by the whole Church for the first sixteen centuries.

This general agreement explains why on this point the early Creeds are less full and explicit than in other cases. The facts of the death and passion of our Saviour Christ are stated plainly with little further definition than that He was crucified *for us*, an assertion sufficient at times when all who admitted the fact admitted the purpose. The testimony of the Creeds is not expanded on topics on which heresy called not for expansion. This incidentally gives proof of agreement; and if the Articles need afterwards to be guarded in consequence of later errors, we may feel more confidence in the correctness of conclusions gathered from writers of old time, because the structure of the Creeds indicates that these conclusions were received by all without dispute.

For liturgical evidence, the address to Christ as "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world," adopted from my text and found in the earliest Liturgies, and the ancient form of concluding our petitions, "for Jesus Christ's sake," concur in confirming this doctrine as primitive; while in the Cle-

mentine Liturgy contained in the Apostolical Constitutions Christ is called a *high priest*, and said to be the *sacrifice*, the *shepherd*, and also the *sheep*, "to appease his God and Father, to reconcile him to the world, and to deliver all men from the impending wrath¹."

But yet more striking testimony on this head is derived from the most solemn act of Christian worship, the celebration of the Eucharist. The very term sacrifice, so constantly applied to it from the very earliest times, though by no means implying that which the Romanists attribute to it, would be utterly inexplicable if the death commemorated were no sacrifice at all. Nor would it be easy to discover why it should be especially enjoined to shew forth the Lord's death till He come², if this death were no more than an example of patience, a seal of his obedience, and a confirmation of his moral precepts.

And while we have abundant tokens of the opinions of the early Church, we have also signs of the convictions of Christendom in the phenomena of the Reformation. With what religious truth was the awakening of the spirit, the reanimation of moral principle, most closely

¹ It is remarkable that these expressions are referred to by Dr Priestley (Corr. Christ. i. p. 232), who attempts very ineffectually to explain them away.

² 1 Cor. xi. 26.

connected? What was the note to which the chord of Christian feeling most readily vibrated? The strain which told of Christ crucified, God reconciled to sinners through the death of his Son. The terrible heresy of Socinus which shortly appeared proves to us what was the topic then most prominently brought into notice. That heresy was the resistance offered to the great truth now so freely and fully proclaimed throughout the world. And the persecutions experienced by the unhappy followers of Socinus, lamentable indeed as are all acts of persecution, shew at least that the common voice was against them. It is true that this is no *proof* of their being in the wrong, but it is a *presumption*, when we find those who had so widely differed uniting on this one point, and remember that many who were most forward to resist these new opinions, were no blind followers of authority, nor accustomed to be satisfied with anything short of full conviction. And it may without prejudice be said, that by far the greater number of those who have testified their sincerity by suffering the loss of all things, have clung to the Cross as their chiefest treasure, as the stronghold of their confidence, their consolation, and their joy: while many who have well nigh fainted under spiritual trials, and have

found it hard to emerge from the darkness which has for a time gone over their soul, have struggled forth into life and hope by laying fast hold of the doctrine of the Atonement. The light which streamed upon the mind of one truly Christian poet, clouded as it had been by painful delusion, speaks instruction to all who read his words: "The happy period which was to shake off my fetters, and afford me a full opening of the free mercy of God in Christ Jesus, was now arrived. . . . I saw the sufficiency of the atonement made by the Son of righteousness, my pardon sealed in His blood, and all the fulness and completeness of His justification¹." And so in our own days, some among the most zealous defenders of Christianity in Germany have been rescued from the shoals of unbelief by the guiding beacon of the Cross². And if

¹ Cowper's Letters.

² Tholuck was in early days an infidel. Neander was by birth a Jew. His biographer remarks, "His love for Christianity was a living affection, dwelling in the present as truly and actively as in the past. His faith remained firm and lively to the end. It was not a dry rationalism; it was not a vague latitudinarianism. He believed profoundly in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, the Redeemer and Saviour of the world, the only true Mediator between God and man. He admitted the supernatural facts of the Gospel—the Incarnation, Expiation, Resurrection, and Ascension of Christ." Neander's Life in Vol. I. of Eng. Transl. of his Church History, p. xxvi.

even these have indulged their national habit of free speculation, and have woven theories not always consistent with one another in regard to particulars of the scheme of Atonement, they have been forward to disclaim all sympathy with the cold and rationalizing spirit of the ancient Socinians and the modern Unitarians.

III. Reason has at times lifted up her voice (but it is a false not true reason) to gainsay this manifold testimony. I will advert very briefly to some of the objections urged. 1. It has been said that it abridges the power of God, to maintain the *necessity* of any sacrifice, much more such a sacrifice, in order to the salvation of mankind. But after all, it is only improperly that any one has talked of necessity in such a case as this: what God could have done concerns us little, what He has done concerns us much. But 2, if salvation could have been procured in any other way, can we believe that He would have adopted such a way as this? How presumptuous the question! The mysteries of Creation, natural or spiritual, are unknown to us—we are ignorant of half the purposes which any one act subserves. And shall we speak of fitter means to an end above all others beyond our comprehension? “Shall he that contendeth

with the Almighty instruct him? he that reproveth God, let him answer it¹." 3. It has been much insisted upon, in fact it has been a chief argument employed by those who deny the Atonement, that the notion of substitution is inconsistent with God's justice, and that of satisfaction with His mercy². But in truth the very terms which we employ, "justice," "mercy," and the like, are not comprehensible to us as they exist in the Divine Being³. Reason teaches us to attribute to God the highest perfection of the qualities which we approve in man, but we see them only as shadowed out in imperfect beings, and therefore are incapable of predicating, beyond what has been revealed to us, what they are in God, in whom justice and mercy meet together, righteousness and benevolence are not only in harmony, but are identical, as

¹ Job xl. 2.

² The partial notion of a love which excludes justice in the Deity found an advocate of old in Marcion. The treatise of Tertullian against Marcion is occupied with combating such exclusive views. See some remarks on Anthropopatheism by Neander, Ch. Hist. Vol. II. p. 271.

³ Iren. II. 13. 4. Est autem et super hæc et propter hæc inenarrabilis. Sensus enim capax omnium bene et recte dicitur, sed non similis hominum sensui. Et lumen rectissime dicitur, sed nihil ei, quod est secundum nos, lumini. Sic autem et in reliquis omnibus nulli similis erit omnium Pater hominum pusillitati.

being different phases of the one Absolute Good. 4. To remove all the difficulties which may be raised on a subject so mysterious, is neither necessary nor possible. Angels desire to look unto it, let us veil our faces with the wings of humility before the Mighty Saviour, the Incarnate God, the crucified Redeemer.

But let right reason stand forth, and see if she cannot add something to the cloud of witnesses which attest this article of our Faith.

1. That we suffer through others, and that even to the death, is undeniable. And as the acts of men often entail pain upon their fellows, so do the sufferings and labours of others contribute largely, nay mainly, to our support and enjoyment. How many of our pleasures are procured by efforts, often painful efforts, of our neighbours! and if it is reasonable to suppose that there will be some correspondence between the natural and supernatural dispensations of the same God, a scheme which supposes vicarious suffering can at least be liable to no antecedent improbability.

2. The infinity of the suffering! Stupendous indeed it is, and awful beyond description or imagination, but yet far from

unreasonable. This will be seen most clearly by those who are sensible of the heinousness of sin. Let us consider what it is for a creature to rebel against his Creator, a finite being to resist an Infinite, a mortal to interrupt the harmony of the world of the Immortal. Yet if there be such a thing as sin, it is this. And it is far more marvellous that we should be able to resist God at all, than that having resisted Him, it should require a dispensation past human thought to avert the consequences.

3. Nor will reason incline us to believe, that repentance would of itself do this. What efficacy there may be in repentance must be owing to the promises which God has annexed to it. When we have been cast down so low as sin has cast us, it seems but reason to conclude that we need some help beyond our own to raise us up. It is only He who can tread the winepress of God's wrath alone, who when He looks and finds none to help, when He wonders there is none to uphold, can bring salvation with his own arm, speaking in righteousness mighty to save¹. "The doctrines of revelation," it was once said by a celebrated moral philosopher, "coincide in

¹ Isai. lxiii. 1—5.

every respect with those original anticipations of our nature, and while they teach us how little we can depend upon the imperfection of our own virtue, so they shew us at the same time that the most painful intercession has been made, and the most dreadful atonement has been paid, for our manifold transgression and iniquities¹.”

4. Reason cannot fail to observe that this idea of man's incapacity to avert the penalty of past acts by mere internal motions, or to bring himself into favour with the powers above him, has impressed itself upon the customs of mankind in the universal, or all but universal, prevalence of sacrifices in the ancient world and among savage nations; a prevalence which can only be explained by the supposition of the Divine appointment of sacrifice immediately after the fall, or by the concession that there is in the human breast an instinctive feeling prompting man to attempt by some offering the expiation of his guilt and the propitiation of his God. There are not wanting in heathen story accounts

¹ A. Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1st Ed. 1759), quoted by Magee (Vol. I. p. 211), who remarks, that it was suppressed in the later editions, but that this suppression does not in any way affect the truth of what was said by the author, or the justness of the sentiments which he had uttered in a pure and unsophisticated state of mind.

of sacrifice which may be thought to resemble closely some parts of the Christian sacrifice, or the acts which typified it¹. Even the horrible practice of human sacrifice may seem to throw some light upon the principle of vicarious suffering. But without dwelling upon special resemblances, the general fact of the custom of propitiatory sacrifices affords a reasonable proof, either of primal revelation, or of natural instinct, developed and satisfied only by the death of Christ.

5. But reason may derive further confirmation from the harmony of Christian doctrines. The Incarnation and the Atonement give and receive mutual corroboration. If it be true that the Eternal Word became flesh, it is inconceivable that this should not have been for the purpose of performing some work amazing and incomprehensible. And if it was possible for the Son of God to suffer, it was in consequence of His having been invested with human nature and all its attributes. For if the act of expiation is to be performed, it must be by one who partakes of the nature to be redeemed². Against this

¹ This subject is fully discussed, and numerous instances adduced from ancient history, by Grotius, *De Satisf. Christ.* ch. x. Grotii Op. Tom. iv. pp. 334—336.

² One of the objections made to the notion that sacrifice

necessity is set the inability of man to redeem his brother. And the two conditions which might at first sight appear irreconcilable are fulfilled in One who was man, yet free from sin, and who suffered, though innocent. The expiation effected by Christ was not simply the satisfaction of the Divine wrath, but the renewal of the union of man with God. And as the severance was made by the founder of our race, so is it appropriate that the act of reconciliation should belong to Him who, as the federal Head of mankind, and the only-begotten Son of God, is qualified to draw men to the Father, them in Him, and He in them, as He and the Father are one. Thus do the several parts of the Christian scheme interpenetrate one with another, as it is well expressed by Irenæus, in a passage wherein he asserts the doctrines both of the Incarnation and Atonement: "The Lord hath redeemed us with His own blood, and giveth His life for our lives, His flesh for our flesh, and poureth out the Spirit of the Father in

was intended to transfer the punishment from man to the victim illustrates the Christian position that the victim was the representative of Christ. "Socinus ait non potuisse errata hominum in bestiis puniri, *quia nulla inter homines et bestias sit speciei communio.*" Grot. de Satisf. Christ. p. 332. Grotius very needlessly disputes this assertion of Socinus. It would have been better to shew what truth lay beneath it.

order to the union and communion of God with man, bringing down God to man by the Spirit, and again taking up man to God by His Incarnation, surely and truly in His Advent endowing us with incorruption through the communion we enjoy with Him¹.”

To conclude, the instincts of nature, the voice of reason, the traditions of antiquity, the declarations of Scripture, and the testimony of the Church, point to a sacrifice and expiation, such as was foreshadowed in the sacrifices of the Law, and completed in the sacrifice of Christ. But the antitype is more than the type, the substance than the shadow. There was restoration to the earthly tabernacle, here to the pattern of the tabernacle in heaven. There the removal of legal uncleanness and involuntary transgression, here the purification of the inner man and the abolition of sin. There the ratification of a covenant of works, here the confirmation of

¹ τῷ ἰδίῳ ὄνι αἵματι λυτρωσαμένου ἡμᾶς τοῦ Κυρίου, καὶ δόντος τὴν ψυχὴν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἡμετέρων ψυχῶν καὶ τὴν σάρκα τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἀντὶ τῶν ἡμετέρων σαρκῶν et effundente Spiritum Patris in adunationem et communionem Dei et hominis, ad homines quidem deponente Deum per Spiritum, ad Deum autem rursus imponente hominem per suam incarnationem, et firme et vere in adventu suo donante nobis incorruptelam per communionem quæ est ad eum; perierunt omnes hæreticorum doctrinæ. S. Iren. v. i. 1.

the covenant of faith by the death of Him who established it. There the blood of bulls and goats, here the blood of Christ at once the Victim and the High Priest. There admission to the congregation on earth, here communion with the Church in Heaven. Redemption there from temporal, here from eternal death: there the possession of the earthly Canaan, here an entrance into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, abundantly ministered unto us¹ by Him who is the Mediator of the New Testament, that by means of death for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance².

But let us not close our meditations upon a subject so deeply affecting as well as so inexpressibly awful and mysterious, with a mere appeal to our reasoning faculties. Let us rather endeavour to awaken our spiritual apprehension to that which has been the support of martyrs in their hour of anguish, of sufferers upon their bed of pain. For is not the comfort which departing spirits have felt and expressed an evidence real and good of the truth that Christ has died for us?

Who is there in whom the record of the

¹ 2 Pet. i. 11.

² Heb. ix. 15.

last words of martyrs of old rejoicing to be made like unto Christ, but resting all their hopes upon the blood shed for them upon the Cross, has not stirred up some deeper feeling of the living reality of the stupendous scenes in which the Son of God passed through torture unto death? Who is there that has not at some time witnessed and shared the holy calm diffused through the chamber of death by the recital of the Scriptural narrative of the sufferings of our Redeemer? Who is there who has not felt at such times each lingering cloud of doubt or misconception roll away before the clear light of Truth, and lifted up from the heart the fervent petition, "By Thine agony and bloody sweat, by Thy Cross and Passion, by Thy precious death and burial, good Lord, deliver us"?

May God of His infinite mercy grant that none of us may harden our hearts against this witness of the Spirit, but that each and every one may cling to the Cross of Christ, and so be borne safe over the stormy billows of temptation unto the wished-for haven of everlasting rest. "Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage-supper of the Lamb¹."

¹ Rev. xix. 9.

LECTURE IX.

GRACE.

S. JOHN XVII. 17.

Sanctify them through thy truth.

THE subject of Divine grace may seem to partake too much of a controversial character to find a fitting place in a course of Lectures, whose object is to make good the common grounds of Christianity, without descending into the divisions among Christians themselves.

Debates connected with such divisions have often been pursued with an acrimony that has lost sight of substantial agreement. The scholastic distinctions of preventing, regenerating, converting and saving grace, though not without their value in a well-ordered system of divinity, have given rise to verbal disputes, wherein differences have been made to appear greater than they really are, and each party has misconceived the assertions of the other—and has perhaps in the heat of argument been carried on to advance opinions, of which the consequences have been ill foreseen.

I am not engaged at present to determine the limits of speculation upon the subject of grace. But it may tend to promote charity and forbearance, without which unity cannot subsist, to remark, that it is perfectly possible to differ as to the mode in which Divine grace operates, and yet to agree as to the Divine Person by whom, and the channels through which, it is communicated; that the differences of Christians have in general concerned the modes of operation, and that their agreement constitutes an essential feature by which they are distinguished from unbelievers. For amidst various opinions, there is one broad truth held in common, that man needs inward help from God, and that this need has been supplied by the peculiar gift of Christian grace.

This truth has at all times found opponents sufficiently numerous and determined to render it necessary for the Christian apologist to proclaim and maintain it. The self-sufficiency (*αὐταρκεία*) of which the Stoics dreamed has never been without its advocates. The perfectibility of human nature by its own unassisted efforts has constantly been a favourite topic with men by whom the truths of Christianity and of religion have

been most recklessly assailed¹; while those who acknowledge in Christ a great Teacher of morality and of natural religion, but see nothing more than human in His birth, in His life, or in His death, carry out their system by averring that the reformation which He came to effect was to be produced simply by the inculcation of purer precepts than had before been known, and that man is of himself capable of apprehending and acting up to the precepts thus delivered.

I shall proceed, therefore, in the course which I have hitherto pursued, and endeavour to discover the doctrine of Divine grace as declared by Scripture, by the Church, and by reason.

I. While the personality of the Holy Spirit was more especially the subject of Gospel-revelation, His operations were exhibited and declared under the Old Covenant. The valour by which captains conquered, and the wisdom by which princes governed, were attributed to the Spirit of the Lord. The Spirit of the Lord came upon Othniel, when he judged Israel, and went out to war². The Spirit of the Lord was upon Jephthah when

¹ See Condorcet, sur le Progrès de l'esprit humain. Quart. Rev. No. 173, p. 33.

² Judges iii. 10.

he passed over Gilead unto the children of Ammon¹. Pharaoh when making provision for the seven years of famine was guided in his choice of a superintendent by observation of the more than human wisdom of Joseph. "Can we find such a man as this is, in whom the Spirit of God is²?" When Moses was directed to appoint assistants in the administration of justice, the Lord said, "I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone³." Joshua was selected to succeed Moses as "a man in whom is the spirit⁴." And upon the choice of David, and rejection of Saul, "the Spirit of the Lord," it is said, "came upon David from that day forward. . . but the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul⁵."

Again, the presence of the Holy Spirit was indicated of old time by the power of prophecy. The Spirit of God came upon Balaam⁶. The Spirit of the Lord rested upon Elijah, and was transferred from him in a double portion (i. e. in exceeding abundance), to Elisha, his servant and successor: while

¹ Judges xi. 29.

³ Numb. xi. 17.

⁵ 1 Sam. xvi. 13, 14.

² Gen. xli. 38.

⁴ Numb. xxvii. 18.

⁶ Numb. xxiv. 2.

upon the whole succession of holy prophets, from David unto Malachi, the Spirit came down, and their mouths were touched as it were with a live coal from the altar of their God¹. The spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah, were all different manifestations of the Spirit of the Lord².

And if under the old Covenant the power of the Holy Ghost was displayed by the inspiration of extraordinary grace for special functions, equally if not more evident were His operations upon the heart. In the historic portions of the Sacred Volume, persons are described as servants of the Lord, men that fear God, that do right in the sight of the Lord; and we are left to gather the full import of such appellations from their actions and from their fortunes, (for they lived under a system of temporal rewards and punishments); but in the prophetic pages the inward motions of the Spirit are more fully developed. Whence is it that the Psalms of David form a manual of devotion in all ages? Whence that the impassioned addresses of prophets to Israel, and to Judah, are no less eloquent to us than to those who have passed

¹ Isai. vi. 6.

² Isai. xi. 2.

away? It is because being uttered by the Spirit of God, they speak home to the spirit of man. The Psalmist's heartfelt acknowledgement of the transgression, that is ever before him—his consciousness that God requires truth in the inward parts, leads up to the recognition of the cleansing hand of Him who will wash him with hyssop that he may be clean, and purge him that he may be whiter than snow; who will create a new heart, and renew a right spirit within him, who will not cast him away from His presence, nor take His Holy Spirit from him—will make him to know wisdom in the hidden parts, restore unto him the joy of salvation, and establish him with His free Spirit¹. If the prophets who wept sore for the sin of their countrymen, and its destined punishment, rejoiced also to see beforehand the future day of restoration, their hopes were connected with the promise of the sanctifying operation of the Lord turning the hearts, in order to turn their captivity. "Then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord²." The name of the Lord was to be sanctified by the recall of his people from bondage, but in preparation of this recall, He should sprinkle

¹ See Psalm li.

² Zeph. iii. 9.

clean water upon them, and cleanse them from all their filthiness—giving a new heart, putting a new spirit within them, and causing them to walk in His judgements¹. For the promises of the latter days were bound up with the effusion of the Spirit, to the purification and sanctification of all flesh. “I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplications².” “I will give them a heart to know me that I am the Lord, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, for they shall return unto me with their whole heart³.” “Upon Mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness⁴.” “This is my covenant with thee, saith the Lord; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever⁵.” “I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes⁶.”

In this as in all respects, He who became the Head of the human race fulfilled the conditions of humanity in partaking of those

¹ Ezek. xxxvi. 25.

³ Jer. xxiv. 7.

⁵ Isai. lix. 21.

² Zech. xii. 10.

⁴ Obad. 17.

⁶ Ezek. xxxvi. 27.

gifts which had been promised to man. On Him "the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape¹." "He was led up of the spirit into the wilderness²." He "returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee³," and proclaimed "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor⁴." And as it seems to have been part of the perfection of our Lord's humanity that the Holy Spirit should rest upon him, so did He by such participation secure unto those whom He should call to be holy as He is holy⁵. And thus is it that the members of Christ's Church are designated as "saints," or "holy men," because it is their birthright to become partakers of the Holy Spirit, that being renewed in the spirit of their mind, they may put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness⁶.

The last discourses of our Lord with his disciples were expressly directed to the purpose of teaching them the nature of the mission of the Comforter, whom He would send unto them from the Father. The prayer wherein He connects together his immediate followers and those who should hereafter be-

¹ Luke iii. 22.

³ Luke iv. 14.

⁵ 1 Pet. i. 16.

² Matt. iv. 1.

⁴ Luke iv. 18.

⁶ Eph. iv. 23, 24.

lieve in His name, shews that this mission was not confined to those who had conversed with Him in the flesh. The office of the Spirit of truth was declared to be to reprove the world, to guide the disciples unto all truth, to shew them things to come, to glorify the Father, to aid them towards the accomplishment of His prayer, "Sanctify them through thy truth." These express declarations of the ministry of the Spirit might, perhaps, have been thought sufficient to preclude all controversy upon the subject. If the gift of the Comforter was so great as to make it expedient even that Jesus should Himself depart from them, if it was so peculiar that if He went not away the Comforter should not come, if it was so universal as to be extended to all that should believe on Him—if the operations of the Comforter were such as our Saviour described them—there seems to be little room for questioning the assertion that the precious legacy bequeathed to His Church by our dying Master was the gift of the Holy Ghost, conferring through His ministration special power upon those who were called to be the sons of God, "through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ¹."

¹ 1 Pet. i. 2.

The Epistles, however, set forth this doctrine if possible in a clearer light. For the evil principle which would seduce man to magnify his own powers, and rely upon his own virtues, manifested itself in the very earliest ages, and was combated by the Apostles themselves. And consequently the doctrine of grace is exhibited in so many shapes, in commendation and in rebuke, in exposition and in exhortation, in appeals to the conscience, and in the narration of personal experience, that we cannot turn to one page of these sacred writings without finding, amid the instructions as to what we are to believe and do, admonitions of our insufficiency of ourselves either to do or to believe. Does S. Paul desire to extol the righteousness which is by faith, he declares that God has dealt to every man the measure of faith¹. Does he enlarge upon the release from the death of sin, it is the grace of God, and the gift by grace which hath abounded unto many; and they which receive abundance of grace shall reign in life by one, Christ Jesus². Does he strive to draw closer the bonds of love and union between those who have put on Christ, he reminds them that by one Spirit are we

¹ Rom. xii. 3.

² Rom. v. 17.

all baptized into one Body¹. Would he check the pride of reason, he tells us "that we have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God²." Is he constrained to refer to his own sufferings, he ascribes all to God: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God³." Does S. Peter urge the strangers of the dispersion to obedience and purity, the groundwork of his exhortation is, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit⁴." More forcible than all is the denomination of Christians as "the house of God⁵," "the temple of the Lord⁶." And lest these appellations should be deemed applicable to them only as a community, they are employed to enforce personal purity: "Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. What? know ye not that your body

¹ 1 Cor. xii. 13.

³ Gal. ii. 20, 21.

⁵ Heb. iii. 6.

² 1 Cor. ii. 12.

⁴ 1 Pet. i. 22.

⁶ Eph. ii. 21.

is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God¹ ?”

It is then perfectly clear that the writers of the New Testament represent the Gospel-system to have fulfilled that which had been promised under the old Covenant ; that they assume in all who have been incorporated into Christ's Church new power to do and to know God's will ; that the revelation of the Son and of the Spirit as distinct Persons in the Unity of the Godhead, is essentially connected with the renovation of man from disobedience unto holiness by the energizing influence of peculiar grace.

Of such a scheme Sacramental grace naturally forms part. We might almost have presumed, even had it not been distinctly revealed, that there would be some such plain and sensible tokens as the two Sacraments to give notice of the glorious presence of the Invisible God.

The subject of the Sacraments is far too comprehensive to be in anyway adequately discussed within my present limits ; it is sufficient to observe the part assigned to them in the system of grace, and the light thus thrown upon the nature of that system.

The birth by water and by the Spirit², the

¹ 1 Cor. vi. 18, 19.

² John iii. 5.

sanctification by washing¹, the death unto sin through burial with Christ in baptism², the victory of faith in those who are born of God³, the renewal of the Holy Ghost following upon the washing of regeneration⁴, speak not only of initial grace conveyed, but of the legitimate results produced, in those who quench not the Spirit, but pressing forward to the mark of their high calling grow in grace. The dwelling with Christ in eating His flesh and drinking His blood⁵, the attainment of eternal life and a joyful resurrection in consequence of such participation⁶, the communion of the body and blood of Christ in the bread broken, and the cup blessed⁷, are plainly the legitimate, not the necessary results of communicating—annexed by promise, not to a formal, but to a faithful reception of the Lord's Supper.

In the Word of God the Sacraments are contemplated in full and unrestrained operation, effecting all which it is their purpose to effect, and which they will effect when no hindrance is presented. Nor are they less important because they work upon man mo-

¹ 1 Cor. vi. 11.

³ 1 John v. 4.

⁵ John vi. 56.

⁷ 1 Cor. x. 16.

² Rom. vi. 4.

⁴ Tit. iii. 5.

⁶ John vi. 54.

rally and progressively, because the growth of grace conveyed by them is fostered and promoted by supplies flowing into the soul through different channels. Nor does the circumstance that there are other means of grace dispense with those which our Lord instituted, and commanded to be perpetually observed. There have been times and places where a magical effect has been ascribed to formal ordinances. At all times, and in all places, man is tempted to repose in vain security upon external rites, and to put the letter for the spirit. But the necessity of inward vitality does not dispense with outward ordained conditions. And while we must beware of ascribing to mere participation, the full effects which Scripture annexes to holy ordinances upon the assumption of *due* participation, the terms descriptive of these full effects are such as to suggest the general necessity of reception of the Sacraments in the preservation of the prescribed order of man's sanctification and salvation. A part is assigned to them in the work of man's redemption which God does not ordinarily perform otherwise,—for the engrafting into the body of Christ, and the indwelling in that body must be more than a name. Of the mode in which these means of grace operate

we have no precise information from Scripture, but whatever that mode may be, it is plain that means so peculiar in their institution, so pregnant with moral results can only have place in a system wherein obedience and holiness are required of a being whose strength is made perfect in weakness¹, because God supplies all his needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus².

For we must never lose sight of the fact, that men are moral beings, responsible for their actions, subject to reward or punishment, according to their works. On the case of the heathen we need not enter, as the question is purely speculative, and therefore less necessary to be determined. The Gospel wherein *we* stand addresses its exhortations to believers, to partakers of grace, able to work because God worketh in them: insisting upon two classes of truths, the one connected with the natural weakness, the other with the free will of man. Exclusive regard to the one or the other class, will lead, as it has led, to partial and erroneous views. Both lie side by side in God's word, and man may not sunder them. The remembrance of this will supply a corrective to the habit, sometimes too freely indulged, of pushing either principle to what

¹ 2 Cor. xii. 9.

² Phil. iv. 19.

are called its logical consequences, seeing that the forces are not antagonistic, but acting in different, though not opposite directions, together guide us along the straight path of righteousness in Christ Jesus.

II. In the writings of the Fathers we find ambiguities of expression arising from reference to these two principles, which require to be guarded against misrepresentation. The earlier among them insist upon the freedom of the will, because they had to oppose the Pagan notions of necessity, and the Manichean principle of dualism — both of which, in various ways, caused the subject-matter of debate to be, not whether the image of God was to be renewed by Divine power, but whether the image of God could be renewed at all in the children of darkness and disobedience. If we turn to Justin Martyr we find him indeed laying down in the broadest terms the universality of Redemption, the capability of all to repent, and the necessity of freedom of will, in order to the justice of punishment¹; but we also remark, that he asserts more than once the necessity of grace from God, in order to understand the

¹ Just. M. (Tryph. p. 370, B) in answer to a statement of the Jews, that they were guiltless of the Saviour's blood, because it was pre-ordained that he should be slain of them.

Scriptures and comprehend the scheme of salvation¹; and in a passage wherein he ascribes the withholding of the Divine judgments to the favour with which God regards those who have turned to Him, he sees in this conversion the gift of God, and the sevenfold operation of the Holy Spirit. "He has delayed, and still delays, to execute judgment, because He knows that there are some being rescued from the way of error, and being taught to acknowledge the name of Christ, who receive gifts each according to their desert, being illuminated by the name of Christ; for one receiveth the spirit of wisdom, another of counsel, a third of strength, of healing, of foreknowledge, of teaching, and of the fear of God²."

The controversy which sprung up at the end of the second century in regard to the tenets of Montanus furnishes us with evidence of the opinions of the Christian Church upon the subject of grace. For Montanism was the result of a one-sided view of the supernatural powers which were brought to life by Christianity. As S. Paul dwelt upon the gifts of the Spirit which illuminated and sanctified all the natural powers and dispo-

¹ See Bishop Kaye's *Just. M.* p. 77.

² *Tryph.* p. 258, A.

sitions of the mind, and referred such illumination to none other than the Holy Spirit Himself, the Montanists especially enlarged upon those extraordinary operations which accompanied a new and authoritative revelation of truth. They conceived that the spiritual, who were the true Church, received communications having all the force of Divine oracles, that with them the Paraclete was present as He was with the Apostles, not only for the sanctification of the heart, but also for the further development of Christian doctrine. So that each succeeding generation was wiser than their predecessors, and were partakers in a yet more perfect dispensation than that of the Gospel which Christ preached, and his Apostles promulgated¹. Without pausing to consider wherein these views were erroneous, we remark, that they presume the actuation of man by the Spirit of God. The whole discussion turns not upon the question whether man was or was not the subject of Divine illumination, but what was the mode and effect of such illumination. And if the tendency of the Alexandrian school (especially opposed to Montanism) was to exaggerate the powers of reason, and the

¹ See Neand. Ch. Hist. Vol. II. pp. 199, et sqq.

value of philosophy, it took the direction of discovering traces of the Holy Spirit in the wisest among the heathens, and of enlarging upon the assistance rendered to them, instead of denying the necessity of grace in order to true knowledge or true obedience. The ascription of all that was excellent in heathens to the presence of the Holy Spirit only produced erroneous conclusions when it led to the disparagement of the difference between philosophy and Christianity. And this was less regarded in the earlier days when Christianity occupied an antagonistic position. If Alexandrian Christians endeavoured to win over heathens to their ranks by persuading them that in the writings of their most valued sages there were adumbrations of Christian principles and Christian mysteries, it would probably not occur to them that the essence of Christianity might be impaired by too close approximation to its opponents. The Christians had then to dare and die for their religion. They shewed how vast they deemed the difference by suffering tortures and death rather than overlook it, and their comparisons of the two systems were applied rhetorically in order to disarm their adversaries, without any thought of giving up on their own part the cause for

which they suffered. The evil attendant upon these speculations was perceived at a later time, when the triumph of Christianity was so far complete that it occupied the imperial throne, and was dominant instead of tolerated. This position was in many respects full of danger. It was dangerous as being likely to weaken man's sense of his need of Divine aid by rescuing him from the emergencies wherein it had been sorely felt. Moreover, the grosser abominations of Paganism were now put aside as it were with one consent, and those who clung to it, clung to it in a philosophical spirit, endeavouring, like Julian, to build up the old religion upon foundations not its own, and to evacuate the peculiar force of Christianity by pretending to discover its principles in heathen philosophy. It was in such times that Pelagius arose, it was the sense of such dangers that caused S. Augustine so vigorously to oppose him. The history of the discussions upon this subject shews that the point which S. Augustine laboured to establish was the distinctive recognition of Christian grace. Pelagius himself was not unwilling to allow the necessity of the Divine assistance, and of grace in a certain sense; but he shrunk from clearly and distinctly tracing the line of de-

marcation between the Divine influence by which the heathen were enabled to think and act, and the peculiar gift of the Holy Ghost accorded to the members of the Church as engrafted into the body of Christ by the Spirit of adoption which He promised and bequeathed to them. It may be admitted that S. Augustine was led by his desire of preserving logical consistency to determine too boldly the case of the heathens and of unbaptized infants, and that he may have pushed the principles of Pelagianism to consequences of which Pelagius never dreamed; but the sum of the argument was of vital importance. It concerned the essence of Christianity as a system of grace; it concerned the efficacy of the Sacraments as means of grace; it concerned the acknowledgment of the Holy Spirit as specially sent by the Son from the Father to those who should believe in His name. The extent of the prevarication of individuals may be questioned. At all events, the controversy drew forth from Pelagius and Cœlestius very important admissions, which, whether made in sincerity or not, are sufficient to prove what were the opinions then maintained in the Church. For they professed to hold the redemption of the world by Christ's merits, and the necessity of Di-

vine grace to free men from the dominion of sin¹.

It is observable that S. Augustine in these discussions makes frequent reference to the Creeds and to the liturgical forms then sanctioned by antiquity²; and it has been forcibly

¹ The course pursued by Cœlestius and Pelagius in this respect gives us instructive information as to the mode in which we indirectly may obtain the sense of the Catholic Church. Item in libello quem Romæ dedit [Cœlestius] cum fidem suam a Trinitate unius Deitatis usque ad resurrectionem qualis futura est mortuorum, de quibus eum nullus interrogaverat, et unde illi nulla quæstio movebatur, quantum dicere libuit, explicasset; ubi ad id quod agebatur ejus sermo pervenit, “si quæ vero,” inquit, “præter fidem quæstiones natæ sunt, de quibus esset inter plerosque contentio; non ego quasi auctor alicujus dogmatis definita hoc auctoritate statui, sed ea quæ de Prophetarum et Apostolorum fonte suscepi, vestri Apostolatus offerimus probanda esse iudicio.” Aug. de Pecc. Orig. c. 23. So also Pelagius gives important testimony as to Infant Baptism: “Nunquam se vel impium aliquem hæreticum audisse qui hoc de parvulis diceret”—“quis tam impius est, qui cujuslibet ætatis parvulo interdicit communem humani generis redemptionem, et in perpetuam certamque vitam renasci neget eum qui natus sit ad incertam?”—De Pecc. Orig. c. 18. And then having asserted the fact of man’s sin and the necessity of grace, though not in such explicit terms as to satisfy Augustine, he adds, “Hæc est fides quam in Ecclesia Catholica didicimus quamque semper tenuimus et tenemus.” See Præf. ad Aug. Oper. Tom. x. pp. 62, 63.

² See, for instance, Op. Imperf. cont. Julian, Lib. vi. ch. 41. Quas Ecclesiæ sanctæ preces toto terrarum orbe crescentes et ferventes opprimere ac extinguere cupiunt, qui contra istam Dei gratiam humanæ voluntatis arbitrium, ut gravius de alto præcipitent, extollunt potius quam defendunt.

remarked by a Church historian, who records the defeat of Pelagianism¹, that “ the doctrine which in this case gained the victory was not a doctrine forced upon the external development of the Church by the secular power, and therefore to be followed at some subsequent period by a violent reaction; but that doctrine conquered which had on its side the voice of the universal Christian consciousness, since this declared itself against the Pelagian tendency—the doctrine conquered which found a ready point of union in the whole life and experience of the Church as expressed in its prayers and in its liturgical forms.”

And it is equally true of this as of the Christian doctrines of the Incarnation and Atonement, that general consent gives testimony to the truth. The voice of Christendom, if rightly heard, has never been on the side of those who deny the necessity and the bestowal of Christian grace. There have been many differences as to the definition of it. The substantial truth that we are insufficient of ourselves, and that our sufficiency is of God, is one that has prevailed in every age and in every country, prompting all who have made practical advance in real religion to confess readily and hopefully with S. Paul,

¹ Neand. Ch. Hist. Vol. iv. p. 335.

“By the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me¹.”

In a previous Lecture² I have alluded to the condition of the world without Christ, which is sufficient evidence of the need of grace. Blessed be God, that we may appeal to the evidence of its presence and of its power in the development of Christian life in the Church. The mass which the kingdom of heaven was to leaven might, indeed, have well seemed hopeless. Venality, extortion, cruelty and treachery, entered into all political relations, and if natural affections did not entirely fail to enforce domestic duties, their observance was so rare as to make the general corruption only more apparent. Savage masters, perfidious slaves, licentious husbands, faithless wives, unloving parents and disobedient children, were the elements of which society was made up. The Divine authority of the powers that be utterly ignored amid perpetual conspiracies; the sanctity of the marriage-tie annulled by repeated divorces; parental tenderness forgotten in the

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 10.

² Lect. VI. p. 170.

barbarous exposure of infants—these were the features of heathen life, independently of the grosser and more abominable vices which prevailed. Such were the social relations of mankind as yet unchristianized. The picture drawn by Tertullian of the transition state of society when the Pagans were still in the ascendant, but felt their strength fast ebbing away, is striking and significant. In every town and in every village the conflict was carried on, and the Pagans themselves confessed that the issue was to their disadvantage. The streets, the courts, and market-places, were all thronged with this sect, who were defamed without probability, accused without reason, and condemned without proof. In the midst of all this their adversaries bore involuntary testimony to their innocence, and to the transforming influence of their religion. The slave became faithful, the son obedient, and the wife chaste; and though, by a strange perversity, they who had patiently endured wrongs would not tolerate their corrective, though they were ready to impute hidden crimes, as concealed beneath apparent purity, the influence of growing good was so widely diffused—good plainly contrary to all that had been before—that they who witnessed it were gradually won to own the Divinity of

that faith which had such power over the hearts of men¹.

As Christianity progressed the sanctity of the various relations of life was gradually unfolded. Obedience to magistrates and the civil power was recognized as a matter of conscience, not of expediency. Marriage was seen to be a state honourable and holy, whose tie was not to be severed by man. Parental love and filial obedience, enforced by the sanction of Divine command, and by a regard to the parental character of our Father in heaven. The services of a slave to his master were dignified as being rendered through fear, not of men, but of God; and the falseness of the whole system of slavery demonstrated to masters, who learnt the equality of those whom they had despised as inferiors. Principles hitherto unknown made their way even in mixed households, and the unbeliever wondered at that which he could not comprehend—the newborn fidelity of converted members of his family. Their fullest and purest exercise was exhibited in the Christian community itself, where rank, wealth, and dignity, were forgotten in the higher relation common to all of brotherhood to Christ, where the new and old commandment of love was duly kept,

¹ See Tertull. Apolog. c. 3.

and they who had broken through earthly ties for Christ's sake, found the spiritual bonds to be yet closer than the natural; and being admitted into the band of Christian brothers, experienced the literal fulfilment of our Lord's promise: "Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, for my sake, and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions¹."

The sanctifying energy of Christian life in the society into which it was infused was seen more evidently when persecutions rendered it comparatively free from baser alloy; but the same process is at all times going on. The true Christian is ever the salt of the earth, preserving the body to which he belongs from corruption and dissolution. To what are we to attribute the notions of morality professed throughout Christendom, elevated so far above the highest flights of Pagan virtue, and the spurious imitations of Mahometanism, but to the religion which has diffused them? But has this diffusion been merely one of instruction? Is it by a better

¹ Mark x. 29, 30.

knowledge of truth alone that this result has been produced? The precepts are carried home to the heart by their practical exhibition in the lives of those who deliver or assent to them. And whence does this living doctrine proceed? Is it not from Him who breathed into man the breath of life, who left not even the heathen without a witness, who made himself known in sundry manners to His people of old, but reserved for the holy priesthood of the new dispensation that peculiar grace which has to a certain extent purified and hallowed the world in which it has appeared, but has evinced its divinest powers in those faithful and humble souls, the eyes of whose understanding have been enlightened by the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ¹.

III. These effects and these experiences are not merely an historic record of what Christians have done and felt, but are reasonable proofs to all, who own a Providence, of the Divine origin of the scheme under which they have been produced. I will add but one consideration which may serve to strengthen this position.

The existence of a want implies the probability that it will be supplied. The subjects

¹ Eph. i. 18.

of the God of nature desire in general objects within their reach. For He who gives them the appetite makes provision for its gratification. So the want of extraordinary aid, whether made manifest by outward destitution, or inward longing, creates a presumption that such aid will be supplied. The philosopher whose chief glory it was to have directed his thoughts to man's nature, was led by the examination of its phænomena to anticipate, in a certain sense, some of the declarations of the Gospel—propounding to his hearers the need of Divine assistance, and recognizing within himself the prompting or dissuading voice of a divinity. And it is a profound remark of Pascal¹, that no reasonable account has ever been given of the observed duality of our nature but that contained in the Bible. Some have placed the springs of action in the senses, others have neglected them altogether; on this side raising man to the gods, on that depressing him to the brutes. Some have deemed him a mere creature of inevitable necessity, with no power to step beyond the course destined for him by fate. Others have maintained for him an absolute independence of all external control. Neither correspond to what we see and feel. The war of the

¹ Pascal, *Pensées*, § 3.

members and of the mind, the alternation of strength and weakness, is the rule of life. When Scripture tells us that this conflict arises from the corruption of human nature, and the new creation of a better spirit, it tells us that of which we at once comprehend the truth. And when it proceeds to enunciate the wonderful dispensations, external and internal, by which renovation from corruption is effected, it instructs us only that Infinite Mercy has miraculously effected that for which less than Infinite Mercy might even to human apprehension have seemed inadequate.

Finally, we recognize in the doctrine of Christian grace the completion of that system whose harmony affords so strong evidence of its truth. The same God who has done so much for us works within us. The power of believing and living up to the doctrines of our faith is no less a Divine gift than our Redemption itself. He who made the light, made the visual organ to perceive it, and the faculty to profit by it. The seeing eye, the hearing ear, the believing heart, and the understanding spirit, are all of God.

Behold then a scheme whose several parts combine together, in wondrous order and fair proportion, the external evidence for its au-

thority illustrated and confirmed by every examination to which we subject it, a scheme held together by doctrinal truth, each doctrine receiving and giving light to the rest. View it as it bears upon the instincts and dispositions of man, explaining what were else incomprehensible and discovering the noblest purpose of his being. See how by reason of its adaptation to human nature it has grown and prospered under circumstances most various, and ask yourselves, what is all this if it be not the very truth of God ?

What is this world, what this our nature, if all these harmonious combinations, all these magnificent effects, are but the result of chance and misconception, and if we must throw aside that which has satisfied the most powerful intellects, and prompted the noblest actions, that history records—throw them aside, in order that the spirit may wander forth in desolate places seeking rest and consolation, but finding none ?

Christianity speaks a language which stirs the soul within us. The cold and chilling rationalism, or the vague and dreamy mysticism which would rob us of our richest treasure, unnerves our energies, benumbs our feelings, depriving us of that hope which we feel after, even when we cannot grasp.

Dreary is it to wend our way through the difficulties that surround us, unconscious of any Power on whose help we may rely: painful in our hours of conscious weakness to have no confidence in strength beyond our own,—so dreary and so painful, that many an unbeliever has owned his misery, in terms that have given affecting proof of the vitality of religion¹. And the sense of insufficiency

¹ A curious illustration of the extent of the anti-religious movement in Germany, and of the natural instincts of the soul on the side of religion, is given in a narrative quoted by Hundeshagen in his *Deutsche Protestantismus*, p. 221. I quote it as it is narrated, notwithstanding some painful expressions of irreligion it contains, because it seems to me very striking and instructive; the more so, considering the sentiments of the narrator. At the festival, with which the assembly of authors at Leipzig in the summer of 1845 concluded, one M. Jordan of Königsberg rose up to give “a toast to the Atheists.” “Under this name,” the president of the day informs us, in a narrative of the proceedings, “he had announced it to me, and I had in vain advised him to give it up, as we were not engaged in a demonstration of opinions, but in an expression of opinions in which a certain company could join. Atheism at least had a harsh sound, and was not calculated in the form of a toast to meet with much sympathy; and the success of such a meeting depended to a certain extent upon sympathy. Dr Jordan however persisted, and I had no right to say more to dissuade him. However, just as I had predicted, there was no applause to greet ‘The free German spirit’ (which was what his toast meant) ‘which is yet to come, which will at some time or other have freed itself from the fetters of all power, whether the actual power on earth, or the imagined ghostly power in Heaven.’ During his speech an ice-cold shudder passed through the assembly, and at the close of it

in times of trial has called many a wanderer back from the paths of delusion, to the only true source of comfort,—the only rock of deliverance.

the stillness of death prevailed. Characteristic enough for an assembly of some hundred authors, among whom we in Berlin might expect to find fifty of the so-called free spirits. But we are all so enfeebled by education and training that we feel the want of a God, and I could guess in the universal silence that there would be some one to give this feeling vent. This some one was not far from me, in the person of the honest Suabian Auerbach, who had studied his Spinoza without having got rid of his God. With lively emotion he spoke the following words: ‘Gentlemen, I do not force myself upon you, but the word I am to speak forces itself upon me. Gentlemen, I am so poor-spirited as to believe in a Spirit who governs me, whom I do not govern. Gentlemen, there is such a thing as reason run mad, that has gone beyond itself. You must all of you, gentlemen, ere this have found yourselves in a dream falling but finding no ground. It is reason run mad which dreams thus of futurity. Gentlemen, I can lay aside all softness, and use the sword of the spirit as freely as the sword of steel. There is a holy name—I will not give up the word holy—the name of freedom. May it never come to this, that the freedom which we are entitled to obtain be withdrawn from us. Therefore we must not pass the boundary or shoot at random beyond the mark, and say, we are they that have found out a new thought! No, gentlemen, God in us! God with us! We are all for freedom—we all follow our inward determination. I am not here to discuss a theological principle—but we all know that there is a law which will conduct us to the mark, within us and without us, in nature and in the spirit, which has certain knowledge of God. True freedom for ever!’ Here followed an immense acclamation of assent and approval, and there was cheering and shouting and embracing, as if they had found again a home which they had believed to have been lost.”

Let us, my brethren, animate our thoughts, our hopes, and our prayers, by stirring up the gift of God,—meditating upon these things—giving ourselves wholly to them, that our profiting may appear to all¹: “for God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind².” We will not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, the testimony that we have a Father who made us, a Saviour who redeemed us, a Spirit who dwells within us—bearing witness with our spirit, sanctifying the highest part of our nature, and revealing things which the natural man receiveth not, shewing us that to be spiritually-minded is to discern what the Holy Ghost teacheth, not according to the wisdom of the world, but according to the hidden wisdom of Him who hath called us: for of Him are we in Christ Jesus our Lord, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, He that glorieth let him glory in the Lord³.

¹ 1 Tim. iv. 15.

² 2 Tim. i. 7.

³ 1 Cor. i. 30, 31.

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