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PREFACE.

THE wish to enable a few friends of the author to read the following Lectures in a convenient form, first suggested the idea of printing them; the hope that they may possibly be useful to some who could not hear them when delivered, has led to their publication. They would have been published with more reluctance, had they not been read before an audience which, though composed mainly of those whom it was the author's endeavour to teach, contained also some of whom he is proud to learn. Their kind criticisms on the first reading led him to alter, on a repetition of the course, several passages of doubtful correctness, and confirmed him in the hope, that much which they allowed to pass uncensured was, in the main, satisfactory and true.

The general plan of these Lectures will be evident to those who think them worth perusal ; a few words may be allowed on their particular purpose. It was the object of the writer to place before those, who, from their age and the course of their reading, were at present necessarily ignorant of systematic Theology, some considerations which should shew the living interest of the subject, and some remarks which might serve to guide them hereafter in its study. In this attempt, one Truth was constantly before his mind. If, as he most firmly believes, Theology is a *real* science; that is, if it is allowed us to attain on religious subjects a body of connected truth, as distinguished from mere accumulations of facts, or empty verbal deductions; it is a necessary consequence of its scientific character, that, if not already *perfect*, it is still *progressive*. Those who do not believe in the existence of a *perfect* Theology, (and those who do are individuals, not a school or class of thinkers,) must accept the latter alternative. We do not know all, but we know so much as to be morally sure that we are capable of knowing more.

One common fault of teaching is, that it is insincere. The teacher, though he propounds

nothing which he does not believe to be true, does not teach *as* he believes it. He alters, not the proportions of truth, but its tints and colouring. He perverts the aerial perspective of his intellectual landscape. He professes, perhaps unintentionally, to be nearer to perfect Truth than he really is; to grasp a certainty when he is only groping after probabilities; or to catch the clear outline of scientific accuracy, when he is only repeating a formula. Perhaps some whose teaching runs up into subjects which have not been completely reduced to system, can never entirely escape this error. The sanguine and confident instructor assumes at once what he cannot prove; and even those of a more cautious and impartial temper feel that it is no part of their duty to mingle doubts with certainties, and add an unprofitable Bitter to the cup of knowledge. But the defect, however caused, should be removed in part, if it cannot be wholly remedied. It prevails in the ordinary teaching on many subjects—on none, perhaps, so extensively and so mischievously, as on Theology.

There are indeed many, who (on this and on all other subjects) refuse to sacrifice candour to effect, and can at once acknowledge and regret

their ignorance. But it is by no means always so. The teacher, who is far below his subject, often endeavours to appear above it. He has found nowhere a perfect proof of some of his positions; but he pieces out the imperfection with his own authority, and claims the conviction of others where he has failed to convince himself. Or he enuntiates as undoubted truths, propositions which he knows are received only within a narrow circle, and are doubted or rejected elsewhere. No truth indeed is so evident, that no one can be found to contradict it; and many truths may be regarded as practical certainties, which have been denied by the majority of mankind in former ages, or are questioned by a considerable minority in our own. But the habit here condemned is the enforcement of opinions with undistinguishing emphasis on the minds of others, while they are received with various degrees of confidence in our own. This is to communicate a wrong impression of our feelings, if not of our opinions; to act, if not to enuntiate, a falsehood. Some minds indeed there are, which are incapable of degrees in the reception of ideas; which do not analyse and investigate, but act by attraction and repulsion; to which

the highest abstractions of the reason appear either as friend or foe ; which cannot see any thing doubtful in the positions which they accept, or acknowledge any probability in those which they reject. To these, it is simply wonderful that others can comprehend them, yet not agree with them ; or differ from them, and yet be in their senses on other subjects. By an involuntary instinct, they understand only what they approve, and misrepresent whatever they disbelieve. Men with minds such as these are often eminently practical, good, and useful. But their vocation is acting, not thinking. Their labours are not thrown away, because they are devoted to developing some principle in practice, of which they see the bearings only imperfectly. There are a thousand ways in which Providence may make the very errors of their enthusiasm useful to themselves and others. But they act out one side of truth, without seeing the other ; their force must be combined with other forces, if it is to operate in the right direction. Their vocation is not to form minds, though it may be to guide them. They may direct, but they cannot discipline ; they may impress, but they can-

not educate. They may be the world's leaders, but they can never be its teachers.

It is not of course professed, that the short-compass of these Lectures contains, so to speak, the summary of a History of Doctrines. It would require a far greater compass of thought and learning to state accurately what subjects are still in doubt, what questions are already decided. Perhaps we are far too ignorant of the nature, if not of the history, of the human mind, to rival the physical philosopher, and draw our co-tidal and isothermal lines on the sphere of human intelligence. Be this as it may, nothing of the kind is here attempted. It is a far humbler undertaking, to lay before beginners in Theology various forms of one important truth; that, on the one hand, our fathers have not so lived in vain, that the temple of Doctrine has still to be re-constructed from its foundations; and, on the other hand, that parts of the building are still wanting; that even wise master-builders have not every where completed the elevation; that it is a work of love, not of unfaithfulness, to build on their designs; and that skill is requisite to determine

their purpose, as well as energy, to complete its execution.

There are two very obvious deficiencies in these Lectures, which call for some apology. The subject of Predestination and the Divine decrees is not so much as mentioned. But most readers, perhaps, will consider such an omission rather desirable than otherwise, if they take into account the difficulty of the subject, and the consequent impossibility of either treating it adequately in a short summary, or devoting to it a space at all proportionate to its abstruseness. It might be pleaded, if necessary, in further justification, that there is a particular inappropriateness in bringing the question before young minds at present, when controversy with regard to the Divine Counsels is comparatively dormant, and we are learning, in the pause, to believe at once the fulness of the Divine Pre-science and the freedom of the human Will, without losing the due sense of mystery in the fever of an unprofitable discussion.

A different reason must be given for another important deficiency. The *direct* remarks on Holy Scripture are confined to some passages in the seventh Lecture—a Lecture necessarily

devoted rather to shewing the place of a group of subjects in Theological Study, than to the immediate discussion of any of them. Its position as the basis of all true study of Theology is indeed repeatedly asserted, and an endeavour is made to exhibit the nature of its bearing on several points which come under discussion. But nothing has been said of its Genuineness, Authenticity, Canon, Authority, Inspiration, and rules of Interpretation. Of these subjects, the first two and, in part, the third are, strictly speaking, *presupposed* in Theology. Their determination, like that of the evidences of Revealed Religion, is not a *part* of the system of faith and doctrine, but constructive portions of the foundation on which that system is built. And though the inspiration of Holy Scripture, and the consequences which flow from it, seem to be more truly a part of Theological doctrine, yet so little has been ruled with regard to them by competent authority, that grave difficulties beset the simplest attempt to determine what, at the present moment, is the received teaching on the subject, and what the due limits of individual enquiry. The statement of private opinions is foreign to the purpose of these Lectures; and

the author reserves to a future and a different opportunity (if such shall be allowed him) the expansion of some positions with regard to the Inspired Word, which could here have been treated at best but imperfectly, and, however treated, would have been out of place.

It only remains to express an earnest hope, that these Lectures may serve to foster in some few minds a temper of faith which shall not be blind, and a spirit of enquiry which shall not be irreverent; to assure them, that there may be knowledge on some points without blind confidence on all; a sphere of lawful doubt, which does not impinge on scepticism; argument, which is not controversy; and differences, which melt in love.

ORIEL,
May 5, 1851.

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LECTURE I.

INTRODUCTORY.

AT the commencement of a Course of Theological Lectures, it cannot be unsuitable to make some remarks on the nature and importance of our great subject—Theology. It is useful to begin any endeavour at grouping together a variety of distinct though connected subjects, by shewing the general idea under which they are meant to combine, and the general object proposed in thus combining them.

What then is Theology? It professes to be a body of connected systematised truth, and, as such, may claim the name of *Science*. But a little consideration will shew that it differs widely from other sciences, both in its dignity, and in its practical importance.

Science in general, we are told, began with *wonder*. At some moment, when there was a

pause in the busy course of life, and powerful minds, relieved from the necessity of action, betook themselves to thought, there rose before them an idea of something external to themselves, which raised a mixed feeling of awe and curiosity. The stars in their silent courses, the solid earth they trod, even their own souls and bodies, approached them as powerful spirits which they could not but question. They gazed, and thought, and reasoned, and pondered, till their faculties gained new extent, and almost ran into each other; till not only reason was enlarged, and thought deepened, and the senses trained and exercised; but reason gained a discernment of its own, and the glance of thought anticipated the long course of inference, and the senses, which had once been masters of the soul, became its servants, or its slaves—till the eye of the philosophical enthusiast fancied it could trace in outward phenomena the flux of all things, or the ear, that it caught a faint echo of the music of the spheres.

Theology too began with wonder; but not in like manner with other sciences. *They* arose from a nobler conformation of particular minds, from a high speculative enthusiasm, from a feel-

ing peculiar at first to a few, that the earth was meant for further purposes than being trodden under foot—that thought, as well as action, has its own finality. But Theology arose from an idea, which the mind of man, in its greatest degradation, has never been able to cast off; which is present, wherever man has penetrated, though often in unworthy forms; which inspires fear and terror where the soul is too low to recognise it in love and awe,—the idea of God.

We thus see the two peculiar features of Theology, as compared with other sciences. It is both of *universal* and *practical* interest: of universal interest, because the awful Idea on which it is founded impresses itself, though in different degrees, upon every mind; of practical interest, because the impression so produced touches not on the intellect only, but on those feelings which are the springs of action. Other sciences are deficient in this respect. They do not convey to the uneducated mind an impression of their own importance. The Savage would not care if he were told, that at the present moment the earth seven miles below the surface is liquified with heat, except from some fear of falling into the abyss, which would, in

all probability, arise from an indefinite idea of Divine retribution. Astronomy owes its *general* cultivation in early stages of society to its supposed connection with Theology, through the belief that our destinies depended on the stars. But while other sciences were thus slowly vegetating, through the heat which spread imperceptibly from the base of the altar, Theology was directly and openly recognised. God was regarded as the Avenger of broken oaths, the Giver of victory, the Father of man; moral attributes were assigned to Him, though often incorrectly, and always imperfectly: prayers were offered up to Him, and the necessity of expiation acknowledged in perverted forms of sacrifice. We have spoken of the past; but it is so at present. The lowest Savages are guided in their worship by their own mistaken ideas of God: and even Fetishism has its Theology.

What has hitherto been said, applies to the teaching of true and false religions alike. We have, of course, the greatest reason to be thankful, that the natural aspiration of the human heart is fulfilled *to us*. We have not the painful and unsatisfactory task of spinning a frail and untenable system out of the imagination of our

own hearts, or supplying by conjecture the deficient parts of a fragmentary primæval tradition. Our system of religious doctrine is built on the sure ground of an historical Revelation. It is not a floating cloud-palace, fair and gorgeous at a distance, though in itself an unsubstantial mist, simple obscurity within, and all its glory a reflection from the surrounding atmosphere; but the permanent abode of Truth, lit internally by a divine light, and resplendent with jewels of heavenly radiance. We are not forbidden to approach it. The peaceful foot may enter its portals, and the pure eye discern its beauties. It is no traitorous act to walk round its bulwarks, and tell its towers. On the contrary, it is our duty to study its structure, and to grow familiar with its proportions.

The general outline of this body of truth, as we now propose to consider it, may be deduced from the previous remarks. A systematic Theology will naturally begin by treating of the Being, Attributes, and mysterious Perfection of God, however our knowledge of these is attained; whether in part by reason, or what is called the light of nature, or directly and exclusively from Revelation. This is the natural,

if not the necessary, commencement of the subject. Theology treats of God, and of nothing else, except so far as it is capable of Divine relations.

But, in the next place, our Theology must not omit the consideration of *Man*. It passes naturally from the being and attributes of God, to His dealings with His creatures; and dwells particularly on the great covenant of mercy. In that covenant, man is a party; and, if we are to understand it, we must know something of human nature antecedent to the covenant, and of the benefits which it receives by entering into it. Our Theology must then include a knowledge of human nature, both as it is before, and as it is after, grace.

There still remains a third division of Theology. Man, we said, must be considered, that we may understand aright his relation to God. This relation, then, becomes in its turn the subject of enquiry. *How* is man related to God? This is a question which demands an answer. The answer is contained in that third part of Theology, which treats of the Economy of Grace.

In calling your attention to these subjects in succession—the Being and Attributes of God, the

nature of man, and the Economy of Grace,—and endeavouring to shew how they may be advantageously studied, I must not be supposed to be stating in the abstract, what the most perfect form of theological study ought to be. Here, as on other subjects, we must be content to fall very far short of our ideal. Possibly, if researches on sacred ground had always been conducted in the simple desire of truth and spirit of charity, we might by this time have a system of acknowledged truth before us, sufficiently comprehensive to supply all our ordinary wants, and sufficiently exact to afford no inlet to the weapon of the adversary. But it is not so. Those Christians and Churches which persuade themselves that they have a complete Theology, do so only by shutting their eyes to many facts, and ignoring many difficulties in theory. There is extant no *perfect* theological system, which is also *proved*. On some points, after all the labours of by-gone times, we must enquire for ourselves.

On the other hand, it would be most false and dangerous to assume, that *nothing* has hitherto been settled; that there is now no ark in which the truth of God is preserved, and that every

individual Christian must toss in his own little bark on the perilous sea of opinion. We who believe that the Church is really an institution of God, and that our place within it is determined by His divine Providence, may discover, that the restless waters of doubt are confined within an outer verge of certainty. Not every thing that is controverted in this or that quarter is really a controversy of the day. We shall find, as we proceed, that former ages have handed down to us a heritage of truth in a form so naturally adapted to attract our attention, that wilfulness alone could lead us to overlook it. We shall find, that on the first division of our subject, the Nature and Attributes of God, there is no reasonable doubt which can truly be said to interfere with real and practical knowledge. And if, as we proceed, the uncertainty seems to increase, and the interval between evident truth and palpable falsehood to widen, yet even then it will appear that we do not drive without the stars of heaven to guide us, or often lose sight of the shore.

My endeavour will be, on each division of the subject, besides throwing out suggestions as to the manner of studying it, to convey some idea

of what is clearly settled, and what is not. One observation may be added in conclusion. The certainty or uncertainty of our subject only affects the *manner* of studying it; it leaves the *necessity* untouched. In the one case, we sit in security as learners at the feet of a sufficient teacher; in the other, we are forced to assume the position of more independent, though anxious, enquirers. But if we assume this position, it must only be in the hope to quit it. Our *ideal* of the theological student must be that of one who contemplates truth known, not of one flying from scepticism or wrestling with falsehood. The absence of tone which is implied in doubt, and the positive dissonance of controversy, must be regarded at best as necessary evils. We are, by profession, *disciples*. If called on to refute others, or to silence the sophisms of our own hearts, let us remember that we are learners still.

LECTURE II.

OF THE BEING AND ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

THE present and the following Lecture will be devoted to that portion of Theology, which relates directly to God. This divides itself naturally into two heads. We may consider separately that knowledge with regard to God, which (to speak guardedly) the human mind, under favourable circumstances, might possibly have discovered for itself, and that knowledge which is clearly due to Revelation. The present Lecture will confine itself almost wholly to the former division—the Being and Attributes of God, as taught by natural Religion. And, first, of His Being.

“He that cometh to God,” we are told^a, “must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.”

^a Heb. xi. 6.

All Theology, as all Religion, is based on a belief in the BEING of a God. And this truth, which recommends itself so naturally to the human heart, which is stamped so clearly on the outward world, which is received with a consent so nearly universal, must be regarded as practically *undisputed*.

Accordingly, the Being of a God has been more often considered by able writers from a metaphysical, than a theological, point of view. Allowing the truth most fully, they have exercised their ingenuity in enquiring, how it may best be proved. The result has not been always happy. The religious reader cannot help wishing, that some more indifferent subject had been chosen as the arena of disputation. We are creatures of association; and it is neither pleasant nor improving to have the primary truth of all Religion, so certain in itself, mixed up with subtle arguments, not always convincing in proportion to their subtlety. Little Good seems to have resulted from the prolonged discussions of the question, whether the Existence of God admits of demonstrative proof. Those who are anxious to see what may be said in the affirmative, may consult Clarke's Demonstration of

the Attributes and Being of a God, and the Meditations of Descartes, especially the fifth. But they must be of a peculiar turn of mind, if they think the arguments at all approaching in certainty to the conclusion at which they point. Even an imperfect faith has in itself the elements of a far more convincing proof than can be supplied by any such philosophical reasonings.

It will of course be remembered, that we are not in the least dependent on this kind of evidence. Whatever be the amount of testimony to the Divine Existence to be extracted from the world of *abstract thought*, all but the wilfully blind are sensible of that which lies in the *world of nature*. “The invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen, *being understood by the things that are made*, even His eternal Power and Godhead^b.”

To pass then to the consideration of the Attributes of God. These may be summed up under the three heads of Omnipotence, Omniscience, and Perfect Goodness. They are thus stated by Clarke. “The self-existent Being, the Supreme Cause of all things, must of necessity have infinite *power*,—be infinitely *wise*,—be

^b Rom. i. 20.

a Being of infinite *goodness, justice, and truth*, and all other perfections, such as become the supreme Governor and Judge of the world."

It might at first sight seem, that any error with regard to the *Attributes* of God was inconsistent with a belief in His *Being*; as if to say, "there is a God," were only to say in other words, "there is One who is omnipotent, omniscient, and perfectly good." But it is not found to be so. Many persons, both before and since the giving of Christianity, while they have admitted the being of a God, have denied, either directly or by inference, some of His divine perfections. This, in some cases, has been doubtless only an intellectual error, compatible with much goodness, and a sincere love of truth. But, in other cases, there is every reason to suspect, that those who denied the Divine attributes were conscious of the tendency of their denial, and acquiesced in it; that, in fact, their opinions were but little, if at all, removed from Atheism; and that their allowing the Being of a God, while they assailed His perfections, was but a pretext for at once attacking the common faith, and sheltering themselves from popular indignation.

But to proceed with our subject. These Divine attributes are clear in themselves, as well as abundantly proved by Holy Scripture. We shall presently see, that they afford to the pious mind a subject of religious meditation. But previously it may be useful to shew the advantage of their clear recognition, as a barrier against a false philosophy. It will appear, that some of the wisest heathen philosophers held (it may be unaware) opinions at variance with these truths; and that some modern thinkers, with far less excuse, stumble at them in the daylight.

Firstly. The *Omnipotence* of God has been indirectly denied by perhaps a majority of the Philosophers, who have treated of the origin of the world. It is inconsistent with the Omnipotence of God to suppose, that any thing exists independently of His will. And therefore every philosophy, which asserts in any form the existence of *two original principles*, is at variance with this truth.

This *Dualism* (if the term may be allowed) in Philosophy, has assumed many different shapes, and appeared in almost every shade of intensity. Its grossest form, according to which the uni-

verse is the battle field of two antagonistic, personal, principles of good and evil, seems natural to the Eastern mind. It lay at the base of that first attempt at corrupting the Gospel by means of Philosophy, which we know by the name of Manichæism. And it shades off, by imperceptible degrees, into another and more widely spread form of error, which, through the Greek Philosophy, extended itself also in the West.

This second form of Dualism is that which gives an independent existence to *matter*. Anaxagoras seems first to have familiarised the Greek mind with this idea, by his doctrine that the world came into being, when the Divine Mind animated and arranged the primitive chaos. Plato and Aristotle seem both to adopt it with modifications of their own. It varies in its practical bearings on Religion very widely, according as matter is considered as more or less evil in its own nature; and again, according to the degree in which the Divine Mind is supposed in the present state of the world to have vindicated its supremacy over the brute element.

We cannot be surprised, that even the noblest minds, unguided by Revelation, fell into this

form of error. The appearance of the physical world suggested to these old philosophers the idea of a struggle and a contest. The admixture of evil and good in the moral world pointed to the same conclusion. Reason can give no sufficient account of the origin of either moral or physical Evil. Even Revelation, though it has solved the problem for practical purposes, has not dissipated the mystery. But it has convinced us, that nothing exists independently of God; and has freed the pious philosopher of these later times from any danger of assailing, unintentionally, the omnipotence of the Creator, while he thinks he is explaining His works.

With regard to the other attributes of God above mentioned, His Omniscience and perfect Goodness, we know that there was no entire concordance among those ancient philosophers, who narrowed the true conception of His Power. All agreed in representing Him as superior to the weaknesses of human nature, though some denied Him those moral perfections which even that weak nature can reflect when strengthened by Him. All again represented His knowledge as covering a far wider horizon than ours. But some, while they asserted that

the causes and principles of things were bare before Him, denied that He had any regard to the detailed consequences of those causes, or descended from general laws to a particular knowledge and providence of the lot of his individual creatures. As there was error in their original hypothesis, perhaps those approached nearest to the truth who were least fearful of inconsistency, and appealed freely, if occasion were, from the verdict of an ill-informed reason, to the truth which was written in the heart.

Thus much then seems certain, that the Omnipotence of God has been denied by Philosophers, who had no intention of denying His Omniscience and perfect Goodness. We must now mention an opposite and more fatal form of error, which, while it does not assail the Omnipotence of God, attacks those attributes which are even more intimately connected with Religion.

We can readily trace this error as far back as those Eleatic Philosophers, who, like many since their time, sought refuge from inevitable difficulties in self-chosen absurdities; and, perplexed with unsuccessful endeavours to account for the creation of the world, resolved to believe that it never *was* created; confronted the visible

facts of nature with the creatures of their own imagination, and blinding themselves willingly to the manifold diversities of the outward as well as the inward world, asserted that the universe was indivisibly *One*, and identical with *God*.

Nor are there wanting at present symptoms of a disposition in a certain class of minds, to confuse God with His works. We sometimes catch the very echo of the philosophy of Spinoza, who held God to be the only *substance*, of which all things were *modes*. The laws of nature are regarded as divine, in another sense than as coming from God. He is spoken of as being every where, in a manner which would forbid us to hold, that He can be in one place in a higher sense than another. Hints are dropped, that the personal form is not the highest under which it is possible that the Divine Power can be exhibited. The notion of power is brought strongly before us; but it is the power of an influence, a law, a multitude of combined agencies, not of a single personal Being.

It need scarcely be said, that ideas such as these sap the very foundation of Religion. Traced to their consequences, they are wholly

inconsistent both with the act and spirit of worship. They reduce the great Source of all good to an abstraction. They prevent our regarding Him as the fountain of all love and all knowledge, and as being Himself knowledge and love. Their tendency (which they sometimes fully develop) is to substitute, for worship and reverence, a species of self-contemplation, in which the individual stands to himself in the place of God, and acknowledges no outward object of adoration and homage.

If then the former kind of error, which we called Dualism, is dangerous even in its modified form, this latter, which is with propriety called Pantheism, is fatal. If Dualism asserts that God is not omnipotent, Pantheism denies that He is a Person. If Dualism represents some portion of the universe as only imperfectly subject to His Will and obedient to His power, Pantheism excludes the idea of a Divine Will altogether, and identifies Divine power with the agencies of a material universe. He who imagines that matter, for instance, exists independently of God, is naturally led to suppose that there *may be* cases in which the operation of material laws is not subject to the providence of God; that

not *all* things work together for good to those who love Him. But he who confuses the Maker with that which He has made, excludes the idea of Providence altogether. There can be no moral government in a world which works purely by physical laws, and is its own governor. There can be no perfect intelligence in a world where there is no presiding mind, and the parts cannot understand themselves, much less the whole. There can be no presiding goodness in a system in which good and evil are unguided, conflicting, forces, left to work out the problem of existence for themselves.

This suggests a caution. In the use of ordinary philosophical language, we should make a point of continually recalling it to its Christian interpretation, or it will infallibly mislead us. Terms and phrases which we meant to be metaphorical, will refuse to continue metaphors, and will start into theories. We may come to mean something else by the laws of nature, than the will of God. We may dwell on the majesty of the universe, till we confound it with its Author. We may talk of the dignity of our nature, till we make ourselves our own idols. Even such expressions as "the interposition of Providence"

may come to be snares, if we do not carefully remember, that God Himself is the Author of that agency, in whose operations He is pleased to interpose.

We have dwelt thus long on instances, in which the error seems really to be part of a false philosophy. There are other cases, in which erroneous opinions about God are rather attached incongruously to the philosophy, than integral parts of the system. Such is the Epicurean doctrine, that the Gods exist in a state of happiness quite apart from the world, which they neither helped to form, nor can help to govern. Such again is the blasphemous teaching of Hobbes, that God is a finite material Being. It requires little penetration to detect here Atheism in a flimsy disguise. We need not waste argument on this intellectual hypocrisy, which, having renounced in fact every thing which is divine, is anxious to preserve it in name.

Thus much of the attacks which have been made on the attributes of God by those who admit His being. I shall have effected my purpose, if I have shewn any of you more clearly the importance of *consciously* holding the

Omnipotence, the Omniscience, and the moral Perfection of God. These truths, indeed, go by themselves a very little way in Christian Theology. They do not transcend the limits of what we call natural Religion. But the toleration of error on any of these points would lead to fatal consequences. And it may be useful to have shewn, how incompatible a false philosophy is with a true Religion.

On the whole, it would seem, that the Divine attributes, if studied philosophically, should also be studied *historically*. There has been enough, probably too much, merely intellectual speculation on the subject. Without devising new paths of our own, we can find lines of thought already trodden by thousands, and yet quite crooked and intricate enough to perplex and mislead us, if our hearts are not set on the one true way. It is, for instance, a much more profitable enquiry, to examine the manner in which the truth of the spirituality of God has in past times been suggested, confirmed, and established, than to endeavour to convince ourselves by an indirect metaphysical process of a truth directly revealed.

Even on these mysterious subjects, Reason may be most beneficially employed, if duly guided by Religion. Philosophy need not be an enemy to Theology; nor speculation inconsistent with meditation. Let the following passage of St. Augustine bear witness to this: the words of one, who was a philosopher before he was a saint, but who, on his conversion, consecrated his philosophy as well as his life to God. One extract from his Confessions will suffice to shew, how in his mind the truths of natural Religion mingled with that of revealed, his studies blended with his prayers, and helped him to praise God, not only in His noble acts, but also in His excellent greatness, His holiness, and the firmament of His power.

“What art Thou, O my God? What art Thou, I beseech Thee, but the Lord my God? For who is God besides our Lord, who is God besides our God? O Thou Supreme; most merciful, most just; most secret, most present; most beautiful, most mighty, most incomprehensible; most constant, and yet changing all things; immutable, never new, and never old, and yet renewing all things; ever in action, and yet ever quiet; keep-

ing all, yet needing nothing; creating, upholding, filling, protecting, nourishing, and perfecting all things.

“Thou lovest, and yet Thou art not transported; Thou art jealous, yet Thou art void of fear; Thou dost repent, yet Thou art free from sorrow; Thou art angry, and yet art never unquiet; Thou takest what Thou findest, yet didst Thou never lose any thing; Thou art never poor, and yet Thou art glad of gain; never covetous, and yet Thou exactest profit at our hands. We bestow largely upon Thee, that Thou mayest become our debtor; yet who hath any thing but of Thy gift? Thou payest debts, when Thou owest nothing; Thou forgivest debts, and yet Thou lovest nothing. And what shall I say? O my God, my life, my joy, my holy dear delight? Or what can any man say when he speaketh of Thee? And woe be to them that speak not of Thee, but are silent in Thy praise; for even they who speak most of Thee, may be accounted to be but dumb. Have mercy upon me, O Lord, that I may speak unto Thee, and praise Thy name^c.”

^c Confessions, B. I. ch. iv. The translation is that of Bp. Jeremy Taylor.

LECTURE III.

OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY TRINITY.

IN the last Lecture, we considered those truths regarding God, which are said to belong to natural Religion. If they really lie within the reach of unassisted reason, we have seen that its apprehension of them was, at best, partial and imperfect. Natural Religion, in fact, was never aware of the amount of its own resources, till Revelation came to its aid. Like a pupil in the school of Plato, it has learned by *ἀνάμνησις*.

But a further knowledge of the Divine Nature we owe to Revelation alone. Reason could teach nothing so far above itself as the doctrine of the Trinity. It has probably never been maintained, that any thing in the structure of the mind, or the order of the external world, could have enabled the most enlightened man to discover the fulness of that mystery for himself.

And Revelation, as it alone discovers the doctrine, also alone proves it. Observant minds have indeed traced hints and likenesses of a Trinity in the human mind, and the works of nature; but they are hints and likenesses at most, not types and analogies; they appeal to the imagination, not to the reason: they may suggest a devout thought, but they are a bad foundation for an argument. The doctrine of the Trinity is pre-eminently a doctrine of Revealed Religion.

In placing it before our minds, and considering our position as students with regard to it, our attention is at once attracted to those formulæ with which we habitually associate it, *the three Creeds*. Before proceeding to investigate their bearing on the study of this mysterious doctrine, two remarks should be made. First, the same valuable assistance which the Creeds afford with regard to the Holy Trinity, they supply in like manner with respect to the doctrine of the Incarnation, of which we shall have to speak hereafter, though in a different connection. And, secondly, nothing which is said of their usefulness in proving the doctrine must be so interpreted, as to imply, that the proof of this,

as of all other Christian doctrine, does not ultimately rest on Holy Scripture.

The most obvious claim, then, which the Creeds have upon the student of the mystery of the Holy Trinity, is their excellency as *statements* of the doctrine. And were this the whole of their value, it would not be small. It is no trifling advantage to have the proposition clearly before us, though severed from the arguments by which it is established; to know, in the outset of our enquiry, that there is no mistaking the nature of the points at issue; that one thousand years, on the lowest calculation, have passed away, since those venerable symbols have received the slightest verbal alteration; that, during all that time, they have drawn the line clear and distinct between the receivers and impugners of the doctrine; that they have left as little room for evasion and verbal disputation as any form of words can leave, and have knit into close and practical connection the *symbol* and the *doctrine*.

From this point we pass naturally to the second point of view in which we must regard the Creeds. Their extraordinary excellency, as dogmatic statements, is, in itself, a strong pre-

sumption of the truth of the doctrine which they contain. We must ascribe to Providence a success, which far transcends merely human foresight. Who could have thought antecedently, that formulæ drawn up in the fourth century, would have retained their vitality so wonderfully, and rise in as direct opposition to the errors of the nineteenth century, as they did to those which prevailed in the day when they were written? Who would not have imagined, that philosophical and social changes would have so altered our method of intellectual warfare, as to render the old bulwarks against error no longer a serviceable defence? Surely there is something in this permanence which testifies not only to their clearness of intellectual statement, but to their firm hold on Truth.

We can now, therefore, proceed to consider the *second* great use of the Creeds. They not only state with admirable precision the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, but go very far to establish it. By the Creeds, we of course here mean not the bare form of words, but that form of words considered as invested with certain historical associations, and as occupying a certain position in the formularies of our Church. We

must look, that is, not only to their *contents*, but to their *external evidence*. And it will then appear, that, being such as they are, and being presented to us under such circumstances as they are, they go far to establish to us the doctrine of the Trinity.

It will be seen, that in asserting this position, we do not enter into the more abstract question of the *Authority* of the Creeds. If we did so, we should be obliged to begin by shewing, that their reception was incumbent upon *all*, and afterward descend from this universal to *ourselves*. But, as we are now considering the subject, we shall commence by considering *our own* obligations, and only proceed afterward, if we are so disposed, to consider the case of others. This method of proceeding may not be so perfect in form; but it is equally correct, less liable to objection, and proportionally more convincing.

How then do the Creeds come *to us*? They come, not as formulæ, known only, or understood only, by the learned, which at a certain stated time we are called upon, once for all, to accept or reject; but as parts of our worship, incorporated in our devotions, blending with our prayers. As

the religious act in which we are engaged becomes more special and solemn, *they* become more prominent also. We have the Apostles' Creed in our Daily Prayers; the Nicene Creed attends on the Communion Service; and on certain more solemn days, the Athanasian Creed in its greater fulness and expansion takes the place in the Morning Prayer of the shorter and more usual symbol. Thus they are evidently meant, not as mere checks and guards against error, but as positive helps to devotion. They *are* of course directly opposed to heretical doctrine; and as such are insisted on in our Articles. But much more than this; they are to the English Church the framework of her systematic Christianity, the expression of the Object of her faith, and the Ground of her hope; a token of peace within her borders; a guard against enemies without; a free breathing-place for concord and charity. On the supposition, then, which every Christian, nay every *man*, is bound to begin by entertaining, that the Providence of God has placed him, not in a dry land, among rocks and stones, but in a green pasture; that his heritage is truth, and not falsehood; we have, antecedently to a minute examination of the

Creeds, a strong reason for gratefully accepting them. They come to us, and should be received by us, as a direct gift from God.

But we must take one step further. The Creeds, we have seen, in the first place, are admirable statements of doctrine; in the second place, are presented to us in God's good providence in a manner which prepares us to accept them as expressions of a great revealed truth; and, in the third place, we now proceed to observe, *are enforced upon those who look back upon their past history, by an accumulation of external testimony.*

There can be no doubt of this fact, though it may be differently stated. Many would refer us to Councils, and authoritative expressions of the decision of the Church. But this method of regarding the external testimony to the Creeds is not without its difficulties. Its perfection of technical form exposes it to a sharp attack of technical objections. *None* of the three Creeds, it may be said, received that full assent of the early Church which it seems to be often assumed that they all received. The Apostles' Creed, in its present form, was not completed till the eighth century; the Nicene Creed, as it stands,

is *not* that of Nicæa, but that of Constantinople, with an addition against which the Eastern Church has continually protested; and the Athanasian Creed seems to rest, as to external authority, on the too narrow ground of the decision of a Pope, or the too general ground of general usage.

But the testimony borne by past ages to the Creeds may be regarded in another manner, which seems equally satisfactory, and is not open to similar objections. Without asserting any theory with regard to their *authority*, we may insist on the fact of their *reception*. We know that they have been, *substantially*, in the Church since the fourth century; that those parts of the Christian family, which have displayed continuous life and energy, have uniformly held them; that they towered like a rock above the storms of the Reformation; that even now large bodies of men around us hold to them in contradiction of their own principles, and profess their allegiance to the form, lest they should sacrifice the truth which it contains. Should it not convince *us* most strongly of their truth and value, to find them harmonising so thoroughly with the remainder

of the body of truth which has been committed to our charge; and, as we consider God's providential dealings with us, to observe how far He has put away from us those who reject them; how severed we are from them, to a great extent locally, much more in thought and feeling; how the whole course and posture of things leads us (and justifies us in leading us) to regard them as being as absolutely and unconditionally true as any really significant form of words can be?

We have surely here a third reason for holding them in reverence and high regard. They speak with a clear and unmistakeable voice; they give coherency to the whole range of Christian doctrine, which gathers around them as its natural centre; and they are written unmistakeably in the records of the Church, which is the pillar and ground of the truth.

From these remarks there naturally follow some concluding suggestions as to the study of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity.

In the first place, those fall into a grave error, who assume the position of independent enquirers on this solemn subject. It is every

way our wisdom to accept, and use, the guidance which God has given us. Those who *will* isolate the doctrine, and carefully cut it loose from every stay with which Providence has connected it, will probably not escape unhurt from the danger which they tempt. If the mind begins by placing itself in the position of unbelief, it may spend much labour in the endeavour to attain to Faith, yet not be able to advance beyond Doubt. Though the scriptural proof of the doctrine, when once really understood and apprehended, is most convincing, it requires much thought and study to grasp it. The detached texts, which serve for the confirmation of most minds in the faith, are, in themselves, and apart from general considerations arising from their comparison and the analogy of other parts of Holy Scripture, a very insufficient basis on which to build the doctrine. Its legitimate proof covers so wide a ground, that none but a far-reaching and practised eye can take in its full extent at once; while none but a very superficial thinker, if left to the guidance of his unassisted judgment, will be satisfied with a small part of it. Such is the dilemma in which those may find themselves, who approach the doctrine from a wrong quarter.

They must either be in suspense as to the reception of the Faith, till they attain an intellectual conviction which may elude them to the last; or they must hastily assume the truth of that which, on their own principles, continues doubtful. A sad choice indeed, between being unbelieving and irrational.

Secondly. The doctrine of the Trinity should not be made unnecessarily a subject of philosophical speculation. We may prove its truth to others, we may meditate on the mystery ourselves; but we shall not, if we are wise, be anxious to reason about it, or draw deductions from it. It is doubtful, for instance, whether any good has arisen from arguing from analogies supposed to be traceable between facts of the outer world, or the constitution of man, and the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity. The mystery is above the sphere of ordinary illustration; and there are other and better ways of casting light on the phenomena of nature. If we press the illustration incautiously, we are unconsciously developing a heresy; if we apply the doctrine to every thing in which we trace a partial correspondence to it, we resist the dictates of a sober judgment, injure our faculties

of comparison and discernment by abusing them, and fall into a false and dreamy mysticism.

Thirdly. There are two ways, at least, in which the doctrine may be studied with greater advantage, and less danger. It may be viewed *historically*. We may, in a sober and reverential spirit, enquire into the belief of the early Church in the blessed Trinity, the rise and fall of heretical opinions respecting it, and the history and formation of the Creeds. But there is still a higher way of treating the subject. If it seems to be unworthy of this great mystery, to mingle our reflections on it and enquiries with regard to it with the history of the ferment of human minds and development of human opinions, there is no such objection to studying it in direct connection with the dealings and dispensations of God. It is so stated in two out of the three Creeds. The Father is considered as the Creator, the Son as the Redeemer, the Holy Ghost as the Sanctifier. And perhaps the difference of tone which is perceived in that Creed which has least external authority, the Athanasian, and which startles many who fully admit its doctrine, lies mainly in this; that its mould is rather philosophical than practical;

that it separates by a definite line the doctrine of the Trinity from that of the Incarnation; that it expresses what the right Faith is, but not in the form in which the pious mind most naturally states its belief; that, for instance, our Lord is spoken of in one part of the Creed, as the only-begotten Son of God, a Person of the Holy and Undivided Trinity, while His human nature, His office as Redeemer and Judge, are reserved for quite a different portion. What may be the rule for persons of extraordinary learning and piety, or under peculiar circumstances, it is not now our place to enquire. The majority of students will certainly be safer in studying the *work* of each Person of the Blessed Trinity in connection with the *doctrine*.

Lastly, we should remember, that the contemplation of this mystery, if it cannot for the most part be wholly separated with advantage from other portions of doctrine, can never, without positive disadvantage, be separated from a holy life. "He," says Bishop Jeremy Taylor^a, "that goes about to speak of and understand the mysterious Trinity, and does it by words

^a "Via Intelligentiæ."

and names of man's invention, or by such which signify contingently ; if he reckons this mystery by the mythology of numbers, by the cabala of letters, by the distinction of the school, and by the weak inventions of disputing people ; if he only talks of essences and existences, hypostasies and personalities, distinctions without difference, and priority in coequalities, and unity in pluralities, and of superior predicates of no larger extent than the inferior subjects ; he may amuse himself, and find his understanding will be like St. Peter's upon the mount of Tabor at the Transfiguration ; he may build three tabernacles in his head, and talk something, but he knows not what. But the good man that feels the ' power of the Father,' and he to whom the Son is become ' wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption ;' he in ' whose heart the love of the Spirit of God is spread,' to whom God hath communicated ' the Holy Ghost, the Comforter ;' this man, though he understands nothing of what is unintelligible, yet he only understands the mysteriousness of the Holy Trinity. No man can be convinced well and wisely of the article of the Holy, Blessed, and Undivided

Trinity, but he that feels the mightiness of 'the Father begetting him to a new life,' the wisdom of 'the Son building him up in a most holy faith,' and the 'love of the Spirit of God making him to become like unto God.'"

LECTURE IV.

OF FALLEN HUMAN NATURE.

HAVING devoted the two previous Lectures to the Attributes and Perfections of God, we now proceed, according to the plan proposed, to speak of MAN. Our attention will be turned, it should be observed, not to Human Nature as it existed before the fall (a subject of great speculative interest, but one which does not hold a prominent place in the outline of Theological study); nor, at present, to Human Nature under the influence of the dispensation of Grace. We shall begin by considering man in his fallen nature. A right view of this subject is of great importance, as a necessary condition of appreciating the blessings of the Christian Covenant, and the fulness of Divine mercy. We must now enquire, what data we have to enable us to form our judgment upon it; and within what limits it

seems that the field of legitimate enquiry is contained. It appears, at first sight, that the study of Human Nature cannot advantageously be conducted in like manner with that of the doctrine of the Trinity. We have, on this subject, no form of words at all approaching the Creeds, either in its excellency as a statement to test and discriminate doctrine, or in the fulness of its external authority. The ninth and tenth Articles of the Church of England, to which we most naturally refer, are liable to considerable varieties of interpretation, and do not pretend to that ancient and general reception, which, in the case of the Creeds, is so strong an evidence of their truth. Besides, we have now descended in our enquiries from the supernatural to the natural: and our subject consequently admits, and even in part calls for, an appeal to our own observation, and the testimony of merely human authority, which in the higher subject would have been misplaced, had it been possible.

We will, then, first consider the materials for the study of Human Nature at our disposal; and next, the great truths which give us at least a negative guidance in their application.

There are three principal sources from which

we may seek instruction on the condition of our fallen nature. The first of these is Holy Scripture. We have here indeed no systematic information on the subject; we have, it will be found on examination, remarkably few texts which bear *directly* upon it; but we have, what is much more important, a definite *tone* with regard to it. The Bible abounds in general statements of the corruption of man. Many of these may be explained, it is true, with considerable probability, as referring to particular times, or particular nations. But this matters little. If the corruption was so universal in the time of the flood, and when David composed the Psalms, and when St. Paul wrote the Epistle to the Romans, this may suffice for our guidance. Examples from such distant quarters amount to something like a valid induction. There is a law at work, we may be sure, where the phenomenon is so uniformly repeated. And we have no reason from any other source to suppose the instances adduced from Holy Scripture to be exceptions. And this brings us to the second source of instruction on the subject.

The conclusions to which the language of Holy Scripture naturally leads us, are corro-

borated by an examination of human nature itself. If this seemed to point another way, we might be led to suspect that our interpretation of Scripture, though obvious, was wrong. But no doubts arise from this source. To study one's own heart, is certainly not the way to form a better opinion of it. The natural meaning of Scripture will be confirmed, if we compare its statements with what we know, or may know, of *ourselves*.

The direct observation of human nature is, then, our second great help in this study. We may learn much from a careful examination of our own thoughts, feelings, conduct, and motives; we may extend the sphere of our observation with advantage, if we temper our judgment with Christian charity, by a practical acquaintance with the laws that govern, and the motives which influence, the conduct of others: we may enlarge our store of facts, and confirm our conclusions, by a recourse to the experience of past ages treasured up in History.

But the material which we may thus collect is so abundant, that we want a guide in using it. Its phenomena are various, often anomalous, sometimes in appearance contradictory. We

should be continually perplexed, were it not for the assistance of another branch of study, which is essentially connected with human nature, and has never been without its direct bearing on Religion. We recognise our *third* great assistance in studying human nature, in *Moral Philosophy*.

It may seem strange, though it is true, to say, that even for Theological purposes the most valuable contributions to moral philosophy are those of heathen Greece. If we wish to know what conclusions really follow from an examination of human nature itself, we should consult those to whom that nature was the only informant. If, on other subjects, they sought carefully, skilfully, and, on the whole, successfully after truth, we may be tolerably sure that on the point before us their impressions were actually and legitimately derived from their analysis. They had indeed ulterior objects in their research, which may sometimes have insensibly affected their conclusions. But we can easily discern the disturbing forces, and make allowances which will correct the error. Their mistakes indeed are generally of a kind which do not affect us. They probably had their own

prejudices, but, on the points on which we consult them, they speak for the most part, clearly, directly, unsuspectingly, and unsuspectedly.

On *Christian* moral philosophers, in general, we can place little reliance. Many of them probably found their conclusions first, their premises afterward. The great majority seem to have done little or nothing in the way of real analysis of human nature, but either to have contented themselves with verbal distinctions, which have little but an air of clearness and precision to recommend them, or to have portioned out the field of their enquiry on the principles of their favourite metaphysical systems. We of this place of course allow at once one eminent exception to this general remark. We meet with very few assumptions of unproven principles, and probably not a single instance of a word used without a real meaning, in the moral writings of Bishop Butler.

These, then, may be regarded as the three great sources from which to draw material for the study of human nature—Holy Scripture, the direct observation of man himself, and moral philosophy. It remains to state the two great

truths which limit on different sides the field of their application, and then, in concluding, to make some remarks on the method of applying them within these limits.

The truth, then, which guards in one direction against grievous error with regard to human nature, is this—*We can do no Good without the grace of God.* The event of the Pelagian controversy, though it has not left behind it any definite formula resembling the Creeds, has written this truth very legibly in the history of the Church, and confirmed, so as to leave no reasonable ground of dispute, the most natural and obvious interpretation of the language of Holy Scripture with regard to the corruption of man. Indeed, to deny the necessity of the grace of God for good works on the part of man is very probably a philosophical, as well as a theological, error. Grace seems to be as necessary a condition of even our idea of a spiritual world, as any thing we can imagine, space or matter for instance, is of the external world. And we have no more right to assume of the soul that it has of itself an impulse toward Good, than of matter, that it can set itself in motion. Thus much then, at least, is involved in the

scriptural statements of the corruption of man. *He can do no Good of himself.*

But there is a necessity for a guarding statement on the other side also. It may be put as follows; *no part of our Nature is substantively bad.* Expressions are not uncommon which directly contradict this truth. Many men speak of an evil *principle* in the heart of man, and assert, that our nature is now as positively evil, as, before it fell, it was positively good. But this cannot be. God made man in His own image. His work was very good; and nothing which we read in Holy Scripture authorises us to infer that it has been, in philosophical language, *essentially* changed; in other words, so altered, as to be no longer really the same thing, and to be called by the same name only by a species of equivocation. It is clear, too, that the sinfulness and corruption of man is not, in the strict sense of the word, his nature, but his imperfection. Our Lord, in the perfection of His human nature, was clean from all stain of sin. And even we are encouraged to hope, that the *same* nature which we now possess shall hereafter be purged from sin, and share the glories of the resurrection.

This then is to be carefully remembered ; that no view of fallen human nature is for a moment tenable, which implies, either that *from it, without grace, can proceed any Good,* or that *it is as a whole, or in any of its parts, essentially bad.* We may now make our concluding observations on the application, within these limits, of Holy Writ, observation of ourselves and others, and moral philosophy, to the study of human nature. Such very different sources cannot but contribute information of very different kinds, and thus complicate the problem in the act of supplying data for its solution. The difficulty which thus arises is much more often evaded than obviated. Perhaps the majority of those who have attended to the subject at all, in despair of a view which shall be at once satisfactory and comprehensive, content themselves with one which is obviously partial. A few, who set too high a value on simple consistency of thought, begin with some theory of human nature, which they follow out boldly to its consequences, however at variance these may be with experience, or revelation, or both. A larger class, with more appearance of reason,

appeal on the subject to Holy Scripture exclusively. Their mistake lies, not in firmly believing Holy Writ, but in assuming too hastily that they are right in their method of interpreting it. Many, again, are content to take what they call a plain practical view of human nature, apart from philosophical theories and theological refinements. In other words, on a subject of which faith, reason, and experience, can all take cognisance, they trust exclusively to the guidance of the lowest of the three. The lover of truth will not willingly surrender himself to either of these erroneous and unphilosophical courses. The following cautions may help to prevent him from falling into this or similar errors unawares.

In the first place, we must be careful not to suppose, that either of these sources of knowledge can *really* contradict another. The *appearance* of contradiction there may indeed be. The same truth may have a very different air as we approach it from different quarters. The difficulty may not be readily solved to our satisfaction, though we are sure it is capable of solution. This risk of apparent contradictions is a reason for beginning by making

sure of the most important point, and forming the *ground-work* of our impressions from Holy Scripture. But it is *not* a reason why we should assume, that whatever is not *at first sight* reconcilable with the teaching of Holy Writ on the subject, is therefore wrong. We often hear language like the following: "The Bible tells us, that the heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. Bp. Butler would have us believe, that there is nothing in the constitution of man contradictory to virtue. I cannot hold both positions at once: I therefore surrender Philosophy, and abide solely by Revelation." A most wise resolution, if the positions are really not tenable at once; an unwise abandonment of an important truth, if they are.

Lastly, the student should not be content, *ultimately*, to hold different truths on the subject, though drawn from divers sources, *inconsistently*. This indeed is better than relinquishing any of them; but it is not so good as harmonising them. The majority of people *must* hold many truths inconsistently, if they are not to cease from useful action, in which they succeed, to indulge in speculations in which they are sure to fail.

A mother, for instance, may one hour be thinking of the many good natural qualities of her child ; the next, be teaching it, out of some imprudently worded manual, a lesson about the total corruption of the nature of man, and the utter sinfulness of our best works ; the next, be admiring some learned man who is talking of the glory and dignity of human nature. Each of the three implied positions seems true to her at the time ; she would be perplexed if they were brought before her mind together. This may be in her case a natural and perhaps unavoidable difficulty ; but it should not be acquiesced in by the Christian teacher or the Christian scholar. Those who have the opportunity of reflection and study, should not let the meaning of words be thus dependent on the occasion of using them. The analogy of Faith extends to all Christian doctrine. And it is a very bad way of understanding a difficult subject, a still worse of teaching it, to heap, as it were, the different truths which concern it one upon another, and to leave them to find their places as best they may, or, which is much more likely, never to find their places at all. The growth of our knowledge of human nature may well be like the growth of man

himself. If all the constituent parts be there, we can tolerate, for the time, some slight deviation from strict proportion, too great an uncertainty of general outline, and the absence of a firm and well-knit union between all the joints and members. We may well rejoice in watching the process of gradual development; but the same loose contexture of parts, the same unformed features, which, while growth continues, can please us at the time, and give good promise for the future, would be a poor substitute for the strength of maturity, and the symmetry of perfect system.

LECTURE V.

OF THE STATE OF MAN UNDER GRACE.

THE enquiry into the nature of fallen man leads to results which in themselves can have little to please us. The traces of past glory only deepen the sadness which hangs about the ruin of that which was made good and holy. We could derive no cheering impression from contemplating its defaced and broken outline, so long as we viewed it by the cold hard light of experience and natural reason. But the sun of Grace has shone upon it; and, fallen though it is, it still emits its responsive music. We witness a partial restoration at present, and look forward in hope to its completion in another world. Both our wishes and our thoughts glide spontaneously from man in a state of nature, to man under the covenant of grace. We are thus introduced to the third part of our subject, by a

ready transition from the second. The method of studying the change which affects man under the covenant of grace, will be the subject of the present Lecture.

It is at once evident that the pious and thoughtful mind, which rejoices to trace the course of the dealings of God with man, and observe how present blessings are the result of His Providence guiding and controlling the past, will best prepare itself for prosecuting this branch of study to advantage, by a diligent and careful consideration of our Lord's life on earth, and especially of the marvel of His Incarnation. On this sacred ground, such a one will know where to seek for guidance. Here, as was observed also with regard to the doctrine of the Trinity, the Creeds supply an accurate statement of the truth, of which Holy Writ presents an abundant proof, and the history of the Church a continued confirmation and comment. He will contemplate, with awe and gratitude, the union of two whole and perfect natures in the one Person of our Lord. And then, approaching the subject by the clearly marked path of historical certainty, and shielded from the weapons of fatal error by the well-

compacted armour of ascertained and definite doctrine, he may hope to be guided, though in a less direct manner, to a sound conclusion on the question before us—what change that Mystery of Grace, which he has been contemplating, has wrought in man.

There is one answer sometimes given to this question, which the Student, thus duly armed, will reject at once. There are those who say, that *no* change has happened to man which can properly fall within the region of scientific Theology; in other words, which partakes of a supernatural character, and cannot be accounted for by natural causes. They argue, that any apparent alteration of man under Grace must be philosophically regarded as a consequence of a change in intellectual position. A further revelation, they allow, was made to man on the publication of the Gospel; he then received an accession of knowledge; his reason was thus enlightened; this enlightenment has acted on the affections. And further, society has been affected as well as individuals; a new bond between man and man has been formed; the Church has been called into existence. And this has, like other societies, a tone, a teaching,

an atmosphere of its own ; men grow up in this, and train others in it ; and so a character is formed, which is really distinctive and peculiar to Christianity. But this character, it is urged, is supernatural neither in itself nor its causes ; it obeys the usual laws of human nature in its formation, and should not be referred to another imaginary cause which theologians, by an abuse of the term, have called *Grace*.

This is the ordinary language of Socinians ; and, when used by others, implies, it can hardly be doubted, a tendency to their fatal error. It is one of the many stratagems which minds of a false and mistaken intellectuality employ, in the endeavour to escape from a sense of mystery which haunts and torments them. And as it proceeds from a dislike of mystery, it terminates, if followed to its consequences, in a disbelief of the most blessed mystery of the Incarnation of our Lord. He who thinks that our Saviour has wrought no change *in* him, will not long believe that He has accomplished so much *for* him. The denial of His work on earth follows naturally on a refusal to recognise the crowning blessing which He now sends us from heaven. If it is thought that His teaching has only a

human efficacy, we must be prepared for a like indignity to the efficacy of His death. Those who reject Spiritual Grace, will not long accept the Atonement. But we need not look to consequences, in order to see the grave nature of this error. It directly contradicts the word of God. If there is one feature of the Gospel dispensation more clearly brought out than any other by the combined testimony of Prophecy, history, and Apostolic teaching, it is its connection with the operations of the Spirit. The law written on the heart, the free effusion of spiritual gifts, the diversity of spiritual operations, the consecration of body and soul by the indwelling of a Divine Presence, all point to the same great Truth; that under the economy of Grace there is not only a fuller external publication of truth, but an increased capacity in the heart of man to receive it; that more light is accompanied with an augmented power of spiritual vision; and not only are new motives proposed to the Christian, but new strength is given him, that he may act upon them.

Dismissing then at once this untenable position of a false philosophy, which would intrude itself into the province of Theology, we will proceed

first to state those established truths, which bound on either side the field of enquiry with regard to regenerate human nature; and next, to give some particular rules and cautions for studying it, subject to the general guidance which these fixed principles imply.

In the first place, then, we may regard it as a truth established by the clear warrant of Holy Writ, and confirmed by the general consent of Churches and the confession of individual Christians, that *the sinful tendency of our nature, however checked and modified, continues under Grace.*

Man, under grace, does not return to his former condition in Paradise. In Christians generally, even in men of eminent holiness, sin, though it has received its death-blow, is not dead. We learn this from the direct statement of Scripture, which condemns us of falsehood and self-deceit if we say that we have no sin, from our own bitter experience, as well as from the general analogy of the dealings of God with man. It does not seem to be the will of God, simply to undo what has once happened. In the present dispensation of things, Evil, both moral and physical, is overruled to Good, not

annihilated. The past still exists, either in its traces or in its consequences. As the material world bears within its bosom the indications of its former history, so, in the smaller world of man, human nature, however mortified in its evil tendencies, however endued with new gifts and powers, though washed and cleansed and covered with a double robe of imputed and imparted righteousness, is human nature still. We may speak with truth of the *restoration* of man; but we must remember, that though, in virtue of the sacrifice of the Cross, he is once more the heir of eternal bliss, and has in Christ even higher promises than unfallen man possessed in Adam, yet he can never in this life attain to that precise state from which Adam fell, the state of sinless innocence.

Grace, then, has not put sin entirely away from man; neither has it left him under its power. Christians inherit human nature; we have the assurance of an Apostle^a, that they are partakers of a Divine nature as well. There is a real analogy between that which man lost in the person of Adam, and that which he has gained in the Person of Christ. This truth

^a 2 Pet. i. 4.

should be borne in mind in connection with that which was last insisted on. *If, in our regenerate nature, there still exists the infection of Evil, there is also implanted a principle of Good.* To strengthen the infirmity of their natural being, Christians have received the gift of the Spirit. This gift is, as has been before observed, the most prominent feature of the new dispensation, as brought out by Prophecy in the Old Testament, and by the history of the early Church in the New. “The law written in the heart” was to be a distinctive mark of the new covenant^b. The first prophecy appealed to by a preacher of the Christian Church was one which predicted the free effusion of the Spirit^c; extraordinary spiritual gifts were poured out on the early Church in such abundance and diversity, that the caution of an Apostle was necessary to prevent confusion in their exercise; and its ordinary fruits, love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, still abide as the greatest blessings and among the surest warrants of a Church.

Bearing these two great truths in mind, we may now proceed to consider how, with their

^b Jer. xxxi. 31—33.

^c Acts ii. 16 sqq.

guidance, the powers and condition of man under grace may be advantageously studied.

One important rule, though of a negative character, results at once from their distinct recognition. For each of these truths naturally limits the application of the other. All statements of the corruption of regenerate man may be at once rejected, which amount to a practical denial of his ability, through the in-strengthening of the Spirit of Christ, to perform the works of the Spirit, and lead a life of real holiness. On the other hand, all representations of that holiness, without which no man can see the Lord, are in some way mistaken, which ignore that weakness of human nature, from the worst consequences of which the Gospel has freed us, but which it has not wholly taken away.

This rule may serve to give a general direction to our enquiries into the condition and power of regenerate human nature. But if we are anxious to discover more precisely what at present man can do, and what he cannot; the hold upon his nature which an Influence, above that nature, has; the height to which he may be raised by the Divine Strength working in and upon his weakness; the limit of his power of perfecting

holiness, and of avoiding and resisting temptation; it is well to have clearly before us more particular rules, to guard us against error in our investigation.

It may then be observed, secondly, that questions about the *manner* of the operation of the Holy Spirit are generally to be avoided. Holy Scripture assures us of the *fact*; and we can go little further. We do not understand how the soul acts upon the body; can we, in this state of ignorance, reasonably hope to understand how a Power, infinitely further above the reach of our faculties, acts upon the soul? We are abundantly sure of the fact in either case; and that may well suffice us.

This is generally admitted: but its consequences are not always seen. If they were, it would not be necessary to observe, thirdly, that *à priori* reasonings on this subject are peculiarly unsafe. We often hear persons arguing as follows: "God is all-powerful; and therefore His grace is irresistible." Or again: "Grace which has once been given can never be withdrawn; the gift was independent of conditions, and the possession must be so also." Or again: "Grace is an active, vital, principle, and therefore cannot

be present in infants, who cannot act, and do not know Right from Wrong." Again, persons draw out schemes of conversion, and state, with a definiteness quite unknown to Holy Scripture, the several stages of feeling, or, as they say, experiences, through which every one who is saved, they would have us think, passes in a regular order on his way to salvation. Yet those who dogmatise most daringly in this manner, are the first to condemn any intrusion of philosophy upon the province of Religion. They would be surprised indeed, if they could be brought to perceive, that they are examples of one of the worst forms of the fault which they are so ready to censure. *They* build upon a philosophy; *they* employ metaphysics in deciding some of the most difficult practical points of the Christian system. Truly it *is* a work of danger and uncertainty, to draw conclusions about things divine from premises which are human, to endeavour to explore the mysteries of God, in man His faint reflection. But the process is doubly dangerous, when attempted in all the confidence of ignorance. Could many who thus rashly pronounce on the nature of the work of the Spirit, and the laws of our renewed nature,

become aware of what they are doing, they would be as the man who fainted in broad daylight at the sight of the precipice, on the edge of which he had been walking carelessly, and without thought of danger, by night.

Lastly; in speaking of the study of the nature of fallen man, we mentioned as the three great sources of information, self-examination, moral philosophy, and Holy Scripture. Of these, Holy Writ, it was observed, held the foremost place. It should now be remarked that, in considering man under grace, we must assign to Holy Scripture a much more decided prominence. Moral philosophy is here beyond its province. Like the guide of Dante through purgatory, it may lead us to the heavenly threshold, but it may not enter. And for ourselves—we may be fair specimens of men, but we are not of saints. If we have the privilege (and many of us have it here) of direct converse with men of high holiness, we see in them the clear effects of the working of the Spirit of God; but this does not tell us the nature of that working. Holy Scripture must be our main resource. We have mentioned some rules which may be useful in attaining

to its definite meaning. Its practical lesson is clear to all who are willing to learn it. It tells us at once of our actual sinfulness, and of our possible holiness; our distance from perfection, and our capacity of indefinite approximation to it. Though, with the Apostle, we count not ourselves to have apprehended, yet, if, with him, we press continually toward the mark, we can still have, like him, when he identifies himself with his brother-saints in the Church, a strong hope and heartfelt confidence in a growing assimilation to God. "We all, with open face beholding (or reflecting) as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory unto glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord^a."

^a 2 Cor. iii. 18.

LECTURE VI.

OF THE CHURCH.

THE last Lecture contained some remarks on the manner of studying the condition of regenerate man. In these remarks, we confined our attention to the *individual*. We spoke of Christian men, but not in their collective capacity; we made no mention of the *Church*. To that subject let us now proceed.

It need not be shewn, that this subject naturally connects itself with our last; that the same great event, which has entailed a blessing on Christians severally, has effected them also as a body. Just as in virtue of our unrenewed nature we are one in Adam, so in virtue of our renewed nature we are one in Christ. Just as all men are, as such, members of the world, so all Christians are, as such, members of the Church. To that whole congregation of Christian men throughout the world, blending with

saints in Paradise, and the army of Angels in heaven, let us now turn our attention. It is an important subject of study; one, on which it would be idle to attempt to conceal that there are, even among sound members of the same Communion, great and wide differences of opinion; one therefore which requires to be approached at once with reverence and judgment; with a temperate zeal, and an enlightened moderation.

The two great questions regarding the Church are, what it *is*; and what are its offices. They are closely connected; so closely, that, if we know, with tolerable accuracy, the mind of a consistent person on the one point, we can generally infer, without much risk of mistake, his opinion on the other. Nevertheless, they had better be considered separately. In treating of difficult questions, especially if they have a directly practical bearing, we are apt to assume too hastily that all is settled. We see the general direction which things are taking, and rush to a conclusion. This is natural, but it is unwise. Not to mention the many opportunities of improvement from careful examination of difficulties and minute observation of details, which

we are sure to forfeit by our precipitancy; we are likely, in hurrying over ground of which we are comparatively ignorant, to mistake our way, and find ourselves wrong at last.

What then is the Church? This is the question to the method of studying which I would in the present Lecture call your attention. It may be, and is, put in many different ways, while remaining substantially the same. The following are common forms; Are all Christians members of the Church; and if not, what portion are? what is the line of distinction? Or, What are the *notes* of the Church? Or, Is or is not this particular point of doctrine, discipline, or order, *essential* or *non-essential*, that is, necessary to the *Being* of a Church, or only to its *perfection*? These questions it is not now our province to answer. We will simply turn our attention to the right way of studying them.

And here it should be observed, that, however important they are, they are far from being *so* important as the verities of which we have hitherto treated. Every rational being ought to know something of God, His attributes, and mysterious perfections; of his own natural weakness and sinfulness; and the relations in which

he stands to his Maker, Redeemer, and Judge. Every Christian man, too, ought to be full of the sense of insecurity, who is not morally certain that he is within the pale of the Church of God, the appointed recipient and vehicle of His blessings. Suppose, however, that he is assured that himself, his friends, those over whom he exercises influence, those for whose conduct he is responsible, more or less, to God and man, *are* within the Church, it is of comparatively little importance to him to ascertain who are not. He cannot plead the excuse of *practical necessity*, of its being indispensable to have *some* opinion to act upon, and *that* soon, for hurrying to a premature conclusion. He will have no good excuse if his haste terminate in error. Supposing him, for instance, to be a member of our own Communion; to live almost wholly among those who enjoy the same privileges; not to be an authorized teacher; not to have the charge of erring souls; he might live a pious, holy, edifying, useful life, without having any definite opinion on the subject before us at all. Thousands, in fact, have done so in former times; thousands, in spite of the general troubling of the waters, are doing so now.

But this is not the case with all of us. A teacher must have more definite doctrine. A layman, for instance, in our Communion, may in many cases be well content to be assured that her doctrines are more pure, her order more apostolical, than those of the dissenting bodies around her; and so be thankful, and leave the question. But supposing these dissenters to be really *without* the Church, the Pastor, from whose flock they had strayed, would do his part most inefficiently, if he merely endeavoured to convince them that he was in a better condition on these points than they. On the above hypothesis, the difference would be one of kind, not of degree, and should be insisted on accordingly. If it *were* the fact, it surely should not be suppressed, that *he* is in the Church, *they* out of it.

How then shall those, whose duty it is to study this question, study it to the best advantage?

Here again we may, with great profit, take a review of the position in which Providence has placed us. This may go far to determine the course which we should adopt. Of course it must not for a moment be supposed, that it

follows necessarily, because certain statements are given us *for* the truth, that they *are* the truth. But our providential position *does* determine one point, and that an important one. It gives us the postulates, so to speak, on which we must found our investigations. Something must be true; and the wisest course is to acquiesce, if we can, in the supposition that *that* is true which is given us.

What light, then, can we derive on this question from our Mother Church of England?

On *one* point, she pronounces most clearly and unmistakeably. There is no question, that she professes to be part of the Catholic Church. On this subject she speaks in one uniform voice, without hesitation or ambiguity. Her services are, it is true, of a penitential character; but the penitence is that of one who has no doubt of his sonship. She teaches us to mourn over the abuse of privileges, but not as those who have lost them. This heritage, at least, of Catholicity, she cannot be said at all to have forfeited by neglecting to assert it.

To the question, then, of each of her members, "Am I within the Church?" she returns a distinct affirmative. But to the other question,

“Who is not within the Church?” she seems to have no such definite answer. She gives us no list of Churches with whom she would willingly, if it might be, hold communion. She certainly does not claim the title of Church as exclusively her own. In her Articles, she gives a definition of the Church, as a Congregation of the Faithful, in which the pure Word is preached, and the Sacraments duly administered. But this leaves the question open. What order, it may be asked, is implied in the term *congregation*? *What* faith is it essential that these faithful men should hold? Who determines what is the pure Word of God, or what admixture of human error with its purity would be fatal to the existence of a Church? Wherein consists the due administration of the Sacraments? The Rubric to the Ordination Service asserts, it is true, that from the Apostles’ time there have been three orders of Ministers in Christ’s Church, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. And this assertion is abundantly sufficient for the purpose with which it is made, of vindicating her practice of requiring the ordination of her Ministers at the hand of Bishops. But it asserts nothing about the *necessity* of these orders, their

universality, or the promise of their *perpetuity*. It justifies her rule, it is clear ; it is not so clear, that it excludes from the Church those who do not adhere to it.

From these data we may draw this conclusion. Whoever, on this important subject, *begins* by assuming some test or tests, some limiting condition or complex of conditions, by means of which he draws a hard definite line, and decides who is in the Church, and who is not ; if, for instance, he begins by assuming the three Creeds, or the tenet of justification by faith only ; a succession of ordained Ministers from the Apostles, or a succession of doctrine ; the administration of Sacraments according to a certain form, or some particular manner of preaching the word ; the Episcopal form of government, or the Presbyterian, or the power of dispensing with *any* peculiar organisation ; the presence or absence of a connection with the State ; the name of Catholic or the name of Protestant ; if he begins by assuming any of these marks, or any like them, as determining accurately and at once where the Church begins and where it ends, he does *not* follow the guidance of the Church of England.

Let not this be misunderstood. It is not said that notes cannot be found, by which to recognise the Church. What is to be observed is *this*, that it is quite the wrong way of studying the subject, to begin by assuming them. A wrong assumption may lead to the gravest consequences. Imagine a student assuming, in this mistaken manner, the principle on which to draw the line of demarcation: imagine him drawing it definitely and consistently, accepting it, and following it to its consequences; lastly, imagine him, which is very likely, having drawn it wrongly. What must follow? He goes forth into the world with a rule, which, though erroneous, is definite; which he applies to Christians and bodies of Christians, and decides at once that they are in the Church or out of it. If he takes the term with too great latitude and indistinction, he will be tolerant of error which he might have helped to cure; lukewarm in the cause of truth, which he is bound to uphold; sanctioning divisions and distractions, which would shock him were it not for his theory; or devising terms of union, compared to which division and distraction themselves are blessings. If, on the other hand, his system is narrower than the truth, and the gifts of God

flow more widely than he imagines, his mistakes in practice are of a different kind. Like St. Peter in the trance, he calls that common which God has cleansed ; he shuts his eyes to the goodness and holiness of many of the saints of God, explains the fruit of the operations of the Holy Spirit by means of natural causes, cuts himself off unnecessarily from the love and sympathy of a great part of the Christian world, and perhaps, disturbs the peace and unsettles the faith of others, who, but for him, would have dwelt peaceably in their habitations. Errors like these can scarcely be avoided, if men will begin where they should end.

The question then should be really studied *as* a question. Some remarks may be made in conclusion on the manner of studying it.

In the first place, as has been observed above, all *precipitancy* should be avoided. With most of us, at present, suspense of judgment on this subject will not affect our line of action. We may be thankful for our privileges and use them, whoever share them or do not.

Secondly, one great scriptural sign of the Church is *Holiness*. In proportion as a Christian Society displays a saintly life in its members,

it is probable that it approaches to the perfection of a Church. This perhaps would be the most satisfactory test, if we possessed knowledge and goodness to apply it. But it is hard to know men's hearts; and, even if this were accomplished, we must be holy, that we may judge of holiness. Here, as usual, we shall be safest in relying on Holy Scripture, and deriving our type of the saintly life from the example and precepts of Apostles, and, above all, from the life of our Great Exemplar.

It is clear how widely we may be led astray by the adoption of a false standard. We may go about the world unsettled and ill at ease, seeking for some imaginary form of perfection, while real holiness, overlooked and unrecognised, is by our side at home. But, independently of possible consequences, we are bound not to entertain, if we can avoid it, erroneous opinions on this or any other subject. Truth should be dear for its own sake. And on what principle can we be careful in forming an idea of Christian *doctrine*, and careless in forming our ideal of the Christian *character*?

Thirdly, we had better be prepared to think it possible, that the question does not admit, to our

faculties, of more than a proximate solution. This however need not make it less practical or less real. Conclusions which bear on practice are apt, to the philosophic mind, to lose much of their convincing power, if they obviously present the clear edge and definite outline of Theory. If it should appear on examination, that our question is one of *degree*, and that all Christians are in *some* sense in the Church, our enquiries need not lose in interest, though they must alter in form. We shall then have to determine, to the best of our power, what is the most perfect form of a Church; what defects in a particular Church justify its members in leaving it for one more perfect; and what degree of departure of a Christian body from the highest type will justify other Churches in suspending communion with it.

Lastly, there is one way in which we certainly should *not* study the subject. Some persons, who have found difficulties in it, and to whom suspense was highly painful, have consulted the Roman Theology to discover the notes of a Church. This is undoubtedly a mistake. “Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes” is here the language of common sense, not of uncharitable and irrational

prejudice. Romanist Theologians have written with a *purpose*. That purpose is, mainly, the promotion of the interests of their Church. That Church professes to be the only Church. It is not wonderful that these notes are so constructed as to tally with her claims, and hers alone. This implies no dishonesty or moral obliquity in those who devised these notes. They believed in the exclusive pretensions of their Church, and sought for the proof accordingly. But there is a painful want of penetration in those of another Communion who adopt them. They should remember that, though doubt and uncertainty are trying to the last degree, yet error is after all a greater Evil than indefiniteness.

LECTURE VII.

OF THE MEANS OF GRACE.

OUR general design has led us to speak of the condition of man under Grace, and also of the Church, in which God has willed that Christians should be knit together as in one body. But it is not enough to recognise the *existence* of that great society; we must also consider its *offices*. In it, Christians are not merely united in external communion, in a common faith, in holy hopes and purposes; they are also one by a mystical union with Christ. Through it, there are imparted by its heavenly Head those gifts and graces, which, when He ascended on high, He received on behalf of His spiritual members. It is in the Church that we possess the *Means of Grace*. To the method of studying them we must now turn our attention.

The course which we have hitherto pursued does not lead us to dwell upon them in detail, or even to attempt their enumeration. It is more to our purpose to insist on their points of agreement than on those of difference, and to seize, if possible, those general features, which give an unity to this varied and extensive portion of Theology. The formularies of our Church afford us the best and safest guidance in studying the Means of Grace, taken one by one. We will confine ourselves to such suggestions with regard to their study as apply to them when taken as a *whole*.

That they *do* form a whole, and that their unity is not one of arbitrary arrangement, it can be scarcely necessary to prove. Prayer, the study of Holy Writ, the Holy Sacraments, the other rites with which the Church ministers directly to the spiritual growth of her members, or stamps her impress on important seasons in the course of ordinary life, whatever be their historical origin, must all be considered as at present deriving their virtue and especial significance from the Gospel. The two Sacraments, as ordained by Christ Himself, are most strongly marked with this Evangelical character;

and if prayer is the natural language of the human heart in times of distress and trial, yet formerly it was not offered in the same prevailing Name, nor had the same full promise of acceptance; if priests were of old time set apart for the service of God, yet their dedication did not convey, like our Ordination, a definite spiritual gift; if vows were made, their acknowledgment was not accompanied, as in Confirmation, with the imparting of strength for their observance; if holy books were read, there was no heavenly interpreter to explain their mysteries; if from the first, men and women have been united in marriage, Religion was not always present at their union, nor, if present, could she speak of Christ and His Church, and invest the outward rite with a mystical meaning.

The Means of Grace have, then, all an Evangelical character. They have also an unity of *purpose*. They all minister, though in different ways and in different degrees, to the spiritual life. Through them, the soul is new-born to God, and the inner life of the regenerate sustained and strengthened; and this, not merely in an accidental and secondary manner, but in their lawful and customary use, and the ordinary

course of God's Providence. We do not read in Holy Writ of any spiritual gift which supersedes them, or robs them of their efficacy. Faith, far from standing in their stead, is the condition of the worthy reception of the Sacraments, which we naturally place at their head. These Sacraments we are taught to regard as generally necessary to salvation. We must admit, as a consequence, that Ordination is also really, though indirectly, necessary, unless we are prepared to enter on the (to us) very unpractical and very unprofitable question, whether Christianity can exist as a divine system, or the Church as a divine institution, without a regularly ordained Ministry. Holy Scripture, again, ministers to the sustenance of spiritual life; in many cases, directly, as a source of light and comfort; in many more, as the warrant for all that is true and important in the instruction of the teacher, while ignorance, and indifference, and an unwise reserve, combine to exclude the great majority of the Christian world from personal knowledge of its treasures. Prayer, again, is not only an especial Means of Grace itself, but is intimately connected with the efficacy of other means. It proves that the soul is not

dead and incapable of profiting by the sources of Christian strength, and is thus an indication, under ordinary circumstances, of the existence of that life, which it acts so important a part in promoting.

This brings us to a third point of union among the Means of Grace. As they are one in purpose, so they are often combined in *operation*. The Sacraments, for instance, do not stand isolated in their mysterious virtue from other channels of Divine mercy. If indeed we are forced to consider what is strictly essential to their due administration, we seem obliged to own that a few solemn words, and the simple outward elements, are alone absolutely necessary. But, though our reason admits of this conclusion, and we could use it for our comfort in cases of extreme necessity, the pious heart is almost shocked by entertaining, even for a useful purpose, the question, how little of the creatures which He has made, of the time which He has placed at our disposal, of the upraising of our hands and the worship of our hearts, we can, on these solemn occasions, offer, without positive sacrilege, to God. The Church only responds to a deep-seated instinct, in accompanying abun-

dantly the celebration of the Sacraments, with the deepened music of adoring devotion, confession, absolution, and prayer. We call her most mysterious Service by the simple name of the "Giving of Thanks;" and we have also learned that in Baptism "faith is confirmed, and grace increased, by virtue of prayer to God."

But we may proceed one step further still. Not only are the Means of Grace combined in their operations: they also resemble each other much more closely in the manner of that operation, so far as we are allowed to perceive it, than we might be at all prepared to expect. It is true in them generally, that it is the will of God to assign certain simple conditions as the means toward an end to which, of themselves, they seem wholly inadequate. The same mystery runs throughout. If we cannot understand how a material font can be the laver of regeneration, or how the elements in Holy Communion are hallowed to a mystical virtue, as little can we comprehend how the laying on of hands could be, or can be, the means of conveying ordinary or extraordinary gifts of the Spirit; nor can we be sure that we know *how* the Bible has a power above other books; nor

can we explain the reason of the especial grace attached to public worship, and the moral omnipotence of prayer. We move but on the confines of the spiritual world; and if in our faint and imperfect view of the land which we hope hereafter to call our own, every feature does not appear equally mysterious, nor every operation equally removed from the character of a natural agency, let us remember, that we can trace a likeness at most, and that likeness does not constitute identity. Neither under the Old Covenant nor the New, were heavenly messengers less heavenly, for coming in the similitude of men.

The Means of Grace, then, have at least these features in common. They all partake of an Evangelical character; they minister to the being and growth of the Christian life; we often find that their operations naturally combine; and in considering the manner of their operation, we soon reach the limits of our faculties, and are ultimately, though it may be a little sooner or later, lost in a sense of mystery. These points of resemblance suggest some general rules, which may be useful in studying the subject through its full extent.

It is clear then in the first place, that, if we would study the Means of Grace aright, we are bound by a stringent necessity, to study them mainly through Holy Scripture. The remarks which were made in a former Lecture on our incapacity to argue abstractedly on the subject of Grace, apply with a double force here. The Means of Grace are the links which practically connect the natural with the supernatural. They occupy that border land of Faith and Sense, which is particularly the province of Revelation. Perhaps all that we really know of the connection between Grace and its appointed channels is, that it is the result of a Divine Fiat. The expression of that Fiat to us is continued in the revelation of the New Covenant. To draw conclusions on the present subject apart from Holy Writ, is to conclude with absolutely no lawful premises.

Secondly ; in our interpretation of Scripture, as bearing on the several Means of Grace, we can derive little or no assistance from conscious observation of ourselves or others. We have, indeed, to examine ourselves with regard to the manner in which we use the appointed instruments of God's mercies; but it would be a

dangerous and most unprofitable exercise for the great majority of minds, to endeavour systematically to trace their effects by an effort of intellectual analysis. And if, in observing the holiness of others, we can learn so little as to the *workings* of Grace, when most sure of its existence, still less can we, in treating of its *means*, investigate the connection of cause and effect in detail, connect given graces, for instance, with given holy observances, or, on the other hand, ascribe definitely some deficiency of character or conduct to the neglect of some particular assistance to holy living.

But, thirdly, if we may not go beyond Holy Scripture in speaking of the Means of Grace, so neither must we shrink from adopting its explicit statements on the subject, or vindicating the truth of legitimate deductions from it. If the Word of God is really our guide, we shall not fear to follow it, even where the way seems difficult. It is a sign of deficient faith, if, while we acknowledge its authority, and take it as the foundation of our belief, we are doubtful or despondent whenever the grosser agencies seem to prevail over the more subtle, and the world of flesh overclouds the world of Spirit.

We should appeal from the doubtful evidence of superficial phenomena to the whole proven system of religious Truth. And if the world refuses to aid us in our researches, we should remember, that we may reasonably expect to find assistance in studying the Means of Grace, where we find the Means of Grace themselves—in the Church.

Lastly; if we succeed in ascertaining, with all the clearness of which the subject admits, the nature of the blessings which attends on each of the ordinances of the Church, the conditions of their conferring grace, the proper work of each, their respective importance and necessity, we should remember, that we can only state the *ordinary* laws under which grace is given in the Church, and can determine nothing about extraordinary cases. God has pleased, generally, to make use of means; but He can, if He will, dispense with them. It is therefore safer simply to state that grace is given through these channels, than to assert that it never flows by any other course from the fountain of Divine mercy. The Means of grace, we have said, quicken us and strengthen us to a spiritual life. But we cannot well determine how far spiritual

life is in all cases dependent on them. To take the analogy of the body. Science has taught us largely of the conditions which are necessary for its growth and sustenance. Yet life often expires when these all seem to be present, and often continues when we might reasonably expect its extinction. Our knowledge of the subject is but partial; and the laws of the spiritual world are, to say the least, not better known than those of our material constitution. The mysteries of grace are not likely to be less manifold or less wonderful than those of nature. If not a particle of matter is exempted from the operation of the laws by which God governs the universe, if not a sparrow falls to the ground without His knowledge, surely not unknown or disregarded by Him is the lamp of the Spirit quenched in an immortal soul. The spark may burn on, when there seems neither fuel to feed, nor breath of heaven to fan it. We know that Grace is given through means; this teaches us the duty of seeking where we may find. We know not that Grace is never given without means. This should not keep us from extending the use of the appointed instruments of salvation: it tells us nothing of the state of heathen nations, or of the many

professed Christians whose recourse to the Means of Grace is unfrequent and imperfect; but, where a darkness broods which no eye can penetrate, it teaches us not to despair.

LECTURE VIII.

OF THE WAY OF INDIVIDUAL SALVATION.

IN the last Lecture we spoke of the Means of Grace, mainly as a trust committed to the Church for the welfare of her members in general. We considered them accordingly rather in their character as divine institutions, than in their relation to the individual. When we touched on their efficacy as Means, little was said of the conditions required on the part of the recipient, that he may partake of their blessing. We proceeded for the time as if no member of the visible Church doubted, or had reason to doubt, whether he was in such a spiritual state as would allow the Means of Grace to be really means of grace *to him*. The case, of course, is practically very different. Not all who are called Christians are walking in the way of salvation. It is unhappily no imaginary or merely

possible case, for men to approach holy things when they are not in a condition to profit by them. This they do, sometimes, it may be feared, in carelessness or hypocrisy, but far more often in ignorance. We do not, as a matter of course, judge aright of our state before God. On this, as on less important subjects, some are too sanguine, others too despondent. These hold back in fear from claiming those blessings, which they should rather draw nigh in trembling expectation to receive; those step forward boldly on the sacred threshold, which they should not approach but as penitents, with bowed head and uncovered feet. Each is a painful spectacle, though in different ways—the proud and self-satisfied spirit, and the unduly disquieted and troubled conscience. Not that these are the only possible unhealthy conditions of a soul with regard to spiritual things. On the contrary, it is probable that in the great majority of cases the soul takes a view more or less mistaken of its own condition and history; and its morbid symptoms are difficult to classify from their very variety. Remedies are proportionally hard to discover. How shall the soul be freed from unhealthy excitement without relapsing into

inactivity, or be roused from apathy without being driven into despair? A right treatment of Disease implies a true conception of Health. And the answer to questions like these must depend mainly on the ideas which are entertained on our present subject—*the relation of the individual soul to God, and the way of individual salvation.*

These questions fall strictly within our subject. Theology is no merely abstract science. It does not confine itself to those truths, which concern the Being, and Attributes, and mysterious Perfections of God, the nature and condition of the Human Family as a Class, the cardinal verity of the Incarnation, or the great fact of the Christian Church; but it descends to the Individual. It must undertake to answer the enquiry of every earnest heart, *How am I to be saved?* This is the portion of Theology, which, with all but the few who love abstruse speculations for their own sake, and the class, probably smaller still, whose hearts burn upward in what, for want of a better word, we must call *mystical* devotion, gives all the interest, and half the meaning, to the rest. It is our individual concern in the conclusion, which prompts the enquiry.

And to this aspect of Theology, none who have any true religion can be indifferent. The most ignorant person who is really endeavouring to walk in the way of salvation, has an opinion on it implicitly. At present (though it has not always been so) the great majority of those who profess attention to Religion, think (though they are often much mistaken) that they have a definite view concerning it. Faith and Works, Justification and Sanctification, are words much more common, it is to be feared, than the things they signify. Some again who suppose, that on these subjects they only accept the conclusions of the Church, and have no opinions of their own, imply nevertheless a settled view of the whole subject, in the form into which they throw the important truth of Sacramental Grace. But those who think that they have arrived at a certain conclusion on these points, and those who think that they have never entertained the question, are often alike in one respect—in never having perceived the real difficulties of the question at all. My endeavour will be, first, to shew in some degree the great extent and complexity of the subject; and next, to consider what is our position with regard to it as

members of the Church of England, what data we have to start with, and within what limits, we may be tolerably sure, our conclusion must at last lie.

Take then any thoughtful man, placed as we are placed; suppose that he is happy and contented in his position, full of trust in the providence of God; and that, being such, he enquires, without any feeling of undue despondency or causeless melancholy, *how am I to be saved?* This question, expanded, will become something as follows. "I am a weak sinful creature, in the presence of a perfect God. Ignorant though I am, I am not left altogether in ignorance of His purposes toward me. I know that if I am finally excluded from His presence, the fault will be my own. He wills my salvation; and, further, has devised an economy to promote it. He dwelt for a time upon this earth in our flesh, that He might found a system which should open to me a more ready way to Heaven. In that system I have my place. I am a member of the Church. Its Sacraments are to me the especial channels of Grace. They make me one of many brethren. Baptism admitted me into the fold; the Holy

Eucharist is my life and strength within it. I share the blessings which the whole Church, by its united prayers, invokes upon its members. I am one of that great society which is travelling on toward perfection. Thus far, it might seem, I have nothing to fear. The community to which I belong has the present Blessing and the future promise. In claiming my share of its fortunes, I must be safe.

“ But, on the other hand, there is a side from which the picture seems different. Part of a body though I be, I am yet a person, with my own proper individuality. Each separate soul must have its separate relation to God who made it. No system whatsoever can permanently interfere between it and Him. He cannot will that any thing should destroy its responsibility. My relation to Him, not my place in a society, must determine my lot hereafter. It will be a question, at the last day, not whether I was in communion with the Church, but whether my Will was right with His Will.

“ Here then are two different views of my position. I trust that I share the life of an undying society; and yet it is true that I live,

and must die, alone. My soul is often thrown forward upon an external system; but it is often cast back upon itself. From this aspect it would seem that all must go well with me, unless, by a conscious act of self-excommunication, I wilfully cut myself off from fellowship in the blessings of the Church. In that aspect, it would seem that I must remain a stranger to God, till a definite act of the Will unites me to Him. In the former case, all may be assumed to be right with me, till it is shewn to be wrong; in the latter, all must be assumed to be wrong, till it is shewn to be right. I should begin, on the one view, by considering myself to be in a state of grace; I should begin, on the other, by considering myself in a state of condemnation. In the one case, my peace would depend primarily on the possession of the Sacraments of the Church; in the other, it would depend primarily on my individual faith in Christ."

It need scarcely be observed, how different an appearance the whole practical scope of Christianity will wear, according as the one frame of mind or the other preponderates. A religious and thoughtful man may perhaps take in the

same reach of prospect from either point of view: but even then the prospect will be strangely altered: what is fore-ground on the one supposition, will be back-ground on the other. He who begins by thinking of himself as a member of the Church, will not often turn for satisfaction or comfort to consider his individual faith. His endeavour will be, to secure the privileges which are already his, to knit himself up more closely with the mystical body of Christ, and by good works, and constant recourse to the Means of Grace, to seek the increase of the knowledge and the confirmation of the faith which he possesses. As a pilgrim on the road between earth and Heaven, he will not be continually pausing to see how far he has gone upon it. Much less will it be his one constant and engrossing thought, whether he is in the way or not. This will be the subject of enquiry at intervals, the basis of self-examination. But his individual justification will hold comparatively a subordinate place in his mind. The Church, its Sacraments, the Means of Grace, the good works ordained for Christian men to walk in, the love of the brethren who are travelling the same road with

himself, the Communion of Saints, extending to those who have gone before him—these are subjects which will be far more prominent.

He, on the other hand, who cannot rest in this sense of Community, to whom, from mental constitution, or deranging causes in early life, or other circumstances, the thought of self is more continually present in connection with religious ideas, will find his thoughts running in quite a different channel. What to him, he will feel, are all the privileges of a Body, with which he is not quite sure of the reality of his spiritual connection? How can he dwell calmly on the thought of grace in the Sacraments, when he does not know that he is in a condition to receive grace through them? What consolation can the Services of the Church be to him, which *presuppose* that those who use them are walking in the right way, though it may be with tottering steps? To him, the Personal question is all-important “Am I in the faith or not?”; to this, his mind is perpetually recurring. It is the one question which he is anxious to be able to answer in the affirmative. The points of doctrine which connect themselves with this question, especially that of Justification, are to him the most interesting

portion of Theology. And, the more he can connect his acceptance before God with some frame or state or act of mind of which he himself is conscious, the happier he will be. The concentration of all religion in the single idea of *faith* will be his intellectual temptation.

There is something very peculiar in the nature of the division thus generated. Learned and pious men may be members of the same Communion, acknowledge the same Creeds, adopt the same Formularies, use the same Services; nay, further, agree in the explanation of their common symbols, refer, to a great extent, to the same theological authorities, have their affections enlisted in the same cause, their energies exerted mainly in the same direction, and yet, in consequence of a difference on this point, differ widely, unmistakeably, and sometimes almost hopelessly, in the whole tone of their Theology. Their agreement on so many heads only brings out more clearly their difference on this. The same objects are before them: but they see them in quite different proportions. Each has the same idea of Grace; but to the one, this is naturally expanded through the medium of faith, to the other, embodied in the

Christian Sacraments. Each allows that holiness and acceptance before God go together; but one has the ideal separation of Justification and Sanctification continually before his eyes; the other dwells as habitually on their practical union. Each allows the privileges of Christian men, and the separate blessings of the Church; but the one, beginning with the privileges of the individual, sees in their aggregate the cumulative blessing of the Church; the other regards Grace as streaming from the Divine Head through the Church to the individual. Differences like these amount, perhaps, only to a slight difference of verbal statement upon *one* point; but they constitute a palpable difference of *tone* upon all.

And here, as on points which we have mentioned before, it is exceedingly important that the *teacher* of the Gospel should have arrived at a sound conclusion. Error here is not only an Evil in itself, but may be most serious in its consequences. We are creatures of sympathy; and a false *tone* is much more infectious than a false opinion. It is imbibed more easily, and spreads more widely.

What then are our guards against error in forming our opinion on this subject?

First, We may avoid a great portion of the danger, by adhering closely to the teaching of our Church. If we are wise in this respect, there is little risk of our opinions being wholly one-sided. In no other Communion, probably, are the great truths of our Community in the blessings of the Church, and our individual responsibility; the Grace of the Sacraments, and the virtue of Faith; so equally insisted on. Those who deny that we are regenerate in Baptism, that we receive the Body and Blood of our Lord in Holy Communion; and, on the other hand, those who deny the justifying power of Faith; are simply unsound members of the Church of England. True, the statements of our formularies are no where exactly harmonised. But nevertheless they serve to fix the boundaries of the question on either side. We may hold ourselves safe from making shipwreck on either shore, if we do not lose sight of the other.

Secondly, We shall find a great safeguard in a resolution, never, on subjects of this kind, to use words without meaning, not even to use the words of Scripture to others, unless they convey an impression to ourselves. Many persons, whose rather indefinite zeal has sought a

premature exponent in language, have never extricated themselves from the mist of words, in which they began by involving themselves and their subject. There is a wide difference, in this respect, between communicating a *tone*, and teaching a *doctrine*. Doctrines may be received on authority, and, on the same authority, repeated. But we cannot hope to impart a frame of mind into which we do not enter. There is an implied falsehood in the attempt. Even if it appears to succeed, the success is often worse than failure. Nothing is imparted, except an affectation. The teacher only enables the disciple to deceive himself.

Thirdly, If we are conscious that we do *not* use words without meaning, let us not suppose that those who differ from us unconsciously fall into the error which we avoid. We must not assume too great an uniformity in the dealings of God with man. The inner history of one Christian need not be the same with that of another. It is easy, in practical matters among men, to be too technical. A similar error is not impossible in things divine.

Lastly, We can never hope to do away with the difference of *tone*. That must exist till we

can put an end to all variety in the constitution of the human mind. We had better be content, if different minds will meet in common symbols. On these we must fix that interpretation which seems to us, on mature consideration, most agreeable to truth. We must allow, meanwhile, to others, all fair latitude in their manner of interpreting them. This, as has been hinted above, is a difference between varieties of *tone* and varieties of *opinion*. Where men really *think* differently, their course of action will differ; they tend to different points. Where only their feelings are of a different cast, their mutual nature may appear most unlike, and yet their conduct be essentially the same. Men may walk side by side without much personal sympathy, with a distant respect which not even Religion can kindle into love, with a keen sense of want of congeniality in taste, and yet have the same great objects in view, and arrive at the same point at last.

LECTURE IX.

CONCLUSION.

TO-DAY we close our Course of Lectures on the Study of Theology. Let us begin by some reflections on the nature of the questions which have been brought before us.

Some persons have an idea, that Theology is an affair of words; that to study it, is only to cultivate a particular form of intellectual subtlety; that all persons, however they may seem to differ with regard to it, agree in the main, and would be sensible of that agreement, did they not make laborious efforts to misunderstand one another. They cannot imagine any real living interest attaching to the subject. They think of it, at best, as a particular method of exhibiting certain moral truths, to which they ascribe its value. How, as distinct from these, it is important to the inner life of man, they have not the faintest conception.

One general object of the previous Lectures has been to shew the utter falsity of this view of Theology. We have confined ourselves carefully to *real* questions. We have exhibited, in several instances, the directly *practical* character of Christian doctrine. Surely it cannot be doubted, that, according to the view which men take of the several subjects which have come before us, they will act very differently. Surely no one, who has at all observed the manifold ways in which our decision of Theological questions must affect our view of things within and things without, of ourselves, and our neighbours, and God, will assert that Theological study deals with empty words and idle conceptions, and not with solemn ideas and awful realities.

Theology, then, is a *real* science, and covers a wide field. But its breadth is not a cause of monotony; if it is extensive, it is also varied. Here, we have truths already proved; there, are questions still undecided, and calling for enquiry. It has its historical side for lovers of facts, and its philosophical for those whose vocation is theory. Students of the past may contribute to its cause the results of research and learning; observers of the present may

derive instruction from experience, and profit by their observations of men and manners. The many, who are neither keen observers, nor given to remote deductions, need not be ignorant, if they will avail themselves of the labours of others; the few, who are called to far-reaching thought, and the use of the dangerous gift of originality, may employ all their powers on the sacred field, and gain a blessing in the employment, if it is prosecuted in a devout, cautious, and reverent spirit.

Yet, with all this variety, there *need be* no real distraction. Brethren in love and in communion, heirs of the same hopes and promises, may betake themselves to very different parts of the field, and yet be in sight of each other. Difference of study here involves no difference of object. And their studies can differ only *in part*. Their most important portion they must always have in common. Holy Scripture will be the base to which they will be continually referring back the several lines of their investigation, however widely they may diverge, and produced to whatever distance. Amid diversities of direction in thought, even in direct differences of opinion, they will still

have their great Authority in common. This does not imply agreement or sympathy, it is true, but it renders them more easy, more natural, and more probable.

But here a difficulty may suggest itself. Is it not dangerous, it may be asked, to study one part of Theology above the rest? Does not the whole system hang together; and this not merely by cohesion, but in virtue of a settled law and the adjustment of definite proportions? May not these proportions be destroyed by the irregularity of our zeal? Will not a devotion to one part of the Truth lead to a distortion in our view of the whole? And if thus much is granted, it may be further asked, is not the danger of acting greater than that of standing still? The whole subject is too large; and the parts must not be isolated. Is it not better to leave things as they are, to accept conclusions, believe what is told us, be content with our share of truth, and not be careful to study further?

The solution of this difficulty is obvious. It is of course not right to dwell on one part of Theology to the exclusion of the rest. With every portion we must be more or less ac-

quainted. No truth must be sacrificed to the desire to be at once rid of doubt, or to close in mortal combat with some prominent falsehood. As there is a proportion of faith, so there is of doctrine. But this proportion, once impressed upon the mind, will not be as a matter of course forgotten in the detail of our studies. Having made the circuit of the walls of our Zion, and told her towers and battlements, we may proceed to bestow ourselves, like good soldiers, where our survey informs us that our services will be most useful. If we are thus employed, we need not be apprehensive of consequences. It is not necessary for the well-being of the moral, more than of the physical, man, that he should be, at all points, a perfect model of symmetry. Indeed, it is not only unnecessary, but impossible. In a higher state, each of us, we hope, will be fashioned in the perfect likeness of the perfect Man. Here, we are in an irregular and imperfect system of things, which will successfully oppose our equitable development. But, though the disproportion resulting from the partial direction of our theological studies cannot be *altogether* avoided, it certainly may be to a very great degree—to so

great a degree, that it would be the height of cowardice to shrink from the undertaking on account of the danger. Perhaps the following rules may be useful in keeping us within the ordinary bounds of safety.

One most important rule is, to have a careful regard to the *general* teaching of the Church. Besides her witness to particular doctrines, she testifies to the existence of a whole circle of truths. Errors have arisen in a variety, which necessitated a corresponding variety in the enunciation of true doctrine. Thus an outline of truth has been formed, drawn indeed, in its parts, at different times and under different circumstances, but partaking, as a whole, of a comparatively definite character. We do not say that it cannot be ignored; but surely scarce any thing short of disobedience, or extreme deficiency in observation, or a strong inward impulse which knows no external law, can account for its not being recognised. Traces are so abundant, that though there may be differences as to where, in this quarter or that, the outline runs; its existence is beyond question.

But it may be said, this guidance is real, but

not sufficient. In study, we use our reason; and we are thus led, whether we at first intend it or not, to seek among the doctrines which we are studying a bond of connection which Reason recognises. The idea of Authority does not suffice us. If we allow on external evidence that Christian Truth is systematic, we desire to learn from internal evidence *how* it is systematic. In using the logical faculty, we need a clue of logical sequence. What shall give us that general connection of thought, which we dare not assume for ourselves?

This leads us to our last rule. It is probably good for all *young* theological students to study Theology under the guidance of *some great mind*. There are names, some of which, through particular Churches, some of which, through the whole Christian world, suggest, as soon as they are mentioned, an union of great goodness and great intellectual power. Neither element is absorbed in the other, whichever gives the name; but grace and reason coexist in harmony; the *doctor* is blended with the *saint*. Such a name we boast in Hooker; such the whole Church Catholic glories in recognising in St. Augustine.

Of these, and the like, if such there be, we may make a most important use.

It would not be right to say, take Hooker, or take St. Augustine; read the Ecclesiastical Polity, or the De Civitate Dei; try and grasp the opinions of the author as a system, and then adopt them as your own. In this way, we may call no man master. But an Apostle has said, "Be ye followers of me, as I of Christ^a;" and it is a most lawful and a most excellent use of the gifts and graces which God has bestowed on the most eminent of our fellow-creatures, to endeavour to trace how these gifts and graces wrought in them for Good, how infinite truths were capable of being reflected in a finite mind, how Faith illumined Reason, and Knowledge kindled into Love. Who can follow living teachers with like implicit confidence? What they are, we know, *perhaps*; but we know not what they will be. Of the great of other days we are more certain. We have seen them to the end of their course; and their sun has gone down in glory.

These are only general directions; but our subject has been general also. One definite line

^a 1 Cor. xi. 1.

of study would not be suitable to all; but all have need of the same love of truth, the same cautious reverence, the same instinctive fear of following any guidance which may mislead, the same thankful readiness in the use of all legitimate assistance. We are apt to picture to ourselves the Theological Student as one, more learned in books than men, fixed in some ancient seat of truth, like our own Oxford; or with leisure, and opportunity, and disposition elsewhere, to devote a considerable, if not the main, portion of his time, to Thought, and Reading, and Writing, hallowed by Devotion and Prayer. This class is probably more numerous than we think; yet it is not, and cannot be, a large one. But, if there be any truth in the idea of Theology which has been laid before you, wherever there is one who bears about with him, in love and reverence, the thought of God; who looks with an interest, in which gratitude mingles with sorrow, on the great human family; who identifies himself in heart and soul with the divine society of the Church; in whose mind the thought of the eternal welfare of others blends with that of his own; who tries all propositions, all theories, all systems, by the standard of the Divine truth;

who endeavours to view the whole course of the world conformably to the Divine Will and Providence; such a one, whether he be layman or priest, busy or at leisure, contemplative or practical, a reader of books or nature or man, is, to his soul's health and the benefit of his brethren, a Student of THEOLOGY.

THE END.

