

TRACT 85

TRACTS FOR THE TIMES

LECTURES ON THE
SCRIPTURE PROOFS OF
THE DOCTRINES OF
THE CHURCH

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

‘If the trumpet give an uncertain sound,
who shall prepare himself to the battle?’

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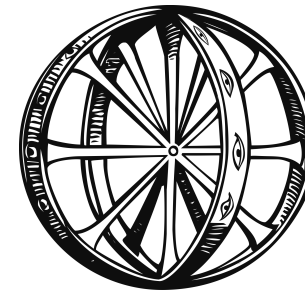
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LECTURE I.

DIFFICULTIES IN THE SCRIPTURE PROOF OF THE DOCTRINES OF THE CHURCH

I PROPOSE in the following Lectures to suggest some thoughts by way of answering an objection, which often presses on the mind of those who are inquiring into the claims of the Church, and the truth of that system of doctrine which she especially represents,—which is at once her trust and her charter. They hear much stress laid upon a certain system of doctrine; they see much that is beautiful in it, much that is plausible in the proof advanced for it, much which is agreeable to the analogy of nature, which bespeaks the hand of the CREATOR, and is suitable to the need and expectations of the creature,—much that is deep, much that is large and free, fearless in its course, sure in its stepping, and singularly true, consistent, entire, harmonious in its adjustments; but they seem to ask for more rigid proof in behalf of the simple elementary propositions on which it rests; or in other words, by way of speaking more clearly, and as a chief illustration of what is meant (though it is not the same thing), let me say, they desire more adequate and explicit *Scripture proof* of its truth. They find that the proof is *rested* on Scripture, and therefore they require more explicit *Scripture proof*. They say, “All this that you say about the Church is very specious, and very attractive; but where is it to be found in the inspired Volume?” And that it is *not* found there (that is, I mean not found as fully as it might be), seems to them proved at once by the simple fact, that *all* persons (as I may say, for the exceptions are very few),—*all* those who try to go by Scripture only, fall away from the Church and her doctrines, to one or other sect or party, as if showing that whatever is or is not scriptural, at least the Church, by consent of all men, is not so.

At the time Tract 85 was composed and given as lectures, Newman evidently planned a second series to complement this. Hence, the original tract bears the label ‘PART I’ and concludes with the notice, ‘END OF THE FIRST PART OF THESE LECTURES.’ This aim was not realised, and when the body of Tract 85 was published in 1872 as part of Newman’s Discussions and Arguments, reference to the second part was omitted.

I am stating no rare or novel objection: it is one which (I suppose) all of us have felt, or perhaps feel: it is one which, before now (I do not scruple to say), I have much felt myself, and that without being able satisfactorily to answer: one which I believe to be one of the main difficulties, and (as I think) one of the intended difficulties which God's Providence puts at this day in the path of those who seek Him as He commands, for purposes known or unknown, ascertainable or not. Nor am I at all sanguine that I shall be able, in what I shall say, to present any thing like a full view of the difficulty itself, even as a phenomenon; which different minds feel differently, and do not quite recognize as their own when stated by another, and which it is difficult to bring out even according to one's own idea of it. Much less shall I be able to assign it its due place in that system which nevertheless I hold to be true, and in which it is but a difficulty. I do not profess to be about to account for it, reconcile it, and dismiss it as a thing which was in a man's way, but is henceforth behind him;—yet, subdued as my hopes may be, I have too great confidence in that glorious Creed, which I believe to have been once delivered to the Saints, to wish in any degree to deny the difficulty, or to be unfair to it, to smooth it over, misrepresent it, or defraud it of its due weight and extent. Though I were to grant that the champions of Israel have not yet rescued this portion of the sacred territory from the Philistine, its usurping occupant, yet was not Jerusalem in the hands of the Jebusites till David's time? and shall I, seeing with my eyes and enjoying the land of promise, be over-troubled with one objection, which stands unvanquished (supposing it); and, like haughty Haman, count the King's favour as nothing till I have all my own way, and nothing to try me? In plain terms, I conceive I have otherwise most abundant evidence given me of the divine origin of the Church system: how then is that evidence which *is* given, *not* given, because *though* given in Scripture, it might be given *more explicitly* and *fully*, and (if I may so say) more consistently?

One consideration alone must create an anxiety in entering on the subject I propose. It is this:—Those who commonly make this objection which is to be considered, viz. the want of *adequate* Scripture evidence for the Church doctrine, have, I feel sure, no right to make it; that is, *they* are

inconsistent in making it; for they cannot consistently object against a person who believes more than they do, unless they cease to believe just so much as they do believe. They ought, on their own principles, to doubt or disown much which happily they do not doubt or disown. This then is the direct, appropriate, polemical answer to them, or (as it is called) an *argumentum ad hominem*. “Look at home, and say, if you can, *why* you believe this or that, which you do believe: whatever reasons you give for your own belief in one point, we can give for our belief in the other. If you are reasonable in believing the one, so are we in believing the other. Either we are reasonable, or you are not so. You ought not to stand where you are; you ought to go further one way or the other.” Now it is plain, that if this be a sound argument against our assailants, it is a most convincing one; and it is obviously very hard and very unfair if we are to be deprived the use of it. And yet a cautious mind will ever use it with anxiety; not that it is not most effective, but because it may be (as it were) too effective: it may drive the parties in question the wrong way, and make things worse instead of better. It only undertakes to show that they are *inconsistent* in their present opinions; and from this inconsistency it is plain they can escape, by going further either one way or the other,—by adding to their creed, or by abandoning it altogether. It is then what is familiarly called a kill-or-cure remedy. Certainly it is better to be inconsistent than consistently wrong,—to hold some truth amid error, than to hold nothing but error,—to believe than to doubt. Yet when I show a man that he is inconsistent, I make him decide whether of the two he loves better, the portion of truth he already holds, or the portion of error. If he loves the truth better, he will abandon the error; if the error, he will abandon the truth. And this is a fearful and anxious trial to put him under, and one cannot but feel loth to have recourse to it. One feels that perchance it may be better to keep silence, and to allow him, in shallowness and presumption, to assail oneself, than to retort, however justly, his weapons on himself; better for oneself to seem a bigot, than to make him a scoffer. Thus, for instance, a person who denies the Apostolical Succession of the Ministry, because it is not clearly taught in Scripture, ought, I conceive, if consistent, to deny the Godhead of the HOLY GHOST, which is nowhere literally stated in Scripture. Yet there is

something so dreadful in his denying the latter, that one may often feel afraid to show him his inconsistency, lest, rather than admit the Apostolical Succession, he should consent to do so. This is one of the great delicacies of disputing on the subject before us: yet, all things considered, I think, it only avails to the cautious use, not the abandonment, of the argument in question. For it is our plain duty to preach and defend the truth in a straightforward way. Those who are to stumble must stumble, rather than the heirs of grace should not hear. While we offend and alienate one man, we secure another; if we drive one man further the wrong way, we drive another further the right way. The cause of truth, the heavenly company of saints, gains on the whole more in the one way than the other. A wavering or shallow mind does perhaps as much harm to others as a mind consistent in error, nay, is in no very much better state itself; for if it has not developed into systematic scepticism, merely because it has not had the temptation, its present conscientiousness is not worth much. Whereas he who is at present obeying God under imperfect knowledge has a claim on His Ministers for their doing their part towards his obtaining further knowledge. He who admits the doctrine of the Trinity, in spite of feeling its difficulties, whether in itself or in its proof—who submits to the indirectness of the Scripture evidence on which it rests,—has a right to be told those doctrines concerning the Church, which are as certainly declared in Scripture, yet not more directly and prominently, and which will be as welcome to him when known, as those which he already knows. It is therefore our duty to do our part, and leave the event to God, begging Him to bless, yet aware that, whenever He visits, He divides.

In saying this, I by no means would imply that the only argument in behalf of our believing more than the generality of men now do, is, that else we ought in consistency to believe less, far from it indeed; but this argument is the one that comes first, and is the most obvious and the most striking. Nor do I mean to say,—far from it also,—that all on whom it is urged, *will* in fact go one way or the other; the many will remain pretty much where education and habit have placed them, and at least will not confess that they are affected by any new argument at all. But of course when one speaks of anxiety about the effect of a certain argument, one

speaks of cases where it *has* effect, not where it has *not*. Where it *has* effect, I say, that effect may be for good *or* for evil, and that is an anxious thing.

Now then, first, let me state the objection itself, which is to be considered. It may be thrown into one or other of the following forms: that “if Scripture laid such stress, as we do, upon the ordinances of Baptism, the Lord’s Supper, Church Union, Ministerial Power, Apostolical Succession, Absolution, and other rites and ceremonies,—upon external, or what is sometimes called formal religion,—it would not in its general tenour make such merely indirect mention of them;—that it would speak of them as plainly and frequently as we now always speak of them; whereas every one must allow that there is next to nothing on the surface of Scripture about them, and very little even under the surface of a satisfactory character.” Descending into particulars, we shall have it granted us, perhaps, that Baptism is often mentioned in the Epistles, and its spiritual benefits; but “its peculiarity as the *one plenary* remission of sin,” it will be urged, “is not insisted on with such frequency and earnestness as might be expected,—chiefly in one or two passages of one Epistle, and there obscurely” (in Heb. vi. and x.). Again, “the doctrine of Absolution is made to rest on but one or two texts (in Matt. xvi. and John xx.), with little or no practical exemplification of it in the Epistles, where it was to be expected. Why,” it may be asked, “are not the Apostles continually urging their converts to rid themselves of sin after Baptism, as best they can, by penance, confession, absolution, satisfaction? Again, why are Christ’s ministers no where called Priests? or at most, in one or two obscure passages (as in Rom. xv.)? Why is not the Lord’s Supper expressly said to be a Sacrifice? why is the Lord’s Table called an Altar but once or twice (Matt. v. and Heb. xiii.), even granting these passages refer to it? why is consecration of the elements expressly mentioned only in one passage (1 Cor. x.) in addition to our Lord’s original institution of them? why is there but once or twice express mention made at all of the Lord’s Supper, all through the Apostolic Epistles, and what there is, chiefly in the same Epistle? why is there so little said about Ordination? about the appointment of a Succession of Ministers? about the visible Church (as in 1 Tim. iii. 15.)? why but one or two passages on the duty of fasting? In short, is not (it may

be asked) the state of the evidence for all these doctrines just this,—a few striking texts at most scattered up and down the inspired volume, or one or two particular passages of one particular epistle, or a number of texts which *may* mean, but need not mean, what they are said by Churchmen to mean, which say something *looking like* what is needed, but with little strength and point, inadequately and unsatisfactorily? Why then are we thus to be put off? why is our earnest desire of getting at the truth to be trifled with? is it conceivable that, if these doctrines were from GOD, He would not tell us plainly? why does He make us to doubt? why does He keep us in suspense?—it is impossible it should be so. Let us, then, have none of these expedients, these makeshift arguments, this patchwork system, these surmises and conjectures, and here a little and there a little, but give us some broad, trustworthy, masterly view of doctrine, give us some plain intelligible interpretation of the sacred volume, such as will approve itself to all educated minds, as being really gained from the text, and not from previous notions which are merely brought to Scripture, and seek to find a sanction in it. Such a broad comprehensive view of Holy Scripture would most assuredly be fatal to the Church doctrines. But this (it will be urged) is not all; there are texts in the New Testament actually inconsistent with that system. For example, what can be stronger against the sanctity of particular places, nay of any institutions, persons, or rites, than our LORD's declaration, that GOD is a Spirit, and they that worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth? or against the Eucharistic Sacrifice, than St. Paul's contrast in Heb. x. between the Jewish sacrifices and the one Christian Atonement? or can Baptism really have the gifts which are attributed to it in the Catholic or Church system, considering how St. Paul says, that all rites are done away, and that faith is all in all? Such is the sort of objection which it is proposed now to consider.

Now, in what remains of this Lecture I shall but briefly draw out the *argumentum ad hominem* I have alluded to, or in other words, show that the argument in question proves too much for the purposes of those who use it; that it leads to conclusions beyond those to which they would confine it;

¹ ψυχὴν αἴρεις. John x. 24.

and if it tells for any thing, tells for much which they repudiate.

Now the argument in question proves too much, first, in this way, that it shows that external religion is not only not important or necessary, but not allowable. If, for instance, when our SAVIOUR said, "Woman, believe Me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father... The hour cometh and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the FATHER in spirit and in truth: for the FATHER seeketh such to worship Him; GOD is a Spirit, and they that worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth ¹," if He means that the external local worship of the Jews was so to be abolished that no external local worship should again be enjoined, that the Gospel worship was but *mental*, stripped of every thing material or sensible, and offered in that simple spirit and truth which exists in heaven,—if so, it is plain that all external religion is not only not *imperative* under the Gospel, but *forbidden*. This text, if it avails for any thing against Sacraments and Ordinances, avails entirely; it cuts them away root and branch. It says, not that they are unimportant, but that they are not to be. It does not leave them at our option. Any interpretation which gives an opening to their existing, gives so far an opening to their being important. If the command to worship in spirit and truth is consistent with the permission to worship through certain rites, it is consistent with the duty to worship through them. Why are *we* to have a greater freedom (if I may so speak) than GOD Himself? why are *we* to choose what rites we please to worship in, and not *God* choose them? as if spirituality consisted, not in doing without rites altogether, (a notion which at least is intelligible,) but in our forestalling our LORD and MASTER in the choice of them. Let us take the text to mean that there shall be no external worship at all, if we will (we shall be wrong, but we shall speak fairly and intelligibly); but, if there may be times, places, ministers, ordinances of worship, though the text speaks of worshipping in spirit and in truth, what is there in it to negative the notion of GOD's having *chosen* those times, places, ministers, and ordinances, so that if *we* attempt to choose, we shall commit the very fault of the Jews, who were

¹ John iv. 21–24.

ever setting up golden calves, planting groves, or consecrating ministers without authority of God?

And what has been observed of this text, holds good of all arguments drawn, whether from the silence about, or the supposed positive statements of Scripture, against, the rites and ordinances of the Church. If obscurity of texts, for instance, about the grace of the Eucharist be taken as a proof that no great benefit is therein given, it is an argument against there being any benefit. On the other hand, when certain texts are once determined to refer to it, the emphatic language used, when it is spoken of, shows that the benefit is not small. We cannot say that the subject is unimportant, without saying that it is not mentioned. Either no gift is given in the Eucharist, or a great gift. If only the 6th of St. John, for instance, does allude to its benefit, it shows it is not merely an edifying rite, but an awful communication beyond words. Again, if the phrase of “the communication of the body of CHRIST,” used by St. Paul, means any gift, it means a great one. You *may* say that it does not mean any gift at all, only a representation or figure of the communication; this I call explaining away, but still it is intelligible; but I do not see how, if it is to be taken literally as a real *communication*, it can be other than a communication of *His Body*. Again, though the LORD’S Table be but twice called an Altar in Scripture, yet granting that *it is* meant in those passages, it is spoken of so solemnly, that it matters not though it be no where else spoken of. “We have an Altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.” We do not know of the existence of the ordinance except in the knowledge of its importance; and in corroboration and explanation of this matter of fact, let it be well observed that St. Paul expressly declares that the Jewish rites are not to be practised because they *are not* important.

This is one way in which this argument proves too much; so that they who for the sake of decency or edification, or from an imaginative turn of mind, delight in ordinances, yet think they may make them for themselves, in that they bring no special blessing with them, these as plainly will contradict the Gospel as those who attribute a mystical virtue to them, nay more so; for if any truth is clear, it is, that such ordinances as are without virtue are abolished by the Gospel, this being the exact case of the Jewish rites.

Now as to the other point of view in which the argument in question proves too much for the purpose of those who use it:—If it be a good argument against the truth of the Apostolical Succession and similar doctrines, that so little is said about them in Scripture, this is quite as good an argument against nearly all the doctrines which are held by any who is called a Christian in any sense of the word; as a few instances will show.

First, as to Ordinances. There is not a single text in the Bible enjoining infant baptism: the Scripture warrant on which we baptize infants, consists of inferences carefully made from various texts. How is it that St. Paul does not in his Epistles remind parents of so great a duty, if it is a duty?

Again, there is not a single text telling us to keep holy the first day of the week, and that *instead* of the seventh. GOD hallowed the seventh day, yet we now observe the first. Why do we do this? Our Scripture warrant for doing so is such as this: “since the Apostles met on the first day of the week, *therefore* the first day is to be hallowed; and *since* St. Paul says the Sabbath is abolished, *therefore* the seventh day (which is the Sabbath) is not to be hallowed:”—this is a true inference, but very indirect surely. It is not on the surface of Scripture. We might infer, though incorrectly still we *might* infer, that St. Paul meant that the command in the second of Genesis was repealed, and that now there is no sacred day at all in the seven, though meetings for prayer are right on Sunday. There is nothing on the surface of Scripture to prove that the *sacredness* conferred in the beginning on the seventh day now *by transference* attaches to the first.

Again, there is scarcely a text enjoining going to Church for joint worship. St. Paul happens in one place of his Epistle to the Hebrews, to warn us against forgetting to assemble together for prayer. Our SAVIOUR says that where two or three are gathered together, He is in the midst of them; yet this alludes in the first instance not to public worship, but to Church councils and censures, quite a distinct subject. And in the Acts and Epistles we meet with instances or precepts in favour of joint worship yet there is nothing express to show that it is necessary for *all* times,—nothing more express than there is to show that in 1 Cor. vii. St. Paul meant that an unmarried state is better at all times,—nothing which does not need collecting and inferring with minute carefulness from Scripture. The first

disciples *did* pray together, and so in like manner the first disciples did *not* marry. St. Paul tells them who were in a state of distress, to pray together so much the more *as they see the day approaching*—and he says that celibacy is “good *for the present distress*.” The same remarks might be applied to the question of community of goods. On the other hand, our LORD did not use social prayer: even when with His disciples He prayed by Himself, and His directions in Matt. vi. about *private* prayer, with the silence which He observes about *public*, might be as plausibly adduced as an argument against public, as the same kind of silence in Scripture concerning turning to the east, or making the sign of the Cross, or concerning commemorations for the dead in CHRIST, accompanied with its warnings against formality and ceremonial abuses, is urged as an argument against these latter usages.

Again:—there is no text in the New Testament which enjoins us to “establish” religion (as the phrase is), or to make it national and give the Church certain honour and power; whereas our LORD’s words, “My kingdom is not of this world,” (John xviii. 36.) may be interpreted to discountenance such a proceeding. We consider that it is right to establish the Church on the ground of mere deductions, though of course true ones, from the sacred text; such as St. Paul’s using his rights as a Roman citizen.

There is no text which allows us to take oaths. The words of CHRIST and St. James seem plainly the other way. Why then do we take them? We *infer* that it is allowable from finding that St. Paul uses such expressions as “I call GOD for a record upon my soul”—“the things which I write unto you, behold, before GOD, I lie not” (2 Cor. i. 23; Gal. i. 20); these we *argue*, and rightly, are equivalent to an oath.

Again, considering GOD has said, “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed,” it seems a very singular power which we give to the Civil Magistrate to take away life. It ought to rest, one might suppose, on some very clear permission given in Scripture. Now, on what does it rest? on one or two words of an Apostle casually introduced into Scripture, as far as anything is casual,—on St. Paul’s saying in a parenthesis, “he (the magistrate) *beareth not* the sword in vain;” and he is speaking of a *heathen* magistrate, *not* of a Christian.

Once more:—On how many texts does the prohibition of polygamy depend, if we set about counting them?

Next, consider how Doctrine will stand, if the said rule of interpretation is to hold.

If the LORD’s Supper is never distinctly called a Sacrifice, or Christian ministers never called Priests, still, let me ask, (as I have already done,) is the HOLY GHOST ever expressly called GOD in Scripture? No where; we infer it from what is said; we compare parallel passages.

If the words Altar, Absolution, or Succession, are not in Scripture (supposing it), neither is the word Trinity.

Again: how do we know that the New Testament is inspired? does it any where declare this of itself? nowhere; *how*, then, do we know it? we infer it from the circumstance that the office of the Apostles who wrote it was what it was, and from the Old Testament being inspired.

Again: whence do Protestants derive their common notion, that every one may gain his faith from Scripture for himself?

Again: consider whether the doctrine of the Atonement may not be explained away by those who explain away the doctrine of the Eucharist: if the expressions used concerning the latter are merely figurative, so may be those of the former.

Again: on how many texts does the doctrine of original sin rest, that is, the doctrine that we are individually born under GOD’s displeasure, in consequence of the sin of Adam? on one or two.

Again: how do we prove the doctrine of justification by faith only; it is no where declared in Scripture. St. Paul does but speak of justification by faith, not faith only, and St. James actually denies that it is by faith only. Yet we infer, and truly, that there is a correct sense in which it *is* by faith only; though an Apostle has in so many words said the contrary. Is any Church doctrine, about the power of Absolution, the Christian Priesthood, or the danger of sin after Baptism, so disadvantageously circumstanced in point of evidence as this?

On the whole then, I ask, on *how many* special or palmary texts do any of the doctrines or rites we hold depend? what doctrines or rites would be left to us, if we demanded the clearest and fullest evidence, before we

believed any thing? what would the Gospel consist of? would there be any revelation at all left? Some all-important doctrines indeed at first sight would remain in the New Testament, such as the divinity of CHRIST, the unity of GOD, and the supremacy of divine grace, and our election in CHRIST, and the resurrection of the body, and eternal life or death to the righteous or sinners; but little besides. Shall we give up the divinity of the HOLY GHOST, original sin, the Atonement, the inspiration of the New Testament, united worship, the Sacraments, and infant baptism? Let us do so. Well:—I will venture to say that *then* we shall find difficulties as regards those other doctrines, as the divinity of Christ, which I have described as at first remaining they are only clearer *than* the others, not so clearly stated as to be secured from specious objections. We shall have difficulties about the *meaning* of the word “everlasting,” as applied to punishment, about the *compatibility* of divine grace with free-will, about the *possibility* of the resurrection of the body, and about the *sense* in which CHRIST is GOD. The mind which rejects a doctrine which has but one text in its favour, on the ground that if it were important, it would have more, may, where a doctrine is mentioned often, always find occasion to wonder that still it is *not* mentioned in this or that particular place, where it might be expected. When it is pressed with such a text as St. Thomas’s confession, “My LORD and my GOD,” it will ask, But why does our LORD say but seven days before to St. Mary Magdalen, “I ascend to My Father and your Father, to My GOD and your God?” When, with St. Peter’s confession, “LORD, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee,” it will ask, But why does CHRIST say of Himself, that He does not know the last day, only the Father? Indeed, the more arguments there are for a doctrine in Scripture, the more objections will be found against it; so that on the whole, I think, even the Scripture evidence for the divinity of CHRIST, will be found in fact as little to satisfy the captious mind, when fairly engaged to discuss it, as that for infant baptism, great as is the difference in the evidence for the two. And the history of these last centuries bears out this remark.

I conclude, then, that there must be some fault *somewhere* in this specious argument; that it does *not* follow that a doctrine or rite is not divine because it is not clearly stated in Scripture; that there are some wise

and unknown reasons for doctrines being as they are, not clearly stated there. To be sure, I might take the other alternative, and run the full length of scepticism, denying that any thing *is* divine, whatever it is, which is not spoken of in Scripture beyond all contradiction and objection. But for many reasons I cannot get myself to do this, as I shall proceed to show in the next Lecture.

LECTURE II.

THE DIFFICULTIES OF LATITUDINARIANISM.

No one, I think, will seriously maintain, that any other definite religious *system* is laid down in Scripture at all more clearly than the Church system. It may be maintained, and speciously, that the Church system is not there, or that this or that *particular doctrine* of some other system seems to be there more plainly than the corresponding Church doctrine; but that Presbyterianism as a whole, or Independency as a whole, or the religion of Lutherans, Baptists, Wesleyans, or Friends, as a whole, is more clearly laid down in it, and with fewer texts looking the other way,—that any of these has less difficulties to encounter than the Creed of the Church,—I do not think can successfully be maintained. The arguments which are used to prove that the Church system is not in Scripture, may as cogently be used to prove that no system is in Scripture. If silence in Scripture, or apparent contrariety, is an argument against the Church system, it is an argument against system at all. No system is on the surface of Scripture; none, but has at times to account for the silence or the apparent opposition of Scripture as to particular portions of it. This, then, is the choice of conclusions to which we are brought:—*either* Christianity contains no definite message, creed, revelation, system, or whatever other name we call it, nothing which can be made the subject of belief at all; *or*, though there is a true creed or system (whatever it is), yet it is not on the surface of Scripture, but contained in a latent form within it, and to be maintained only by indirect arguments, by comparison of texts, by inferences from what is said plainly, and by overcoming or resigning oneself to difficulties; *or* though there is a true creed or system revealed, it is *not* in Scripture, but to be gained collaterally from other sources. I wish persons to consider this statement steadily. I do not see that it can be disputed; and if not, it is very important. I repeat it; we have a choice of three conclusions. Either there is *no* definite religious information given us in Christianity at all, or it *is* given in Scripture in *an indirect* and covert way, or it *is* given, but *not* in Scripture.

The first is the Latitudinarian view which has gained ground in this day; the second is our own received ground; the third is the ground of the Roman Church. If then we will not content ourselves with merely probable, or (what we may be disposed to call) insufficient proofs of matters of faith and worship, we must become either utter Latitudinarians or Roman Catholics. If we will not submit to the notion of the doctrines of the Gospel being hidden under the text of Scripture from the view of the chance reader, we must submit to believe that there are no doctrines at all, *or* that the doctrines are not in Scripture, but elsewhere, as in Tradition. I know of no other alternative.

Many men, indeed, will attempt to find a fourth way, thus: they would fain discern one or two doctrines in Scripture clearly, and no more; or some generalized form, yet not so much as a *body* of doctrine of any character. They consider that a certain message, consisting of *one* or *two* great and simple statements, makes up the whole of the Gospel, and that these *are* plainly in Scripture; accordingly, that he who holds and acts upon these is a Christian, and ought to be acknowledged by all to be such, for in holding these, he holds all that is necessary. These statements they sometimes call the essentials, the peculiar doctrines, the vital doctrines, the leading idea, the great truths of the Gospel,—and all this sounds very well; but when we come to realize what is abstractedly so plausible, we are met by this insurmountable difficulty, that no great number of persons agree together what *are* these great truths, simple views, leading idea, or peculiar doctrines of the Gospel. Some say that the doctrine of the Atonement is the leading idea; some, the doctrine of spiritual influence; some, that both together are the peculiar doctrines; some, that love is all in all; some, that the acknowledgment that JESUS is the CHRIST; and some, that the resurrection from the dead is after all the essence of the Gospel, and all that need be believed. Moreover, since, as all parties must confess, the Catholic Doctrine of the Trinity is not brought out in form upon the surface of Scripture, it follows either that it is not one part of the leading idea, or that the leading idea is not on the surface. And if the doctrine of the Trinity is not to be accounted as one of the leading or fundamental truths of revelation, the keystone of the mysterious system is lost; and that being

lost, mystery will, in matter of fact, be found gradually to fade away from the creed altogether; that is, the notion of Christianity as being a revelation of *new* truths, will gradually fade away, and the Gospel will be considered in course of time scarcely more than the republication of the law of nature. This, I think, will be found to be the historical course and issue of this line of thought. If we will have it so, that the doctrines of Scripture should be on the surface of Scripture, though I may have my very definite notion what doctrines *are* on the surface, and you yours, and another his, yet you and he and I, though in appearance competent to judge, though serious, earnest, and possessed of due attainments, will not agree together *what* those doctrines are; so that, practically, what I have said will come about in the end, that (if we are candid) we shall be forced to allow, that there is no system, no creed, no doctrine at all lucidly and explicitly set forth in Scripture; and if we will not seek it under the surface, we must either give up seeking it, or seek it, in Tradition,—we must become Latitudinarians or Roman Catholics.

Now of these alternatives, Romanism or Latitudinarianism, the latter I do really conceive to be quite out of the question with every serious mind. The Latitudinarian doctrine is this: that every man's view of revealed religion is acceptable to GOD, if he acts up to it; that no one view is in itself better than another, or at least that we cannot tell which is the better. All we have to do then is to act consistently with what we hold, and to value others if they act consistently with what they hold; that to be consistent constitutes sincerity; that where there is this evident sincerity, it is no matter whether we profess to be Romanists or Protestants, Catholics or Heretics, Calvinists or Arminians, Anglicans or Dissenters, High Churchmen or Puritans, Episcopalians or Independents, Wesleyans or Socinians. Such seems to be the doctrine of Latitude. Now, I *can* conceive such a view of the subject to be maintainable, supposing GOD had given us no revelation,—though even then, (by the way,) and were we even left to the light of nature, belief in His existence and moral government would, one should think, at least be necessary to please Him. 'He that cometh to GOD must believe that He is,

and that He is a rewarder of them which diligently seek Him¹." But however, not to press this point, one may conceive that, before GOD had actually spoken to us. He might accept as sufficient, a sincere acting on religious opinions of whatever kind; but that after a revelation is given, there is nothing to believe, nothing (to use an expressive Scripture word) to *hold*, to *hold fast*, that a message comes from GOD, and contains no subject-matter, or, that containing it (as it must do), it is not important to be received and is not capable of being learned by any one who takes the proper means of learning it, that there is nothing in it such, that we may depend on our own impression of it as true, feel we have really gained something, and continue in one opinion about it,—all this is so extravagant, that I really cannot enter into the state of mind of a person maintaining it. I think he is not aware what he is saying. Why should GOD speak, unless He meant to say something? Why should He say it, unless He meant us to hear? Why should we be made to hear, if it mattered not whether we accepted it or no? *What* the doctrine is, is another and distinct question; yet that there is *some* doctrine revealed, and that it is revealed in order that it may be received, and that it really *is* revealed,—that it is not hidden, so as to be a mere matter of opinion, a chance what is true and what not, or as if there were a number of opposite modes of holding it, one as good as another,—but that it is plain in one and the same substantial sense to all who sincerely and suitably seek for it, and that GOD is better pleased when we hold it than when we do not,—all this seems a truism. *Where* it is given us, whether entirely in Scripture, or partly elsewhere, this again is another and secondary question; though surely that it is given somewhere cannot be denied either without some eccentricity or confusion of mind, or some want of seriousness and candour. When then we once decide that there is some essential doctrine proposed to our faith, the question at once follows, *what* is it, and *how much*, and *where?* and we are forthwith involved in *researches* of some kind or other, somewhere or other; for the doctrine is not written on the sun.

For reasons such as the above, I really cannot conceive a serious man,

¹ Heb. xi. 6.

who realized what he was speaking about, a consistent Latitudinarian. He always will reserve from the general proscription his own favourite doctrine, whatever it is; and then holding it, he will be at once forced into the difficulty which is ours also, but which he would fain make ours and not his, that of stating clearly what this doctrine of his is, and what are those grounds of it, such as to enable him to take in just so much of dogmatic teaching and nothing more, to hold so much firmly, and to treat all the rest as comparatively unimportant.

Revelation implies a something revealed, and what is revealed is imperative on our faith, *because* it is revealed. Revelation implies imperativeness; it limits in its very notion our liberty of *thought*, because it limits our liberty of *error*, for error is one kind of thought.

But now, putting aside abstract considerations, let us turn to the *fact* which is urged in behalf of Latitudinarianism. The doctrine, then, that it matters not what you believe, so that you act up to what you believe, is grounded (it would seem) on this alleged fact, that no one creed of any sort can be surely gathered from Scripture,—that the divine message, the whole counsel of God, is not there. “Whichever view of religion you fix upon (it is said), there are parts of it which, by a candid, dispassionate, unprejudiced observer, will be pronounced additions to Scripture; *therefore* (it is inferred), there *is no* definite creed or message at all revealed anywhere.” Indeed! Supposing the fact to be as stated (which I do not grant, but supposing it), is this the necessary conclusion? No: there is another. Such an inference indeed as the above is a clever controversial way of settling the matter; it is the sort of answer which in the schools of disputation or the courts of law, may find a place, where men are not in earnest; but it is an answer without a *heart*. It is an excuse for indolence, love of quiet, or worldliness. There is *another* answer. I do not adopt it, I do not see I am driven to it, because I do not allow the premisses from which the argument starts. I do not allow that there *is no* creed at all contained in Scripture, though I grant it is not on the surface. But if there *be* no divine message, gospel, or creed, *producible* from Scripture, this would not lead me one iota towards deciding that there was none at all *any where*. No; it would make me look out of Scripture for it, that is all. If there is a revelation, there must be a

doctrine; both our reason and our hearts tell us so. If it is not in Scripture, it is somewhere else, it is to be sought elsewhere. Should the fact so turn out, (which I deny,) that Scripture is so obscure that nothing can be made of it, even when the true interpretation is otherwise given, so obscure that every person will have his own interpretation, and no two alike, this would drive me, not into Latitudinarianism but into Romanism. Yes, and it will drive the multitude of men. It is far more certain that revelation must contain a message, than that that message must be in Scripture. It is a less violence to one’s feelings to say that part of it is revealed elsewhere, than to say that nothing is revealed any where. There is an overpowering antecedent improbability in Almighty God’s announcing that He has revealed something, and revealing nothing; there is no antecedent improbability in His revealing it elsewhere than in an inspired volume. And, I say, the mass of mankind will feel it so. It is very well for educated persons, at their ease, with few cares, or in the joyous time of youth, to argue and speculate about the impalpableness and versatility of the divine message, its chameleon-like changeableness, its adaptation to each fresh mind it meets; but when men are conscious of sin, are sorrowful, are weighed down, are desponding, they ask for something to lean on, something external to themselves. It will not do to tell them that whatever they at present hold as true, is enough. They want to be assured that what seems to them true, is true; they want something to lean on, holier, diviner, more stable than their own minds. They have an instinctive feeling that there is an external, eternal truth which is their only stay, and it mocks them, after being told of a revelation, to be assured next that that revelation tells us nothing certain, nothing which we do not know without it, nothing distinct from our own impressions concerning it, whatever they may be,—nothing such, as to exist independently of that shape and colour into which our own individual mind happens to throw it. Therefore, practically, those who argue for the vague character of the Scripture informations, and the harmlessness of all sorts of religious opinions, do not tend to advance Latitudinarianism one step among the many; they advance Romanism. That truth, which men are told they cannot find in Scripture, they will seek *out* of Scripture. They will never believe, they will never be content with, a

religion without doctrines. The common sense of mankind decides against it. Religion cannot but be dogmatic, it ever has been. All religions have had doctrines; all have professed to carry with them benefits which could be enjoyed only on condition of believing the word of a supernatural informant, that is, of embracing some doctrines or other. It is a mere idle sophistical theory, to suppose it can be otherwise. *Destroy* religion, make men give it up, if you can; but while it exists, it will profess an insight into the next world, it will profess *important* information about the next world, it will have points of faith, it will have dogmatism, it will have anathemas. Christianity, therefore, ever will be looked on, by the multitude, what it really is, as a rule of faith as well as of conduct. Men may be Presbyterians or Baptists, or Lutherans, or Calvinists, or Wesleyans; but something or other they will be; a creed, a creed necessary to salvation, they will have; a creed either in Scripture or out of it; and if in Scripture, I say, hidden in Scripture, indirectly gained from Scripture. Latitudinarianism, then, is out of the question; and you have your choice, to be content with indirect proofs *in* Scripture, or to look for tradition *out of* Scripture. You cannot get beyond this; *either* you must take up with us, (or with some system not at all better off, whether Presbyterianism, or Independency, or the like), or you must go to Rome. Which will you choose? You may not like us; you may be impatient and impetuous you may go forward, but back you cannot go.

But further, it can scarcely be denied that Scripture, if it does not furnish, at least speaks of, refers to, sanctions, recommends some certain doctrine or message which is to be believed in order to salvation; and which, accordingly, if not found in Scripture, must be sought for out of it. It says, "He who believeth shall be saved, and he who believeth not shall be damned;" it speaks of "the doctrine of CHRIST," of "keeping the faith," of "the faith once *delivered* to the saints," and of "delivering that which has been received," recounting at the same time some of the articles of the Apostles' Creed. And the case is the same as regards discipline; rules of worship and order, whether furnished or not, are at least alluded to again and again, under the title of "traditions." Revelation then will be inconsistent with itself, unless it had provided some creed somewhere. For

in Scripture it implies that it has; therefore some creed *exists* somewhere, whether in Scripture or out of it.

Nor is this all; from the earliest times, so early that there is no assignable origin to it short of the Apostles, one definite system *has* existed in the Church both of faith and worship, and that in countries far disjoined from one another, and without any appearance (as far as we can detect) of the existence of any other system any where; and (what is very remarkable) a system, such, that the portion in it which relates to matters of faith (or its philosophy), accurately fits in and corresponds to that which relates to matters of worship and order (or its ceremonial); as if they were evidently parts of a whole, and not an accidental assemblage of rites on the one hand, and doctrines on the other;—a system moreover which has existed ever since, and exists at the present day, and in its great features, as in other branches of the Church, so among ourselves;—a system moreover which at least *professes* to be quite consistent with and to appeal and defer to the written word, and thus in all respects accurately answers to that to which Scripture seems to be alluding in the notices above cited. Now, is it possible, with this very significant phenomenon standing in the threshold of Christian history, that a person can be of opinion that one creed or worship is as good as another? St. Paul speaks of one faith, one baptism, one body; this in itself is a very intelligible hint of his own view of Christianity; but as if to save his words from misinterpretation, here in history is at once a sort of realization of what he seems to allude to. Under these circumstances, what excuse have we for not recognizing in this system of doctrine and worship existing in history that system to which the Apostles refer in Scripture? They evidently did not in Scripture say out all they had to say; this is evident on the face of Scripture, evident from what they do say. St. Paul says, "*The rest* will I set in order when I come." St. John, "I had *many things* to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee; but I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall *speak* face to face." This he says in two epistles. Now supposing, to take the case of profane history, a collection of letters was extant by the founders or remodellers of the Platonic or Stoic philosophy, and supposing they referred in them to their philosophy, and treated of it in parts, yet without drawing it out, and then

besides, supposing there were other and more direct historical sources of various kinds from which a distinct systematic account of their philosophy might be drawn, one account and but one from many witnesses, should we not take it for granted that this *was* their system, that system of which their letters spoke? Should not we take up that system conveyed to us by history with (I will not say merely an antecedent disposition in its favour, but) with a confidence and certainty that it was their system; and if we found discrepancies between it and their letters, should we at once cast it aside as spurious, or rather try to reconcile them, and suspect that we were in fault, that we had made some mistake; and even if after all we could not reconcile all parts (supposing it), should we not leave them as difficulties, and believe in the system notwithstanding? The Apostles refer to a large existing fact, their system; history informs us of a system, as far as we can tell, contemporaneous, and claiming to be theirs;—what other claimant is there?

Whether, then, the system, referred to but not brought out in Scripture, be latent there or not, whether our view be right or the Roman view, at any rate a system there is; we see it, we have it external to Scripture. There it stands, however we may determine this further question. Whether we adopt the wording of our sixth article or not, we cannot obliterate the fact that a system does substantially exist in history; all the proofs you may bring of the obscurities or the unsystematic character of Scripture cannot touch this independent fact; were Scripture lost to us, that fact would remain. You have your choice to say that Scripture does, or does not agree with it. If you think it actually *disagrees* with Scripture, then you have your choice between concluding either that you are mistaken in so thinking, or that although this system comes to us, as it does, on the same evidence with Scripture, yet it is not divine, while Scripture is. If, however, you consider that it merely teaches things *additional* to Scripture, then you have no excuse for not admitting it in addition to Scripture. And if it teaches things but *indirectly taught* in Scripture, then you must admit it as an interpreter or comment upon Scripture. But, whether you say it is an accordant or a discordant witness, whether the supplement, complement, or interpreter of Scripture, there it stands, that consistent harmonious

system of faith and worship, as in the beginning; and, if history be allowed any weight in the discussion, it is an effectual refutation of Latitudinarianism. It is a fact concurring with the common sense of mankind and with their wants. Men want a dogmatic system; and behold in the beginning of Christianity, and from the beginning to this day, there it stands. This is so remarkable a coincidence that it will always practically weigh against Latitudinarian views. Nor does it avail to say, that there were additions made to it in the course of years, or that the feeling of a want may have given rise to it; for what was added after, whatever it was, could not create that to which it was added; and I say that first of all, before there was a time for the harmonious uniform expansion of a system, for the experience and supply of human wants, for the inroads of innovation, and the growth of corruption, and with all fair allowance for differences of opinion as to how much is primitive, or when and where this or that particular fact is witnessed, or what interpretation is to be given to particular passages in historical documents,—from the first a system exists. And we have no right to refuse it, merely on the plea that *we* do not see all the parts of it in Scripture, or that we think some parts of it to be inconsistent with Scripture; for even though some parts were not there, this would not disprove its truth; and even though some parts seemed contrary to what is there, this appearance might after all be caused simply by our own incompetency to judge of Scripture.

But perhaps it may here be urged, that I have proved too much; that is, it may be asked, “If this system is so natural, and appears *at once* in the writings of the Apostles’ disciples, as in the Epistles of St. Ignatius, *how is it* that it is not in the writings of the Apostles themselves? how does it happen that it does appear in the short Epistles of Ignatius, and does not in the Epistles of St. Paul? so that the tendency of the foregoing argument is to disparage the Apostles’ teaching, as showing that it is *not* adapted, and Ignatius’s *is* adapted to our wants.” But the answer to this is simple; for though the Apostles’ writings do not on their surface display the system, they certainly do express (as I have said) a recognition both of its existence and of its principle. If, then, in spite of this there is no Apostolic system of faith and worship, all we shall have proved by our argument is, that the

Apostles are inconsistent with themselves; that they recognize the need of a system, and do not provide one. How it is they do *not* draw down a system, while they nevertheless both recognize its principle and witness its existence, has often been discussed, and perhaps I may say something incidentally on the subject hereafter. Here, I do but observe, that on the one side of the question we have the human heart expecting, Scripture sanctioning, history providing,—a coincidence of three witnesses; and on the other side only this, Scripture *not actually* providing in form and fulness what it sanctions.

Lastly, I would observe that much as Christians have differed in these latter or in former ages, as to what *is* the true faith and what the true worship and discipline of CHRIST, yet one and all have held that Christianity is dogmatic and social, that creeds and forms are not to be dispensed with. There has been an uninterrupted maintenance of this belief from the beginning of Christianity down to this day, with exceptions so partial and ephemeral as not to deserve notice. I conclude, then, either that the notion of forms and creeds, and of unity in them, is so natural to the human mind as to be spontaneously produced and cherished in every age; or that there has been a strong external reason for its having been so cherished, whether in authority or in argumentative proof, or in the force of tradition. In whatever way we take it, it is a striking evidence in favour of dogmatic religion, and against that unreal form, or rather that mere dream of religion, which pretends that modes of thinking and social conduct are all one and all the same in the eyes of GOD, supposing each of us to be sincere in his own.

Dismissing, then, Latitudinarianism once for all, as untenable, and taking for granted that there *is* a system of religion revealed in the Gospel, I come, as I have already stated several times, to one or other of two conclusions: either that it is not all in Scripture, but part in tradition only, with the Romanists,—or with the English Church, that though it *is* in tradition, yet it can also be gathered from the communications of Scripture. As to the non-descript system of religion now in fashion, that nothing is to be believed but what is clearly in Scripture, that all its own doctrines are clearly there and none other, and that as to history it is no

matter what it says and what it does not say, except so far that it must be used to prove the canonicity of Scripture, this will come before us again and again in the following Lectures. Suffice that it has all the external extravagance of Latitudinarianism without its internal consistency. It is inconsistent because it is morally better: Latitudinarianism is consistent because it is intellectually deeper. Both, however, are mere theories in theology, and ought to be discarded by serious men. We must give up our ideal notions, and resign ourselves to facts. We must take things as we find them, as God has given them. We did not make them, we cannot alter them, though we are sometimes tempted to think it very hard that we cannot. We must submit to them instead of quarrelling with them. We must submit to the indirectness of Scripture, unless we think it wiser and better to become Romanists; and we must employ our minds rather (if so be) in accounting for the fact, than in excepting against it.

LECTURE III.

ON THE GENERAL STRUCTURE OF THE BIBLE
AS A RECORD OF FAITH.

ENOUGH perhaps has now been said by way of opening the subject before us. The state of the case, I conceive to be as I have said. The structure of Scripture is such, so irregular and immethodical, that either we must hold that the Gospel doctrine or message is not contained in Scripture (and if so, either that there is no message at all given, or that it is given elsewhere, out of Scripture), or, as the alternative, we must hold that it is but indirectly and covertly recorded there, under the surface. Moreover, since the great bulk of professing Christians in this country, whatever their particular denomination may be, do consider, agreeably with the English Church, that there *are* doctrines revealed (though they differ what), and that they are *in Scripture*, they must undergo, and resign themselves to an inconvenience which certainly does attach to our Creed, and, as they often suppose, to it alone, that of having to infer from Scripture, to prove circuitously, to argue at disadvantage, to leave difficulties, and to seem to others weak or fanciful reasoners. They must leave off their exceptions against our proofs of our doctrines not being stronger in their own proofs themselves. No matter whether they are Lutherans or Calvinists, Wesleyans or Independents, they have to wind their way through obstacles, in and out, avoiding some things and catching at others, like men making their way in a wood, or over broken ground. If they believe in consubstantiation with Luther, or in the absolute predestination of individuals, with Calvin, they have very few texts to produce which, in argument, will appear even specious. Or how, if Wesleyans, do they prove that the Gospel sanctions an order of ministers, yet allows man to choose them? Where do they find a precedent in Scripture for a self-chosen ministry? or if no mere succession, and no mere human appointment are contemplated by them, where has the Gospel promised them infallible evidence from GOD, whom He will have as His ministers one by one? And still more plainly have these

religionists strong texts against them, whatever be their sect or persuasion. If they be Lutherans, they have to encounter St. James's declaration, that "by works a man is justified, and not by faith only¹;" if Calvinists, God's solemn declaration, that "as He liveth, He willeth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should live?" if a Wesleyan, St. Paul's precept to "obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves²;" if Independents, the same Apostle's declaration concerning the Church's being "the pillar and ground of the Truth;" if Zuinglians, they have to explain how Baptism is not really and in fact connected with regeneration, considering it is always connected with it in Scripture; if Friends, why they allow women to speak in their assemblies, contrary to St. Paul's plain prohibition; if Erastians, why they forget our Saviour's plain declaration, that His kingdom is not of this world; if maintainers of the ordinary secular Christianity, what they make of the woe denounced against riches, and the praise bestowed on celibacy. Hence, none of these sects and persuasions has any right to ask the question of which they are so fond, "Where in the Bible are the Church doctrines to be found? *Where* in Scripture, for instance, is Apostolical succession, or the priestly office, or the power of absolution?" This is with them a favourite mode of dealing with us; and I in return ask them. *Where* are we told that the Bible contains all that is necessary to salvation? Where are we told that the New Testament is inspired? Where are we told that justification is by faith only? Where are we told that every individual who is elected is saved? Where are we told that we may leave the Church, if we think its ministers do not preach the Gospel? or, Where are we told that we may make ministers for ourselves?

All Protestants, then, in this country, Churchmen, Presbyterians, Baptists, Arminians, Calvinists, Lutherans, Friends, Independents, Wesleyans, Unitarians, and whatever other sect claims the Protestant name, all who consider the Bible as the one standard of faith, and much more if they think it the standard of morals and discipline, are more or less in this difficulty,—the more so, the larger they consider the contents of

¹ James ii. 24.

² Heb. xiii. 7.

revelation, and the less, the scantier; but they cannot escape from it altogether, except by falling back into utter scepticism and latitudinarianism, or on the other hand going on into Romanism. Nor does it rid them of their difficulties, as I have said more than once, to allege, that all points that are incapable of clear Scripture proof are the peculiarities of each sect; so that if all protestants were to agree to put out of sight their respective peculiarities, they would then have a creed set forth distinctly, clearly, and adequately, in Scripture. For take that single instance which I have referred to in a former Lecture, the doctrine of the Trinity. Is this to be considered as a mere peculiarity or no? Apparently a peculiarity; for on the one hand it is not held by all Protestants, and next, it is not brought out in form in Scripture. First, the word Trinity is not in Scripture. Next I ask, *How* many of the verses of the Athanasian Creed are distinctly set down in Scripture? and further, take particular portions of the doctrine, viz. that CHRIST is equal to the FATHER, that the HOLY GHOST is GOD, or that the HOLY GHOST proceedeth from the FATHER and the SON, and consider the kind of texts, and the modes of using them, by which the proof is built up. Yet is there a more sacred, a more vital doctrine in the circle of the articles of faith than this? Let then no one take refuge and comfort in the idea that he will be what is commonly called an orthodox Protestant,—I mean, that he will be just this and no more; that he will admit the doctrine of the Trinity, but not that of the Apostolical succession,—of the Atonement, but not of the Lord's Supper,—of the influences of grace, but not of Baptism. This is an impossible position: it is shutting one eye, and looking with the other. Shut both or open both. Deny that there is any necessary doctrine in Scripture, or consent to prove indirectly from Scripture what you at present disbelieve.

The whole argument, however, depends of course on the certainty of the fact assumed, viz. Scripture is unsystematic and irregular in its communications to the extent to which I have supposed it to be. To this point, therefore, I shall, in the Lectures which follow, direct attention. Here, however, I shall confine myself to a brief argument to show that under the circumstances it *must* be so. I observe then as follows:—

In what way inspiration is compatible with that personal agency on the

part of its instruments, which the composition of the Bible evidences, we know not; but if any thing is certain, it is this,—that, though the Bible is inspired, and therefore, in one sense, written by GOD, yet very large portions of it, if not far the greater part of it, are written in as free and unconstrained a manner, and (apparently) with as little consciousness of a supernatural dictation or restraint, on the part of His earthly instruments, as if He had had no share in the work. As GOD rules the will, yet the will is free,—as He rules the course of the world, yet men conduct it,—so He has inspired the Bible, yet men have written it. Whatever else is true about it, this is true,—that we may speak of the history, or mode of its composition, as truly as of that of other books; we may speak of its writers having an object in view, being influenced by circumstances, being anxious, taking pains, purposely omitting or introducing things, leaving things incomplete, or supplying what others had so left. Though the Bible be inspired, it has all such characteristics as might attach to a book uninspired,—the characteristics of dialect and style, the distinct effects of times and places, youth and age, of moral and intellectual character; and I insist on this, lest in what I am going to say, I seem to forget (what I do not forget), that in spite of its human form, it has in it the spirit and the mind of God.

I observe, then, that Scripture is not one book; it is a great number of writings, of various persons, living at different times, put together into one, and assuming its existing form as if casually and by accident. It is as if you were to seize the papers or correspondence of leading men in any school of philosophy or science, which were never designed for publication, and bring them out in one volume. You would find probably in the collection so resulting many papers begun and not finished; some parts systematic and didactic, but the greater part made up of hints or of notices, which assumed first principles instead of asserting them, or of discussions upon particular points which happened to require their attention. I say the doctrines, the first principles, the rules, the objects of the school, would be taken for granted, alluded to, implied, not stated. You would have some trouble to get at them you would have many repetitions, many hiatuses, many things which looked like contradictions; you would have to work your way through heterogeneous materials, and after your best efforts,

there would be much hopelessly obscure; or, on the other hand, you might look in vain in such a casual collection for some particular opinions which the writers were known nevertheless to have held, nay to have insisted on.

Such, I conceive, with limitations presently to be noticed, is the structure of the Bible. Parts, indeed, are more regular than others: parts of the Pentateuch form a regular history. The book of Job is a regular narrative; some prophecies are regular, one or two epistles; but even these portions are for the most part incorporated in or with writings which are not regular; and we never can be sure beforehand what we shall find, or what we shall not find. They are the writings of men who had already been introduced into a knowledge of the unseen world and the society of Angels, and reported what they had seen and heard; and they are full of allusions to a system, a course of things, which was ever before their minds, which was too awful and too familiar to be described minutely, which we do not know, and which these allusions, such as they are, but partially disclose to us. Try to make out the history of Rome from the extant letters of some of its great politicians, and from the fragments of ancient annals, histories, laws, inscriptions, and medals, and you will have something like the matter of fact, viewed antecedently, as regards the structure of the Bible, and the task of deducing the true system of religion from it.

This being, as I conceive, really the state of the case in substance, I own it seems to me, *judging antecedently*, very improbable indeed, that it *should* contain the whole of the revealed word of God. I own that in my own mind, at first sight, I am naturally led to look not only there, but *elsewhere* for notices of sacred truth; and I consider that they who say that the Bible *does* contain the whole revelation, (as I do say myself), that they and I, that we, have what is called the *onus probandi*, the burden and duty of proving the point, on our side. Till we prove that it does contain the whole of revealed truth, it is natural, from the *prima facie* appearance of Scripture, to suppose that it does not. Why, for instance, should a certain number of letters, more or less private, written by St. Paul and others to particular persons or bodies, contain the whole of what the SPIRIT taught them? We do not look into Scripture for a complete history of the secular matters which it mentions; why should we look for a complete account of *religious*

truth? You will say that its writers wrote in order to communicate religious truth; true, but not *all* religious truth: that is the point. They did not sit down with a design to commit to paper all they had to say on the whole subject, all they could say about the Gospel; but they either wrote to correct some particular error of a particular time or place, or to “stir up the pure minds” of their brethren, or in answer to questions, or to give directions for conduct, or on indifferent matters. For instance, St. Luke says he wrote his Gospel that Christians might know “the certainty of the things in which they had been instructed.” Does this imply he told all that was to be told? Any how he did *not*; for the other Evangelists add to his narrative. It is then far from being a self-evident truth that Scripture must contain all the revealed counsel of God; rather the probability lies the other way at first sight.

Nevertheless, at least as regards matters of faith, it does (as we in common with all Protestants hold) contain all that is necessary for salvation; it has been *overruled* to do so by Him who inspired it. By parallel acts of power, He both secretly inspired the books, and secretly formed them into a perfect rule or canon. I shall not prove what we all admit, but I state it, to prevent misapprehension. If asked *how* we know this to be the case, I answer, that the early Church thought so, which must have known. And, if this answer does not please, the inquirer may look out for a better as he can. I know of no other. I require no other. For our own Church it is enough, as the Homilies show. It is enough that Scripture has been overruled to contain the whole Christian faith, and that the early Church so taught, though its form at first sight might lead to an opposite conclusion. And this being once proved, we see in this state of things an analogy to God’s providence in other cases. How confused is the course of the world, yet it is the working out of a moral system, and is overruled in every point by God’s will! Or, take the structure of the earth; mankind are placed in fertile and good dwelling-places, with hills and valleys, springs and fruitful fields, with metals and marbles, and other minerals, and coal, and seas, and forests; yet this beautiful and fully furnished surface is the result of (humanly speaking) a series of accidents, of gradual influences and sudden convulsions, of a long history of change and chance.

Yet while we admit, or rather maintain, that the Bible is the one standard of faith, there is no reason why we should suppose the overruling hand of GOD to go further than we are told that it has gone. That He has overruled so far as to make the apparently casual writings of the Apostles a canon of faith, is no reason that He should have given them a systematic structure, or a didactic form, or a completeness in their subject-matter. So far as we have no proof that the Bible is more than at first sight it seems to be, so far the antecedent probability tells against its being more. Both the history of its composition and its internal structure are against its being a complete depository of the Divine Will, unless the early Church says that it is. Now the early Church does not tell us this. It does not seem to have considered that a complete code of *morals*, or of Church *government*, or of *rites*, or of *discipline*, is in Scripture; and therefore so far the original improbability remains in force. Again, this antecedent improbability tells, even in the case of the doctrines of faith, as far as this, that it reconciles us to the necessity of gaining them *indirectly* from Scripture, for it is a near thing (if I may so speak) that they are in Scripture at all; the wonder is, that they are *all* there; humanly judging, they would not be there but for GOD's interposition; and, therefore, since they are there by a sort of accident, it is not strange they shall be but latent there, and only indirectly producible thence. GOD effects His greatest ends by apparent accidents. As in respect to this earth, we do not find minerals or plants arranged within it as in a cabinet,—as we do not find the materials for building laid out in order, stone, timber, and iron,—as metal is found in ore, and timber on the tree,—so we must not be surprised, but think it great gain, though we find revealed doctrines scattered about high and low in Scripture, in places expected and unexpected. It could not be otherwise, the same circumstances being supposed. Supposing fire, water, and certain chemical and electrical agents in free operation, the earth's precious contents could not be found arranged in order and in the light of day without a miracle; and so without a miracle (which we are no where told to expect) we could not possibly find in Scripture all sacred truths in their place, each taught clearly and fully, with its suitable prominence, its varied bearings, its developed meaning, supposing Scripture to be, what it is, the work of various

independent minds in various times and places, and under various circumstances. And so much on what might reasonably be expected from the nature of the case.

LECTURE IV.

MODE IN WHICH FACTS OF HISTORY ARE CONTAINED
IN SCRIPTURE.

I HAVE above insisted much upon this point,—that if Scripture contains any religious system at all, it *must* contain it covertly, and teach it obscurely, because it is altogether most immethodical and irregular in its structure; and therefore, that the indirectness of the Scripture proof of the Catholic system is not an objection to its cogency, except as it is an objection to the Scripture proof of every other system; and accordingly that we must take our choice (Romanism being for the time put aside,) between utter Latitudinarianism and what may be called the Method of Indirect Consequences. Now this argument depends evidently on the fact, that Scripture is thus unsystematic in its structure,—a fact which it would not be necessary to dwell upon, so obvious is it, except that examining into it will be found much to increase its appositeness as an argument, and to throw light upon the whole subject of Scripture teaching. Something, accordingly, I have already observed on the subject, from antecedent considerations, and now I proceed, in the course of several Lectures, to inquire into the matter of fact.

I shall refer to Scripture as a record both of historical events and of general doctrine, with a view of exhibiting the peculiar character of its structure, the unostentatious, indirect, or covert manner, which it adopts for whatever reason in its statements of whatever kind. This, I say, will throw light on the subject in hand; for so it is, directly we come to see that any thing, which has already attracted our notice in one way, holds good in others, that there is a certain law, according to which it occurs uniformly under various circumstances, we gain a satisfaction from the very coincidence, and seem to find a reason for it in the very circumstance that it does proceed on a rule or law. Even in matters of conduct, in which an external and invariable standard might seem to interfere, the avowal, “It is my way,” “I always do so,” is often given and accepted, as a satisfactory

account of a person's mode of acting. Order implies a principle; order in God's written word implies a principle or design in it. If I show that the Bible is written throughout with this absence of method, I seem to find an order in the very disorder, and hence become reconciled to it in particular instances. That it is inartificial and obscure as regards the relation of facts, seems to explain its being so in statement of doctrines; that it is so as regards one set of doctrines, seems to account for its being so as regards another. Thus, the argument from analogy, which starts with the profession of being only *negative*, ends with being *positive*, when drawn out into details; such being the difference between its abstract pretension and its actual and practical force.

In the present Lecture I propose to mention some instances of the unstudied and therefore perplexed character of Scripture, as regards its relation of *facts*; and to apply them, as I go, to the point under discussion, viz. the objection brought against the Church doctrines from the mode in which they too are stated in Scripture; and I shall begin without further preface.

An illustration occurs in the very beginning of the Bible. However we account for it, with which I am not concerned, you will find that the narrative of the Creation, commenced in the first chapter, ends at the third verse of the second chapter; and then begins a fresh narrative, carrying on the former, but going back a little way. The difference is marked, as is well known, by the use of the word “GOD” in the former narrative, and of “LORD GOD” in the latter. According to the former, GOD is said to create man “in His own image; *male and female* created He them” on the sixth day. According to the latter, the LORD GOD created Adam, and placed him in the garden of Eden, to dress and keep it, and gave him the command about the forbidden fruit, and brought the beasts to him; and *afterwards*, on his finding the want of a helpmeet, caused him to sleep, and took one of his ribs, and thence made woman. This is an instance of the unsolicitous freedom and want of system of the sacred narrative. The second account, which is an expansion of the first, is in the letter opposed to it. Now supposing the narrative contained in the second chapter was *not* in Scripture, but was the received Church account of man's creation, it is

plain not only would it not be in, but it could not even be gathered or proved *from* the first chapter; which makes the argument all the stronger. Evidently not a pretence could be made of *proving* from the first chapter the account of the dressing the garden, the naming the brutes, the sleep, and the creation of Eve from a rib. And most persons in this day would certainly have disbelieved it. Why? Because it wanted *authority*? No. There would be some sense in such a line of argument, but they would not go into the question of authority. Whether or not it had Catholic tradition in its favour, whether Catholic tradition were or were not a sufficient guarantee of its truth, would not even enter into their minds, they would not go so far, they would disbelieve it at once on two grounds; first, they would say Scripture was silent about it, nay, that it contradicted it, that it spoke of man and woman being created both together on the sixth day; and, secondly, they would say it was incongruous and highly improbable, and that the account of Adam's rib sounded like an idle tradition. If (I say) they set it aside for want of evidence of its truth, that is a fair ground; but I repeat, their reason for setting it aside (can it be doubted?) would be, that it was *inconsistent* with Scripture in actual statement, and *unlike* it in tone. But it *is* in Scripture. It seems then that a statement may seem at variance with a certain passage of Scripture, may bear an improbable exterior, and yet come from GOD. Is it so strange, so contrary to the Scripture account of the institution, that the LORD's Supper should be a sacrifice, as it is inconsistent with the first of Genesis, and antecedently improbable, that the second chapter also should be true? No one ever professed to deduce the second chapter from the first: all Anglo-Catholics profess to prove the sacrificial character of the LORD's Supper from Scripture. Thus the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist is not unscriptural, unless the Book of Genesis is (what is impossible, GOD forbid!) self-contradictory.

Again, take the following account, in the beginning of the fifth chapter of Genesis, and say whether, if this only had come down to us, we should not, with our present notions, have utterly disallowed the account of Eve's creation, the temptation, the fall, and the history of Cain and Abel:—"This is the book of the generation of Adam. In the day that GOD created man, in the likeness of GOD created He him; male and female created He them;

and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created. *And* Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image, and called his name Seth." If the contrast between GOD's image and Adam's image be insisted on, then I would have it observed, how indirect and concealed it is.

Again: I believe I am right in saying that we are nowhere told in Scripture, certainly not in the Old Testament, that the Serpent that tempted Eve was the Devil. The nearest approach to an intimation of it is in the last book of the Bible, where the devil is called "that old serpent." Can we be surprised that other truths are but obscurely conveyed in Scripture, when this hardly escapes (as I may say) omission?

Again: we have two accounts of Abraham denying his wife also, one instance of Isaac being betrayed into the same weakness. Now supposing we had only one or two of these in Scripture, and the remaining by tradition, should we not have utterly rejected the latter as a perverted account? On the one hand, we should have said it was inconceivable that *two* such passages should occur in Abraham's life; or, on the other, that it was most unlikely that both Abraham and Isaac should have gone to Gerar, in the time of a king of the same name, Abimelech. Yet because St. James says, "Confess your faults *one to another*" if we read that in the early Church there was an usage of secret confession made *to the priest*, we are apt to consider this latter practice, which our Communion Service recognizes, as a mere perversion or corruption of the Scripture command, and that the words of St. James are a positive argument against it.

In Deuteronomy we read that Moses fasted for forty days in the Mount, *twice*; in Exodus only one fast is mentioned. Now supposing Deuteronomy were not Scripture, but merely part of the Prayer Book, should we not say it was in this instance evidently mistaken? This is what men do as regards Episcopacy. Deacons are spoken of by St. Paul in his Epistles to Timothy and Titus, and Bishops; but no third order in direct and express terms. The Church considers that there are two kinds of Bishops, or, as the word signifies, overseers; those who have the oversight of single parishes, or priests, and those who have the oversight of many together, or what are now specially called Bishops. People say, "Here is a contradiction to

Scripture, which speaks of two orders, not of three." Yes, just as really a contradiction as the chapter in Deuteronomy is of the chapter in Exodus. But this again is to take far lower ground than we need; for we all contend that Episcopacy, even granting it is an addition to some passages of Scripture, yet is in accordance with others.

Again: in the history of Balaam we read, "GOD came unto Balaam at night, and said unto him, If the men come to call thee, rise up and go *with them*; but yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou speak."¹ Presently we read, "And GOD's anger was kindled, *because* he went; and the Angel of the LORD stood in the way for an adversary against him." Now supposing the former circumstance (the permission given him to go) was not in Scripture, but was only the received belief of the Church, would it not be at once rejected by most men as inconsistent with Scripture? And supposing a Churchman were to entreat objectors to consider the strong evidence in Catholic tradition for its truth, would not the answer be, "Do not tell us of evidence; we cannot give you a hearing; your statement is in plain contradiction to the inspired text, which says that GOD's *anger* was kindled. How then can He have told Balaam to go with the men? The matter stands to reason; we leave it to the private judgment of any unbiassed person. Sophistry indeed may try to reconcile the tradition with Scripture; but after all you are unscriptural, and we uphold the pure word of truth without glosses and refinements." Now, is not this just what is done in matters of doctrine? Thus, because our LORD represents the Father saying, in the parable of the Prodigal Son, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet," it is argued that this is inconsistent with the Church's usage, even supposing for argument's sake it has no Scripture sanction, of penance for sin.

Again: the Book of Deuteronomy, being a recapitulation of the foregoing Books, in an address to the Israelites, is in the position of the Apostolic Epistles. Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers being a more orderly and systematic account, are somewhat in the position of Catholic tradition.

¹ Numb. xxii. 20.

² Luke xv. 22.

Now Deuteronomy differs in some minute points from the former books. For example: in Exodus, the fourth commandment contains a reference to the creation of the world on the seventh day, as the reason of the institution of the Sabbath: in Deuteronomy, the same commandment refers it to the deliverance of the Israelites out of Egypt on that day. Supposing we had only the latter statement in Scripture, and supposing the former to be only the received doctrine of the Church, would not this former, that is, the statement contained in Exodus, that the Sabbatical rest was in memory of GOD's resting after the Creation, have seemed at once fanciful and unfounded? Would it not have been said, "Why do you have recourse to the mysticism of types? here is a plain intelligible reason for keeping the sabbath holy, viz. the deliverance from Egypt. Be content with this:— besides, your view is grossly carnal and anthropomorphic. How can ALMIGHTY GOD be said to rest? And it is unscriptural; for Christ says, "My FATHER worketh hitherto, and I work." Now is it not a similar procedure to argue, that *since* the Holy Eucharist is a "communication of the body and blood of CHRIST," *therefore* it is not also a mysterious representation of His meritorious sacrifice in the sight of ALMIGHTY GOD?

Again: the Books of Samuel and Kings, compared with those of Chronicles, would supply many instances in point, of which I select a few. For instance:—

In 2 Kings xv. we read of the reign of Azariah, or Uzziah, king of Judah. It is said, "he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father Amaziah had done;" and then that "the Lord smote the king, so that he was a leper unto the day of his death;" and we are referred for "the rest of the acts of Azariah, and all that he did," to "the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah." We turn to the Chronicles and find an account of the cause of the visitation which came upon him. "When he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction for he transgressed against the LORD his GOD, and went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense upon the altar of incense. And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of the LORD that were valiant men. And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him. It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the LORD, but to the priests the sons of

Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary, for thou hast trespassed; neither shall it be for thine honour from the LORD GOD. Then Uzziah was wroth, and had a censer in his hand to burn incense; and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, from beside the incense altar. And Azariah, the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from thence; yea, himself hasted also to go out, because the LORD had smitten him. And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house, being a leper¹.”

Now nothing can be more natural than this joint narrative. The one is brief, but refers to the other for the details; and the other gives them. Suppose, then, a captious mind were to dwell upon the remarkable *silence* of the former,—magnify it as an objection,—and on the other hand should allude to the tendency of the second narrative to uphold the priesthood, and should attribute it to such a design. Should we think such an argument valid, or merely ingenious, clever, amusing, yet not trustworthy? I suppose the latter; yet this instance is very near a parallel to the case as it stands, between the New Testament and the doctrine of the Church. For instance, after St. Paul has declared some plain truths to the Corinthians, he says, “Be ye followers of me; *for this cause*, have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, *who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways*, which be in CHRIST, as I teach every where in every Church².” He refers them to an authority beyond and besides his epistle,—to Timothy, nay to his doctrine as he had taught in every Church. If then we can ascertain, for that I here assume, what was that doctrine taught every where in the Church, we have ascertained that to which St. Paul refers us; and if that doctrine, so ascertained, adds many things in detail to what he has written, developes one thing, and gives a different impression of others, it is no more than such a reference might lead us to expect, it is the very thing he prepares us for. It as little therefore

¹ 2 Chron. xxvi. 16–21.

² 1 Cor. iv. 17.

contradicts what is written, as the books of Chronicles contradict the book of Kings; and if it appears to favour the priesthood more than St. Paul does, this is no more than can be objected to the Chronicles compared with the Kings.

Again, after, not *teaching*, but *reminding* them about the LORD’S Supper, he adds, “*the rest* will I set in order when I come.” When then we find the Church has always considered that Holy Sacrament to be not only a feast or supper, but in its fulness to contain a sacrifice, and to require a certain Liturgical form, how does this contradict the inspired text, which plainly signifies that something else is to come besides what it has said itself? So far from its being strange that the Church brings out and fills up St. Paul’s outline, it would be very strange if it did not. Yet it is not unusual to ascribe these additional details to priestcraft, and without proof to call them corruptions and innovations, in the very spirit in which freethinkers have before now attributed the books of Chronicles to the Jewish priests, and accused them of bigotry and intolerance.

It is remarkable how frequent are the allusions in the Epistles to *other* Apostolic teaching beyond themselves, i. e. besides the written authority. For instance; in the same chapter, “I *praise* you brethren, that ye *remember* me in all things, and *keep the traditions*, as I delivered them to you.” Again, “I have also received,” or had by tradition, “of the LORD that which also I delivered unto you,” that is, which I gave by tradition unto you. This giving and receiving was not in writing. Again, “If any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of GOD:” he appeals to the received custom of the Church. Again, “I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand,... for I delivered unto you (gave by tradition) first of all that which I also received,” (by tradition). Again, “Stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or our epistle¹.” Such passages prove, as all will grant, that, at the time there were means of knowledge distinct from Scripture, and containing information in addition to it. When, then, we actually do find in the existing Church system of

¹ 1 Cor. xi. 2. 16. 23; xv. 1–3. 2 Thess ii. 15.

those times, as historically recorded, such additional information, that information may be Apostolic or it may be not; but however this is, the mere circumstance that it *is* in addition, is no proof against its being Apostolic; that it is extra-scriptural is no proof that it is unscriptural, for St. Paul himself tells us in Scripture, that there are truths not in Scripture. And we may as fairly object to the books of Chronicles that they are an addition to the books of Kings. In saying this, I am not entering into the question which lies between us and the Romanists, whether these further truths are substantive additions or developments, whether in faith or in conduct and discipline.

Further: the Chronicles pass over David's great sin, and Solomon's fall; and they insert Manasseh's repentance. The account of Manasseh's reign is given at length in the second book of Kings; it is too long of course to cite, but the following are some of its particulars. Manasseh¹ "used enchantments and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards;" he "seduced them to do more evil than did the nations whom the LORD destroyed before the children of Israel." "Moreover Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another." Afterwards, when Josiah had made his reforms, the sacred writer adds², "Notwithstanding the LORD turned not from the *fierceness of His great wrath* wherewith His anger was kindled against Judah, *because* of all the provocations that *Manasseh* had provoked him withal." And again in Jehoiakim's time³, "Surely, at the commandment of the LORD came this upon Judah, to remove them out of His sight for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he did; and also for the innocent blood that he shed; for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, which the LORD *would not pardon*." And again in the book of Jeremiah⁴, "I will cause them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth, *because of Manasseh*, the son of Hezekiah king of Judah, for that which he did in Jerusalem." Who would

¹. 2 Kings xxi.

². 2 Kings xxiii. 26.

³. 2 Kings xxiv. 3, 4.

⁴. Jer. xv. 4.

conjecture with such passages of Scripture before him, that Manasseh repented before his death, and was forgiven; but to complete the *illusion*, (as it may be called,) the account of his reign in the book of Kings ends thus:—"Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh, and all that he did, and *his sin that he sinned*, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?" not a word about his repentance. Might it not then be plausibly argued that the books of Kings precisely limited and defined *what* the Chronicles were to relate, "*the sin that he sinned*;" that this was to be the theme of the history, its outline and ground plan, and that their absolute silence about his repentance was a cogent, positive argument that he did not repent? How little do they prepare one for the following most affecting record of him? "When he was in affliction, he besought the LORD his GOD, and humbled himself greatly before the GOD of his fathers, and prayed unto Him. And He was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD He was GOD.... And he took away the strange gods, and the idol out of the house of the LORD, and the altars that he had built in the mount of the house of the LORD, and in Jerusalem, and cast them out of the city, &c.... Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh, and his prayer unto his GOD, and the words of the seers that spake to him in the name of the LORD GOD of Israel, behold they are written in the book of the kings of Israel.... So Manasseh slept with his fathers²." If then the books of Kings were the only canonical account, and the books of Chronicles part of the Apocrypha, would not the latter be pronounced an unscriptural record, a legend and a tradition of men, not because the evidence for their truth was not sufficient, but as if they contradicted the books of Kings? at least, is not this what is done as regards the Church system of doctrine, as if it must be at variance with the New Testament, because it views the Gospel from a somewhat distinct point of view, and in a distinct light?

Again: the account given of Jehoash in the Kings is as follows³:—

¹. 2 Kings xxi.

². 2 Chron. xxxiii. 12—20.

³. 2 Kings xii.

“Jehoash did that which was right in the sight of the LORD *all his days, wherein* Jehoiada the priest instructed him.” And it ends thus, “His servants arose and made a conspiracy, and slew Joash in the house of Millo:” there is no hint of any great defection or miserable ingratitude on his part, though, as it turns out on referring to Chronicles, the words “all his days wherein,” &c. are significant. In the Chronicles we learn that *after* good Jehoiada’s death, whose wife had saved him from Athaliah, and who preserved for him his throne, he went and served groves and idols, and killed Zechariah the son of Jehoiada when he was raised up by the Spirit of GOD to protest. Judgments followed,—the Syrians, and then “great diseases,” and then assassination. Now, if the apparently simple words, “all the days wherein,” &c. are emphatic, why may not our Saviour’s words, “If thou bring thy gifts to the *altar*” be emphatic, or “If thou wouldst be *perfect*” suggest a doctrine which it does not exhibit?

Now let us proceed to the Gospels; a few instances must suffice.

Considering how great a miracle the raising of Lazarus is in itself, and how connected with our LORD’s death, how it is that the three first Gospels do not mention it? They speak of the chief priests taking counsel to put him to death, but give no reason; rather they seem to assign other reasons, as the parables he spoke against them¹. At length St. John mentions the miracle and its consequences. Things important then may be true, though particular inspired documents do not mention them. As the raising of Lazarus is true, though not contained at all in the first three Gospels, so the gift of consecrating the Eucharist may have been committed by CHRIST to the priesthood, though only indirectly taught in any of the four. Will you say, I am arguing against our own Church, which says that Scripture “contains all things necessary to be believed to salvation?” Doubtless, Scripture *contains* all things necessary to be *believed*; but there may be things *contained* which are not *on the surface*, and things which belong to the *ritual* and not to *belief*. Points of faith may lie *under* the surface, points of observance need not be in Scripture *at all*. The consecrating power is a point of ritual, yet it is indirectly taught in Scripture, though not brought

¹ Matt. xxi. 45.

out, when CHRIST said, “Do this,” for He spake to the Apostles who were priests, not to His disciples generally.

Again: I just now mentioned the apparent repetition in Genesis of the account of Abraham’s denying his wife; a remark which applies to the parallel miracles which occur in the histories of Elijah and Elisha, as the raising of the dead child and the multiplication of the oil. Were only one of the parallel instances in Scripture, we should certainly call the other a corruption or distorted account; and not without some show of reason, till other and better reasons were brought. And in like manner as regards the Gospels, did the account of the feeding of the 4000 with seven loaves rest on the testimony of Antiquity, most of us would have said, “You see how little you can trust the fathers; it was not 4000 with seven loaves, but 5000 with five.” Again, should we not have pronounced that the discourses in Luke vi. xi. and xii., if they came to us through the fathers, were the same only in a corrupt form as the Sermon on the Mount in Matt, v–vii. and as xxiii.? Nay, we should have seized, for instance, on Luke xi. 41, “But rather give alms of such things as ye have, and behold *all things are clean* unto you,” as a symptom of incipient Popery, a mystery already working. Yes, our Saviour’s own sacred words (I fear too truly) would have been seized on by some of us as the signs of the dawn of Anti-christ. This is a most miserable thought.

Again: St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke, say, that Simon of Cyrene bore CHRIST’s cross; St. John, that CHRIST Himself bore it. Both might be true, and both of course were true. He bore it part of the way, and Simon part. Yet I conceive, did we find it was the tradition of the Church that Simon bore it, we should decide, without going into the evidence, that this was a gloss upon the pure scriptural statement. So, in like manner, even supposing that, when St. Paul says, “Ye do *show forth* the LORD’s death till He come,” he meant, which I do not grant, by “show forth,” preach, remind each other of, or commemorate among yourselves, and nothing more, (which I repeat I do not grant,) even then it may be that the Holy Eucharist is also a remembrance in GOD’s sight, a pleading *before Him* the merits of CHRIST’s death, and so far a propitiatory offering, though this view of it were only contained in the immemorial usage of the Church, and

were no point of necessary faith contained in Scripture.

Again: Judas is represented as hanging himself in St. Matthew, yet in the Acts as falling headlong, and his bowels gushing out. I do not mean to say, of course, that these accounts are irreconcilable even by us; but is the difference wider than this, which exists between the explicit Scripture statement that confirmation imparted miraculous gifts, and the Church view, not clearly brought out in Scripture, that it is also an ordinary rite conferring ordinary gifts?

We know how difficult it is to reconcile the distinct accounts of the occurrences which took place at the Resurrection with each other, and our LORD's appearances to His disciples. For instance: according to Matt. xxviii., it might seem that CHRIST did not appear to His disciples till He met them in the mountain in Galilee; but in St. Luke and St. John His first appearance was on the evening of the day of Resurrection. Again: in the Gospels according to St. Mark and St. Luke, the Ascension seems to follow immediately on the Resurrection; but in the Acts our LORD is declared to have shown Himself to His disciples for forty days. These forty days are a blank in two Gospels. And in like manner, even though Scripture be considered to be altogether *silent* as to the intermediate state, and to pass from the mention of death to that of the judgment, there is nothing in this circumstance to disprove the Church's doctrine, (if there be *other* grounds for it,) that there *is* an intermediate state, and that it is important, that in it the souls of the faithful are purified and grow in grace, that they pray for us, and that our prayers benefit them.

Moreover, there is on the face of the New Testament plain evidence, that often it is but *referring* to the circumstances it relates, *as known*, and not narrating them. Thus St. Luke, after describing our LORD's consecration of the bread at supper time, adds immediately, "*Likewise* also the cup after supper, saying¹," &c. he does not narrate it in its place; he does but allude to it as a thing well known in the way of a note or memorandum. Again: St. Mark, in giving an account of St. John Baptist's martyrdom, says, "When his disciples heard of it, they came and took up his corpse and laid it in *the*

¹ Luke xxii. 20.

tomb¹." He is evidently speaking of an occurrence, and of a tomb which were well known to those for whom he wrote. If historical facts be thus merely alluded to, not taught, why may not doctrines also? Here again it will be replied, that Scripture was written to teach doctrine, not history; but such an answer will not hold good for many reasons. First, is it true that the Gospels were *not* written to teach us the *facts* of CHRIST's life? Next, is it true that the account of the institution of the LORD's Supper is a *mere abstract* historical narrative, and not recorded to direct our practice? Further, where is the proof that Scripture was intended to *teach* doctrine? This is one of the main points in dispute. But enough in answer to a gratuitous proposition; and enough indeed in exemplification of the characteristic of Scripture, which I proposed to consider.

¹ Mark vi. 29.

LECTURE V.

THE IMPRESSION CONVEYED BY THE STATEMENT OF FACTS AND DOCTRINES IN SCRIPTURE.

THE peculiarities, then, of the narrative portion of Scripture are such as I have described; it is unsystematic and unstudied; from which I would infer, that as Scripture relates *facts* without aiming at completeness or consistency, so it relates *doctrines* also; so that if it does after all include the whole system of doctrine (as we of the English Church hold), it is not from any purpose in the *writers* so to do, but from the overruling providence of GOD, overruling just so far as this, to secure a certain *result*, not a certain *mode* of attaining it,—not so as to interfere with their free and natural manner of writing, but imperceptibly guiding it; in other words, not securing their teaching against indirectness and irregularity, but against eventual incompleteness. From which it follows, that we must not be surprised to find in Scripture doctrines of the Gospel, however momentous, nevertheless taught obliquely, and capable only of circuitous proof;—such for instance as that of the Blessed Trinity,—and, among them, the especial Church doctrines, such as the Apostolical Succession, the efficacy of the Holy Eucharist, and the details of the Ritual.

The argument, stated in a few words, stands thus:—As distinct portions of Scripture itself are apparently inconsistent with one another, yet are not really so; therefore it does not follow that Scripture and Catholic doctrine are at variance with each other, even if they seem to be.

Now I propose to go over the ground again in somewhat a different way, not confining myself to illustrations from Scripture narrative, but taking others from Scripture teaching also, and that with a view of answering another form which the objection is likely to take.

The objection then may be put thus: —“We are told, it seems, in the Prayer Book, of a certain large and influential portion of doctrine, as constituting one great part of the Christian revelation, that is, of Sacraments, of Ministers, of Rites, of Observances; we are told that these

are the appointed *means* through which CHRIST’s gifts are conveyed to us. Now when we turn to Scripture, we see much indeed of those *gifts*, we read much of what He has done for us, by atoning for our sins, and much of what He does in us, that is, much about holiness, faith, peace, love, joy, hope, and obedience; but of those intermediate portions of the revelation coming between Him and us, of which the Church speaks, we read very little. Passages, indeed, are pointed out to us as if containing notices of them, but they are in our judgment singularly deficient and unsatisfactory; and that, either because the meaning assigned to them is not obvious and natural, but (as we think) strained, unexpected, recondite, and at best but possible, or because they are conceived in such plain, unpretending words, that we cannot imagine the writers meant to say any great thing in introducing them. On the other hand, a silence is observed in *particular* places, where one might expect the doctrines in question to be mentioned. Moreover, the *general* tone of the New Testament is to our apprehension a full disproof of them; that is, it is moral, rational, elevated, impassioned, but there is nothing of what maybe called a sacramental, ecclesiastical, mysterious tone in it.—For instance, let Acts xx. be considered:—‘Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread’—who would imagine, from such a mode of speaking, that this was a solemn, mysterious rite? The words ‘break bread’ are quite a familiar expression. Or again:—‘CHRIST our Passover is sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.’—Here, if the Church system were true, one might have expected that in mentioning ‘keeping the feast,’ a reference would be made to the LORD’s Supper, as being the great feast of CHRIST’s sacrifice; whereas, instead of the notion of any literal feast occurring to the sacred writer, a mental feast is the only one he proceeds to mention; and the unleavened bread of the Passover, instead of suggesting to his mind the sacred elements in the Eucharist, is to him but typical of something moral, ‘sincerity and truth.’”

“Or again: —‘Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the

world'.—This means, we are told, that CHRIST is with the present Church: *for* when Christ said 'with you,' He meant, with you and your descendants, and the Church, at present so-called, is descended from the Apostles and first disciples. How very covert, indirect, and unlikely a meaning!"

"Or, to take another instance: How is it proved that the Lord's Supper is generally necessary to salvation? By no part of Scripture except the sixth chapter of St. John. Now supposing that a person denies that this passage belongs to the Sacrament, how shall we prove it? And is it a very strong measure to deny it? Do not many most excellent men now alive deny it? have not many now dead denied it?"

This is the objection now to be considered, which lies, it would seem, in this; that, *after* considering what was said in the last Lecture, *after* all allowances on the score of the unstudied character of Scripture, there is still a serious difficulty remaining,—that the circumstance that the books of Scripture were written at different times and places, by different persons without concert, explains much,—explains why there is no system in it, why so much is out of place, why great truths come in by the bye, nay, would explain why others were left out, were there any such; but it does not explain the case as it stands, it does not explain why a doctrine is not introduced when there *is* a call for it, why a sacred writer should come close up to it, as it were, and yet pass by it; why, when he does introduce it, he should mention it so obscurely, as not at all to suggest it to an ordinary reader why, in short, the tone and character of his writing should be just contrary to his real meaning. This is the difficulty,—strongly, nay, almost extravagantly put, but still plausible,—on which I shall now set before you some remarks.

Now there are two attributes of the Bible throughout, which, taken together, seem to meet this difficulty,—attributes which, while at first sight in contrast, have a sort of necessary connexion, and set off each other,—simplicity and depth. Simplicity leads a writer to say things *without display*: and depth obliges him to use *inadequate words*. Scripture then treating of invisible things, at best must use words less than they; and, as if from a

feeling that *no* words can be worthy of them, it does not condescend to use even the strongest that exist, but often takes the plainest. The deeper the thought, the plainer the word; the word and thought diverge from each other. Again, it is a property of depth to lead a writer into verbal contradictions and it is a property of simplicity not to care to avoid them. Again, when a writer is deep, his half sentences, parentheses, clauses, nay his words, have a meaning in them independent of the context, and admit of exposition. There is nothing put in for ornament's sake, or for rhetoric; nothing put in for the mere sake of anything else, but all for its own sake; all as the expressions and shadows of great things, as seeds of thought, and with corresponding realities. Moreover, when a writer is deep, or again, when he is simple, he does not set about exhausting his subject in his remarks upon it; he says so much as is in point, no more; he does not go out of his way to complete a view or to catch at collateral thoughts: he has something before him which he aims at, and while he cannot help including much in his meaning which he does not aim at, he does aim at one thing, not at another. Now to illustrate these remarks, and to apply them.

1. One of the most remarkable characteristics of Scripture narrative, which I suppose all readers must have noticed, is the absence of expressions by which the reader can judge whether the events recorded are presented for praise or blame. A plain bare series of facts is drawn out; and whether for imitation or warning, often cannot be decided except by the context, or by the event, or by our general notions of propriety,—often not at all. The bearing and drift of the narrative are not given.—For instance, when the prophet Isaiah told Ahaz to ask a sign, he said, "I will not ask, neither *will I tempt* the Lord." Was this right or wrong?

When Elisha said to Joash, "Smite on the ground," the king "smote thrice and stayed." What was the fault of this? We should not know it was faulty but by the event, viz. that "the man of God was wroth with him, and said. Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times¹."

What was David's sin in numbering the people? Or take the account of

¹ Matt. xxviii. 20.

¹ 2 Kings xiii. 18, 19.

Moses striking the rock:—"And Moses took the rod from before the Lord, as He commanded him. And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels! must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also." I really do not think we should have discovered that there was any thing wrong in this, but for the comment that follows "Because ye believed Me not, to sanctify Me," &c.; though of course when we are told, we are able to point out where their fault lay.

And in that earlier passage in the history of Moses, when his zeal led him to smite the Egyptian, we are entirely left by the sacred narrative to determine for ourselves whether his action was good or bad, or how far one, how far the other. We are left to a comment, the comment of our own judgment, *external* to the inspired volume.

Or consider the account of Jeroboam's conduct from first to last in the revolt of the ten tribes; or that of the old prophet who dwelt in Samaria. Is it not plain that Scripture does not interpret itself?

Or consider the terms in which an exceedingly great impiety of Ahaz and the high priest is spoken of; and say, if we knew not the Mosaic law, or if we were not told in the beginning of the chapter what the character of Ahaz was, whether we should be able to determine, from the narrative itself, whether he was doing a right or a wrong, or an indifferent action. There is no epithet, no turn of sentence, which betrays God's view of his deed. It passes in the Scripture narrative, as in God's daily providence, silently. I allude to the following passage:—"And king Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, and saw an altar that was at Damascus: and king Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the fashion of the altar, and the pattern of it, according to all the workmanship thereof. And Urijah the priest built an altar according to all that king Ahaz had sent from Damascus: so Urijah the priest made it against king Ahaz came from Damascus. And when the king was come from Damascus, the king saw the

¹ Numb. xx. 9—11.

altar; and the king approached to the altar, and offered thereon. And he burned his burnt-offering and his meat-offering, and poured his drink-offering, and sprinkled the blood of his peace-offerings upon the altar. And he brought also the brasen altar, which was before the Lord, from the fore-front of the house, from between the altar and the house of the Lord, and put it on the north-side of the altar. And king Ahaz commanded Urijah the priest, saying. Upon the great altar burn the morning burnt-offering... and the brasen altar shall be for me to inquire by. Thus did Urijah the priest, according to all that king Ahaz commanded¹."

Or, again, how simple and unadorned is the account of St. John Baptist's martyrdom! "Herod had laid hold of John and bound him, and put him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife; for John said unto him. It is not lawful for thee to have her. And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet. But when Herod's birth-day was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod. Whereupon he promised with an oath, to give her whatsoever she would ask. And she, being instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger. And the king was sorry: nevertheless for the oath's sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded it to be given her. And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison. And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel; and she brought it to her mother. And his disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told JESUS²." Not a word of indignation, of lament, or of triumph! Such is the style of Scripture, singularly contrasted to the uninspired style, most beautiful but still human, of the ancient Martyrologies; for instance, that of the persecution at Lyons and Vienne³.

St. Paul's journey to Jerusalem, against the warnings of the prophets, is the last instance of this character of Scripture narrative which shall be given. The facts of it are related so nakedly, that there has been room for

¹ 2 Kings xvi. 10—16.

² Matt. xiv. 3—12.

³ Vide Records of the Church, No. VI.

maintaining that he was wrong in going thither. That he was right would seem certain, from the way he speaks of these warnings: “Behold I go *bound in the Spirit* unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there, save that the HOLY GHOST witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me¹,” and also from Christ’s words in the vision: “Be of good cheer, Paul; for as *thou hast testified of Me* in Jerusalem²,” &c. Yet though this be abundantly enough to convince us, yet, I confess, the impression conveyed by the warning of the disciples at Tyre saying “through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem³” and of Agabus at Cæsarea, and, when he got to Jerusalem, by his attempt to soften the Jews in showing conformity to the Law, and by his strong words seemingly retracted to Ananias, and by his dividing the Jewish council by proclaiming himself a Pharisee,—the impression, I say, conveyed by all this would *in itself* be (a very false one,) that there was something human in his conduct.

Thus the style of Scripture is plain and colourless, as regards the relation of facts; so that we are continually perplexed what to think about them and the parties concerned in them. We want a comment,—they are evidently but a text *for* a comment,—and as they stand may be turned this way or that way, according to the accidental tone of mind in the reader. And often the true comment, when given us in other parts of Scripture, is startling. I think it startling at first sight that Lot, being such as he is represented to be on the whole in the Old Testament, should be called by St. Peter “a just man.” I think Ehud’s assassination of Eglon a startling act,—the praise given to Jael for killing Sisera, startling. It is evident that the *letter* of the sacred history conveys to the ordinary reader a very inadequate idea of what is recorded, considered as a bodily, substantial, and (as it were) living and breathing transaction.

Equal simplicity is observed in the relation of great and awful events. For instance, consider the words in which is described the vision of God

¹ Acts xx. 22, 23.

² Ib. xxiii. 11.

³ Ib. xxi. 4.

vouchsafed to the elders of Israel. “Then went up Moses and Aaron, and Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and they saw the God of Israel: and there was under His feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire-stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel He laid not His hand: also they saw God, and did eat and drink¹.” Or consider the account of Jacob’s wrestling with the Angel. Or the plain, unadorned way in which the conversations, if I may dare use the word, between God and Moses are recorded, and Almighty God’s gracious laments, purposes of wrath, appeasement, repentance. Or between the Almighty and Satan, in the first chapter of Job. Or how simply and abruptly the narrative runs, “And [the Serpent] said unto the woman and the woman said unto the serpent,” or, “And the LORD opened the mouth of the ass, and she said to Balaam... and Balaam said unto the ass².” Minds familiarized to supernatural things, minds set upon definite great objects, have no disposition, no time to indulge in embellishment, or to aim at impressiveness.

And so in like manner the words in which the celebration of the holy Eucharist is spoken of by St. Luke and St. Paul (breaking bread) are very simple: they are applicable to a common meal quite as well as to the Sacrament, and they only do not exclude, they in no respect introduce that full and awful meaning which the Church has ever put on them. “As He sat at meat with them, He took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and their eyes were opened³.” “They continued stedfastly in the breaking of bread and in prayers⁴.” “The first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread... When he therefore was come up again and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while even till break of day, so he departed⁵.” “When he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in the presence of them all; and when he had broken it, he began to

¹ Exod. xxiv. 9—11.

² Numb. xxii. 28, 29.

³ Luke xxiv. 30, 31.

⁴ Acts ii. 42.

⁵ Ib. xx. 8—11.

eat.¹” “The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of CHRIST?” “The LORD JESUS, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks He brake it².” Now no words can be simpler than these. What *is* remarkable is the repeated mention of the very same acts in the same order,—taking, blessing or giving thanks, and breaking. Certainly the constant use of the word “break” is very remarkable. For instance, in the ship, why should it be said, “And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks; and when he had *broken* it, he began to eat,” since he *alone* eat it, and did not divide it among his fellow-passengers? But supposing the passages had been a little less frequent, so as not to attract attention by their similarity, what could be more simple than the words,—what less adapted to force on the mind any high meaning? Yet these simple words, *blessing, breaking, eating, giving*, have a very high meaning put on them in the Prayer Book, put on them by the Church from the first; and a person may be tempted to say that the Church’s meaning is not borne out by such simple words. I ask, are they more bare and colourless than the narrative of many a transaction in the Old Testament?

2. So much on the plain and (as it were) unconscious way in which great things are recorded in Scripture. However, it is objected that there is not an allusion to the Church doctrines, even where one would think this must have been, had they been in the inspired writer’s mind; that is, were they part of the divine revelation. For instance, St. John says, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness⁴.” Why (it is asked) is nothing said here concerning Absolution, or the Lord’s Supper, as the means of forgiveness? Certainly then the *tone* of the New Testament is unsacramental; and the impression it leaves on the mind is not that of a Priesthood and its attendant system. Now I conceive that a series of Scripture parallels to this,

¹. Acts xxvii. 35.

². 1 Cor. x. 16.

³. Ib. xi. 23, 24.

⁴. 1 John i. 9.

as regards other matters, might easily be drawn out, all depending on this principle, and illustrating it in the case before us; viz. that when the sacred writers were aiming at one thing, they did not go out of their way ever so little to introduce another. The fashion of this day indeed, is ever to speak about all religious things at once, and never to introduce one, but to introduce all, and never to maintain reserve about any; and those who are imbued with the spirit which this implies, doubtless will find it difficult to understand how the sacred writers could help speaking of what was very near their subject, when it was not their subject. Still we must submit to facts, which abundantly evidence that they could. This omission of the Sacraments in St. Paul and St. John, *so far* as distinct mention is omitted (for they *are* frequently mentioned), as little proves that those Apostles were not aware and thinking of them, as St. James’s Epistle is an evidence that he did not hold the doctrine of the Atonement, which is not there mentioned. Or consider how many passages there are in the history, where some circumstance is omitted which one would expect to be inserted. For instance: St. Peter struck off the ear of Malchus, when our Lord was seized. St. John gives the names; St. Matthew and St. Mark relate the occurrence without the names. This is commonly explained on the ground that St. John writing later than his brother Evangelists, and when all parties were dead, might give the names without exposing St. Peter to any civil inconveniences. True, this is an explanation so far; but what explains their omitting, and St. John omitting our LORD’s miracle in healing the ear, while St. Luke relates it? Was not this to deliver a half account? is it not what would be called unnatural, if it were a question, not of history, but of doctrine?

This relates to a matter of fact: let us review cases in which matters of doctrine, or the doctrinal tone of the composition, are in question. Is the tone of Scripture more unfavourable to the doctrine of a Priesthood than it is to the idea of Christianity, such as we are brought up to regard it,—I mean of an established, endowed, dignified Church; and if its establishment is not inconsistent (as it is not) with the New Testament, why should its mysticalness be? Certainly, if *any* thing is plain, it is that Scripture represents, that the very *portion* of all Christians is tribulation, want,

contempt, persecution. I do not,—of course not, far from it,—I do not say that the actual present state of the Church Catholic and the text of the New Testament are not reconcilable: but is it not a fact, that the first *impression* from Scripture of what the Church should be, is not fulfilled in what we see around us?

Again: I suppose another impression which would be left on an unbiassed reader by the New Testament would be, that the world was soon to come to an end. Yet it has not. As, then, we submit to facts in one case, and do not exercise our so-called right of private judgment to quarrel with our own consciousness that we do live, and that the world does still go on, why should we not submit to facts in the other instance? and if there be good proof that what the Church teaches is true, and is conformable to given texts of Scripture, in spite of this vague impression from its text; why should we not reconcile ourselves to the conclusion, that that impression of its being opposed to a Sacramental or Priestly system is a false impression, is private and personal, or peculiar to a particular age, untrustworthy, in fact false, just as the impression of its teaching that the world was soon to come to an end is false, because it has not been fulfilled?

Again: I suppose any one reading our LORD's discourses, would, with the Apostles, consider that the Gentiles, even if they were to be converted, yet were not to be on a level with the Jews. The impression His words convey is certainly such. But of this more presently.

Again: it is objected that little is said in the New Testament of the *danger* of sin after baptism, or of the *penitential exercises* by which it is to be remedied. Well: supposing it for argument's sake; yet let me ask the previous question, Is there much said in the New Testament of sin after baptism at all? I will venture to say, less still,—less about its actually occurring than there is about its prospective danger and its provisional remedies. Till we examine Scripture on the subject, perhaps we have no adequate notion how little the Apostles contemplate sin in the baptized. The argument then proves too much: for if silence proves any thing, it will prove either that Christians who now live do not fall into gross sin, or that those who have so fallen have forfeited their Christianity.

Again: the three first Gospels contain no declaration of our Lord's

divinity, and there are passages which tend at first sight the other way. Now, is there one doctrine more than another essential and characteristic of a Christian mind? Is it possible that the Evangelists could write any one particle of their records of His life without having the great and solemn truth stedfastly before them, that He was their GOD? Yet they do not show this. It follows that truths may be in the mind of the inspired writers, which are not discoverable to ordinary readers in the tone of their composition. I by no means deny, that now we know the doctrine, we can gather proofs of it from the three Gospels in question, and can discern in them a feeling of reverence towards our LORD which fully implies it; but no one will say it is on the surface, and so as to strike a reader. I conceive the impression left on an ordinary mind would be, that our SAVIOUR was a superhuman being, intimately possessed of GOD's confidence, but still a creature,—an impression infinitely removed from the truth as really contained and intended in those Gospels.

Again: is the tone of the Epistle of St. James the same as the tone of St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians? or that of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans as that of the same Apostle's Epistle to the Hebrews? Might they not be as plausibly put in opposition with each other, as the Church system is made contrary to Scripture?

Again: consider what the texts are from which Calvinists are accustomed to argue; such, viz. as speak of GOD's sovereign grace, without happening to make mention of man's responsibility. Thus: "He who has begun a good work in you will perform it unto the day of the LORD JESUS;" and, "Who are kept by the power of GOD through faith unto salvation," are taken as irrefragable arguments for final perseverance. If mention of GOD's grace need not exclude man's freedom in a question of conduct, why need mention of moral qualifications exclude the necessity of sacramental instruments, in a question of spiritual gifts?

Again: if silence implies denial or ignorance of the things passed over; if nothing is the sense of Scripture but what is openly declared; if first impressions are every thing, what are we to say to the Book of Canticles, which nowhere hints, what Scripture afterwards nowhere hints either, that it has a spiritual meaning? Either, then, the apparent tone of passages of

Scripture is not the real tone, or the Canticles is not a sacred book.

Again: is not the apparent tone of the Prophecies concerning CHRIST of a similarly twofold character, as is shown by the Jewish notion that there were to be two Messiahs, one suffering, and one triumphant?

Another illustration, which deserves attention, lies in the impression David's history in the Books of Samuel conveys, compared with that derived from the Chronicles and the Psalms. I am not speaking of *verbal discrepancies* or *difficulties* to be reconciled,—that was the subject of the last Lecture,—but of the *tone* of the narrative, and the impression thence created in the reader and I think that it must be allowed that the idea which we have of David from the one document, is very different from that gained from the other two. In the Books of Samuel we have the picture of a monarch, bold, brave, generous, loyal, accomplished, attractive, and duly attached to the cause, and promoting the establishment, of the Mosaic law, but with apparently little permanent and consistent personal religion; his character is sullied with many sins, and clouded with many suspicions. But in the First Book of Chronicles, and in the Psalms, we are presented with the picture of a humble, tender, devotional, and deeply spiritual mind, detached from this world, and living on the thought and in the love of GOD. Is the impression derived from the New Testament more unfavourable to the Church system (admitting that it *is* unfavourable), than that of the Books of Samuel to David's personal holiness?

I just now reserved the doctrine of the admission of the Gentiles into the Church, for separate consideration; let us now turn to it. Their call, certainly their equality with the Jews, was but covertly signified in our LORD's teaching. I think it is plainly there signified, though covertly; but, if covertly, then what the state of the evidence is for the *Catholicity* of the Christian Church in the Gospels, as much as this (viewed at the greatest disadvantage), will turn out to be the state of the evidence for its *ritual character* in the Epistles; and we may as well deny that the Church is Gentile, on the ground that our LORD but indirectly teaches it, as that it is sacramental on the ground that His Apostles indirectly teach it. It is objected that the Church system, the great Episcopal, Priestly, Sacramental system, was an after-thought, a corruption coming upon the simplicity of

the primitive and Apostolic religion. The primitive religion, it is said, was more *simple*. More *simple*! Did objectors never hear that there have been unbelievers who have written to prove that CHRIST's religion was more simple than St. Paul's,—that St. Paul's Epistles are “a second system” coming upon the Gospels and changing their doctrine? Have we never heard that some have considered the doctrine of our LORD's Divinity an addition upon the “simplicity” of the Gospels? Yes: this has been the belief not only of heretics as the Socinians, but of infidels such as the historian Gibbon, who looked at things with less of prejudice than heretics, as having no point to maintain. I think it will be found quite as easy to maintain that the Divinity of CHRIST was an after-thought, brought in by the Greek Platonists and other philosophers, upon the simple and primitive creed of the Galilean fishermen, as infidels say, as that the Sacramental system came in from the same source, as rationalists say.—But to return to the point before us. Let it be considered whether a very plausible case might not be made out, by way of proving that our Blessed Lord did *not* contemplate the evangelizing of the heathen at all, but that it was an after-thought, when His Apostles began to succeed, and their ambitious hopes to rise.

If texts from the Gospels are brought to show that it was no after-thought, such as the mustard-seed, or the labourers of the vineyard, which imply the calling and conversion of the Gentiles, and the implication contained in His discourse at Nazareth concerning the miracles of Elijah and Elisha wrought upon Gentiles, and His significant acts, such as his complying with the prayer of the Canaanitish woman, and His condescension towards the centurion, and, above all, His final command to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature, “and to go teach all nations, baptizing them;” still it may be asked, Did not the Apostles hear our Lord, and what was *their* impression from what they heard? Is it not certain that the Apostles did not gather this truth from His teaching? So far is certain; and it is certain that none of us will deny that nevertheless that truth is clear. Well then, it is plain, that important things may be in Scripture, yet not brought out: is there then any reason why *we* should be more clear-sighted as to another point of doctrine than the Apostles were as to

this? I ask this again: Is there any reason that we, who have not heard CHRIST speak, should have a clearer apprehension of the meaning of His recorded discourses on a given point, than the Apostles who did? and if it be said that we have now the gift of the Holy Spirit, which the Apostles had not during our LORD's earthly ministry, then I ask again, Where is there any promise that we, as individuals, should be brought by His gracious influences into perfect truth from merely employing ourselves on the text of Scripture by ourselves? However, so far is plain, that a doctrine which we see to be plainly contained, nay necessarily presupposed, in our LORD's teaching, did not so impress itself on the Apostles.

These thoughts deserve consideration; but what I was coming to in particular is this: I wish you to turn in your mind such texts as the following: "Ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and in Samaria, and unto *the uttermost part of the earth.*" An objector would say that "the uttermost part of the earth," ought to be translated "uttermost part of the *land,*" that is, the Holy Land. And he would give this reason to confirm it. "How very unlikely that the whole of the world, except Judaea, should be *straitened up into one clause!* Jerusalem, Judaea, Samaria mentioned distinctly, and the whole world brought under one word!" And I suppose the Apostles did at the time understand the sentence to mean only the Holy Land. Certainly they did not understand it to imply the absolute and immediate call of the Gentiles as mere Gentiles.

You will say that such texts as Luke xxiv. 47. are decisive: "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name *among all nations,* beginning at Jerusalem." Far from it as men now-a-days argue, they would say it was not *safe* to rely on such texts. "*Among all nations;*" "*into or to all nations,*" this need not mean more than that the Jews in those nations should be converted. The Jews were scattered about in those days; the Messiah was to collect them together. This text speaks of His doing so, according to the prophecies, wherever they were scattered. To this the question of the populace relates, "Whither will He go that we shall not find Him? will He go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the

Gentiles?" or Greek Jews? And St. John's announcement, that He died "not for that nation only, but that also He should gather together in one the children of GOD that were scattered abroad²." And St. Peter's address "to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." And especially on the day of Pentecost, when the same Apostle addressed the Jews, "devout men dwelling at Jerusalem, out of every nation under heaven³."

Again: if the words "preach the Gospel to every creature" were insisted on, an objector might say that creature or creation does not mean all men any more than it includes all animals or all Angels, but one part of the creation, the elect, the Jews⁴.

Here then are instances of the same concise and indirect mode of stating important doctrine in half sentences, or even words, which is supposed to be an objection to the peculiar Church doctrines only. E. g. it is objected that the sacred truth of the procession of the HOLY GHOST from the Father, is only contained in the words, "the Spirit of Truth, which *proceedeth from the Father*⁵:" the equality of the Son to the Father, in the phrase, "who, being in the form of GOD, thought it not robbery *to be equal with GOD,*" and in the Jews' inference from our Lord's words, "He said that GOD was His Father, making Himself equal with GOD⁶." The doctrine of original sin depends on a few implications such as this, "As in Adam all die, even so in CHRIST shall all be made alive⁷." And in like manner the necessity of the Lord's Supper to salvation upon the sixth chapter of St. John, in which the subject of CHRIST's flesh and blood is mentioned, but not a word expressly concerning that Sacrament, which as yet was future. So also, 1 Cor. x. 16, "The cup of blessing," &c. is almost a parenthesis; and

¹ John vii. 35.

² Ib. xi. 61, 52.

³ Acts ii. 5.

⁴ Vide Rom. viii. 19.

⁵ John xv. 26.

⁶ Philip. ii. 6. John v. 18.

⁷ 1 Cor. xv. 22.

the ministerial power of Absolution depends on our LORD's words to His Apostles, "Whosoever sins ye remit," &c.; and the doctrine of the Christian Altar, upon such words as, "If thou bring thy gift to the altar," &c. Now I say all these are paralleled by the mode in which our Lord taught the call of the Gentiles: He said, "Preach the Gospel to every creature." These words need have only meant, "Bring all men to Christianity through Judaism;" make them Jews, that they may enjoy CHRIST's privileges which are lodged in Judaism; teach them those rites and ceremonies, circumcision and the like, which hitherto have been dead ordinances and now are living: and so the Apostles seem to have understood them. Yet they meant much more than this; that Jews were to have no precedence of the Gentiles, but the one and the other to be on a level. It is quite plain that our SAVIOUR must have had this truth before His mind, if we may so speak, when He said, "Preach to every creature." Yet the words did not on the surface mean all this. As then they meant more than they seemed to mean, so the words, "I am with you alway," or, "Receive ye the HOLY GHOST," may mean much more than they need mean; and the early Church may, in God's providence, be as really intended to bring out and settle the meaning of the latter, as St. Peter at Joppa, and St. Paul on his journeys, to bring out the meaning of the former.

To this there are other parallels. For instance: who would have conceived that the doctrine of the Resurrection of the Dead lay hid in the words, "I am the GOD of Abraham," &c.? Why may not the doctrines concerning the Church lie hid in repositories which certainly are *less* recondite? Why may not the Church herself, which is called the pillar and ground of the Truth, be the appointed interpreter of the doctrines about herself?

Again: consider how much is contained, and how covertly, in our SAVIOUR's words, "But ye are clean, but not all;"—or in His riding on an ass, and not saying why.

Here, too, the whole subject of prophecy might be brought in. What doctrine is more important than that of the immaculate conception of our LORD? Yet how is it declared in prophecy? Isaiah said to Ahaz, "Behold, a

Virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His Name Immanuel." The first meaning of these words seems not at all to allude to CHRIST, but to an event of the day. The great Gospel doctrine is glanced at (as we may say) through this minor event.

These remarks surely suffice on this subject, viz. to show that the impression we gain from Scripture need not be any criterion or any measure of its true and full sense; that solemn and important truths may be silently taken for granted, or alluded to in a half sentence, or spoken of indeed, yet in such unadorned language that we may fancy we see through it, and see nothing;—peculiarities of Scripture which result from what is the peculiar character of its teaching, simplicity and depth. Yet even without taking into account these peculiarities of Scripture, it is obvious from what meets us daily in the course of life, how insufficient a test is the surface of any one writing, conversation, or transaction, of the full circle of opinions of its author. How different persons are, when we know them, from what they appeared to us in their writings! how many opinions do they hold, which we did not expect in them! how many practices and ways have they, how many peculiarities, how many tastes, which we did not expect! I will give one illustration, which may approve itself to those who are acquainted with the case alluded to. That great philosopher, Bp. Butler, has written a book, as we know, on the Analogy of Religion. It is distinguished by a grave, profound, and severe style; and apparently is not the work of a man of lively or susceptible mind. Now we know from his history, that when Bishop, he put up a Cross in his chapel at Bristol. Could a reader have conjectured this from his work? At first sight would it not have startled one who knew nothing of him but from his work? I do not ask whether, on consideration, he would not find it fell in with his work; of course it would, if his philosophy were consistent with itself; but certainly it is not on the surface of his work. Now might not we say that his work contained the *whole* of his philosophy, and yet say that the use of the Cross was one of his *usages*? In like manner we may say that the Bible is the *whole* of the Divine revelation, and yet the use of the Cross a divine usage.

But this is not all. Some small private books of his are extant, containing a number of every-day matters, such as of course one could not *expect* to be

¹ John xx. 23.

able to conjecture from his great work; I mean, matters of ordinary and almost household life. Yet those who have seen these papers are likely to feel a surprise that they should be Butler's. I do not say that they can give any reason why they should not be so; but the notion we form of any one whom we have not seen, will ever be in its details very different from the true one.

Another series of illustrations might be drawn from the writings of the ancients. Those who are acquainted with the Greek historians know well that they, and particularly the gravest and severest of them, relate events so simply, calmly, unostentatiously, that an ordinary reader does not recognize what events are great and what little; and on turning to some modern history in which they are commented on, will find to his surprise that a battle or a treaty, which was despatched in half a line in the Greek author, is perhaps the turning point of the whole history, and certainly known to be so by him. Here is the case of the Gospels with this difference, that they are unsystematic compositions, whereas the Greek historians profess to be methodical.

Again: instances might easily be given of the silence of contemporary writers as to great events of their time, when they might be expected to notice them; a silence which has even been objected sometimes against the fact of those events having occurred, yet, in the judgment of the mass of well-informed men, without any real cogency.

I conclude with two additional remarks. I have been arguing that Scripture is a deep book, and that the peculiar doctrines concerning the Church, contained in the Prayer Book, are in its depths. Now let it be remarked in corroboration, first, that the early Church always *did* consider Scripture to be what I have been arguing from the structure of it,—viz. a book with very recondite meanings: this they considered, not merely with reference to its teaching the particular class of doctrines in question, but as regards its entire teaching. They considered that it was full of mysteries. Thus, saying that Scripture has deep meanings, is not an hypothesis invented to meet this particular difficulty, that the Church doctrines are not on its surface, but is an acknowledged principle independent of it.

Secondly, it is also certain that the early Church did herself conceal

these same Church doctrines. I am not determining whether or not all her writers did, or all her teachers, or at all times, but merely that viewing that early period as a whole, there is on the whole a great secrecy observed in it concerning such doctrines (e. g.) as the Trinity and the Eucharist; that is, the early Church did the very thing which I have been supposing Scripture does,—conceal high truths. To suppose that Scripture conceals them, is not an hypothesis invented to meet the difficulty arising from the fact that they are not on the surface for the early Church, independent of that alleged difficulty, did herself in her own teaching conceal them. This is a second very curious coincidence. If the early Church had reasons for concealment, perchance Scripture has the same; especially if we suppose,—what at the very least is no very improbable idea,—that the system of the early Church is a continuation of the system of those inspired men who wrote the New Testament.

LECTURE VI.

EXTERNAL DIFFICULTIES OF THE CANON AND THE CATHOLIC
CREED, COMPARED.

I AM now proceeding to a subject which will in some little degree take me beyond the bounds which I have proposed to myself in these Lectures, but which, being closely connected with their subject and (as I think) important, has a claim on our attention. The argument which has last engaged us is this: objection is made to the *indirectness* of the evidence from Scripture on which the peculiar Church doctrines are proved. I have answered, that sacred *history* is for the most part conveyed with as much apparent inconsistency between one part of Scripture and another, as there is inconsistency as regards *doctrine* between Scripture and the Church; one event being told us here, another there; so that we have to compare, compile, reconcile, adjust. As then we do not complain of the history being conveyed in distinct, and at times conflicting, documents, so too we have no fair reason for complaining of the obscurities and intricacies under which doctrine is revealed.

Again: in the last Lecture I answered in a similar way the objection, that Scripture was contrary to the teaching of the Church (i. e. to our Prayer Book), not only *in specific statements*, but *in tone*; for I showed that what we call the *tone* of Scripture, or the impression it makes on the reader, varies so very much according to the reader, that little stress can be laid upon it, and that its tone, and the impression it makes, would tell against a variety of other points undeniably true or firmly held by us, quite as much as against the peculiar Church doctrines.

In a word, it is as easy to show that Scripture has no contents at all, or next to none, as that it does not contain the peculiar Church doctrines,—that the objection which is brought against the Apostolical Succession, or the Sacerdotal Office, tells against the instruction and information conveyed in Scripture generally. But now I am going to a further point, which has been incidentally touched on, that this same objection is

prejudicial not only to the revelation, whatever it is, conveyed in Scripture, but to the text of Scripture itself, to the books of Scripture, to their canonicity, to their trust-worthiness. The line of reasoning entered on in this objection may be carried forward, and, if it reaches one point, may be made to reach the other also. For, first, if the want of method and verbal consistency in Scripture be an objection to the truth of *Church doctrine*, it is also an objection equally to what is called "*orthodox Protestantism*." Further, it is an objection also to the trust-worthiness of the *sacred history*, to the *information* contained in any part of Scripture, which is in great measure indirect. And now, lastly, I say it is an objection to the Bible itself, both because that book cannot be a revelation which contains neither doctrine nor matter of fact, and because the evidence on which its portions are received is not clearer or fuller than its own evidence to facts and doctrines. This is the legitimate consequence of the attempt to invalidate the scripturalness of Catholic doctrine, on the allegation of its want of Scripture proof,—an invalidating of Scripture itself. This is the conclusion to which both the argument itself, and the temper of mind which belongs to it, will assuredly lead those who use it, at least eventually.

There is another objection which is sometimes attempted against Church doctrines, which may be met in the same way. It is sometimes strangely maintained, not only that Scripture does not clearly teach them, but that the Fathers do not clearly teach them; that nothing can be drawn for certain from the Fathers; that their evidence leaves the matter pretty much as it found it, as being inconsistent with itself, or of doubtful authority. This part of the subject has not yet been considered, and will come into prominence as we proceed with the present argument.

I purpose, then, now to enlarge on this point; that is, to show that those who object to Church doctrines, whether from deficiency of Scripture or Patristical proof, ought, if they acted consistently on their principles, to object to Scripture; a melancholy truth, if it be a truth; and I fear it is but too true. Too true, I fear it is *in fact*,—not only that men ought, if consistent, to proceed from opposing Church doctrine to oppose Scripture, but that the leaven which at present makes the mind oppose Church doctrine, *does* set it, or *will* soon set it, against Scripture. I wish to declare

what I think will be found really to be the case, viz. that a battle for the Canon of Scripture is but the next step after a battle for the Creed,—that the Creed comes first in the assault, that is all; and that if we were not defending the Creed, we should at this moment be defending the Canon. Nay, I would predict as a coming event, that minds are to be unsettled as to what is Scripture and what is not; and I predict it, that, as far as the voice of one person in one place can do, I may defeat my own prediction by making it. Now to consider the subject.

How do we know that the whole Bible is the word of GOD? Happily at present we are content to believe this, because we have been so taught. It is our great blessedness to receive it on faith. A believing spirit is in all cases a more blessed spirit than an unbelieving. The testimony of unbelievers declares it: they often say, “I wish I *could* believe; I should be happier, if I could; but my *reason* is unconvinced.” And then they go on to speak as if they were in a more exalted though less happy state of mind. Now I am not here to enter into the question of the grounds on which the duty and blessedness of believing rest; but I would observe, that Nature certainly does give sentence against scepticism, against doubt, nay, against a habit (I say a *habit*) of inquiry, against a critical, cold, investigating temper, the temper of what are called shrewd, clear-headed, hard-headed men, in that, by the confession of all, happiness is attached, not to their temper, but rather to confiding, unreasoning faith. I do not say that inquiry may not under circumstances be a duty, as going into the cold and rain may be a duty, instead of stopping at home,—as serving in war may be a duty; but it does seem to me preposterous to confess, that free inquiry leads to scepticism, and scepticism makes one less happy than faith, and yet, that such free inquiry is right. What is right and what is happy cannot on the long run and on a large scale be disjoined. To follow truth can never be a subject of regret; free inquiry does lead a man to regret the days of his childlike faith; therefore it is not following truth. Those who measure every thing by utility, should on their own principles embrace the obedience of faith, for its very expedience; and they should cease this kind of seeking, that they may find.

I say, then, that never to have been troubled with a doubt about the truth

of what has been taught us, is the happiest state of mind; and if any one says, that to maintain this is to admit that heretics ought to remain heretics, and pagans pagans, I deny it. For I have not said that it is a happy thing never to *add* to what you have learned, but not happier to *take away*. Now true religion is the summit and perfection of false religions: it combines in one whatever there is of good and true, separately remaining in each. And in like manner the Catholic Creed is for the most part the combination of separate truths, which heretics have divided among themselves, and err in dividing. So that in matter of fact, if a religious mind were educated in and sincerely attached to some form of heathenism or heresy, and then were brought under the light of truth, it would be drawn off from error into the truth, not by losing what it had, but by gaining what it had not,—not by being unclothed, but by being “clothed upon,” “that mortality may be swallowed up of life.” That same principle of faith which attaches it to its original wrong doctrine, would attach it to the truth; and that portion of its original doctrine which was to be cast off as absolutely false, would not be directly rejected, but indirectly rejected in the reception of the truth which is its opposite. True conversion is ever of a positive, not a negative character. And in like manner, if Romanists are to be brought to a more primitive faith, it is by our enlarging on the doctrines of the Gospel, which they observe, not by ridicule or scoffing. All this is a digression: but before returning to the subject, I will just add, that it must not be supposed, from my expressing such sentiments, that I have any fear of argument for the cause of Christian truth, as if reason were dangerous to it, as if it could not stand before a scrutinizing inquiry. Nothing is more out of place, though it is too common, than such a charge against the defenders of Church doctrines. They may be right, or they may be wrong in their arguments, but argue they do; they are ready to argue; they believe they have reason on their side but they remind others, they remind themselves, that though argument on the whole will but advance the cause of truth, though so far from dreading it, they are conscious it is a great weapon in their hands yet that, after all, if a man does nothing more *than* argue, if he has nothing deeper at bottom, if he does not seek GOD by some truer means, by obedience, by faith prior to conviction, he will either not

attain truth, or attain a shallow, unreal view of it, and a weak grasp. Reason will prepare for the reception, will spread the news, and secure the outward recognition of the truth; but in all we do we ought to seek edification, not mere knowledge. Now to return.

I say, it is our blessedness, if we have no doubts about the Canon of Scripture, as it is our blessedness to have no doubts about the Catholic Creed. And this is at present actually our blessedness as regards the Canon; we have no doubts. Even those persons who unhappily have doubts about the Church system, have no doubts about the Canon,—by a happy inconsistency, *I* say. They *ought* to have doubts on their principles, as I will now show, in the confidence that their belief in the Canon is so much stronger than their disbelief of the Church system, that, if they must change their position, they will rather believe the Church system, than go on to disbelieve the Canon.

Now there are two chief heads of objection made against the Catholic or Church system of doctrine and worship,—external and internal. It is said, on the one hand, to be uncertain, not only what is in Scripture, but what is in Antiquity, and what not; for the early Fathers, it is objected, who are supposed to convey the information, contradict each other; and the most valuable and voluminous of them did not live till two or three hundred years after St. John's death, while the earlier records are scanty and moreover that their view of doctrine was from the first corrupted from assignable external sources, pagan, philosophical, or Jewish. And on the other hand the system itself may be accused of being contrary to reason and incredible. In this Lecture I shall consider the former of these two objections.

Objectors, then, speak thus “We are far from denying,” they say, “that there is truth and value in the ancient Catholic system, as reported by the Fathers; but we deny that it is *unmixed* truth. We consider it is truth and error mixed together; we do not see why the system of doctrine must be taken together as a whole, so that if one part is true, all is true. We consider we have a right to take it piecemeal, and examine each part by itself; that so far as it is true, it is true not as belonging to the ancient system, but for other reasons, as being agreeable to our reason, or to our understanding of

Scripture, not because stated by the Fathers; and, after all, the Church system in question (that is, such doctrines as the mystical power of the Sacraments, the power of the keys, the grace of Ordination, the gifts of the Church, and the Apostolical Succession,) has very little *primitive* authority. The Fathers whom we have, not only might have been of an earlier date, but contradict each other; they declare what is incredible and absurd, and what can reasonably be ascribed to Platonism, or Judaism, or Paganism.”

Be it so: well, how will the same captious spirit treat the sacred Canon? in just the same way. It will begin thus: “These *many* books are put together in *one* book; what makes them one? who put them together? the printers. The books of Scripture have been *printed* together for many centuries. But that does not make them one; what authority had those who put them together to do so? what authority to put just so many books, neither more nor less? *when* were they first so put together? on what authority do we leave out the Wisdom or the Son of Sirach, and insert the book of Esther? Catalogues certainly are given of these books in early times: but exactly the same books are not enumerated in all. The language of St. Austin is favourable to the admission of the Apocrypha¹. The Latin Church anciently left out the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the Eastern Church left out the book of Revelation. This so-called Canon did not exist at earliest till the fourth century, between two and three hundred years after St. John's death. Let us then see into the matter with our own eyes. Why should not we be as good judges as the Church of the fourth century, on whose authority we receive it? Why should one book be divine because another is?” This is what objectors would say. Now to follow them into particulars as far as the first head; viz. as to the evidence itself, which is offered in behalf of the divinity and inspiration of the separate books.

For instance; the first Father who expressly mentions Commemorations for the Dead in Christ (such as we still have in substance at the end of the prayer for the Church Militant, where it was happily restored in 1662, having been omitted a century earlier,) is Tertullian, about a hundred years after St. John's death. This, it is said, is not authority early enough to prove

¹ De Doctr. Christ, ii. 13.

that that ordinance is Apostolical, though succeeding Fathers, Origen, St. Cyprian, Eusebius, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, &c. bear witness to it ever so strongly. "Errors might have crept in by that time; mistakes might have been made; Tertullian is but one man, and confessedly not sound in many of his opinions we ought to have clearer and more decisive evidence." Well, supposing it: suppose Tertullian, a hundred years after St. John, is the first that mentions it, yet Tertullian is also the first that alludes to St. Paul's Epistle to Philemon, and even he without quoting or naming it. He is followed by two writers; one of Rome, Caius, whose work is not extant, but is referred to by Eusebius, who, speaking of *thirteen* Epistles of St. Paul, and excluding the Hebrews, by implication includes that to Philemon; and the other, Origen, who quotes the fourteenth verse of the Epistle, and elsewhere speaks of *fourteen* Epistles of St. Paul. Next, at the end of the third century, follows Eusebius. Further, St. Jerome observes, that in his time some persons doubted whether it was St. Paul's, (just as Aerius questioned the Commemorations for the Dead,) or at least whether it was canonical, and that from internal evidence; to which he opposes the general consent of external testimony as a sufficient answer. Now, I ask, why do we receive the Epistle to Philemon as St. Paul's, and not the Commemorations for the faithful departed as Apostolical also? Ever after indeed the times I mention, the Epistle to Philemon was accounted St. Paul's, and so ever after the same time the Commemorations spoken of are acknowledged on all hands to have been observed as a religious duty, down to three hundred years ago. If it be said that from historical records we have good reasons for thinking that the Epistle of St. Paul to Philemon, with his other Epistles, was read from time immemorial in Church, which is a witness independent of particular testimonies in the Fathers, I answer, no evidence can be more satisfactory and conclusive to a well-judging mind; but then it is a *moral* evidence, resting on very little formal and producible proof, and quite as much evidence can be given for the solemn Commemorations of the Dead in the Holy Eucharist which I speak of. They too were in use in the Church from time immemorial. Persons, then, who have the heart to give up and annul the Ordinance, will not, if they are consistent, scruple much at the Epistle. If in the sixteenth century the

innovators on religion had struck the Epistle to Philemon out of Scripture, they would have had just as much right to do it as to abolish these Commemorations; and those who wished to defend such innovation, would have had just as much to say in its behalf. If it be said they found nothing on the subject of such Commemorations in Scripture, even granting this for argument's sake, yet I wonder where they found in Scripture that the Epistle to Philemon was written by St. Paul, except indeed in the Epistle itself. No where; yet they kept the one, they abolished the other,—as far, that is, as human tyranny could abolish it. Let us be thankful that they did not also say, "The Epistle to Philemon is of a private nature, and has no marks of inspiration about it. It is not mentioned by name or quoted by any writer till Origen, who flourished at a time when mistakes had begun, in the third century, and who actually thinks St. Barnabas wrote the Epistle which goes under his name; and he too, after all, just mentions it once, but not as inspired or canonical, and elsewhere happens to speak of St. Paul's fourteen Epistles. In the beginning of the fourth century, Eusebius, without anywhere naming it" (as far as I can discover), "also speaks of fourteen Epistles, and speaks of a writer one hundred years earlier, who in like manner enumerated thirteen besides the Hebrews. All this is very unsatisfactory. We will have nothing but the pure word of God; we will only admit what has the clearest proof. It is impossible that God should require us to believe a book to come from Him, without authenticating it with the highest and most cogent evidence."

Again: the early Church with one voice testifies in favour of Episcopacy, as an ordinance especially pleasing to God. Ignatius, the very disciple of the Apostles, speaks in the clearest and strongest terms; and those who follow fully corroborate his statements for three or four hundred years. And besides this, we know the fact, that a succession of Bishops from the Apostles did exist in all the Churches all that time. At the end of that time one Father, St. Jerome, in writing controversially, has some strong expressions against the divine origin of the ordinance. And this is all that can be said in favour of any other regimen. Now, on the other hand, what is the case as regards the Epistle to the Hebrews? Though received in the

East, it was not received in the Latin Churches till that same St. Jerome's time. St. Irenæus either does not affirm, or denies that it is St. Paul's. Tertullian ascribes it to St. Barnabas. Caius excluded it from his list. St. Hippolytus does not receive it. St. Cyprian is silent about it. It is doubtful whether St. Optatus received it. Now, that this important Epistle is part of the inspired word of God, there is no doubt. But why? Because the testimony of the fourth and fifth centuries, when Christians were at leisure to examine the question thoroughly, is altogether in its favour. I know of no other reason, and I consider this to be quite sufficient: but with what consistency do persons receive this Epistle as inspired, yet deny that Episcopacy is a divinely ordained means of grace?

Again: the Epistles to the Thessalonians are quoted by six writers in the first two hundred years from St. John's death; first, at the end of the first hundred, by three Fathers, Irenæus, Clement, and Tertullian; and are by implication acknowledged in the last work of Caius, at the same time, and are in Origen's list some years after. On the other hand, the Lord's Table is always called an Altar, and is called a Table only in one single passage of a single Father, during the first three centuries. It is called Altar in four out of the seven Epistles of St. Ignatius. It is called Altar by St. Clement of Rome, by St. Irenæus, Tertullian, St. Cyprian, Origen, Eusebius, St. Athanasius, St. Ambrose, St. Gregory Nazianzen, St. Optatus, St. Jerome, St. Chrysostom, and St. Austin'. It is once called Table by St. Dionysius of

¹ It is perhaps unnecessary to say that the sense of the word Altar (*θυσιαστήριον*) in some of these passages has been contested; as has it been contested whether the Fathers' works are genuine, or the Books of Scripture genuine, or its text free from interpolations. There is no one spot in the territory of theology but has been the scene of a battle. Any thing has been ventured and believed in the heat of controversy; and the ultimate appeal in such cases is the common sense of mankind. Ignatius says, *σπουδάσετε οὐκ μὴ εὐχαριστία χρῆσαι· μία γὰρ σὰρξ τοῦ Κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, καὶ ἐν ποτήριον εἰς ἔνωσιν τοῦ αἵματος αὐτοῦ· ἐν θυσιαστήριον, ὡς εἰς ἐπίσκοπος, ἅμα τῷ πρεσβυτερίῳ καὶ διακόνοις τοῖς συνδούλοις μου, ἵνα ὁ εἶν πράσσητε κατὰ Θεὸν πράσσητε.* Ad Phil. 4. Would it have entered into any one's mind, were it not for the necessities of his theory, to take *εὐχαριστία, σὰρξ, ποτήριον, αἷμα, ἐπίσκοπος, πρεσβυτερίον, διάκονος*, in their ecclesiastical meaning, as belonging to the visible Church, and the one word *θυσιαστήριον*

Alexandria. (Johnson's U. S. vol. i. p. 306.*) I do not know on what ground we admit the Epistles to the Thessalonians to be the writing of St. Paul, yet deny that the use of Altars is Apostolic.

Again: that the Lord's Supper is a Sacrifice is declared or implied by St. Clement of Rome, St. Paul's companion, by St. Justin, by St. Irenæus, by Tertullian, by St. Cyprian, and others. On the other hand, the Acts of the Apostles are perhaps alluded to by St. Polycarp, and first distinctly noticed by St. Irenæus, then by three writers who came soon after (St. Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and the Letter from the Church of Lyons), and then not till the end of the two hundred years from St. John's death. Which has the best evidence, the Book of Acts, or the doctrine of the Eucharistic Sacrifice?

Again: much stress, as I have said, is laid by objectors on the fact that there is so little evidence concerning Catholic doctrine in the *first* years of Christianity. Now, how does this stand, as regards the Canon of the New Testament? The New Testament consists of twenty-seven books in all, though of varying importance. Of these, fourteen are not mentioned at all till from eighty to one hundred years after St. John's death, in which number are the Acts, the Second to the Corinthians, the Galatians, the Colossians, the Two to the Thessalonians, and St. James. Of the other thirteen, five, viz. St. John's Gospel, the Philippians, the First of Timothy, the Hebrews, and the First of John, are quoted but by one writer during the same period.

Lastly, St. Irenæus, at the close of the second century, quotes all the books of the New Testament but five, and deservedly stands very high as a witness. Now, why may not so learned and holy a man, and so close on the Apostles, stand also as a witness of some doctrines which he takes for granted, as the invisible but real Presence in the holy Eucharist, the use of Catholic tradition in gaining the truth, and the powers committed to the Church?

I do not see then, if men will indulge that eclectic spirit which chooses

figuratively?

* John Johnson, *The Unbloody Sacrifice*, vol. 1, p. 306.

part and rejects part of the primitive Church system, what is to keep them from choosing part, and rejecting part of the Canon of Scripture.

But again: it is objected that the evidence of the Church doctrines, whether from Scripture or from Antiquity, is not clear or complete. Now, as far as the question of Scripture is concerned, this point has been already considered at length. The immethodical character of the evidence has been granted, and accounted for. This being the case then, it may be used to protect the proof from Antiquity, as far as it also is immethodical and incomplete. If the Fathers contradict each other in words, so do passages of Scripture contradict each other. Against the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity may be brought the text, "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the Angels which are in heaven, *neither the SON, but the FATHER*¹." And against the doctrine of faith justifying, St. James's declaration, "that works justify."

But this is not all: the objection about the uncertainty of the Fathers, which subserves the ultra-Protestant and Liberal, will be found as prejudicial to the reception of the Canon, as that which we just now examined. There are books, which, great sin as it would be in us to reject, I think any candid person would grant are presented to us under circumstances less promising than those which attend upon the Church doctrines. Take, for instance, the Book of Esther. This book is not quoted once in the New Testament. It was not admitted as canonical by two considerable Fathers, Melito and Gregory Nazianzen. It contains no prophecy, it has nothing on the surface to distinguish it from a mere ordinary history; nay, it has no mark on the surface of its even being a religious history. Not once does it mention the name of GOD or LORD, or any other name by which the GOD of Israel is designated. Again, when we inspect its contents, it cannot be denied that there are things in it which at first sight startle one, and demand our faith. Why then do we receive it? Because we have good reason from tradition to believe it to be one of those which our LORD intended, when He spoke of "the prophets²."

¹ Mark xiii. 32.

² Luke xxiv. 44.

In like manner the Book of Ecclesiastes contains no prophecy, is referred to in no part of the New Testament, and contains passages which at first sight are startling. Again: that most sacred Book, called the Song of Songs, or Canticles, is a continued type from beginning to end. Nowhere in Scripture, as I have already observed, are we told that it is a type; nowhere is it hinted that it is not to be understood literally. Yet it is only as having a deeper and hidden sense, that we are accustomed to see a religious purpose in it. Moreover, it is not quoted or alluded to once all through the New Testament. It contains no prophecies. Why do we consider it divine? For the same reason because tradition informs us that in our SAVIOUR'S time it was included under the title of "the Psalms:" and our SAVIOUR, in St. Luke's Gospel, refers to "the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms."

Objections as plausible, though different, might be urged against the Epistles of St. James, St. Jude, the Second of St. Peter, the Second and Third of St. John, and the Book of Revelation.

Again: we are told that the doctrine of the mystical efficacy of the Sacraments comes from the Platonic philosophers, the ritual from the Pagans, and the Church polity from the Jews. So they do; that is, in a sense in which much more also comes from the same sources. Traces also of the doctrines of the Trinity, Incarnation, and Atonement, may be found among heathens, Jews, and philosophers; for GOD scattered through the world, before His SON came, vestiges and gleams of His true religion, and collected all the separated rays together, when He set Him on His holy hill to rule the day, and the Church, as the moon, to govern the night. In the sense in which the doctrine of the Trinity is Platonic, doubtless the doctrine of mysteries generally is Platonic also. But this by the way. What I have here to notice is, that the same supposed objection can be and has been made against the books of Scripture too, viz. that they borrow from external sources. Infidels have accused Moses of borrowing his law from the Egyptians or other pagans; and elaborate comparisons have been instituted, on the part of believers also, by way of proving it; though even if proved, and so far as proved, it would show nothing more than this,—that GOD, who gave His law to Israel absolutely and openly, had secretly given some portions of it to the heathen. Again: an infidel historian accuses St.

John of borrowing the doctrine of the Eternal Logos or Word from the Alexandrian Platonists. Again: a theory has been advocated,—by whom I will not say,—to the effect that the doctrine of apostate angels, Satan and his hosts, was a Babylonian tenet introduced into the Old Testament after the Jews' return from the Captivity; that no allusion is made to Satan, as the head of the malignant Angels, and as having set up a kingdom for himself against God, in any book written before the Captivity; from which circumstance it may easily be made to follow, that those books of the Old Testament which were written after the Captivity are not plenary inspired, and not to be trusted as canonical. Now, I own I am not at all solicitous to deny that this doctrine of an apostate Angel and his hosts was gained from Babylon: it might still be divine, nevertheless. GOD, who made the prophet's ass speak, and thereby instructed the prophet, might instruct His Church by means of heathen Babylon. Again: is not instruction intended to be conveyed to us by the remarkable words of the governor of the feast, upon the miracle of the water changed to wine? "Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine, and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse; but Thou hast kept the good wine until now¹." Yet at first sight they have not a very serious meaning. It does not therefore seem to me difficult, nay, nor even unlikely, that the prophets of Israel should, in the course of GOD's providence, have gained new truths from the heathen, among whom they lay corrupted. The Church of GOD in every age has been, as it were, on visitation through the earth,—surveying, judging, sifting, selecting, and refining all matters of thought and practice; detecting what was precious amid what is ruined and refuse, and putting her seal upon it. There is no reason, then, why Daniel and Zechariah should not have been taught by the *instrumentality* of the Chaldeans. However, this is stated, and as if to the disparagement of the Jewish Dispensation, by some persons; and under the notion that its system was not only enlarged but altered at the era of the Captivity. And I certainly think it may be done as plausibly, as pagan customs are brought to illustrate and thereby to invalidate the ordinances of the Catholic Church; though the proper

¹ John ii. 10.

explanation in the two cases is not exactly the same.

The objection I have mentioned is applied, in the quarter to which I allude, to the Books of Chronicles. These, it has already been observed, have before now been ascribed by sceptics to (what is called) priestly influence: here then is a second exceptionable influence, a second superstition! In the second Book of Samuel it is said, "the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel; and He moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah¹." On the other hand, in Chronicles it is said, "*Satan* stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel²." On this a writer, not of the English Church, who is in too high a station to be named, says, "The author of the Book of Chronicles... *availing himself* of the learning which he had acquired in the East, and *influenced* by a suitable tenderness for the harmony of the Divine attributes, refers the act of temptation to the malignity of the evil principle."^{*} You see in this way a blow is also struck against the more ancient parts of the Old Testament, as well as the more modern. The books written before the Captivity are represented, as the whole discussion would show, as containing a ruder, simpler, less artificial theology; those after the Captivity, a more learned and refined: GOD's inspiration is excluded in both cases.

The same consideration has been applied to determine the date and importance of the Book of Job, which has been considered, from various circumstances external and internal, not to be a literal history, but an Eastern story.

But enough has been said on this part of the subject.

It seems then that the objections which can be made to the evidence for the Church doctrines are such as also lie against the Canon of Scripture; so that if they avail against the one, they avail against both. If they avail against both, we are brought to this strange conclusion, that GOD has given us a revelation, yet revealed nothing,—that at great cost and with much

¹ 2 Sam. xxxiv. 1.

² 1 Chron. xxi. 1.

^{*} The Rt Revd Michael Russell, the first Bishop of Glasgow and Galloway, in *A Connection of Sacred and Profane History from the Death of Joshua....*

preparation He has miraculously declared His will, that multitudes have accordingly considered they possessed it, yet that, after all. He has said nothing so clearly as to recommend itself as His to a cautious mind, that nothing is so revealed as to be part of the revelation, nothing plain enough to act upon, nothing so certain that we dare assert that the contrary is less certain.

Such a conclusion is a practical refutation of the objection which leads to it. It surely cannot be meant that we should be undecided all our days. We were made for action, and for right action,—for thought, and for true thought. Let us live while we live; let us be alive and doing; let us act on what we have, since we have not what we wish. Let us believe what we do not see and know. Let us forestal knowledge by faith. Let us maintain, before we have proved. This seeming paradox is the secret of happiness. Why should we be unwilling to go by faith? We do all things in this world by faith in the word of others. By faith only we know our position in the world, our circumstances, our rights and privileges, our fortunes, our parents, our brothers and sisters, our age, our mortality. Why should religion be an exception? Why should we be unwilling to use for heavenly objects what we daily use for earthly? Why will we not discern, what it is so much our interest to discern, that trust, in the first instance, in what Providence sets before us in religious matters, is His will and our duty; that thus it is He leads us into all truth, not by doubting, but by believing; that thus He speaks to us, by the instrumentality of what seems accidental that He sanctifies what He sets before us, shallow or weak as it may be in itself, for His high purposes; that almost all systems have so much of truth, as, when we have no choice besides, and cannot discriminate, to make it better to take all than to reject all that He will not deceive us, if we thus trust in Him. Though the received system of religion in which we are born were as unsafe as the sea when St. Peter began to walk on it, yet “be not afraid.” He who could make St. Peter walk the waves, could make even a corrupt or defective creed truth to us, even were ours such; much more can He teach us by the witness of the Church Catholic. It is far more probable that her witness should be true, whether about the Canon or the Creed, than that God should have left us without any witness at all.

LECTURE VII.

INTERNAL DIFFICULTIES OF THE CANON AND THE CATHOLIC CREED COMPARED.

I SHALL now finish the subject I commenced in my last lecture, the parallel between the objections adducible against the Catholic system, and those against the Canon of Scripture. It will be easily understood, that I am not attempting any formal and full discussion of the subject, but offering under various general heads, such suggestions as may be followed by those who will. The objections to the evidence for the Canon have been noticed, now let us consider objections that may be made to its contents.

Perhaps the main objection taken to the Church system, is the dislike which men feel for its doctrines. They call them the work of priestcraft, and in that word is summed up all that they hate in them. Priestcraft is the art of gaining power over men by appeals to their consciences; its instrument is mystery; its subject matter, superstitious feeling. “Now the Church doctrines,” it is urged, “invest a certain number of indifferent things with a new and extraordinary power, beyond sense, beyond reason, beyond nature, a power over the soul; and they put the exclusive possession and use of the things, thus distinguished, into the hands of the Clergy. Such, for instance, is the Creed; some mysterious benefit is supposed to result from holding it, even though with but a partial comprehension, and the Clergy are practically its sole expounders. Such still more are the Sacraments, which the Clergy only administer, and which are supposed to effect some supernatural change in the soul, and to convey some supernatural gift.” This then is the antecedent exception taken against the Catholic doctrines, that they are mysterious, tending to superstition, and to dependence on a particular set of men. And this objection is urged, not merely as a reason for demanding fair proof of what is advanced, but as a reason for refusing to listen to any proof whatever, as if it fairly created an insurmountable presumption against the said doctrines.

Now I say, in like manner, were it not for our happy reverence for the

Canon of Scripture, we should make like exceptions to many things in Scripture; and, since we do not, we ought not consistently to make these exceptions to the Catholic system; but if we do take such grounds against that system, there is nothing but the strength of habit, good feeling, and our LORD'S controlling grace, to keep us from using them against Scripture also. This I shall now attempt to show, and with that view, shall cite various passages in Scripture which, to most men of this generation, will appear at first sight strange, superstitious, incredible, and extreme. If then, in spite of these, Scripture is nevertheless from GOD, so again in spite of similar apparent difficulties, the Catholic system may be from Him also and what the argument comes to is this, that the minds of none of us are in such a true state, as to warrant us in judging peremptorily what is from GOD and what is not. We shrink from the accents of His providence with offence, as if they were not His, in consequence of our inward ears being attuned to false harmonies. Now for some instances of what I mean.

i. I conceive, were we not used to the Scripture narrative, that we should be startled at the accounts there given us of demoniacs.—For instance: “And he asked him, What is thy name? And He answered. *My name is Legion*, for we are many¹.” Again, consider the passage, “When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest and findeth none²,” &c. and in like manner, the account of the damsel who was “possessed of a spirit of divination,” or “Python,” that is of a heathen god, in Acts xvi.; and in connexion with this, St. Paul's assertion “that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils and not to GOD³,” and this as being so literally true that he deduces a practical conclusion from it, “I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.” But, as regards this instance, one is not at all driven to conjecture, but one knows it is really the case, that they who allow themselves to treat the inspired text freely, do at once explain away, or refuse to admit its accounts of this mysterious interference of evil spirits in the affairs of men. Let those see to

¹ Mark v. 9.

² Matt. xii. 43.

³ I Cor. x. 20.

it, who call the Fathers credulous for recording similar narratives. If they find fault with the evidence, that is an intelligible objection; but the common way with objectors is at once and before examination to charge on the narrators of such accounts childish superstition and credulity.

2. If we were not used to the narrative, I conceive we should be very unwilling to receive the account of the serpent speaking to Eve, or its being inhabited by an evil spirit; or, again, of the devils being sent into the swine. We should scoff at such narratives, as fanciful and extravagant. Let us only suppose that instead of being found in Scripture, they were found in some legend of the middle ages; should we merely ask for evidence, or simply assume that there was none? Should we think that it was a case for evidence one way or the other? Should we not rather say, “This is intrinsically incredible? it supersedes the necessity of examining into evidence, it decides the case.” Should we allow the strangeness of the narrative merely to act as suspending our belief, and throwing the burden of proof on the other side, or should we not rather suffer it to settle the question for us? Again, should we have felt less distrust in the history of Balaam's ass speaking? Should we have been reconciled to the account of the HOLY GHOST appearing in a bodily shape, and that apparently the shape of an irrational animal, a dove? And, again, though we might bear the figure of calling our SAVIOUR a lamb, if it occurred once, as if to show that it was the antitype of the Jewish sacrifices, yet, unless we were used to it, would there not be something repugnant to our present habits of mind in calling again and again our SAVIOUR by the name of a brute animal? Unless we were used to it, I conceive it would hurt and offend us much, to read of “glory and honour” being ascribed to Him that sitteth upon the Throne and to the Lamb, as being a sort of idolatry, or at least an unadvised way of speaking. It seems to do too much honour to an inferior creature, and to dishonour CHRIST. You will see this, by trying to substitute any other animal however mild and gentle. It is said that one difficulty in translating the New Testament into some of the oriental languages actually is, that the word in them for Lamb does not carry with it the associations which it does in languages which have had their birth in Christianity. Now we have a remarkable parallel to this in the impression produced by another figure, which was in

use in primitive times, when expressed in our own language. The ancients formed an acrostic upon our LORD's Greek titles as the SON OF GOD, the SAVIOUR of men, and in consequence called Him from the first letters *ἰχθῦς* or "fish." Hear how a late English writer speaks of it, "This contemptible and disgusting quibble originated in certain verses of one of the pseudo-sibyls... I know of no figure which so revoltingly degrades the person of the SON OF GOD¹." Such as this is the nature of the comment made in the farther east on the sacred image of the Lamb.—But without reference to such peculiar associations which vary with place and person, there is in the light of reason a strangeness perhaps in GOD's allowing symbols at all; and, again, a greater strangeness in His vouchsafing to take a brute animal as the name of His Son, and bidding us ascribe praise to it. Now it does not matter, whether we take all these instances separate or together. Separate, they are strange enough; put them together, you have a law of GOD's dealings, which accounts indeed for each separate instance yet it is; then not less strange that the brute creation should have so close a connexion with GOD's spiritual and heavenly kingdom. Here, moreover, it is in place to make mention of the "four beasts" spoken of in the Revelations as being before GOD's throne. Translate the word "living thing," as you may do, yet the circumstance is not less startling. They were respectively like a lion, calf, man, and eagle. To this may be added the figure of the Cherubim in the Jewish law, which is said to have been a symbol made up of limbs of the same animals. Is it not strange that Angels should be represented under brute images? Consider then, if GOD has thus made use or allowed of brutes in deed and in His teaching, as real instruments and as symbols of spiritual things, what is there strange antecedently in supposing He makes use of the inanimate creation also? If Balaam's ass instructed Balaam, what is there fairly to startle us in the Church's doctrine, that the water of Baptism cleanses from sin, that eating the consecrated Bread is eating His Body, or that oil may be blessed for spiritual purposes, as is still done in our Church in the case of a coronation? Of this I feel sure, that those who consider the doctrines of the Church incredible, will soon, if

¹ Osburn on the Early Fathers, p. 85.

they turn their thoughts steadily that way, feel a difficulty in the serpent that tempted Eve and the ass that admonished Balaam.

3. We cannot, it seems, believe that water applied to the body really is GOD's instrument in cleansing the soul from sin; do we believe that at Bethesda, an Angel gave the pool a miraculous power? What GOD has done once, He may do again; that is, there is no antecedent improbability in His connecting real personal benefits to us with arbitrary outward means. Again, what should we say, unless we were familiarised to it, to the story of Naaman bathing seven times in the Jordan? or rather to the whole system of mystical signs;—the tree which Moses cast into the waters to sweeten them; Elisha's throwing meal into the pot of poisonous herbs; and our SAVIOUR's breathing, making clay, and the like? Indeed, is not the whole of the Bible, Old and New Testament, engaged in a system of outward signs with hidden realities under them, which in the Church's doctrine is only *continued*? Is it not certain then that those who stumble at the latter as incredible, will stumble at the former too, as soon as they learn just so much irreverence as to originate objections as well as to receive them? I cannot doubt that unless we were used to the Sacraments, we should be objecting not only to the notion of their conveying virtue, but to their observance altogether, viewed as mere badges and memorials. They would be called Eastern, suited to a people of warm imagination, suited to the religion of other times, but too symbolical, poetical, or (as some might presume to say) theatrical for us; that there was something far more plain, solid, sensible, practical, and edifying, in a sermon, or an open profession, or a prayer.

4. Consider the accounts of virtue going out of our LORD, and that, in the case of the woman with the issue of blood, as it were by a natural law, without a distinct application on His part;—of all who touched the hem of His garment being made whole; and further, of handkerchiefs and aprons being impregnated with healing virtue by touching St. Paul's body,—and of St. Peter's shadow being earnestly sought out, when religion was purest, and the Church's condition most like a heaven upon earth. Can we hope that these passages will not afford matter of objection to the mind, when once it has brought itself steadily to scrutinize the evidence for the

inspiration of the Gospels and Acts? Will it not be obvious to say, “St. Luke was not an Apostle; and I do not believe this account of the handkerchiefs and aprons, though I believe the Book of Acts as a whole.” Next, when the mind gets bolder, it will address itself to the consideration of the account of the woman with the issue of blood. Now, it is not wonderful that she, poor ignorant woman (as men speak), in deplorable ignorance of spiritual religion (alas! that words should be so misused), dark, and superstitious,—it is not wonderful, I say, that she should expect a virtue from touching our Lord’s garment; but that she should *obtain* it by the *opus operatum* of merely touching, and again that He should even commend her faith, will be judged impossible. The notion of virtue *going out* of Him will be considered as Jewish, pagan, or philosophical. Yes; the *outline* of the story will be believed.—the main fact, the leading idea,—not the details. Indeed, if persons have already thought it inherently incredible that the hands of Bishop or priest should impart a power, or grace, or privilege, if they have learned to call it profane, and (as they speak) blasphemous so to teach with the early Church, how can it be less so, to consider that GOD gave virtue to an handkerchief, or apron, or garment, though our LORD’S? What was it, after all, but a mere earthly substance, made of vegetable or animal materials? How was it more holy because He wore it? *He* was holy, not *it*; *it* did not gain holiness by being near Him. Nay: do they not already lay this down as a general principle, that to suppose He diffuses from His Person heavenly virtue, is a superstition? do not they, on this ground, object to the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist? and on what other ground do they deny that the Blessed Virgin, whom all but heretics have ever called the Mother of GOD, was most holy in soul and body, from her ineffable proximity to GOD? He who gave to the perishing and senseless substances of wool or cotton that grace of which it was capable, should not He rather communicate of His higher spiritual perfections to her in whose bosom He lay, or to those who now possess Him through the Sacramental means He has appointed?

5. Unless we were used to the passage, I cannot but think that we should stumble greatly at the account of our LORD’S temptation by Satan. Putting aside other considerations, dwell awhile on the thought of Satan

showing “*all* the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time¹.” What is meant by this? How did he show all, and in a moment; and if by a mere illusion, why from the top of a high mountain?

Or again: consider the account of our SAVIOUR’S bidding St. Peter catch a fish in order to find money in it, to pay tribute with. What should we say if this narrative occurred in the Apocrypha? Should we not speak of it as an evident fiction? and are we likely to do less whenever we have arrived at a proper pitch of unscrupulousness, and what is now-a-days called critical acumen in analysing and disposing of what we have received as divine? Again: I conceive that the blood and water which issued from our SAVIOUR’S side, particularly taken with the remarkable comment upon it in St. John’s Epistle, would be disbelieved, if men were but consistent in their belief and disbelief. The miracle would have been likened to many which occur in Martyrologies, and the inspired comment would have been called obscure and fanciful, as on a par with various doctrinal interpretations in the Fathers, which carry forsooth their own condemnation with them. Again: the occurrence mentioned by St. John “Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it (My Name), and will glorify it again. The people, therefore, that stood by and heard it, said that it thundered; others said, An Angel spake to him²:” this, I conceive, would soon be looked upon as suspicious, did men once begin to examine the claims of the Canon upon our faith. Or again: to refer to the Old Testament. I conceive that the history of the Deluge, the ark, and its inhabitants, will appear to men of modern tempers more and more incredible, the longer and more minutely it is dwelt upon. Or, again, the narrative of Jonah and the whale. Once more, the following narrative will surely be condemned also, as bearing on its face evident marks of being legendary: “And the sons of the prophets said unto Elisha, Behold now, the place where we dwell with thee is too strait for us. Let us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan, and take thence every man a beam, and let us make us a place there, where we may dwell. And he answered, Go ye. And one said, Be

¹. Luke iv. 6.

². John xii. 28, 29.

content, I pray thee, and go with thy servants. And he answered, I will go. So he went with them. And when they came to Jordan, they cut down wood. But as one was felling a beam, the axe-head fell into the water; and he cried, and said, Alas, master! for it was borrowed. And the man of GOD said, Where fell it? And he showed him the place. And he cut down a stick, and cast it in thither; and the iron did swim. Therefore said he, Take it up to thee. And he put out his hand, and took it¹.”

6. Having mentioned Elisha, I am led to say a word or two upon his character. Men of this age are full of their dread of priestcraft and priestly ambition; and they speak and feel as if the very circumstance of a person claiming obedience upon a divine authority was priestcraft and full of evil. They speak as if it was against the religious rights of man (for some such rights are supposed to be possessed by sinners, even by those who disown the doctrine of the political rights of man), as if it were essentially an usurpation for one man to claim spiritual power over another. They do not ask for the voucher of his claim, for his commission, but think the claim absurd. They so speak, that any one who heard them, without knowing the Bible, would think that ALMIGHTY GOD had never given such power unto men. Now, what would such persons say to Elisha's character and conduct? Let us recount some few passages in his history, in the Second Book of Kings, and let us bear in mind what has been already observed of the character of the Books of Chronicles. When the little children out of Bethel mocked him, “he cursed them in the name of the LORD².” This was his first act after entering on his office. Again: Jehoram, the son of Ahab, put away Baal, and walked not in the sins of his father and his mother; but because he did not put away the false worship of Jeroboam, but kept to his calves, his self-appointed priests, altars, and holy days, which he probably thought a little sin, when he was in distress, and called upon Elisha, Elisha said, “What have I to do with thee? Get thee to the prophets of thy father, and to the prophets of thy mother³.” and went on to say, that but for the presence

¹. 2 Kings vi. 1–7.

². 2 Kings ii. 23.

³. Ib. iii. 13.

of good Jehoshaphat, “I would not look toward thee nor see thee.” This was taking (what would now be called) a high tone. Again the Shunammite was a great woman; he was poor. She got her husband's leave to furnish a “little chamber” for him, not in royal style, but as for a poor minister of GOD. It had “a bed and a table and a stool and a candlestick,” and when he came that way he availed himself of it. The world would think that she was the patron, and he ought to be humble, and to know his place. But observe his language on one occasion of his lodging there. He said to his servant, “Call this Shunammite.” When she came, she, the mistress of the house, “stood before him.” He did not speak to her, but bade his servant speak, and then she retired; then he held a consultation with his servant, and then he called her again, and “she stood in the door:” then he promised her a son. Again: Naaman was angered that Elisha did not show him due respect: he only sent him a message, and bade him wash and be clean. Afterwards we find him interposing in political matters in Israel and Syria. Now, it is not to the purpose to account for all this, by saying he worked miracles. Are miracles necessary for being a minister of GOD? Are miracles the only way in which a claim can be recognised? Is a man the higher minister, the more miracles he does? Are we to honour only those who minister temporal miracles, and to be content to eat and be filled with the loaves and fishes? Are there no higher miracles than visible ones? John the Baptist did no miracles, yet he too claimed, and gained, the obedience of the Jews. Miracles *prove* a man to be GOD's minister, they do not *make* him GOD's minister. No matter how a man is proved to come from GOD, if he is known to come from GOD. If CHRIST is with His ministers, according to His promise, even to the end of the world, so that he that despiseth them despiseth Him, then, though they do no miracles, they are in office as great as Elisha. And if Baptism be the cleansing and quickening of the dead soul, to say nothing of the LORD's Supper, they do work miracles. If GOD's ministers are then only to be honoured when we *see* that they work miracles, where is place for faith? Are we not under a dispensation of faith, not of sight? Was Elisha great because he was seen to work miracles, or because he could, and did, work them? Is GOD's minister a proud priest now, for acting as if he came from GOD, if He *does* come from Him? Yet men of this generation, without

inquiring into his claims, would most undoubtedly call him impostor and tyrant, proud, arrogant, profane, and Antichristian, nay, Antichrist himself, if he, a Christian minister, assume one-tenth part of Elisha's state. Yes, Antichrist;—"If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of His household?"

7. St. John the Baptist's character, I am persuaded, would startle most people, if they were not used to Scripture; and when men begin to doubt about the integrity of Scripture, it will be turned against the authenticity or the authority of the particular passages which relate to it. Let us realize to ourselves a man living on locusts and wild honey, and with a hair shirt on, bound by a leathern girdle. Our LORD indeed bids us avoid outward show, and therefore the ostentation of such austerity would be wrong now, of course. But what is there to show that the thing itself would be wrong, if a person were moved to do it? Does not our SAVIOUR expressly say, with reference to the austerities of St. John's disciples, that after His departure His own disciples shall resemble them,—“then shall they fast?” Yet, I suppose, most persons would cry out now against the very semblance of the Baptist's life; and why? Those who gave a reason would perhaps call it Jewish. Yet what had St. John to do with the Jews, whose religion was one of joyousness and feasting, not of austerity, and that by divine permission? Surely the same feeling which would make men condemn an austere life now, if individuals attempted it, which make them, when they read of such instances in the early Church, condemn them, would lead the same parties to condemn it in St. John, were they not bound by religious considerations; and, therefore, I say, if ever the time comes that men begin to inquire into the divinity of the separate parts of Scripture, as they do now scrutinize the separate parts of the Church system, they will no longer be able to acquiesce in St. John's character and conduct as simply right and religious.

8. I conceive that under the same circumstances men will begin to be offended at the passage in the Revelation, which speaks of “the *number* of the beast.” Indeed, it is probable that they will reject the Book of Revelation altogether, not sympathising in the severe tone of doctrine which runs

¹. Matt. x. 25.

through it. Again: there is something very surprising in the importance attached to the Name of GOD and CHRIST in Scripture. The Name of JESUS is said to work cures and frighten away devils. I anticipate that this doctrine will become a stone of stumbling to those who set themselves to inquire into the trustworthiness of the separate parts of Scripture. For instance, the narrative of St. Peter's cure of the impotent man, in the early chapters of the Acts:—first, “Silver and gold,” he says, “have I none; but such as I have, give I thee; In the Name of JESUS CHRIST of Nazareth, rise up and walk.” Then, “And His *Name* through faith in his *Name* hath made this man strong.” Then the question “By what power, or by what *name*, have ye done this?” Then the answer, “By the *Name* of JESUS CHRIST of Nazareth... even *by It* doth this man now stand here before you whole... there is none other *Name* under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.” Then the threat, that the apostles should not “speak at all, nor teach in the *Name* of JESUS.” Lastly, their prayer that God would grant “that signs and wonders might be done by the *Name* of His Holy Child JESUS.” In connection with which must be considered St. Paul's declaration, “that at the *Name* of JESUS every knee should bow¹.” Again: I conceive that the circumstances of the visitation of the Blessed Virgin to Elizabeth would startle us considerably, if we lost our faith in Scripture. Again: can we doubt but that the account of CHRIST's *ascending* into heaven will not be received by the science of this age, when it is carefully considered what is implied in it? Where is heaven? Beyond all the stars? If so, it would take years for any natural body to get there. We say, that with GOD all things are possible. But this age, wise in its own eyes, has already decided the contrary, in maintaining, as it does, that He who virtually annihilated the distance between earth and heaven on His SON's ascension, cannot annihilate it in the celebration of the Holy Communion, so as to make us present with Him, though He be on GOD's right hand in heaven.

9. Lastly, I will mention together a number of doctrinal passages, which, though in Scripture, they who deny that the Fathers contain the pure Gospel, hardly would consider parts of it, if they were but consistent in

¹. Acts iii. iv. Phil. ii. 10.

their free speculations. Such are St. Paul's spiritualizing the history of Sarah and Hagar; his statement of the fire trying every man's work in the day of judgment; his declaring that women must have their heads covered in church, "because of the Angels;" his charging Timothy "before the elect Angels;" his calling the Church "the pillar and ground of the Truth;" the tone of his observations on celibacy, which certainly, if written by any of the Fathers, would in this day have been cited in proof of "the mystery of iniquity" (by which they mean Romanism) "already working" in an early age; St. John's remarkable agreement of tone with him in a passage in the Revelations, not to say our SAVIOUR'S; our SAVIOUR'S account of the sin against the HOLY GHOST, viewed in connection with St. Paul's warning against falling away, after being enlightened, and St. John's notice of a sin which is unto death—(this would be considered opposed to the free grace of the Gospel); our LORD'S strong words about the arduousness of a rich man's getting to heaven; what He says about binding and loosing; about a certain kind of evil spirit going out only by fasting and prayer; His command to turn the left cheek to him who smites the right; St. Peter's saying that we are partakers of a divine nature; and what he says about CHRIST'S going and preaching to the spirits in prison; St. Matthew's account of the star which guided the wise men to Bethlehem; St. Paul's statement, that a woman is saved through childbearing; St. John's directions how to treat those who hold not "the doctrine of CHRIST;"—these and a multitude of other passages would be adduced, not to prove that Christianity was not true, or that CHRIST was not the SON of GOD, or the Bible not inspired, or not on *the whole* genuine and authentic, but that every part of it was not *equally* divine; that portions, books, particularly of the Old Testament, were not so; that we must use our own judgment. Nay, as time went on, perhaps it would be said that the Old Testament altogether was not inspired, only the New,—nay, perhaps only parts of the New, not certain books which were for a time doubted in some ancient Churches, or not the Gospels according to St. Mark and St. Luke, and the Acts, because not the writing of Apostles, or not St. Paul's reasonings, only his conclusions. Next, it would be said, that no reliance can safely be placed on single texts; and so men would proceed, giving up first one thing, then

another, till it would become a question what they gained of any kind, what they considered they gained from Christianity as a definite revelation or a direct benefit. They would come to consider its publication mainly as an historical event occurring eighteen hundred years since, which modified or altered the course of human thought and society, and thereby altered what would otherwise have been our state; as something infused into an existing mass, and influencing us in the improved tone of the institutions in which we find ourselves, rather than as independent, substantive, and one, specially divine in its origin, and directly acting upon us. This is what the Age is coming to, and I wish it observed. We know it denies the existence of the Church as a divine institution: it denies that Christianity has been cast into any particular social mould. Well: but this, I say, is not all; it is rapidly tending to deny the existence of any *system* of Christianity either, any creed, doctrine, philosophy, or by whatever other name we designate it. Hitherto it has been usual, indeed, to give up the Church, and to speak only of the covenant, religion, creed, matter, or system of the Gospel; to consider the Gospel as a sort of literature or philosophy, open for all to take and appropriate, not confined to any set of men, yet still a real, existing system of religion. This has been the approved line of opinion in our part of the world for the last hundred and fifty years; but now a further step is about to be taken. The view henceforth is to be, that Christianity does not exist in documents, any more than in institutions; in other words, the Bible will be given up as well as the Church. It will be said that the benefit which Christianity has done to the world, and which its Divine Author meant it should do, was to give an impulse to society, to infuse a spirit, to direct, control, purify, enlighten the mass of human thought and action, but not to be a separate and definite something, whether doctrine or association, existing objectively, integral, and with an identity, and for ever, and with a claim upon our homage and obedience. And all this fearfully coincides with the symptoms in other directions of the spread of a Pantheistic spirit, the religion that is of beauty, imagination, and philosophy, without constraint moral or intellectual, a religion speculative and self-indulgent.

Pantheism, indeed, is the great deceit which awaits the Age to come¹.

Let us then look carefully, lest we fall in with the evil tendencies of the times in which our lot is cast. GOD has revealed Himself to us, that we might believe: surely His revelation is something great and important. He who made it, meant it to be a blessing even to the end of the world: this is true, if any part of Scripture is true. From beginning to end, Scripture implies that GOD has spoken, and that it is right, our duty, our interest, our safety to believe. Whether, then, we have in our hands the means of exactly proving this or that part of Scripture to be genuine or not, whether we have in our hands the complete proofs of all the Church doctrines, we are more sure that implicit belief in something is our duty, than that it is not our duty to believe those doctrines and that Scripture as we have received them. If our choice lies between accepting all and rejecting all, which I consider it does when persons are consistent, no man can hesitate which alternative is to be taken. So far then every one of us may say,—“Our FATHER which is in heaven gave the world a revelation in CHRIST; we are baptized into His name. He wills us to believe, *because* He has given us a revelation. He who wills us to believe *must* have given us an object to believe. Whether I can prove this or that part to my satisfaction, yet, since I can prove all in a certain way, and cannot separate part from part for certain, I cannot be wrong in taking the whole. I am sure that, if there be error, which I have yet to learn, it must be, not in principles, but in mere matters of detail. If there be corruption or human addition in what comes to me, it must be in little matters, not in great. On the whole, I *must* have GOD’s revelation, and that in what I see before me, with whatever incidental errors. I am sure, on the other hand, that the way which the age takes cannot be right, for it tends to destroy revelation altogether. Whether this or that doctrine, this or that book of Scripture is fully proveable or not, that line of objection to them cannot be right, which when pursued destroys Church, Creed, Bible altogether,—which obliterates the very Name of CHRIST from the world. It is then GOD’s will, under my circumstances,

that I should believe what, in the way of Providence, He has put before me to believe. GOD will not deceive me. I can trust Him. Either every part of the system is pure truth, or, if this or that be an addition, He will (I humbly trust and believe) make such addition harmless to my soul, if I thus throw myself on His mercy with a free and confiding spirit. Doubt is misery and sin, but belief has received CHRIST’s blessing.”

This is the reflection which I recommend to all, so far as they have not the means of examining the evidences for the Church, Creed, and Canon of Scripture ; but I must not be supposed to imply, because I have so put the matter, that those who have the means will not find abundant evidence for the divinity of all three.

¹ Vide Tract No. 83, on Antichrist, which represents another side of the development of Pantheism.

LECTURE VIII.

DIFFICULTIES OF JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN FAITH COMPARED.

I HAVE been engaged in the last two Lectures in showing that the Canon of Scripture rests on no other foundation than the Catholic doctrines; that those who dispute the latter should, if they were consistent,—will, when they learn to be consistent,—dispute the former; that in both cases we believe, mainly, because the Church of the fourth and fifth centuries unanimously believed, and that we have at this moment to defend our belief in the Catholic doctrines merely because they come first, are the first object of attack; and that if we were not defending our belief in them, we should at this very time be defending our belief in the Canon. Let no one then hope for peace in this day; let no one attempt to purchase it by concession;—vain indeed would be that concession. Give up the Catholic doctrines, and what do you gain? an attack upon the Canon, with (to say the least) the *same* disadvantages on your part, or rather, in fact, with much greater; for the circumstance that you have already given up the Doctrines as if insufficiently evidenced in primitive times, will be an urgent call on you, in consistency, to give up the Canon too. And besides, the Church doctrines may also be proved from Scripture, but no one can say that the Canon of Scripture itself can be proved to be a Canon from Scripture; no one can say, that Scripture any where enumerates all the books of which it is composed, and puts its seal upon them ever so indirectly, even if it might allowably bear witness to itself.

But here, before proceeding to make some reflections on the state of the case, I will make one explanation and notice one objection. In the first place, then, I must explain myself, when I say that we depend for the Canon and Creed upon the fourth and fifth centuries. We depend upon them thus: As to Scripture, former centuries certainly do not speak distinctly, frequently, or unanimously, except of some chief books, as the Gospels; but still we see in them, as we believe, an ever-growing tendency

and approximation to that full agreement which we find in the fifth. The testimony given at the latter date is the limit to which all that has been before given converges. For instance, it is commonly said *exceptio probat regulam*; when we have reason to think, that a writer or an age *would* have witnessed so and so, *but for* this or that, and that this or that were mere accidents of his position, then he or it may be said to *tend towards* such testimony. In this way the first centuries tend towards the fifth. Viewing the matter as one of moral evidence, we seem to see in the testimony of the fifth the very testimony which every preceding century gave, accidents excepted, such as the present loss of documents once extant, or the then existing misconceptions which want of intercourse between the Churches occasioned. The fifth century acts as a comment on the obscure text of the centuries before it, and brings out a meaning, which with the help of the comment any candid person sees really to belong to them. And in the same way as regards the Catholic creed, though there is not so much to explain and account for. Not so much, for no one, I suppose, will deny that in the Fathers of the fourth century it is as fully developed, and as unanimously adopted as it can be in the fifth; and, again, there had been no considerable doubts about any of its doctrines previously, as there were about the Epistle to the Hebrews or the Apocalypse: or if any, they were started by individuals, as Origen's about eternal punishment, not by Churches,—or they were at once condemned by the general Church, as in the case of heresies,—or they were not about any primary doctrine, such as the Incarnation or Atonement and all this in spite of that want of free intercourse which did occasion doubts about portions of the Canon. Yet, in both cases, we have at first an *inequality* of evidence in the parts of what was afterwards universally received as a whole;—the doctrines of the Holy Trinity and of Episcopacy, and, again, the four Gospels being generally witnessed from the first; but certain other doctrines being at first rather practised and assumed, than insisted on, (as the necessity of infant baptism,) and certain books, (as the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Apocalypse,) doubted or not admitted in particular countries. And as the unanimity of the fifth century as regards the Canon clears up and overcomes all previous differences, so the abundance of the fourth as to the

Creed interprets, develops, and combines all that is recondite or partial in previous centuries as to doctrine, acting similarly as a comment, not, indeed, as in the case of the Canon, upon a perplexed and disordered, but upon a concise text. In both cases, the after centuries contain but the termination and summing up of the testimony of the foregoing.

So much in explanation; the objection I have to notice is this. It is said, that the Fathers might indeed bear witness to a *document* such as the books of Scripture are, and yet not be good witnesses to a *doctrine*, which is, after all, but an opinion. A document or book is something external to the mind; it is an object that any one can point at, and if a person about two or three hundred years after CHRIST, said, "This book of the New Testament has been accounted sacred ever since it was written," he could be as sure of what he said, as we are at the present day, that the particular Church we now use was built at a certain date, or that the date in the title-page of a certain printed book is to be trusted. On the other hand, it is urged, a doctrine does not exist except in the mind of this or that person, it is not a thing you can point at, it is not a something which two persons see at once,—it is an *opinion*; and every one has *his own* opinion. I have an opinion, you have an opinion;—if on comparing notes we think we agree, we call it the same opinion, but it is not the same really, only called the same because similar; and, in fact, probably no two such opinions really do coincide in all points. Every one describes and colours from his own mind. No one then can bear witness to a doctrine being ancient. Strictly speaking, that which he contemplates, witnesses, speaks about, began with himself; it is a birth of his own mind. He may, indeed, have caught it from another, but it is not the same as another man's doctrine, unless one flame is the same as a second kindled from it; and as flame communicated from phosphorus to sulphur, from sulphur to wood, from wood to coal, from coal to charcoal, burns variously, so, true as it may be that certain doctrines originated in the Apostles, it does not follow that the particular form in which we possess them, originated with the Apostles also. Such is the objection; that the Fathers, if honest men, may be credible witnesses of facts, but not, however honest, witnesses to doctrines.

It admits of many answers:—I will mention two.

1. It does not rescue the Canon from the difficulties of its own evidence, which is its professed object; for it is undeniable, that there are books of Scripture, which in the first centuries particular Fathers, nay, particular Churches did not receive. What is the good of contrasting testimony to facts with testimony to opinions, when we have not, in the case of the Canon, that clear testimony to the fact in dispute which the objection supposes? Lower, as you will, the evidence for the Creed; you do nothing towards raising the evidence for the Canon. The first Fathers, in the midst of persecutions, had not, as I have said, time and opportunity to ascertain always what was inspired and what was not; and since nothing but an agreement of many, of different countries, will prove to us what the Canon is, we must betake ourselves, of necessity, to the fourth and fifth centuries, to those centuries which did hold those very doctrines, which, it seems, are to be rejected as superstitions and corruptions. But if the Church then was in that miserable state of superstition, or rather popery, which belief in those doctrines is supposed to imply, then, I must contend, that blind bigotry and ignorance were not fit judges of what was inspired and what was not. I will not trust the judgment of a worldly-minded partizan, or a crafty hypocrite, or a credulous fanatic in this matter. Unless then you allow those centuries to be tolerably free from doctrinal corruptions, I conceive, you cannot use them as evidence of the canonicity of the Old and New Testament, as we now have them; but if you do consider the fourth and fifth centuries enlightened enough to decide on the Canon, I want to know *why* you call them not enlightened in point of doctrine? The only reason commonly given is, that their Christianity contains many notions and many usages and rites not *in* Scripture, and which because not *in* Scripture, are to be considered, it seems, as if *against* Scripture. But this surely is no sound argument, unless it is true also that the canonicity itself of the Old and New Testament, not being declared in Scripture, is therefore unscriptural. I consider then that the same habit of mind, whether we call it cautious or sceptical, which quarrels with the testimony for Catholic doctrine, because a doctrine is an opinion and not an object, ought also in consistency to quarrel with the testimony for the Canon, as being that of an age which on its own principles is superstitious and uncritical.

2. Granting then, that Scripture is an external object which can be appealed to and witnessed, yet it is not witnessed generally till (according to the objection in question) a blind and superstitious age, and, therefore, an age whose testimony on account of such superstition is not satisfactory. But again: the doctrines of the Church are after all not mere matters of opinion; they were not mere ideas in the mind which no one could appeal to, each individual having his own, but they were external facts, quite as much as the books of Scripture,—how so? Because they were embodied in rites and ceremonies. A usage, custom, or monument, has the same kind of identity, is in the same sense common property, and admits of a common appeal, as a book. When a writer appeals to the custom of the Sign of the Cross, or the Baptism of infants, or the Sacrifice or the Consecration of the Eucharist, or Episcopal Ordination, he is not speaking of an opinion in his mind, but of something external to it, and is as trustworthy as when he says that the Acts of the Apostles is written by St. Luke. Now such usages more or less involve the doctrines in question. Is it not implied, for instance, in the fact of priests only consecrating the Eucharist, that it is a gift which others have not? in the Eucharist being offered to God, that it is an offering? in penance being exacted of offenders, that it is right to impose it? in children being exorcised, that they are by nature children of wrath and inhabited by Satan? On the other hand, when the Fathers witness to the *inspiration* of Scripture, they are surely as much witnessing to a mere doctrine,—not to the book itself, but to an opinion,—as when they witness to the grace of Baptism.

Again, the Creed is a document the same in kind as Scripture, though its wording be not fixed and invariable, or its language. It admits of being appealed to, and is appealed to by the early Fathers, as Scripture is. If Scripture was written by the Apostles, because the Fathers say so (as it is), why was not the Creed taught by the Apostles, because the Fathers say so? The Creed is no opinion in the mind, but a form of words pronounced many times a day, at every baptism, at every communion, by every member of the Church;—is it not common property as much as Scripture?

Once more; if Church doctrine is but an opinion, how is it there can be such a thing at all as Catholic consent about it? If, in spite of its being

subjective to the mind, Europe, Asia, and Africa could agree together in doctrine in the fourth and fifth centuries (to say nothing of earlier times), why should its subjective character be an antecedent objection to a similar agreement in it between the fourth century and the first?

Granting then, that external facts can be testified in a way in which opinions cannot be, yet the Church doctrines are not mere opinions, but ordinances: and though the books of Scripture themselves are an external fact, yet they are not all of them witnessed by all writers till a late age, and their canonicity and inspiration are but doctrines, not facts, and open to the objections, whatever they are, to which doctrines lie open.

And now, having said as much as is necessary on these subjects, I will make some remarks on the state of the case as I have represented it, and thus shall bring to an end the train of thought in which these Lectures have hitherto been engaged. Let us suppose it proved, then, as I consider it has been proved, that many difficulties are connected with the evidence for the Canon, that we might have clearer evidence for it than we have; and again, let us grant that there are many difficulties connected with the evidence for the Church doctrines, that they might be more clearly contained in Scripture, nay, in the extant writings of the first three centuries, than they are. This being assumed, I observe as follows:—

1. There is something very arresting and Impressive in the fact, that there should be these difficulties attending those two great instruments of religious truth which we possess. We are all of us taught from the Bible and from the Prayer Book: it is from these that we get our knowledge of God. We are sure they contain a doctrine which is from Him. We are sure of it but *how* do we know it? We are sure the doctrine is from Him, and (I hesitate not to say) by a supernatural, divinely inspired assurance; but *how* do we know the doctrine is from Him? When we go to inquire into the reasons in argument, we find that the Prayer Book rests upon the Bible, and the Bible rests on testimony; that the Church doctrines, which the Prayer Book contains, are to be gathered from Scripture, and that the books of Scripture which make up the Bible are to be gathered from history; and further, that those doctrines might have been more clearly stated in the Bible, and the books of the Bible more clearly witnessed by

Antiquity. I say, there is something very subduing in this remarkable coincidence, which cannot be accidental. We have reason to believe that GOD, our Maker and Governor, has spoken to us by revelation; yet, why has He not spoken more clearly? He has given us doctrines, which are but obscurely gathered from Scripture, and a Scripture which is but obscurely gathered from history. It is not a single fact, but a double fact; it is a coincidence. We have two informants, and both leave room for doubt. GOD's ways surely are not as our ways.

2. This is the first reflection which rises in the mind on the state of the case. The second is this: that, most remarkable it is, the Jews were left in the same uncertainty about CHRIST, in which we are about His doctrine. The precept "*Search the Scriptures,*" and the commendation of the Bereans, who "*searched the Scriptures daily,*" surely implies that divine truth was not on the surface of the Old Testament. We do not search for things which are before us, but for what we have lost, or have to find. The whole system of the prophecies left the Jews (even after CHRIST came) where we are,—in doubt. The Sun of righteousness did not at once clear up the mists from the prophetic word. It was a dark saying to the many, after He came, as well as before. It is not to be denied that there were and are many real difficulties in the way of the Jews admitting that JESUS CHRIST is their Messiah. The Old Testament certainly does speak of the Messiah as a temporal monarch, and a conqueror of this world. We are accustomed to say that the prophecies must be taken *spiritually*; and rightly do we say so. True: yet does not this look like an evasion, to a Jew? Is it not much more like an evasion, though it be not, than to say (what the Church *does* say, and rightly) that rites remain, *though* Jewish rites are done away, because *our* rites are not Jewish but spiritual, gifted with the Spirit, channels of grace? The Old Testament certainly spoke as if, when the Church expanded into all nations, yet that those nations should be inferior to the Jews, even if admitted into the Church; and so St. Peter understood it till he had the vision. Yet when the Jews complained, instead of being soothed and consoled, they were met with language such as this: "Friend, I do thee no wrong... Is it not lawful for Me to do what I will with Mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?" "Nay but, O man, who art thou that

repliest against GOD? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why hast Thou made me thus¹?"—Again: why were the Jews discarded from GOD's election? for *keeping* to their Law. Why, this was the very thing they were *told* to do, the very thing which, if not done, was to be their ruin. Consider Moses' words: "If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, The LORD thy GOD; then the LORD will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance²." Might they not, or rather did they not bring passages like this as an irrefragable argument against Christianity, that they were told to give up their law, that law which was the charter of their religious prosperity? Might not their case seem a *hard* one, judging by the surface of things and without reference to "the hidden man of the heart?" We know how to answer this objection; we say, Christianity lay beneath the letter; that the letter slew those who for whatever cause went by it; that when CHRIST came, He shed a light on the sacred text and brought out its secret meaning. Now, is not this just the case I have been stating, as regards Catholic doctrines, or rather a more difficult case? The doctrines of the Church are not hidden so deep in the New Testament as the Gospel doctrines are hidden in the Old; but they are hidden; and I am persuaded that were men but consistent, who oppose the Church doctrines as being unscriptural, they would vindicate the Jews for rejecting the Gospel. Much might be said on this subject: I will but add, by way of specimen, how such interpretations as our LORD's of "I am the GOD of Abraham," &c. would startle and offend reasoning men. Is it not much further from the literal force of the words than the doctrine of the Apostolical Succession, from the words, "I am with you *always*, even unto the end of the world?" In the one case we argue, "Therefore, the Apostles are in one sense *now* on earth, because Christ says, 'with you *always*,'" "in the other, CHRIST Himself argues, "therefore in one sense the bodies of the patriarchs are still alive; for GOD calls Himself

¹. Matt. xx. 13–15. Rom. ix. 20.

². Deut. xxviii. 58, 59.

their God.” We say, “therefore the Apostles live in their successors.” CHRIST implies, “therefore the body never died, therefore it will rise again.” His own divine mouth hereby shows us that doctrines may be in Scripture, though they require a multitude of links to draw them thence. It must be added that the Sadducees *did* profess (what they would call) a plain and simple creed; they recurred to Moses and went by Moses, and rejected all additions to what was on the surface of Moses’ writings, and thus they rejected what really was in Moses, though not on the surface. They denied the resurrection; they had no idea that it was contained in the books of Moses.

Here, then, is another singular instance of the same procedure on the part of Divine Providence. That Gospel, which was to be “the glory of His people Israel¹,” was a stumbling-block to them, as for other reasons, so especially *because* it was not on the *surface* of the Old Testament. And all the compassion (if I may use the word) they received from the Apostles for their perplexity was, “because they *knew* Him not, nor yet the *voice* of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning Him².” Or again: “Well spake the HOLY GHOST by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people, and say. Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand³,” &c. Or when the Apostles are mildest: “I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from CHRIST for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh;” or, “I bear them record that they have a zeal of GOD, but not according to knowledge⁴.” Moreover, it is observable that the record of their anxiety is preserved to us; an anxiety which many of us would call just and rational, many would pity, but which the inspired writers treat with a sort of indignation and severity. “Then came the Jews round about Him, and said unto Him, How long dost Thou make us to

¹ Luke ii. 32.

² Acts xiii. 27.

³ Ib. xxviii. 25, 26.

⁴ Rom. ix. 2, 3; x. 2.

doubt?” or more literally, “How long dost Thou keep our soul in suspense? If thou be the CHRIST, *tell us plainly.*” CHRIST answers by referring to His works, and by declaring that His sheep do hear and know Him, and follow Him. If any one will seriously consider the intercourse with our Lord and the Pharisees, he will see that, not denying their immorality and miserable pride, yet that they had just reason to complain (as men now speak) that “the Gospel was not preached to them,”—that the Truth was not placed before them clearly and fully and uncompromisingly and intelligibly and logically,—that they were bid to believe on weak arguments and fanciful deductions.

This then, I say, is certainly a most striking coincidence in addition. Whatever perplexity any of us may feel about the evidence of Scripture or of Church doctrine, we see it is what is represented in Scripture as the lot of the Jews too; and this circumstance, while it shows that it is a sort of law of GOD’s providence², and so affords an additional evidence of the truth of the revealed system by its harmony, also serves to quiet and console, and moreover to awe and warn us. Doubt and difficulty, as regards evidence, seems our lot; the simple question is, What is our duty under it? Difficulty is our lot, as far as we take on ourselves to inquire; the multitude are not able to inquire, and so escape the trial; but when men inquire, this trial at once comes upon them. And surely we may use the parable of the Talents to discover what our duty is under the trial. Do not those who refuse to go by the hints and probable meaning of Scripture hide their talent in a napkin? and will they be excused?

3. Now, in connexion with what has been said, observe the singular coincidence, or rather appositeness of what Scripture enjoins as to going by *faith* in religious matters. The difficulties which exist in the evidence give a deep meaning to the exhortation. Scripture is quite aware of the difficulties. Objections can be brought against its own inspiration, its canonicity, against revealed doctrines, as in the case of the Jews against the

¹ John x. 24.

² For the *reasons* of this indirect mode of teaching, the reader is referred to Tract 8o.

Messiahship of JESUS CHRIST. It knows them all: it has provided against them, by recognizing them. It says, "Believe," because it knows that, unless we believe, there is no means of divine knowledge. If we will doubt, that is, if we will not allow evidence to be sufficient which merely results in a balance on the side of revelation; if we will determine that no evidence is enough to prove revealed doctrine but what is overpowering; if we will not go by evidence in which there are (so to say) three chances for revelation and only two against, we cannot be Christians; we shall miss CHRIST either in His inspired Scriptures, or in His doctrines, or in His ordinances.

To conclude: our difficulty and its religious solution is contained in the sixth chapter of St. John. After our LORD had declared what all who heard seemed to feel to be a hard doctrine, some in offence and disgust left Him. Our LORD said to the Twelve most tenderly, "Will ye also go away?" St. Peter promptly answered, No: but observe on what ground he put it: "LORD, *to whom* shall we go?" He did not bring forward evidences of our LORD's mission, though he knew of such. He knew of such in abundance, in the miracles that He did: but still questions might be raised about the miracles of others, such as Simon the sorcerer, or of vagabond Jews, or about the force of the evidence from miracles itself. This was not the evidence on which he rested, but this,—that if CHRIST was not to be trusted, there was nothing in the world to be trusted; and this was a conclusion repugnant both to his reason and his heart. He had within him ideas of greatness and goodness, holiness and eternity,—he had a love of them,—he had an instinctive hope and longing after their possession. Nothing could convince him that this unknown good was a dream. Eternal life was the object which his soul, as far as it had learned to realize and express its wishes, supremely longed for. In CHRIST he found what he wanted. He says, "Lord, *to whom shall* we go?" implying he must go somewhere. CHRIST had asked, "Will ye also go *away*?" He only spoke of leaving *Himself*; but in St. Peter's thought to leave Him was to go somewhere else. He only thought of leaving Him *by* taking another god. That negative state of neither believing nor disbelieving, neither acting this way nor that, which is so much in esteem now, did not occur to his mind as possible. The fervent Apostle knew not what scepticism was. With him,

his course was at best but a *choice of difficulties*, of difficulties perhaps, but still a choice. He knew of no course without a choice,—choice he must make. Somewhither he must go: whither else? If CHRIST could deceive him, to whom should he go? His ways might be dark. His words often perplexing, but still he found in Him what he found nowhere else,—amid difficulties a realization of his inward longings. "Thou hast the words of eternal life." So far he saw. He might have misgivings at times; he might have permanent and in themselves insuperable objections; still, in spite of such objections, in spite of the assaults of unbelief, on the whole, he saw that in Christ which was positive, real, and satisfying. He saw it nowhere else. "Thou," he says, "hast the words of eternal life; and we *have believed* and *have known* that thou art the CHRIST, the SON of the Living GOD." As if he said, "We will stand by what we believed and knew yesterday,—what we believed and knew the day before. A sudden gust of new doctrines, a sudden inroad of new perplexities shall not unsettle us. We *have believed*, we *have known*: we cannot collect together all the evidence, but this is the abiding impression on our minds. We feel that it is better, safer, truer, pleasanter, more blessed to cling to Thy feet, O merciful SAVIOUR, than to leave Thee. Thou *canst not* deceive us; it is impossible. We will hope in Thee against hope, and believe in Thee against doubt, and obey Thee in spite of gloom."

Now, what are the feelings I have described but the love of CHRIST? Thus love is the parent of faith. We believe in things we see not, from love of them: if we did not love, we should not believe. Faith is reliance on the word of another; the word of another is in itself a faint evidence compared with that of sight or reason. It is influential only when we cannot do without it. We cannot do without it, when it is our informant about things which we cannot do without. Things we cannot do without, are things which we desire. They who feel they cannot do without the next world, go by faith (not that sight would not be better), but because they have no other means of knowledge to go by. "To whom shall they go?" If they will not believe the word preached to them, what other access have they to the next world? Love of GOD led St. Peter to follow CHRIST, and love of GOD and CHRIST leads men now to love and follow the Church.

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Let us then say, If we give up the Gospel, as we have received it, in the Church, to whom shall we go? It has the words of eternal life in it: where else are they to be found? Is there any other religion to choose but that of the Church? Shall we go to Mahometanism or Paganism? But we may seek some heresy or sect: true, we may: but why are they more sure? are they not a part, while the Church is the whole? Why is the part true, if the whole is not? Why is not that evidence trustworthy for the whole, which is trustworthy for a part? Sectaries commonly give up the Church's doctrines, and go by the Church's Bible; but if the doctrines cannot be proved true, neither can the Bible: they stand or fall together. If we begin, we must soon make an end. On what consistent principle can I give up part and keep the rest? No: I see a great Work before me, professing to be the work of that God whose being and attributes I feel within me to be real. Why should not this great sight be,—what it professes to be,—His presence? *Why* should not the Church be divine? The burden of proof surely is on the other side. I will accept her doctrines, and her rites, and her Bible,—not, one and not the other, but all,—till I have clear proof that she is mistaken. It is, I feel, God's will that I should do so; and besides, I love these her possessions,—I love her Bible, her doctrines, and her rites, and *therefore* I BELIEVE.