

But this is not to be attributed to the want of clearness of the word of God. "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the God of the other world hath blinded the minds of them who believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." We further reply, in the second place, that the conflicting opinions held by those who profess to believe in the sufficiency of Scripture are, to a great extent, to be accounted for by a *real departure from this belief*. Among those who really believe in the sufficiency of Scripture, there is a marvellous uniformity of belief as may be seen from the Confessions of the Evangelical Churches. But there are many who nominally profess reverence for the Bible as the rule of faith but who found their views, to a great extent, on *a priori* speculations, rejecting the plain teachings of the Scripture, when these stand opposed to what seem to be the dictates of reason. Finally, we retort upon Romanists who deny the perspicuity of Scripture, and rely upon the interpretation of the Church, that there exist the greatest difficulties among themselves respecting most important doctrines. The Jesuits for example are Arminians, and the Jansenists are Calvinists (as regards the doctrine of Predestination). The Gallicans and the Ultramontanists differ respecting the power and infallibility of the Pope. Besides as has been most fully shown by Protestant writers (*e. g.*, in Edgar's book on the Variations of Popery) in many important matters Popes have differed from Popes, Councils from Councils, Councils confirmed by Popes from Councils confirmed by other Popes, and the Church in some ages, from the Church of other ages. There is thus no good reason for objections to the perspicuity of Scripture, either on the ground of apparently adverse truths, or on the ground of conflicting opinions among those who regard the Bible as a sufficient rule of faith.

I have thus endeavoured, with as much brevity as possible, to discuss the important question of the sufficiency of the Scripture. I have endeavoured to establish and defend the twofold position that all doctrines necessary to salvation are *either explicitly or implicitly* contained in the Holy Scriptures; and that they are exhibited with *such clearness* that even the unlearned, in the due use of ordinary means, may arrive at an acquaintance with saving truth. I shall now briefly indicate in a few sentences, the bearing of the views I have endeavoured to establish on two different branches of study to which the attention of students in our new College is to be directed during the winter—Apologetic and Systematic Theology.

So far as Systematic Theology is concerned, it is evident that if the Bible be a sufficient rule of faith, and the only sufficient rule of faith (as may be inferred from our arguments) our system of doctrines should be based on the Bible alone. It will, indeed, be allowable to have recourse to extraneous sources for the illustration of Bible doctrines, but no doctrines are to be held as binding on the conscience, or necessary to salvation, and as therefore entitled to a place in a system of Christian Theology, which are not warranted by the teaching, explicit or implied, of the inspired word of God.

As to Apologetics, or the evidences of Christianity, I desire most distinctly to state my belief that the defence of Christianity is only possible on the theory that the Bible is a sufficient rule of faith. If Christianity be supposed to include among its doctrines certain tenets which are held by Romanists and their Anglican allies on the ground of tradition, and without the warrant of the inspired volume, it would be necessary in defending the Church system, to defend contradictions, and prove impossibilities. The attempt to uphold such a system must necessarily fail. The