

Do not for a moment suppose that the Church of England then had her beginning. She did not then spring up for the first time, as if she had never existed before. She was not *first* formed at that time ; she was only *reformed*, and purified from the idolatry, defilements, and superstitions of Popery.

This Reformation was indeed a glorious work. If anything wrong was mixed with it, to us belongs the shame ; but for all that was right we may indeed bless God.

You will bear in mind then that after the Reformation the Church continued to be the same Church as she was before it ; only she was purified from error in doctrine, and freed from the dominion of Rome.

Just as a careful Gardener, who discovers that his Tree is cankered and decaying, lops off every unsound part, and preserves the rest ; so did our Reformers. They did not root up the whole Tree ; but they purged it and cleansed it ; and it has grown, and prospered, and borne fruit, ever since.