

mare for centuries, say, from the beginning of the seventh century to the beginning of the sixteenth, nine long centuries. When they went out they shut the door behind them, and showed a stern resolve not to go back to what they at least regarded as beggarly elements. These contrasts between the two countries and the people that live in them and the trend of religious thought, as well as of the forms of Church life, are remarkable, are well worthy of study, and if they can be accounted for in a philosophical way, let an attempt be made to do so. I take it that in this there is suggested the strongest possible presumption that if the people of England had been free to act in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, that is, if the free action of the people had not been blocked by the arbitrary intervention of the Crown, the outward form of the Reformation in that country would have conformed more closely than it did to the shape it took in the Continent of Europe generally and in Scotland in particular. Whether that on the whole would have been a greater good or a greater evil, it is not our province at this moment to discuss or attempt to determine.

We may conclude this lecture with an examination of the idea of the Church put forward by our neighbours in the course of this controversy. Here, indeed, in a way we get down to the root of the whole matter. As we look at the statements made, not in a veiled way, but broadly avowed, we cannot help saying that the position taken up, as well as the arguments brought forward in support of it, is essentially the position that