

which all doctrines must be tested. Lecky in his history of Rationalism puts it thus, "Men have come instinctively and almost unconsciously to judge all doctrines by their intuitive sense of right, and to reject or explain away, or throw into the background those that will not bear the test, no matter how imposing may be the authority that authenticates them." Thus the moral faculty is made supreme over all other authority. The conscience is made the supreme judge of religious truth, and no doctrine can be admitted which the individual conscience does not sanction, however plainly it may be taught in the Word of God. Some for example object to the doctrine of atonement because it teaches the imputation of the guilt incurred by sinners to the Holy Jesus of Nazareth; this offends their sense of right and wrong, and they must either find some explanation of it or reject the professed revelation which contains it. Here without doing more than notice the fact that this representation of the doctrine is false because only partially stated; we remark that to say that God is not to be or do so and so is *a priori* reasoning of the most objectionable kind, it measures what God ought to be or do by the standard of human thought. "Thou thoughtest," saith God, "that I was altogether such a one as thyself." The argument proceeds on a total misconception of the nature of conscience; it is not an active energy that gives existence to views and beliefs, and invests them with authority; it is a regulative faculty, which decides on the lawfulness or unlawfulness of our actions and affections and instantly approves or condemns them. Throughout the entire Scriptures there is the recognition of the individual conscience, existing prior to a positive revelation, which is the supreme moral guide within the soul; but it is not independent and infallible—"like other parts of the human soul it exhibits the weakness of a dependent and corrupt creature." The imperfections and perversions of the natural conscience are undeniable—it needs to be quickened and enlightened and educated; and to make it the judge of truth, the measure and arbiter of faith, is to transfer it out of its proper sphere, and to ascribe to it powers which it is quite incompetent to exercise. Hence the necessity of *an authoritative rule of faith*