

**PROTESTANTISM AND THE BIBLE:
LECTURES DELIVERED IN ST.
ANN'S CHURCH ON THE SUNDAY
EVENINGS OF ADVENT, 1880**

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Protestantism and the Bible: Lectures Delivered in St. Ann's Church on the Sunday Evenings of Advent, 1880 by Thomas S. Preston

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THOMAS S. PRESTON

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LECTURES

DELIVERED IN ST. ANN'S CHURCH

ON THE

SUNDAY EVENINGS OF ADVENT 1880.

BY THE

RIGHT REV. THOMAS S. PRESTON, V.G., LL.D.,

PROTHONOTARY APOSTOLIC.

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P R E F A C E .

THE following lectures present, in a brief and popular form, the argument against Protestantism, drawn from its use of the Holy Scriptures. They are a continuation of former discourses upon the nature and results of the Protestant Reformation. Wherever you approach error you find contradictions and inconsistency. The houses of heretics and schismatics are divided against themselves, and built upon either absolute falsehood or the perversion of truth. The children of Protestant parents are fast going away from every species of dogmatism; and the different sects are losing not only unity of faith, but also the conviction of the necessity of a creed. Liberalism, or freedom of thought in matters of revelation, is the characteristic of our times. No article of faith is made the condition of church-membership, or even of the exercise of the ministry. Creeds must grow with the progress of science, and men must be left

free to embrace new views, as day unto day brings more light, and widens the circle of knowledge.

Yet there are among the many to whom the Catholic truth is unknown those who can never relinquish the associations of childhood, nor all the truths of Christianity. They cling to their Bibles, which they have received as the oracles of God and the words of Christ to a fallen world. They identify their interpretations of the inspired Scriptures with all that they have of religion, and with all their hopes of a future life. We would not for one moment judge their consciences. But, for the reason that we believe in their sincerity, we would press upon them the discharge of a duty from which they cannot be excused. They are bound to examine well the grounds of their faith. They cannot take the Bible as their only teacher, without knowing the authority which has received it from the Holy Ghost and delivered it to men. They cannot credit the falsehoods which gave birth to the Reformation, and which are still repeated to the ignorant, as well as to those who are wilfully deceived. They cannot close their eyes to the facts which all around us testify to the logical consequences of the principle of private judgment. The

Bible must be authenticated by some living, infallible witness, or else it cannot stand. If it be accepted as the work of the Divine Spirit upon the testimony of the Catholic Church, then in all things must that testimony be obeyed. The Scriptures and the Church cannot be separated, neither in logic nor in fact. The attempt to separate them violates the order of God, and leads to countless contradictions; while it results in the abuse of the sacred word to the destruction of faith and piety. It is strange that the lessons of the past three hundred years are lost upon so many; that any should fail to see the truth which is so plain, which responds to the needs of the intellect and heart. One reason why men do not accept the teachings of Catholic faith, is that they are unwilling to submit their intelligence to an authority external to themselves. If they would reason for one moment, they would see that such an authority is essential to the exercise of faith, and that the Protestant principle destroys, root and branch, the fundamental idea of Christianity, which is a fixed creed coming from God through Christ.

These lectures are only a mere outline of the subject so much more ably treated in larger and more

profound works. We venture to hope that they may fall into some hands where, by the divine blessing, they may bring forth fruit. They are presented to the public with the utmost charity to all, and the earnest desire to promote the glory of God in the salvation of souls. If honest Protestants could be brought to see the harmony, sufficiency, and divinity of the Catholic faith, they would gladly leave all their prejudices and worldly ties behind them, and follow Christ, who in His Church is the way, the truth, and the life.

T. S. P.

NEW YORK, November 21, 1880.

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