

Discourse 4. Bearing of Other Branches of Knowledge on Theology

1.

{71} NOTHING is more common in the world at large than to consider the resistance, made on the part of religious men, especially Catholics, to the separation of Secular Education from Religion, as a plain token that there is some real contrariety between human science and Revelation. To the multitude who draw this inference, it matters not whether the protesting parties avow their belief in this contrariety or not; it is borne in upon the many, as if it were self-evident, that religious men would not thus be jealous and alarmed about Science, did they not feel instinctively, though they may not recognize it, that knowledge is their born enemy, and that its progress, if it is not arrested, will be certain to destroy all that they hold venerable and dear. It looks to the world like a misgiving on our part similar to that which is imputed to our refusal to educate by means of the Bible only; why should you dread the sacred text, men say, if it be not against you? And in like manner, why should you dread secular education, except that it is against you? Why impede the circulation of books which take religious views opposite to your own? Why forbid your children and scholars the free {72} perusal of poems or tales or essays or other light literature which you fear would unsettle their minds? Why oblige them to know these persons and to shun those, if you think that your friends have reason on their side as fully as your opponents? Truth is bold and unsuspicious; want of self-reliance is the mark of falsehood.

Now, as far as this objection relates to any supposed opposition between secular science and divine, which is the subject on which I am at present engaged, I made a sufficient answer to it in my foregoing Discourse. In it I said, that, in order to have possession of truth at all, we must have the whole truth; and no one science, no two sciences, no one family of sciences, nay, not even all secular science, is the whole truth; that revealed truth enters to a very great extent into the province of science, philosophy, and literature, and that to put it on one side, in compliment to secular science, is simply, under colour of a compliment, to do science a great damage. I do not say that every science will be equally affected by the omission; pure mathematics will not suffer at all; chemistry will suffer less than politics, politics than history, ethics, or metaphysics; still, that the various branches of science are intimately connected with each other, and form one whole, which whole is impaired, and to an extent which it is difficult to limit, by any considerable omission of knowledge, of whatever kind, and that revealed knowledge is very far indeed from an inconsiderable department of knowledge, this I consider undeniable. As the written and unwritten word of God make up Revelation as a whole, and the written, taken by itself, is but a part of that whole, so in turn Revelation itself may be viewed as one of the constituent parts of human knowledge, considered as a whole, and {73} its omission is the omission of one of those constituent parts. Revealed Religion furnishes facts to the other sciences, which those sciences, left to themselves, would never reach; and it invalidates apparent facts, which, left to themselves, they would imagine. Thus, in the science of history, the preservation of our race in Noah's ark is an historical fact, which history never would arrive at without Revelation; and, in the province of physiology and moral philosophy, our race's progress

42 and perfectibility is a dream, because Revelation contradicts it, whatever may be
43 plausibly argued in its behalf by scientific inquirers. It is not then that Catholics are
44 afraid of human knowledge, but that they are proud of divine knowledge, and that they
45 think the omission of any kind of knowledge whatever, human or divine, to be, as far as
46 it goes, not knowledge, but ignorance.

2.

47 Thus I anticipated the objection in question last week: now I am going to make it the
48 introduction to a further view of the relation of secular knowledge to divine. I observe,
49 then, that, if you drop any science out of the circle of knowledge, you cannot keep its
50 place vacant for it; that science is forgotten; the other sciences close up, or, in other
51 words, they exceed their proper bounds, and intrude where they have no right. For
52 instance, I suppose, if ethics were sent into banishment, its territory would soon
53 disappear, under a treaty of partition, as it may be called, between law, political
54 economy, and physiology; what, again, would become of the province of experimental
55 science, if made over to the Antiquarian Society; or of history, if surrendered out and out
56 to Metaphysicians? The case is the same with the {74} subject-matter of Theology; it
57 would be the prey of a dozen various sciences, if Theology were put out of possession;
58 and not only so, but those sciences would be plainly exceeding their rights and their
59 capacities in seizing upon it. They would be sure to teach wrongly, where they had no
60 mission to teach at all. The enemies of Catholicism ought to be the last to deny this:—
61 for they have never been blind to a like usurpation, as they have called it, on the part of
62 theologians; those who accuse us of wishing, in accordance with Scripture language, to
63 make the sun go round the earth, are not the men to deny that a science which exceeds
64 its limits falls into error.

65 I neither then am able nor care to deny, rather I assert the fact, and today I am going on
66 to account for it, that any secular science, cultivated exclusively, may become
67 dangerous to Religion; and I account for it on this broad principle, that no science
68 whatever, however comprehensive it may be, but will fall largely into error, if it be
69 constituted the sole exponent of all things in heaven and earth, and that, for the simple
70 reason that it is encroaching on territory not its own, and undertaking problems which it
71 has no instruments to solve. And I set off thus:

3.

72 One of the first acts of the human mind is to take hold of and appropriate what meets
73 the senses, and herein lies a chief distinction between man's and a brute's use of them.
74 Brutes gaze on sights, they are arrested by sounds; and what they see and what they
75 hear are mainly sights and sounds only. The intellect of man, on the contrary, energizes
76 as well as his eye or ear, and perceives in sights and sounds something beyond them.
77 {75} It seizes and unites what the senses present to it; it grasps and forms what need
78 not have been seen or heard except in its constituent parts. It discerns in lines and
79 colours, or in tones, what is beautiful and what is not. It gives them a meaning, and
80 invests them with an idea. It gathers up a succession of notes into the expression of a

whole, and calls it a melody; it has a keen sensibility towards angles and curves, lights and shadows, tints and contours. It distinguishes between rule and exception, between accident and design. It assigns phenomena to a general law, qualities to a subject, acts to a principle, and effects to a cause. In a word, it philosophizes; for I suppose Science and Philosophy, in their elementary idea, are nothing else but this habit of *viewing*, as it may be called, the objects which sense conveys to the mind, of throwing them into system, and uniting and stamping them with one form.

This method is so natural to us, as I have said, as to be almost spontaneous; and we are impatient when we cannot exercise it, and in consequence we do not always wait to have the means of exercising it aright, but we often put up with insufficient or absurd views or interpretations of what we meet with, rather than have none at all. We refer the various matters which are brought home to us, material or moral, to causes which we happen to know of, or to such as are simply imaginary, sooner than refer them to nothing; and according to the activity of our intellect do we feel a pain and begin to fret, if we are not able to do so. Here we have an explanation of the multitude of off-hand sayings, flippant judgments, and shallow generalizations, with which the world abounds. Not from self-will only, nor from malevolence, but from the irritation which suspense occasions, is the mind forced on to pronounce, without sufficient data for {76} pronouncing. Who does not form some view or other, for instance, of any public man, or any public event, nay, even so far in some cases as to reach the mental delineation of his appearance or of its scene? yet how few have a right to form any view. Hence the misconceptions of character, hence the false impressions and reports of words or deeds, which are the rule, rather than the exception, in the world at large; hence the extravagances of undisciplined talent, and the narrowness of conceited ignorance; because, though it is no easy matter to view things correctly, nevertheless the busy mind will ever be viewing. We cannot do without a view, and we put up with an illusion when we cannot get a truth.

4.

Now, observe how this impatience acts in matters of research and speculation. What happens to the ignorant and hotheaded, will take place in the case of every person whose education or pursuits are contracted, whether they be merely professional, merely scientific, or of whatever other peculiar complexion. Men, whose life lies in the cultivation of one science, or the exercise of one method of thought, have no more right, though they have often more ambition, to generalize upon the basis of their own pursuit but beyond its range, than the schoolboy or the ploughman to judge of a Prime Minister. But they must have something to say on every subject; habit, fashion, the public require it of them: and, if so, they can only give sentence according to their knowledge. You might think this ought to make such a person modest in his enunciations; not so: too often it happens that, in proportion to the narrowness of his knowledge, is, not his distrust of it, but the deep hold it has upon him, his absolute conviction of his own conclusions, and his positiveness in {77} maintaining them. He has the obstinacy of the bigot, whom he scorns, without the bigot's apology, that he has been taught, as he thinks, his doctrine from heaven. Thus he becomes, what is commonly called, a man of

one idea; which properly means a man of one science, and of the view, partly true, but subordinate, partly false, which is all that can proceed out of any thing so partial. Hence it is that we have the principles of utility, of combination, of progress, of philanthropy, or, in material sciences, comparative anatomy, phrenology, electricity, exalted into leading ideas, and keys, if not of all knowledge, at least of many things more than belong to them,— principles, all of them true to a certain point, yet all degenerating into error and quackery, because they are carried to excess, viz. at the point where they require interpretation and restraint from other quarters, and because they are employed to do what is simply too much for them, inasmuch as a little science is not deep philosophy.

Lord Bacon has set down the abuse, of which I am speaking, among the impediments to the Advancement of the Sciences, when he observes that "men have used to infect their meditations, opinions, and doctrines, with some conceits which they have most admired, or *some Sciences which they have most applied*; and give all things else a *tincture* according to them *utterly untrue and improper* ... So have the alchemists made a philosophy out of a few experiments of the furnace; and Gilbertus, our countryman, hath made a philosophy out of the observations of a lodestone. So Cicero, when, reciting the several opinions of the nature of the soul, he found a musician that held the soul was but a harmony, saith pleasantly, 'hic ab arte suâ non recessit,' 'he was true to his art.' But of these conceits Aristotle speaketh {78} seriously and wisely when he saith, 'Qui respiciunt ad pauca, de facili pronunciant,' 'they who contemplate a few things have no difficulty in deciding.'"

5.

And now I have said enough to explain the inconvenience which I conceive necessarily to result from a refusal to recognize theological truth in a course of Universal Knowledge;—it is not only the loss of Theology, it is the perversion of other sciences. What it unjustly forfeits, others unjustly seize. They have their own department, and, in going out of it, attempt to do what they really cannot do; and that the more mischievously, because they do teach what in its place is true, though when out of its place, perverted or carried to excess, it is not true. And, as every man has not the capacity of separating truth from falsehood, they persuade the world of what is false by urging upon it what is true. Nor is it open enemies alone who encounter us here, sometimes it is friends, sometimes persons who, if not friends, at least have no wish to oppose Religion, and are not conscious they are doing so; and it will carry out my meaning more fully if I give some illustrations of it.

As to friends, I may take as an instance the cultivation of the Fine Arts, Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, to which I may add Music. These high ministers of the Beautiful and the Noble are, it is plain, special attendants and handmaids of Religion; but it is equally plain that they are apt to forget their place, and, unless restrained with a firm hand, instead of being servants, will aim at becoming principals. Here lies the advantage, in an ecclesiastical point of view, of their more rudimental state, I mean of the ancient style of architecture, of Gothic {79} sculpture and painting, and of what is called Gregorian music, that these inchoate sciences have so little innate vigour and life

in them, that they are in no danger of going out of their place, and giving the law to Religion. But the case is very different when genius has breathed upon their natural elements, and has developed them into what I may call intellectual powers. When Painting, for example, grows into the fulness of its function as a simply imitative art, it at once ceases to be a dependant on the Church. It has an end of its own, and that of earth: Nature is its pattern, and the object it pursues is the beauty of Nature, even till it becomes an ideal beauty, but a natural beauty still. It cannot imitate that beauty of Angels and Saints which it has never seen. At first, indeed, by outlines and emblems it shadowed out the Invisible, and its want of skill became the instrument of reverence and modesty; but as time went on and it attained its full dimensions as an art, it rather subjected Religion to its own ends than ministered to the ends of Religion, and in its long galleries and stately chambers, did but mingle adorable figures and sacred histories with a multitude of earthly, not to say unseemly forms, which the Art had created, borrowing withal a colouring and a character from that bad company. Not content with neutral ground for its development, it was attracted by the sublimity of divine subjects to ambitious and hazardous essays. Without my saying a word more, you will clearly understand, Gentlemen, that under these circumstances Religion was bound to exert itself, that the world might not gain an advantage over it. Put out of sight the severe teaching of Catholicism in the schools of Painting, as men now would put it aside in their philosophical studies, and in no long time you would have the hierarchy of the Church, the Anchorite and Virgin-martyr, the {80} Confessor and the Doctor, the Angelic Hosts, the Mother of God, the Crucifix, the Eternal Trinity, supplanted by a sort of pagan mythology in the guise of sacred names, by a creation indeed of high genius, of intense, and dazzling, and soul-absorbing beauty, in which, however, there was nothing which subserved the cause of Religion, nothing on the other hand which did not directly or indirectly minister to corrupt nature and the powers of darkness.

6.

The art of Painting, however, is peculiar: Music and Architecture are more ideal, and their respective archetypes, even if not supernatural, at least are abstract and unearthly; and yet what I have been observing about Painting, holds, I think, analogously, in the marvellous development which Musical Science has undergone in the last century. Doubtless here too the highest genius may be made subservient to Religion; here too, still more simply than in the case of Painting, the Science has a field of its own, perfectly innocent, into which Religion does not and need not enter; on the other hand here also, in the case of Music as of Painting, it is certain that Religion must be alive and on the defensive, for, if its servants sleep, a potent enchantment will steal over it. Music, I suppose, though this is not the place to enlarge upon it, has an object of its own; as mathematical science also, it is the expression of ideas greater and more profound than any in the visible world, ideas, which centre indeed in Him whom Catholicism manifests, who is the seat of all beauty, order, and perfection whatever, still ideas after all which are not those on which Revelation directly and principally fixes our gaze. If then a great master in this mysterious science (if I {81} may speak of matters which seem to lie out of my own province) throws himself on his own gift, trusts its inspirations, and absorbs himself in those thoughts which, though they come to him in the way of nature, belong

207 to things above nature, it is obvious he will neglect everything else. Rising in his
208 strength, he will break through the trammels of words, he will scatter human voices,
209 even the sweetest, to the winds; he will be borne upon nothing less than the fullest flood
210 of sounds which art has enabled him to draw from mechanical contrivances; he will go
211 forth as a giant, as far as ever his instruments can reach, starting from their secret
212 depths fresh and fresh elements of beauty and grandeur as he goes, and pouring them
213 together into still more marvellous and rapturous combinations;—and well indeed and
214 lawfully, while he keeps to that line which is his own; but, should he happen to be
215 attracted, as he well may, by the sublimity, so congenial to him, of the Catholic doctrine
216 and ritual, should he engage in sacred themes, should he resolve by means of his art to
217 do honour to the Mass, or the Divine Office,—(he cannot have a more pious, a better
218 purpose, and Religion will gracefully accept what he gracefully offers; but)—is it not
219 certain, from the circumstances of the case, that he will be carried on rather to use
220 Religion than to minister to it, unless Religion is strong on its own ground, and reminds
221 him that, if he would do honour to the highest of subjects, he must make himself its
222 scholar, must humbly follow the thoughts given him, and must aim at the glory, not of
223 his own gift, but of the Great Giver?

7.

224 As to Architecture, it is a remark, if I recollect aright, both of Fénélon and Berkeley, men
225 so different, that it {82} carries more with it even than the names of those celebrated
226 men, that the Gothic style is not as *simple* as befits ecclesiastical structures. I
227 understand this to be a similar judgment to that which I have been passing on the
228 cultivation of Painting and Music. For myself, certainly I think that that style which,
229 whatever be its origin, is called Gothic, is endowed with a profound and a commanding
230 beauty, such as no other style possesses with which we are acquainted, and which
231 probably the Church will not see surpassed till it attain to the Celestial City. No other
232 architecture, now used for sacred purposes, seems to be the growth of an idea,
233 whereas the Gothic style is as harmonious and as intellectual as it is graceful. But this
234 feeling should not blind us, rather it should awaken us, to the danger lest what is really a
235 divine gift be incautiously used as an end rather than as a means. It is surely quite
236 within the bounds of possibility, that, as the *renaissance* three centuries ago carried
237 away its own day, in spite of the Church, into excesses in literature and art, so that
238 revival of an almost forgotten architecture, which is at present taking place in our own
239 countries, in France, and in Germany, may in some way or other run away with us into
240 this or that error, unless we keep a watch over its course. I am not speaking of Ireland;
241 but to English Catholics at least it would be a serious evil, if it came as the emblem and
242 advocate of a past ceremonial or an extinct nationalism. We are not living in an age of
243 wealth and loyalty, of pomp and stateliness, of time-honoured establishments, of
244 pilgrimage and penance, of hermitages and convents in the wild, and of fervent
245 populations supplying the want of education by love, and apprehending in form and
246 symbol what they cannot read in books. Our rules and our rubrics have been altered
247 now to meet the {83} times, and hence an obsolete discipline may be a present heresy.

8.

I have been pointing out how the Fine Arts may prejudice Religion, by laying down the law in cases where they should be subservient. The illustration is analogous rather than strictly proper to my subject, yet I think it is to the point. If then the most loyal and dutiful children of the Church must deny themselves, and do deny themselves, when they would sanctify to a heavenly purpose sciences as sublime and as divine as any which are cultivated by fallen man, it is not wonderful, when we turn to sciences of a different character, of which the object is tangible and material, and the principles belong to the Reason, not to the Imagination, that we should find their disciples, if disinclined to the Catholic Faith, acting the part of opponents to it, and that, as may often happen, even against their will and intention. Many men there are, who, devoted to one particular subject of thought, and making its principles the measure of all things, become enemies to Revealed Religion before they know it, and, only as time proceeds, are aware of their own state of mind. These, if they are writers or lecturers, while in this state of unconscious or semi-conscious unbelief, scatter infidel principles under the garb and colour of Christianity; and this, simply because they have made their own science, whatever it is, Political Economy, or Geology, or Astronomy, to the neglect of Theology, the centre of all truth, and view every part or the chief parts of knowledge as if developed from it, and to be tested and determined by its principles. Others, though conscious to themselves of their anti-christian opinions, have too much good feeling {84} and good taste to obtrude them upon the world. They neither wish to shock people, nor to earn for themselves a confessorship which brings with it no gain. They know the strength of prejudice, and the penalty of innovation; they wish to go through life quietly; they scorn polemics; they shrink, as from a real humiliation, from being mixed up in religious controversy; they are ashamed of the very name. However, they have had occasion at some time to publish on some literary or scientific subject; they have wished to give no offence; but after all, to their great annoyance, they find when they least expect it, or when they have taken considerable pains to avoid it, that they have roused by their publication what they would style the bigoted and bitter hostility of a party. This misfortune is easily conceivable, and has befallen many a man. Before he knows where he is, a cry is raised on all sides of him; and so little does he know what we may call the *lie* of the land, that his attempts at apology perhaps only make matters worse. In other words, an exclusive line of study has led him, whether he will or no, to run counter to the principles of Religion; which principles he has never made his landmarks, and which, whatever might be their effect upon himself, at least would have warned him against practising upon the faith of others, had they been authoritatively held up before him.

9.

Instances of this kind are far from uncommon. Men who are old enough, will remember the trouble which came upon a person, eminent as a professional man in London even at that distant day, and still more eminent since, in consequence of his publishing a book in which he so treated the subject of Comparative Anatomy as {85} to seem to deny the immateriality of the soul. I speak here neither as excusing nor reprobating sentiments about which I have not the means of forming a judgment; all indeed I have heard of him makes me mention him with interest and respect; anyhow of this I am sure,

that if there be a calling which feels its position and its dignity to lie in abstaining from controversy and in cultivating kindly feelings with men of all opinions, it is the medical profession, and I cannot believe that the person in question would purposely have raised the indignation and incurred the censure of the religious public. What then must have been his fault or mistake, but that he unsuspectingly threw himself upon his own particular science, which is of a material character, and allowed it to carry him forward into a subject-matter, where it had no right to give the law, viz., that of spiritual beings, which directly belongs to the science of Theology?

Another instance occurred at a later date. A living dignitary of the Established Church wrote a History of the Jews; in which, with what I consider at least bad judgment, he took an external view of it, and hence was led to assimilate it as nearly as possible to secular history. A great sensation was the consequence among the members of his own communion, from which he still suffers. Arguing from the dislike and contempt of polemical demonstrations which that accomplished writer has ever shown, I must conclude that he was simply betrayed into a false step by the treacherous fascination of what is called the Philosophy of History, which is good in its place, but can scarcely be applied in cases where the Almighty has superseded the natural laws of society and history. From this he would have been saved, had he been a Catholic; but in the Establishment he knew of {86} no teaching, to which he was bound to defer, which might rule that to be false which attracted him by its speciousness.

10.

I will now take an instance from another science, and will use more words about it. Political Economy is the science, I suppose, of wealth,—a science simply lawful and useful, for it is no sin to make money, any more than it is a sin to seek honour; a science at the same time dangerous and leading to occasions of sin, as is the pursuit of honour too; and in consequence, if studied by itself, and apart from the control of Revealed Truth, sure to conduct a speculator to unchristian conclusions. Holy Scripture tells us distinctly, that "covetousness," or more literally the love of money, "is the root of all evils;" and that "they that would become rich fall into temptation;" and that "hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God;" and after drawing the picture of a wealthy and flourishing people, it adds, "They have called the people happy that hath these things; but happy is that people whose God is the Lord"—while on the other hand it says with equal distinctness, "If any will not work, neither let him eat;" and, "If any man have not care of his own, and especially of those of his house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." These opposite injunctions are summed up in the wise man's prayer, who says, "Give me neither beggary nor riches, give me only the necessities of life." With this most precise view of a Christian's duty, viz., to labour indeed, but to labour for a competency for himself and his, and to be jealous of wealth, whether personal or national, the holy Fathers are, as might be expected, in simple accordance. "Judas," says St. Chrysostom, "was with Him who {87} knew not where to lay His head, yet could not restrain himself; and how canst thou hope to escape the contagion without anxious effort?" "It is ridiculous," says St. Jerome, "to call it idolatry to offer to the creature the grains of incense that are due to God, and not to call it so, to

offer the whole service of one's life to the creature." "There is not a trace of justice in that heart," says St. Leo, "in which the love of gain has made itself a dwelling." The same thing is emphatically taught us by the counsels of perfection, and by every holy monk and nun anywhere, who has ever embraced them; but it is needless to collect testimonies, when Scripture is so clear.

Now, observe, Gentlemen, my drift in setting Scripture and the Fathers over against Political Economy. Of course if there is a science of wealth, it must give rules for gaining wealth and disposing of wealth, and can do nothing more; it cannot itself declare that it is a subordinate science, that its end is not the ultimate end of all things, and that its conclusions are only hypothetical, depending on its premisses, and liable to be overruled by a higher teaching. I do not then blame the Political Economist for anything which follows from the very idea of his science, from the very moment that it is recognized as a science. He must of course direct his inquiries towards his end; but then at the same time it must be recollected, that so far he is not practical, but only pursues an abstract study, and is busy himself in establishing logical conclusions from indisputable premisses. Given that wealth is to be sought, this and that is the method of gaining it. This is the extent to which a Political Economist has a right to go; he has no right to determine that wealth is at any rate to be sought, or that it is the way to be virtuous and the price {88} of happiness; I say, this is to pass the bounds of his science, independent of the question whether he be right or wrong in so determining, for he is only concerned with an hypothesis.

To take a parallel case:—a physician may tell you, that if you are to preserve your health, you must give up your employment and retire to the country. He distinctly says "if;" that is all in which he is concerned, he is no judge whether there are objects dearer to you, more urgent upon you, than the preservation of your health; he does not enter into your circumstances, your duties, your liabilities, the persons dependent on you; he knows nothing about what is advisable or what is not; he only says, "I speak as a physician; if you would be well, give up your profession, your trade, your office, whatever it is." However he may wish it, it would be impertinent in him to say more, unless indeed he spoke, not as a physician but as a friend; and it would be extravagant, if he asserted that bodily health was the *summum bonum*, and that no one could be virtuous whose animal system was not in good order.

11.

But now let us turn to the teaching of the actual Political Economist, in his present fashionable shape. I will take a very favourable instance of him: he shall be represented by a gentleman of high character, whose religious views are sufficiently guaranteed to us by his being the special choice, in this department of science, of a University removed more than any other Protestant body of the day from sordid or unchristian principles on the subject of money-making. I say, if there be a place where Political Economy would be kept in order, and would not be suffered to leave the high road {89} and ride across the pastures and the gardens dedicated to other studies, it is the University of Oxford. And if a man could anywhere be found who would have too much

good taste to offend the religious feeling of the place, or to say any thing which he would himself allow to be inconsistent with Revelation, I conceive it is the person whose temperate and well-considered composition, as it would be generally accounted, I am going to offer to your notice. Nor did it occasion any excitement whatever on the part of the academical or the religious public, as did the instances which I have hitherto been adducing. I am representing then the science of Political Economy, in its independent or unbridled action, to great advantage, when I select, as its specimen, the Inaugural Lecture upon it, delivered in the University in question, by its first Professor. Yet with all these circumstances in its favour, you will soon see, Gentlemen, into what extravagance, for so I must call it, a grave lawyer is led in praise of his chosen science, merely from the circumstance that he has fixed his mind upon it, till he has forgotten there are subjects of thought higher and more heavenly than it. You will find beyond mistake, that it is his object to recommend the science of wealth, by claiming for it an *ethical* quality, viz., by extolling it as the road to virtue and happiness, whatever Scripture and holy men may say to the contrary.

He begins by predicting of Political Economy, that in the course of a very few years, "it will rank in public estimation among the first of *moral* sciences in interest and in utility." Then he explains most lucidly its objects and duties, considered as "the science which teaches in what wealth consists, by what agents it is produced, and according to what laws it is distributed, {90} and what are the institutions and customs by which production may be facilitated and distribution regulated, so as to give the largest possible amount of wealth to each individual." And he dwells upon the interest which attaches to the inquiry, "whether England has run her full career of wealth and improvement, but stands safe where she is, or whether to remain stationary is impossible." After this he notices a certain objection, which I shall set before you in his own words, as they will furnish me with the illustration I propose.

This objection, he says, is, that, "as the pursuit of wealth is one of the humblest of human occupations, far inferior to the pursuit of virtue, or of knowledge, or even of reputation, and as the possession of wealth is not necessarily joined,—perhaps it will be said, is not conducive,—to happiness, a science, of which the only subject is wealth, cannot claim to rank as the first, or nearly the first, of moral sciences." [Note 1] Certainly, to an enthusiast in behalf of any science whatever, the temptation is great to meet an objection urged against its dignity and worth; however, from the very form of it, such an objection cannot receive a satisfactory answer by means of the science itself. It is an objection external to the science, and reminds us of the truth of Lord Bacon's remark, "No perfect discovery can be made upon a flat or a level; neither is it possible to discover the more remote and deeper parts of any science, if you stand upon the level of the science, and ascend not to a higher science." [Note 2] The objection that Political Economy is inferior to the science of virtue, or does not conduce to happiness, is an ethical or theological objection; the question of its "rank" belongs to that Architectonic {91} Science or Philosophy, whatever it be, which is itself the arbiter of all truth, and which disposes of the claims and arranges the places of all the departments of knowledge which man is able to master. I say, when an opponent of a particular science asserts that it does not conduce to happiness, and much more when its champion

contends in reply that it certainly does conduce to virtue, as this author proceeds to contend, the obvious question which occurs to one to ask is, what does Religion, what does Revelation, say on the point? Political Economy must not be allowed to give judgment in its own favour, but must come before a higher tribunal. The objection is an appeal to the Theologian; however, the Professor does not so view the matter; he does not consider it a question for Philosophy; nor indeed on the other hand a question for Political Economy; not a question for Science at all; but for Private Judgment,—so he answers it himself, and as follows:

12.

"My answer," he says, "is, first, that the pursuit of wealth, that is, the endeavour to accumulate the means of future subsistence and enjoyment, is, to the mass of mankind, the great source of *moral* improvement." Now observe, Gentlemen, how exactly this bears out what I have been saying. It is just so far true, as to be able to instil what is false, far as the author was from any such design. I grant, then, that, ordinarily, beggary is not the means of moral improvement; and that the orderly habits which attend upon the hot pursuit of gain, not only may effect an external decency, but may at least shelter the soul from the temptations of vice. Moreover, these habits of good order guarantee regularity in a family or household, and thus are accidentally the means of good; moreover, {92} they lead to the education of its younger branches, and they thus accidentally provide the rising generation with a virtue or a truth which the present has not: but without going into these considerations, further than to allow them generally, and under circumstances, let us rather contemplate what the author's direct assertion is. He says, "the endeavour to *accumulate*," the words should be weighed, and for what? "for *enjoyment*;"—"to accumulate the means of future subsistence and enjoyment, is, to the mass of mankind, *the great* source," not merely *a* source, but *the great* source, and of what? of social and political progress?—such an answer would have been more within the limits of his art,—no, but of something individual and personal, "of *moral improvement*." The soul, in the case of "the mass of mankind," improves in moral excellence from this more than any thing else, viz., from heaping up the means of enjoying this world in time to come! I really should on every account be sorry, Gentlemen, to exaggerate, but indeed one is taken by surprise, one is startled, on meeting with so very categorical a contradiction of our Lord, St. Paul, St. Chrysostom, St. Leo, and all Saints.

"No institution," he continues, "could be more beneficial to the morals of the lower orders, that is, to at least nine-tenths of the whole body of any people, than one which should increase their power and their wish to accumulate; none more mischievous than one which should diminish their motives and means to save." No institution more beneficial than one which should increase the *wish to accumulate*! then Christianity is not one of such beneficial institutions, for it expressly says, "*Lay not up to yourselves treasures on earth ... for where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also*;"—no institution more mischievous than one which should diminish the {93} *motives to save*! then Christianity is one of such mischiefs, for the inspired text proceeds, "*Lay up*

459 to yourselves treasures *in heaven, where* neither the rust nor the moth doth consume,
460 and where thieves do not dig through, nor steal."

461 But it is not enough that morals and happiness are made to depend on gain and
462 accumulation; the practice of Religion is ascribed to these causes also, and in the
463 following way. Wealth depends upon the pursuit of wealth; education depends upon
464 wealth; knowledge depends on education; and Religion depends on knowledge;
465 therefore Religion depends on the pursuit of wealth. He says, after speaking of a poor
466 and savage people, "Such a population must be grossly ignorant. The desire of
467 knowledge is one of the last results of refinement; it requires in general to have been
468 implanted in the mind during childhood; and it is absurd to suppose that persons thus
469 situated would have the power or the will to devote much to the education of their
470 children. A further consequence is the *absence of all real religion*; for the religion of the
471 grossly ignorant, if they have any, scarcely ever amounts to more than a debasing
472 superstition." [Note 3] The pursuit of gain then is the basis of virtue, religion, happiness;
473 though it is all the while, as a Christian knows, the "root of all evils," and the "poor on
474 the contrary are blessed, for theirs is the kingdom of God."

475 As to the argument contained in the logical *Sorites* which I have been drawing out, I
476 anticipated just now what I should say to it in reply. I repeat, doubtless "beggary," as the
477 wise man says, is not desirable; doubtless, if men will not work, they should not eat;
478 there is doubtless a sense in which it may be said that mere {94} social or political virtue
479 tends to moral and religious excellence; but the sense needs to be defined and the
480 statement to be kept within bounds. This is the very point on which I am all along
481 insisting. I am not denying, I am granting, I am assuming, that there is reason and truth
482 in the "leading ideas," as they are called, and "large views" of scientific men; I only say
483 that, though they speak truth, they do not speak the whole truth; that they speak a
484 narrow truth, and think it a broad truth; that their deductions must be compared with
485 other truths, which are acknowledged to be truths, in order to verify, complete, and
486 correct them. They say what is true, *exceptis excipiendis*; what is true, but requires
487 guarding; true, but must not be ridden too hard, or made what is called a *hobby*; true,
488 but not the measure of all things; true, but if thus inordinately, extravagantly, ruinously
489 carried out, in spite of other sciences, in spite of Theology, sure to become but a great
490 bubble, and to burst.

13.

491 I am getting to the end of this Discourse, before I have noticed one tenth part of the
492 instances with which I might illustrate the subject of it. Else I should have wished
493 especially to have dwelt upon the not unfrequent perversion which occurs of antiquarian
494 and historical research, to the prejudice of Theology. It is undeniable that the records of
495 former ages are of primary importance in determining Catholic doctrine; it is undeniable
496 also that there is a silence or a contrariety abstractedly conceivable in those records, as
497 to an alleged portion of that doctrine, which would be sufficient to invalidate its claims on
498 our acceptance; but it is quite as undeniable that the existing documentary testimony to
499 Catholicism {95} and Christianity may be so unduly valued as to be made the absolute

measure of Revelation, as if no part of theological teaching were true which cannot bring its express text, as it is called, from Scripture, and authorities from the Fathers or profane writers,—whereas there are numberless facts in past times which we cannot deny, for they are indisputable, though history is silent about them. I suppose, on this score, we ought to deny that the round towers of this country had any origin, because history does not disclose it; or that any individual came from Adam who cannot produce the table of his ancestry. Yet Gibbon argues against the darkness at the Passion, from the accident that it is not mentioned by Pagan historians:—as well might he argue against the existence of Christianity itself in the first century, because Seneca, Pliny, Plutarch, the Jewish Mishna, and other authorities are silent about it. Protestants argue in a parallel way against Transubstantiation, and Arians against our Lord's Divinity, viz., on the ground that extant writings of certain Fathers do not witness those doctrines to their satisfaction:—as well might they say that Christianity was not spread by the Twelve Apostles, because we know so little of their labours. The evidence of History, I say, is invaluable in its place; but, if it assumes to be the sole means of gaining Religious Truth, it goes beyond its place. We are putting it to a larger office than it can undertake, if we countenance the usurpation; and we are turning a true guide and blessing into a source of inexplicable difficulty and interminable doubt.

And so of other sciences: just as Comparative Anatomy, Political Economy, the Philosophy of History, and the Science of Antiquities may be and are turned against Religion, by being taken by themselves, as I {96} have been showing, so a like mistake may befall any other. Grammar, for instance, at first sight does not appear to admit of a perversion; yet Horne Tooke made it the vehicle of his peculiar scepticism. Law would seem to have enough to do with its own clients, and their affairs; and yet Mr. Bentham made a treatise on Judicial Proofs a covert attack upon the miracles of Revelation. And in like manner Physiology may deny moral evil and human responsibility; Geology may deny Moses; and Logic may deny the Holy Trinity [Note 4]; and other sciences, now rising into notice, are or will be victims of a similar abuse.

14.

And now to sum up what I have been saying in a few words. My object, it is plain, has been—not to show that Secular Science in its various departments may take up a position hostile to Theology;—this is rather the basis of the objection with which I opened this Discourse;—but to point out the cause of an hostility to which all parties will bear witness. I have been insisting then on this, that the hostility in question, when it occurs, is coincident with an evident deflection or exorbitance of Science from its proper course; and that this exorbitance is sure to take place, almost from the necessity of the case, if Theology be not present to defend its own boundaries and to hinder the encroachment. The human mind cannot keep from speculating and systematizing; and if Theology is not allowed to occupy its own territory, adjacent sciences, nay, sciences which are quite foreign to Theology, will take possession of it. And this occupation is proved to be a usurpation by this circumstance, that these foreign sciences will assume certain principles as {97} true, and act upon them, which they neither have authority to lay down themselves, nor appeal to any other higher science to lay down for them. For

example, it is a mere unwarranted assumption if the Antiquarian says, "Nothing has ever taken place but is to be found in historical documents;" or if the Philosophic Historian says, "There is nothing in Judaism different from other political institutions;" or if the Anatomist, "There is no soul beyond the brain;" or if the Political Economist, "Easy circumstances make men virtuous." These are enunciations, not of Science, but of Private Judgment; and it is Private Judgment that infects every science which it touches with a hostility to Theology, a hostility which properly attaches to no science in itself whatever.

If then, Gentlemen, I now resist such a course of acting as unphilosophical, what is this but to do as men of Science do when the interests of their own respective pursuits are at stake? If they certainly would resist the divine who determined the orbit of Jupiter by the Pentateuch, why am I to be accused of cowardice or illiberality, because I will not tolerate their attempt in turn to theologize by means of astronomy? And if experimentalists would be sure to cry out, did I attempt to install the Thomist philosophy in the schools of astronomy and medicine, why may not I, when Divine Science is ostracized, and La Place, or Buffon, or Humboldt, sits down in its chair, why may not I fairly protest against their exclusiveness, and demand the emancipation of Theology?

15.

And now I consider I have said enough in proof of the first point, which I undertook to maintain, viz., the claim of Theology to be represented among the Chairs {98} of a University. I have shown, I think, that exclusiveness really attaches, not to those who support that claim, but to those who dispute it. I have argued in its behalf, first, from the consideration that, whereas it is the very profession of a University to teach all sciences, on this account it cannot exclude Theology without being untrue to its profession. Next, I have said that, all sciences being connected together, and having bearings one on another, it is impossible to teach them all thoroughly, unless they all are taken into account, and Theology among them. Moreover, I have insisted on the important influence, which Theology in matter of fact does and must exercise over a great variety of sciences, completing and correcting them; so that, granting it to be a real science occupied upon truth, it cannot be omitted without great prejudice to the teaching of the rest. And lastly, I have urged that, supposing Theology be not taught, its province will not simply be neglected, but will be actually usurped by other sciences, which will teach, without warrant, conclusions of their own in a subject-matter which needs its own proper principles for its due formation and disposition.

Abstract statements are always unsatisfactory; these, as I have already observed, could be illustrated at far greater length than the time allotted to me for the purpose has allowed. Let me hope that I have said enough upon the subject to suggest thoughts, which those who take an interest in it may pursue for themselves.

Notes

1. Introd. Lecture on Pol. Econ. pp. 11, 12.

2. Advancement of Learning.
3. Intr. Lect., p. 16.
4. Vid. Abelard, for instance.