

"Wisdom, as Contrasted with Faith and with Bigotry"  
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St. John Henry Newman  
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1 "He that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man." 1  
2 Cor. ii. 15.

3 THE gift to which this high characteristic is ascribed by the Apostle is  
4 Christian Wisdom, and the Giver is God the Holy Ghost. "We speak wisdom,"  
5 he says, shortly before the text, "among them that are perfect, yet not the  
6 wisdom of this world ... but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even  
7 the hidden wisdom." And after making mention of the heavenly truths which  
8 Wisdom contemplates, he adds: "God hath revealed them unto us by His  
9 Spirit ... we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is  
10 of God."

11 2. In a former verse St. Paul contrasts this divine Wisdom with Faith. "My  
12 speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but  
13 in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not stand  
14 in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Howbeit, we speak wisdom  
15 among them that are perfect." Faith, then, and Wisdom, are distinct, or even  
16 opposite gifts. Wisdom belongs to the perfect, and more especially to  
17 preachers of the Gospel; and Faith is the elementary grace which is required  
18 of all, especially of hearers. The two are introduced again in a later chapter  
19 of the same Epistle: "To one is given by the Spirit the word of Wisdom, to  
20 another the word of Knowledge by the same Spirit, to another Faith by the  
21 same Spirit." Such are the two gifts which will be found to lie at the  
22 beginning and at the end of our new life, both intellectual in their nature,  
23 and both divinely imparted; Faith being an exercise of the Reason, so  
24 spontaneous, unconscious, and unargumentative, as to seem at first sight  
25 even to be a moral act, and Wisdom being that orderly and mature  
26 development of thought, which in earthly language goes by the name of  
27 science and philosophy.

28 3. In like manner, in the Services of this sacred Season, both these spiritual  
29 gifts are intimated, and both referred to the same heavenly source. The  
30 Collect virtually speaks of Faith, when it makes mention of Almighty God's  
31 "teaching the hearts of His faithful people by the sending to them the light of  
32 His Holy Spirit;" and of the Wisdom of the perfect, when it prays God, that  
33 "by the same Spirit" we may "have a right judgment in all things."

34 4. Again, in the Gospel for Whitsunday, the gift of Wisdom is surely implied  
35 in Christ's promise, that the Comforter should teach the Apostles "all

things," and "bring all things to their remembrance whatsoever He had said unto them;" and in St. Paul's exhortation, which we read yesterday, "In malice be children, but in understanding be men." Again, a cultivation of the reasoning faculty, near akin to Philosophy or Wisdom, is surely implied in the precepts, of which we have heard, or shall hear, from the same Apostle and St. John today, about "proving all things," and "holding fast that which is good," and about "trying the spirits whether they are of God."

5. Again, other parts of our Whitsun Services speak of exercises of Reason more akin to Faith, as being independent of processes of investigation or discussion. In Sunday's Gospel our Lord tells us, "He that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him ... If a man love Me, he will keep My words, and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him." This manifestation is doubtless made to us through our natural faculties; but who will maintain that even so far as it is addressed to our Reason, it comes to us in forms of argument? Again, in the Gospel for yesterday, "He that doeth truth cometh to the light," and on the contrary, "Light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil; for every one that doeth evil hateth the light." Men do not choose light or darkness without Reason, but by an instinctive Reason, which is prior to argument and proof. And in the Gospel for today, "The sheep hear His voice, and He calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. The sheep follow Him, for they know His voice, and a stranger will they not follow, for they know not the voice of strangers." The sheep could not tell how they knew the Good Shepherd; they had not analyzed their own impressions or cleared the grounds of their knowledge, yet doubtless grounds there were: they, however, acted spontaneously on a loving Faith.

6. In proceeding, then, as I shall now do, to inquire into the nature of Christian Wisdom, as a habit or faculty of mind distinct from Faith, the mature fruit of Reason, and nearly answering to what is meant by Philosophy, it must not be supposed that I am denying its spiritual nature or its divine origin. Almighty God influences us and works in us, through our minds, not without them or in spite of them; as at the fall we did not become other beings than we had been, but forfeited gifts which had been added to us on our creation, so under the Gospel we do not lose any part of the nature in which we are born, but regain what we have lost. We are what we were, and something more. And what is true of God's dealings with our minds generally, is true in particular as regards our reasoning powers. His grace does not supersede, but uses them, and renews them by using. We gain Truth by reasoning, whether implicit or explicit, in a state of nature: we gain it in the same way in a state of grace. Both Faith and Wisdom, the elementary and the perfecting gift of the Holy Spirit, are intellectual habits,

and involve the exercise of Reason, and may be examined and defined as any other power of the mind, and are subject to perversion and error, and may be fortified by rules, just as if they were not instruments in the hands of the Most High. It is no derogation, then, from the divine origin of Christian Wisdom, to treat it in its human aspect, to show what it consists in, and what are its counterfeits and perversions; to determine, for instance, that it is much the same as Philosophy, and that its perversions are such as love of system, theorizing, fancifulness, dogmatism, and bigotry,—as we shall be led to do. And now to enter upon our subject.

7. The words philosophy, a philosophical spirit, enlargement or expansion of mind, enlightened ideas, a wise and comprehensive view of things, and the like, are, I need hardly say, of frequent occurrence in the literature of this day, and are taken to mean very much the same thing. That they are always used with a definite meaning, or with any meaning at all, will be maintained by no one; that so many persons, and many of them men of great ability, should use them absolutely with no meaning whatever, and yet should lay such stress and rest so much upon them, is, on the other hand, not to be supposed. Yet their meaning certainly requires drawing out and illustrating. Perhaps it will be best ascertained by setting down some cases, which are commonly understood, or will be claimed, as instances of this process of mental growth or enlargement, in the sense in which the words are at present used.

8. I suppose that, when a person whose experience has hitherto been confined to our own calm and unpretending scenery, goes for the first time into parts where physical nature puts on her wilder and more awful forms, whether at home or abroad, as especially into mountainous districts,—or when one who has ever lived in a quiet village comes for the first time to a great metropolis,— he will have a sensation of mental enlargement, as having gained a range of thoughts to which he was before a stranger.

9. Again, the view of the heavens, which the telescope opens upon us, fills and possesses the mind, and is called an enlargement, whatever is meant by the term.

10. Again, the sight of an assemblage of beasts of prey and other foreign animals, their strangeness and startling novelty, the originality (if I may use the term) and mysteriousness of their forms, and gestures, and habits, and their variety and independence of one another, expand the mind, not without its own consciousness; as if knowledge were a real opening, and as if an addition to the external objects presented before it were an addition to its inward powers.

117 11. Hence physical science, generally, in all its departments, as bringing  
118 before us the exuberant riches, the active principles, yet the orderly course  
119 of the universe, is often set forth even as the only true philosophy, and will  
120 be allowed by all persons to have a certain power of elevating and exciting  
121 the mind, and yet to exercise a tranquillizing influence upon it.

122 12. Again, the knowledge of history, and again, the knowledge of books  
123 generally—in a word, what is meant by education, is commonly said to  
124 enlighten and enlarge the mind, whereas ignorance is felt to involve a  
125 narrow range and a feeble exercise of its powers.

126 13. Again, what is called seeing the world, entering into active life, going  
127 into society, travelling, acquaintance with the various classes of the  
128 community, coming into contact with the principles and modes of thought of  
129 separate parties, interests, or nations, their opinions, views, aims, habits,  
130 and manners, their religious creeds and forms of worship,—all this exerts a  
131 perceptible effect upon the mind, which it is impossible to mistake, be it  
132 good or be it bad, and which is popularly called its enlargement or  
133 enlightenment.

134 14. Again, when a person for the first time hears the arguments and  
135 speculations of unbelievers, and feels what a very novel light they cast upon  
136 what he has hitherto accounted most sacred, it cannot be denied that,  
137 unless he is shocked and closes his ears and heart to them, he will have a  
138 sense of expansion and elevation.

139 15. Again, sin brings with it its own enlargement of mind, which Eve was  
140 tempted to covet, and of which she made proof. This, perhaps, in the  
141 instance of some sins, to which the young are especially tempted, is their  
142 great attraction and their great recompense. They excite the curiosity of the  
143 innocent, and they intoxicate the imagination of their miserable victims,  
144 whose eyes seem opened upon a new world, from which they look back  
145 upon their state of innocence with a sort of pity and contempt, as if it were  
146 below the dignity of men.

147 16. On the other hand, religion has its own enlargement. It is often  
148 remarked of uneducated persons, who hitherto have lived without  
149 seriousness, that on their turning to God, looking into themselves, regulating  
150 their hearts, reforming their conduct, and studying the inspired Word, they  
151 seem to become, in point of intellect, different beings from what they were  
152 before. Before, they took things as they came, and thought no more of one  
153 thing than of another. But now every event has a meaning; they form their  
154 own estimate of whatever occurs; they recollect times and seasons; and the  
155 world, instead of being like the stream which the countryman gazed on, ever

156 in motion and never in progress, is a various and complicated drama, with  
157 parts and with an object.

158 17. Again, those who, being used to nothing better than the divinity of what  
159 is historically known as the nonconformist school,—or, again, of the  
160 latitudinarian,—are introduced to the theology of the early Church, will often  
161 have a vivid sense of enlargement, and will feel they have gained  
162 something, as becoming aware of the existence of doctrines, opinions, trains  
163 of thought, principles, aims, to which hitherto they have been strangers.

164 18. And again, such works as treat of the Ministry of the Prophets under the  
165 various divine Dispensations, of its nature and characteristics, why it was  
166 instituted and what it has effected; the matter, the order, the growth of its  
167 disclosures; the views of divine Providence, of the divine counsels and  
168 attributes which it was the means of suggesting; and its contrast with the  
169 pretences to prophetic knowledge which the world furnishes in mere  
170 political partisans or popular fortune-tellers; such treatises, as all will admit,  
171 may fitly be said to enlarge the mind.

172 19. Once more, such works as Bishop Butler's Analogy, which carry on the  
173 characteristic lineaments of the Gospel Dispensation into the visible course  
174 of things, and, as it were, root its doctrines into nature and society, not only  
175 present before the mind a large view of the matters handled, but will be  
176 commonly said, and surely, as all will feel, with a true meaning, to enlarge  
177 the mind itself which is put in possession of them.

178 20. These instances show beyond all question that what is called Philosophy,  
179 Wisdom, or Enlargement of mind, has some intimate dependence upon the  
180 acquisition of Knowledge; and Scripture seems to say the same thing. "God  
181 gave Solomon," says the inspired writer, "wisdom and understanding,  
182 exceeding much, and largeness of heart even as the sand that is on the sea  
183 shore ... And he spake three thousand proverbs, and his songs were a  
184 thousand and five. And he spake of trees, from the cedar-tree that is in  
185 Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall. He spake also  
186 of beasts and of fowl, and of creeping things and of fishes." And again, when  
187 the Queen of Sheba came, "Solomon told her all her questions; there was  
188 not any thing hid from the king, which he told her not." And in like manner  
189 St. Paul, after speaking of the Wisdom of the perfect, calls it a revelation, a  
190 knowledge, of the things of God, such as the natural man "discerneth" not.  
191 And in another Epistle, evidently speaking of the same Wisdom, he prays  
192 that his brethren may be given to "comprehend with all saints what is the  
193 breadth and length and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ  
194 which passeth knowledge, that they might be filled with all the fulness of  
195 God."

196 21. However, a very little consideration will make it plain also, that  
197 knowledge itself, though a condition of the mind's enlargement, yet,  
198 whatever be its range, is not that very thing which enlarges it. Rather the  
199 foregoing instances show that this enlargement consists in the comparison of  
200 the subjects of knowledge one with another. We feel ourselves to be ranging  
201 freely, when we not only learn something, but when we also refer it to what  
202 we knew before. It is not the mere addition to our knowledge which is the  
203 enlargement, but the change of place, the movement onwards, of that moral  
204 centre, to which what we know and what we have been acquiring, the whole  
205 mass of our knowledge, as it were, gravitates. And therefore a philosophical  
206 cast of thought, or a comprehensive mind, or wisdom in conduct or policy,  
207 implies a connected view of the old with the new; an insight into the bearing  
208 and influence of each part upon every other; without which there is no  
209 whole, and could be no centre. It is the knowledge, not only of things, but of  
210 their mutual relations. It is organized, and therefore living knowledge.

211 22. A number of instances might readily be supplied in which knowledge is  
212 found apart from this analytical treatment of the matter of it, and in which it  
213 is never associated with Philosophy, or considered to open, enlarge, and  
214 enlighten the mind.

215 23. For instance, a great memory is never made synonymous with Wisdom,  
216 any more than a dictionary would be called a treatise. There are men who  
217 contemplate things both in the mass and individually, but not correlatively,  
218 who accumulate facts without forming judgments, who are satisfied with  
219 deep learning or extensive information. They may be linguists, antiquarians,  
220 annalists, biographers, or naturalists; but, whatever their merits, which are  
221 often very great, they have no claim to be considered philosophers.

222 24. To the same class belong persons, in other respects very different, who  
223 have seen much of the world, and of the men who, in their own day, have  
224 played a conspicuous part in it, who are full of information, curious and  
225 entertaining, about men and things, but who having lived under the  
226 influence of no very clear or settled principles, speak of every one and every  
227 thing as mere facts of history, not attempting to illustrate opinions,  
228 measures, aims, or policy,—not discussing or teaching, but conversing.

229 25. Or take, what is again a very different instance, the case of persons of  
230 little intellect, and no education, who perhaps have seen much of foreign  
231 countries, and who receive in a passive, otiose, unfruitful way, the various  
232 facts which are forced upon them. Seafaring men, for example, range from  
233 one end of the earth to the other; but the multiplicity of phenomena which  
234 they have encountered, forms no harmonious and consistent picture upon  
235 their imagination: they see, as it were, the tapestry of human life on the

236 wrong side of it. They sleep, and they rise up, and they find themselves now  
237 in Europe, now in Asia; they see visions of great cities and wild regions; they  
238 are in the marts of commerce, or amid the islands of the ocean; they gaze  
239 on the Andes, or they are ice-bound; and nothing which meets them carries  
240 them on to any idea beyond itself. Nothing has a meaning, nothing has a  
241 history, nothing has relations. Every thing stands by itself, and comes and  
242 goes in its turn, like the shifting sights of a show, leaving the beholder  
243 where he was. Or, again, under other circumstances, every thing seems to  
244 such persons strange, monstrous, miraculous, and awful; as in fable, to  
245 Ulysses and his companions in their wanderings.

246 26. Or, again, the censure often passed on what is called undigested  
247 reading, shows us that knowledge without system is not Philosophy.  
248 Students who store themselves so amply with literature or science, that no  
249 room is left for determining the respective relations which exist between  
250 their acquisitions, one by one, are rather said to load their minds than to  
251 enlarge them.

252 27. Scepticism, in religious matters, affords another instance in point. Those  
253 who deliberately refuse to form a judgment upon the most momentous of all  
254 subjects; who are content to pass through life in ignorance, why it is given,  
255 or by whom, or to what it leads; and who bear to be without tests of truth  
256 and error in conduct, without rule and measure for the principles, persons,  
257 and events, which they encounter daily,—these men, though they often  
258 claim, will not by any Christian be granted, the name of philosophers.

259 28. All this is more than enough to show that some analytical process, some  
260 sort of systematizing, some insight into the mutual relations of things, is  
261 essential to that enlargement of mind or philosophical temper, which is  
262 commonly attributed to the acquisition of knowledge. In other words,  
263 Philosophy is Reason exercised upon Knowledge; for, from the nature of the  
264 case, where the facts are given, as is here supposed, Reason is synonymous  
265 with analysis, having no office beyond that of ascertaining the relations  
266 existing between them. Reason is the power of proceeding to new ideas by  
267 means of given ones. Where but one main idea is given, it can employ itself  
268 in developing this into its consequences. Thus, from scanty data, it often  
269 draws out a whole system, each part with its ascertained relations, collateral  
270 or lineal, towards the rest, and all consistent together, because all derived  
271 from one and the same origin. And should means be found of ascertaining  
272 directly some of the facts which it has been deducing by this abstract  
273 process, then their coincidence with its *à priori* judgments will serve to prove  
274 the accuracy of its deductions. Where, however, the facts or doctrines in  
275 question are all known from the first, there, instead of advancing from idea  
276 to idea, Reason does but connect fact with fact; instead of discovering, it

277 does but analyze; and what was, in the former case, the tracing out of  
278 inferences, becomes a laying down of relations.

279 29. Philosophy, then, is Reason exercised upon Knowledge; or the  
280 Knowledge not merely of things in general, but of things in their relations to  
281 one another. It is the power of referring every thing to its true place in the  
282 universal system,—of understanding the various aspects of each of its  
283 parts,—of comprehending the exact value of each,—of tracing each  
284 backwards to its beginning, and forward to its end,—of anticipating the  
285 separate tendencies of each, and their respective checks or counteractions;  
286 and thus of accounting for anomalies, answering objections, supplying  
287 deficiencies, making allowance for errors, and meeting emergencies. It  
288 never views any part of the extended subject-matter of knowledge, without  
289 recollecting that it is but a part, or without the associations which spring  
290 from this recollection. It makes every thing lead to every thing else; it  
291 communicates the image of the whole body to every separate member, till  
292 the whole becomes in imagination like a spirit, every where pervading and  
293 penetrating its component parts, and giving them their one definite  
294 meaning. Just as our bodily organs, when mentioned, recall to mind their  
295 function in the body, as the word creation suggests the idea of a Creator, as  
296 subjects that of a sovereign, so in the mind of a philosopher, the elements of  
297 the physical and moral world, sciences, arts, pursuits, ranks, offices, events,  
298 opinions, individualities, are all viewed, not in themselves, but as relative  
299 terms, suggesting a multitude of correlatives, and gradually, by successive  
300 combinations, converging one and all to their true centre. Men, whose minds  
301 are possessed by some one object, take exaggerated views of its  
302 importance, are feverish in their pursuit of it, and are startled or downcast  
303 on finding obstacles in the way of it; they are ever in alarm or in transport.  
304 And they, on the contrary, who have no firm grasp of principles, are  
305 perplexed and lose their way every fresh step they take; they do not know  
306 what to think or say of new phenomena which meet them, of whatever kind;  
307 they have no view, as it may be called, concerning persons, or occurrences,  
308 or facts, which come upon them suddenly; they cannot form a judgment, or  
309 determine on a course of action; and they ask the opinion or advice of  
310 others as a relief to their minds. But Philosophy cannot be partial, cannot be  
311 exclusive, cannot be impetuous, cannot be surprised, cannot fear, cannot  
312 lose its balance, cannot be at a loss, cannot but be patient, collected, and  
313 majestically calm, because it discerns the whole in each part, the end in  
314 each beginning, the worth of each interruption, the measure of each delay,  
315 because it always knows where it is, and how its path lies from one point to  
316 another. There are men who, when in difficulties, by the force of genius,  
317 originate at the moment vast ideas or dazzling projects; who, under the  
318 impulse of excitement, are able to cast a light, almost as if from inspiration,  
319 on a subject or course of action which comes before them; who have a




sudden presence of mind equal to any emergency, rising with the occasion, and an undaunted heroic bearing, and an energy and keenness, which is but sharpened by opposition. Faith is a gift analogous to this thus far, that it acts promptly and boldly on the occasion, on slender evidence, as if guessing and reaching forward to the truth, amid darkness or confusion; but such is not the Wisdom of the perfect. Wisdom is the clear, calm, accurate vision, and comprehension of the whole course, the whole work of God; and though there is none who has it in its fulness but He who "searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of" the Creator, yet "by that Spirit" they are, in a measure, "revealed unto us." And thus, according to that measure, is the text fulfilled, that "he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged by no man." Others understand him not, master not his ideas, fail to combine, harmonize, or make consistent, those distinct views and principles which come to him from the Infinite Light, and are inspirations of the breath of God. He, on the contrary, compasses others, and locates them, and anticipates their acts, and fathoms their thoughts, for, in the Apostle's language, he "hath the mind of Christ," and all things are his, "whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world or life, or death, or things present, or things to come." Such is the marvellousness of the Pentecostal gift, whereby we "have an unction from the Holy One, and know all things."

30. Now, this view of the nature of Philosophy leads to the following remark: that, whereas no arguments in favour of Religion are of much account but such as rest on a philosophical basis, Evidences of Religion, as they are called, which are truly such, must consist mainly in such investigations into the relation of idea to idea, and such developments of system, as have been described, if Philosophy be in these abstract exercises of Reason. Such, for instance, is the argument from analogy, or from the structure of prophecy, or from the needs of human nature; or from the establishment and history of the Catholic Church. From which it follows, first, that what may be called the rhetorical or forensic Evidences,—I mean those which are content with the proof of certain facts, motives, and the like, such as, that a certain miracle must have taken place, or a certain prophecy must have been both written before, and fulfilled in, a certain event; these, whatever their merits, which I have no wish to disparage, are not philosophical. And next, it follows that Evidences in general are not the essential groundwork of Faith, but its reward; since Wisdom is the last gift of the Spirit, and Faith the first.

31. In the foregoing observations I have, in fact, been showing,—in prosecution of a line of thought to which I have before now drawn attention,—what is the true office, and what the legitimate bounds, of those abstract exercises of Reason which may best be described by the name of systematizing. They are in their highest and most honourable place, when they are employed upon the vast field of Knowledge, not in conjecturing

362 unknown truths, but in comparing, adjusting, connecting, explaining facts  
363 and doctrines ascertained. Such a use of Reason is Philosophy; such  
364 employment was it to which the reason of Newton dedicated itself; and the  
365 reason of Butler; and the reason of those ancient Catholic Divines, nay, in  
366 their measure, of those illustrious thinkers of the middle ages, who have  
367 treated of the Christian Faith on system, Athanasius, Augustine, Aquinas.  
368 But where the exercise of Reason much outstrips our Knowledge; where  
369 Knowledge is limited, and Reason active; where ascertained truths are  
370 scanty, and courses of thought abound; there indulgence of system is  
371 unsafe, and may be dangerous. In such cases there is much need of  
372 wariness, jealousy of self, and habitual dread of presumption, paradox, and  
373 unreality, to preserve our deductions within the bounds of sobriety, and our  
374 guesses from assuming the character of discoveries. System, which is the  
375 very soul, or, to speak more precisely, the formal cause of Philosophy, when  
376 exercised upon adequate knowledge, does but make, or tend to make,  
377 theorists, dogmatists, philosophists, and sectarians, when or so far as  
378 Knowledge is limited or incomplete.

379 32. This statement, which will not be questioned, perhaps, in the abstract,  
380 requires to be illustrated in detail, and that at a length inconsistent with my  
381 present limits. At the risk, however, of exceeding them, I will attempt so  
382 much as this,—to show that Faith, distinct as it is from argument,  
383 discussion, investigation, philosophy, nay, from Reason altogether, in the  
384 popular sense of the word, is at the same time perfectly distinct also from  
385 narrowness of mind in all its shapes, though sometimes accidentally  
386 connected with it in particular persons. I am led to give attention to this  
387 point from its connexion with subjects, of which I have already treated on  
388 former occasions.

389  33. It is as if a law of the human mind, ever to do things in one and the  
390 same way. It does not vary in its modes of action, except by an effort; but,  
391 if left to itself, it becomes almost mechanical, as a matter of course. Its  
392 doing a thing in a certain way today, is the cause of its doing it in the same  
393 way tomorrow. The order of the day perpetuates itself. This is, in fact, only  
394 saying that habits arise out of acts, and that character is inseparable from  
395 our moral nature. Not only do our features and make remain the same day  
396 after day, but we speak in the same tone, adopt the same phrases and turns  
397 of thought, fall into the same expressions of countenance, and walk with the  
398 same gait as yesterday. And, besides, we have an instinctive love of order  
399 and arrangement; we think and act by rule, not only unconsciously, but of  
400 set purpose. Method approves itself to us, and aids us in various ways, and  
401 to a certain point is pleasant, and in some respects absolutely necessary.  
402 Even sceptics cannot proceed without elementary principles, though they

403 would fain dispense with every yoke and bond. Even the uneducated have  
404 their own rude modes of classifying, not the less really such, because  
405 fantastic or absurd; children too, amid their awe at all that meets them, yet  
406 in their own thoughts unconsciously subject these wonders to a law. Poets,  
407 while they disown philosophy, frame an ideal system of their own; and  
408 naturalists invent, if they do not find, orders and *genera*, to assist the  
409 memory. Latitudinarians, again, while they profess charity towards all  
410 doctrines, nevertheless count it heresy to oppose the principle of latitude.  
411 Those who condemn persecution for religious opinions, in self-defence  
412 persecute those who advocate it. Few of those who maintain that the  
413 exercise of private judgment upon Scripture leads to the attainment of  
414 Gospel truth, can tolerate the Socinian and Pelagian, who in their own  
415 inquiries have taken pains to conform to this rule. Thus, what is invidiously  
416 called dogmatism and system, in one shape or other, in one degree or  
417 another, is, I may say, necessary to the human mind; we cannot reason,  
418 feel, or act, without it; it forms the stamina of thought, which, when it is  
419 removed, languishes, and droops. Sooner than dispense with principles, the  
420 mind will take them at the hand of others, will put up with such as are faulty  
421 or uncertain;—and thus much Wisdom, Bigotry, and Faith, have in common.  
422 Principle is the life of them all; but Wisdom is the application of adequate  
423 principles to the state of things as we find them, Bigotry is the application of  
424 inadequate or narrow principles, while Faith is the maintenance of principles,  
425 without caring to apply or adjust them. Thus they differ; and this distinction  
426 will serve to enable us to contrast Bigotry and Faith with Wisdom, as I  
427 proposed.

428 34. Now, certainly, Faith may be confused with Bigotry, with dogmatism,  
429 positiveness, and kindred habits of mind, on several plausible grounds; for,  
430 what is Faith but a reaching forth after truth amid darkness, upon the  
431 warrant of certain antecedent notions or spontaneous feelings? It is a  
432 presumption about matters of fact, upon principle rather than on knowledge;  
433 and what is Bigotry also but this? And, further still, its grounds being thus  
434 conditional, what does it issue in? in the absolute acceptance of a certain  
435 message or doctrine as divine; that is, it starts from probabilities, yet it ends  
436 in peremptory statements, if so be, mysterious, or at least beyond  
437 experience. It believes an informant amid doubt, yet accepts his information  
438 without doubt. Such is the *primà facie* resemblance between two habits of  
439 mind, which nevertheless are as little to be confused as the Apostles with  
440 their Jewish persecutors, as a few words may suffice to show.

441 35. Now, in the first place, though Faith be a presumption of facts under  
442 defective knowledge, yet, be it observed, it is altogether a practical principle.  
443 It judges and decides because it cannot help doing so, for the sake of the  
444 man himself, who exercises it—not in the way of opinion, not as aiming at

445 mere abstract truth, not as teaching some theory or view. It is the act of a  
446 mind feeling that it is its duty any how, under its particular circumstances, to  
447 judge and to act, whether its light be greater or less, and wishing to make  
448 the most of that light and acting for the best. Its knowledge, then, though  
449 defective, is not insufficient for the purpose for which it uses it, for this plain  
450 reason, because (such is God's will) it has no more. The servant who hid his  
451 Lord's money was punished; and we, since we did not make our  
452 circumstances, but were placed in them, shall be judged, not by them, but  
453 by our use of them. A view of duty, such as this, may lead us to wrong acts,  
454 but not to act wrongly. Christians have sometimes inflicted death from a zeal  
455 not according to knowledge; and sometimes they have been eager for the  
456 toleration of heresy from an ill-instructed charity. Under such circumstances  
457 a man's error may be more acceptable to God than his truth; for his truth, it  
458 may be, but evidences {299} clearness of intellect, whereas his error  
459 proceeds from conscientiousness; though whence it proceeds, and what it  
460 evidences, in a particular case, must be left to the Searcher of hearts.

461 36. Faith, then, though a presumption, has this peculiarity, that it is  
462 exercised under a sense of personal responsibility. It is when our  
463 presumptions take a wide range, when they affect to be systematical and  
464 philosophical, when they are indulged in matters of speculation, not of  
465 conduct, not in reference to self, but to others, then it is that they deserve  
466 the name of bigotry and dogmatism. For in such a case we make a wrong  
467 use of such light as is given us, and mistake what is "a lantern unto our feet"  
468 for the sun in the heavens.

469 37. Again, it is true that Faith as well as Bigotry maintains dogmatic  
470 statements which go beyond its knowledge. It uses words, phrases,  
471 propositions, it accepts doctrines and practices, which it but partially  
472 understands, or not at all. Now, so far indeed as these statements do not  
473 relate to matters of this world, but to heavenly things, of course they are no  
474 evidence of Bigotry. As the widest experience of life would not tend to  
475 remove the mysteriousness of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, so even the  
476 narrowest does not deprive us of the right of asserting it. Much knowledge  
477 and little knowledge leave us very much as we were, in a matter of this kind.  
478 But the case is very different when positions are in question of a social or  
479 moral character, which claim to be rules or maxims for political combination  
480 or conduct, for the well-being of the world, or for the guidance of public  
481 opinion. Yet many such positions Faith certainly does accept; and thus it  
482 seems to place the persons who act upon it in the very position of the  
483 bigoted, theoretical, and unreal; who use words beyond their depth, or avow  
484 sentiments to which they have no right, or enunciate general principles on  
485 defective knowledge. Questions, for instance, about the theory of  
486 government, national duties, the establishment of Religion, its relations to

487 the State, the treatment of the poor, and the nature of the Christian Church:  
488 these, and other such, may, it cannot be denied, be peremptorily settled, on  
489 religious grounds, by persons whose qualifications are manifestly unequal to  
490 so great an undertaking, who have not the knowledge, penetration, subtlety,  
491 calmness, or experience, which are a claim upon our attention, and who in  
492 consequence are, at first sight, to say the least, very like bigots and  
493 partisans.

494 38. Now that Faith may run into Bigotry, or may be mixed with Bigotry in  
495 matter of fact in this instance or that, of course I do not deny; at the same  
496 time the two habits of mind, whatever be their resemblance, differ in their  
497 dogmatism, in this:—Bigotry professes to understand what it maintains,  
498 though it does not; it argues and infers, it disowns Faith, and makes a show  
499 of Reason instead of it. It persists, not in abandoning argument, but in  
500 arguing only in one way. It takes up, not a religious, but a philosophical  
501 position; it lays claim to Wisdom, whereas Faith from the first makes men  
502 willing, with the Apostle, to be fools for Christ's sake. Faith sets out with  
503 putting reasoning aside as out of place, and proposes instead simple  
504 obedience to a revealed command. Its disciples represent that they are  
505 neither statesmen nor philosophers; that they are not developing principles  
506 or evolving systems; that their ultimate end is not persuasion, popularity, or  
507 success; that they are but doing God's will, and desiring His glory. They  
508 profess a sincere belief that certain views which engage their minds come  
509 from God; that they know well that they are beyond them; that they are not  
510 able to enter into them, or to apply them as others may do; that,  
511 understanding them but partially themselves, they are not sanguine about  
512 impressing them on others; that a divine blessing alone can carry them  
513 forward; that they look for that blessing; that they feel that God will  
514 maintain His own cause; that *that* belongs to Him, not to them [Note]; that  
515 if their cause is God's cause, it will be blessed, in His time and way; that if it  
516 be not, it will come to nought; that they securely wait the issue; that they  
517 leave it to the generation to come; that they can bear to seem to fail, but  
518 cannot bear to be "disobedient to a heavenly vision;" that they think that  
519 God has taught them and put a word in their mouths; that they speak to  
520 acquit their own souls; that they protest in order to be on the side of God's  
521 host, of the glorious company of the Apostles, the goodly fellowship of the  
522 Prophets, the noble army of Martyrs, in order to be separate from the  
523 congregation of His enemies. "Blessed is the man that hath not walked in  
524 the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners, and hath not sat  
525 in the seat of the scornful." They desire to gain this blessedness; and though  
526 they have not the capacity of mind to embrace, nor the keenness to  
527 penetrate and analyze the contents of this vast world, nor the  
528 comprehensive faculty which resolves all things into their true principles, and  
529 connects them in one system, though they can neither answer objections

530 made to their doctrines, nor say for certain whither they are leading them,  
531 yet profess them they can and must. Embrace them they can, and go out,  
532 not knowing whither they go. Faith, at least, they may have; Wisdom, if so  
533 be, they have not; but Faith fits them to be the instruments and organs, the  
534 voice and the hands and the feet of Him who is invisible, the Divine Wisdom  
535 in the Church,—who knows what they know not, understands their words,  
536 for they are His own, and directs their efforts to His own issues, though they  
537 see them not, because they dutifully place themselves upon His path. This is  
538 what they will be found to profess; and their state is that of the multitude of  
539 Christians in every age, nay even in the Apostolic, when, for all the  
540 supernatural illumination of such as St. Paul, "God chose the foolish things of  
541 the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to  
542 confound the things which were mighty, and base things of the world, and  
543 things which were despised, yea, and things which were not, to bring to  
544 nought things that were, that no flesh should glory in His presence."

545 39. Such a view of things is not of a nature to be affected by what is  
546 external to it. It did not grow out of knowledge, and an increase or loss of  
547 knowledge cannot touch it. The revolution of kingdoms, the rise or the fall of  
548 parties, the growth of society, the discoveries of science, leave it as they  
549 found it. On God's word does it depend; that word alone can alter it. And  
550 thus we are introduced to a distinct peculiarity of Faith; for considering that  
551 Almighty God often speaks, nay is ever speaking in one way or another, if  
552 we would watch for His voice, Faith, while it is so stable, is necessarily a  
553 principle of mental growth also, in an especial way; according, that is, as  
554 God sees fit to employ it. "I will stand upon my watch," says the prophet,  
555 "and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what He will say unto  
556 me;" and though since Christ came no new revelation has been given, yet  
557 much even in the latter days has been added in the way of explaining and  
558 applying what was given once for all. As the world around varies, so varies  
559 also, not the principles of the doctrine of Christ, but the outward shape and  
560 colour which they assume. And as Wisdom only can apply or dispense the  
561 Truth in a change of circumstances, so Faith alone is able to accept it as one  
562 and the same under all its forms. And thus Faith is ever the means of  
563 learning something new, and in this respect differs from Bigotry, which has  
564 no element of advance in it, and is under a practical persuasion that it has  
565 nothing to learn. To the narrow-minded and the bigoted the history of the  
566 Church for eighteen centuries is unintelligible and useless; but where there  
567 is Faith, it is full of sacred principles, ever the same in substance, ever  
568 varying in accidentals, and is a continual lesson of "the manifold Wisdom of  
569 God."

570 40. Moreover, though Faith has not the gift of tracing out and connecting  
571 one thing with another, which Wisdom has, and Bigotry professes to have,

but is an isolated act of Reason upon any matter in hand, as it comes; yet on this very account it has as wide a range as Wisdom, and a far wider one than can belong to any narrow principle or partial theory, and is able to take discursive views, though not systematic. There is no subject which Faith working by Love may not include in its province, on which it may not have a judgment, and to which it may not do justice, though it views each point by itself, and not as portions of a whole. Hence, unable as Faith is to analyze its grounds, or to show the consistency of one of its judgments with another, yet every one of these has its own place, and corresponds to some doctrine or precept in the philosophical system of the Gospel, for they are all the instincts of a pure mind, which steps forward truly and boldly, and is never at fault. Whatever be the subject-matter and the point in question, sacred or profane, Faith has a true view of it, and Wisdom can have no more; nor does it become truer because it is held in connexion with other opinions, or less true because it is not. And thus, since Faith is the characteristic of all Christians, a peasant may take the same view of human affairs in detail as a philosopher; and we are often perplexed whether to say that such persons are intellectually gifted or not. They have clear and distinct opinions; they know what they are saying; they have something to say about any subject; they do not confuse points of primary with those of secondary importance; they never contradict themselves: on the other hand they are not aware that there is any thing extraordinary about their judgments; they do not connect any two judgments together; they do not recognize any common principles running through them; they forget the opinions they have expressed, together with the occasion; they cannot defend themselves; they are easily perplexed and silenced; and, if they set themselves to reason, they use arguments which appear to be faulty, as being but types and shadows of those which they really feel, and attempts to analyze that vast system of thought which is their life, but not their instrument.

41. It is the peculiarity, then, of Faith, that it forms its judgment under a sense of duty and responsibility, with a view to personal conduct, according to revealed directions, with a confession of ignorance, with a carelessness about consequences, in a teachable and humble spirit, yet upon a range of subjects which Philosophy itself cannot surpass. In all these respects it is contrasted with Bigotry. Men of narrow minds, far from confessing ignorance and maintaining Truth mainly as a duty, profess, as I observed just now, to understand the subjects which they take up and the principles which they apply to them. They do not see difficulties. They consider that they hold their doctrines, whatever they are, at least as much upon Reason as upon Faith; and they expect to be able to argue others into a belief of them, and are impatient when they cannot. They consider that the premisses with which they start just prove the conclusions which they draw, and nothing else. They think that their own views are exactly fitted to solve all the facts

which are to be accounted for, to satisfy all objections, and to moderate and arbitrate between all parties. They conceive that they profess just the truth which makes all things easy. They have their one idea or their favourite notion, which occurs to them on every occasion. They have their one or two topics, which they are continually obtruding, with a sort of pedantry, being unable to discuss, in a natural unconstrained way, or to let their thoughts take their course, in the confidence that they will come safe home at the last. Perhaps they have discovered, as they think, the leading idea, or simple view, or sum and substance of the Gospel; and they insist upon this or that isolated tenet, selected by themselves or by others not better qualified, to the disparagement of the rest of the revealed scheme. They have, moreover, clear and decisive explanations always ready of the sacred mysteries of Faith; they may deny those mysteries or retain them, but in either case they think their own to be the rational view and the natural explanation of them, and all minds feeble or warped or disordered which do not acknowledge this. They profess that the inspired writers were precisely of their particular creed, be it a creed of today, or yesterday, or of a hundred years since; and they do not shrink from appealing to the common sense of mankind at large to decide this point. Then their proof of doctrines is as meagre as their statement of them. They are ready with the very places of Scripture,—one, two, or three,—where it is to be found; they profess to say just what each passage and verse means, what it cannot mean, and what it must mean. To see in it less than they see is, in their judgment, to explain away; to see more, is to gloss over. To proceed to other parts of Scripture than those which they happen to select, is, they think, superfluous, since they have already adduced the very arguments sufficient for a clear proof; and if so, why go beyond them? And again, they have their own terms and names for every thing; and these must not be touched any more than the things which they stand for. Words of parties or politics, of recent date and unsatisfactory origin, are as much a portion of the Truth in their eyes, as if they were the voice of Scripture or of Holy Church. And they have their forms, ordinances, and usages, which are as sacred to them as the very Sacraments given us from heaven.

42. Narrow minds have no power of throwing themselves into the minds of others. They have stiffened in one position, as limbs of the body subjected to confinement, or as our organs of speech, which after a while cannot learn new tones and inflections. They have already parcelled out to their own satisfaction the whole world of knowledge; they have drawn their lines, and formed their classes, and given to each opinion, argument, principle, and party, its own locality; they profess to know where to find every thing; and they cannot learn any other disposition. They are vexed at new principles of arrangement, and grow giddy amid cross divisions; and, even if they make the effort, cannot master them. They think that any one truth excludes



658 another which is distinct from it, and that every opinion is contrary to their  
659 own opinions which is not included in them. They cannot separate words  
660 from their own ideas, and ideas from their own associations; and if they  
661 attain any new view of a subject, it is but for a moment. They catch it one  
662 moment, and let it go the next; and then impute to subtlety in it, or  
663 obscurity in its expression, what really arises from their own want of  
664 elasticity or vigour. And when they attempt to describe it in their own  
665 language, their nearest approximation to it is a mistake; not from any  
666 purpose to be unjust, but because they are expressing the ideas of another  
667 mind, as it were, in translation.

668 43. It is scarcely necessary to observe upon the misconceptions which such  
669 persons form of foreign habits of thought, or again of ancient faith or  
670 philosophy; and the more so because they are unsuspecting of their own  
671 deficiency. Thus we hear the Greek Fathers, for instance, sometimes called  
672 Arminians, and St. Augustine Calvinistic; and that not analogously, but as if  
673 each party really answered to the title given to it. And again an inquiry is  
674 made whether Christians in those early days held this or that point of  
675 doctrine, which may be in repute in particular sects or schools now; as, for  
676 instance, whether they upheld the union of Church and State, or the doctrine  
677 of assurance. It is plain that to answer either in the affirmative or negative  
678 would be to misrepresent them; yet the persons in question do not  
679 contemplate more than such an absolute alternative.

680 44. Nor is it only in censure and opposition that narrowness of view is  
681 shown; it lies quite as often in approval and partisanship. None are so easily  
682 deceived by others as they who are preoccupied with their own notions.  
683 They are soon persuaded that another agrees with them, if he disagrees with  
684 their opponents. They resolve his ideas into their own, and, whatever words  
685 he may use to clear his meaning, even the most distinct and forcible, these  
686 fail to convey to them any new view, or to open to them his mind.

687 45. Again, if those principles are narrow which claim to interpret and subject  
688 the whole world of knowledge, without being adequate to the task, one of  
689 the most striking characteristics of such principles will be the helplessness  
690 which they exhibit, when new materials or fields of thought are opened upon  
691 them. True philosophy admits of being carried out to any extent; it is its  
692 very test, that no knowledge can be submitted to it with which it is not  
693 commensurate, and which it cannot annex to its territory. But the theory of  
694 the narrow or bigoted has already run out within short limits, and a vast and  
695 anxious region lies beyond, unoccupied and in rebellion. Their "bed is shorter  
696 than that a man can stretch himself on it; and the covering narrower, than  
697 that he can wrap himself in it." And then what is to be done with these  
698 unreclaimed wastes?—the exploring of them must in consequence be

699 forbidden, or even the existence denied. Thus, in the present day, there are  
700 new sciences, especially physical, which we all look at with anxiety, feeling  
701 that our views, as we at present hold them, are unequal to them, yet feeling  
702 also that no truth can really exist external to Christianity. Another striking  
703 proof of narrowness of mind among us may be drawn from the alteration of  
704 {310} feeling with which we often regard members of this or that  
705 communion, before we know them and after. If our theory and our view of  
706 facts agreed together, they could not lead to opposite impressions about the  
707 same matters. And another instance occurs daily: true Catholicity is  
708 commensurate with the wants of the human mind; but persons are often to  
709 be found who are surprised that they cannot persuade all men to follow  
710 them, and cannot destroy dissent, by preaching a portion of the Divine  
711 system, instead of the whole of it.

712 46. Under these circumstances, it is not wonderful that persons of narrow  
713 views are often perplexed, and sometimes startled and unsettled, by the  
714 difficulties of their position. What they did not know, or what they knew but  
715 had not weighed, suddenly presses upon their notice. Then they become  
716 impatient that they cannot make their proofs clear, and try to make a  
717 forcible riddance of objections. They look about for new arguments, and put  
718 violence on Scripture or on history. They show a secret misgiving about the  
719 truth of their principles, by shrinking from the appearance of defeat or from  
720 occasional doubt within. They become alarmists, and they forget that the  
721 issue of all things, and the success of their own cause (if it be what they  
722 think it), is sealed and secured by Divine promise; and sometimes, in this  
723 conflict between broad fact and narrow principle, the hard material breaks  
724 their tools; they are obliged to give up their principles. A state of uncertainty  
725 and distress follows, and, in the end, perhaps, bigotry is supplanted by  
726 general scepticism. They who thought their own ideas could measure all  
727 things, end in thinking that even a Divine Oracle is unequal to the task.

728 47. In these remarks, it will be observed that I have been contrasting Faith  
729 and Bigotry as habits of mind entirely distinct from each other. They are so;  
730 but it must not be forgotten, as indeed I have already observed, that,  
731 though distinct in themselves, they may and do exist together in the same  
732 person. No one so imbued with a loving Faith but has somewhat, perhaps, of  
733 Bigotry to unlearn; no one so narrow-minded, and full of self, but is  
734 influenced, it is to be hoped, in his degree, by the spirit of Faith.

735 48. Let us ever make it our prayer and our endeavour, that we may know  
736 the whole counsel of God and grow unto the measure of the stature of the  
737 fulness of Christ; that all prejudice, and self-confidence, and hollowness, and  
738 unreality, and positiveness, and partisanship, may be put away from us  
739 under the light of Wisdom, and the fire of Faith and Love; till we see things

740 as God sees them, with the judgment of His Spirit, and according to the  
741 mind of Christ.

742 (Preached on Whit-Tuesday Morning, June 1, 1841, by appointment of Mr.  
743 Pritchard, Fellow of Oriel.)

744 Note

745 Dan. iii. 17, 18.