APOLOGETICA

ELEMENTARY APOLOGETICS
FOR
PULPIT AND PEW

BY
THE REV. P. A. HALPIN

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JOSEPH F. WAGNER

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Contents.

Preface.

THE chapters contained in these pages are an attempt to suggest a method of presenting the basic facts of Christianity in the light of reason alone. As much as possible the arguments advanced make no appeal to divine revelation. They contain proofs drawn from natural sources only. They are an essay in the direction of sustaining that the teachings of religion are eminently reasonable. They are an endeavor to show that man, led solely by his reason, is compelled to admit that, of all the views entertained by mankind relatively to the origin and destiny of the race, that view alone is to be accepted which is upheld by Christianity, and especially by the Catholic Church. Infidelity has had the ear of humanity since the beginning. The reason therefor is discoverable in this, that it has pandered to the common desire to remove all the restrictions with which religion, divinely inspired, has sought to impose limits on physical freedom, has sought to inculcate the saving idea that there is a law decreed in heaven which coerces, with moral pressure, the lower inclinations of human nature. The plan is a very simple one. It discusses all the watchwords of incredulity which have had such destructive sway. It aims at demonstrating, by reason only, that these rallying cries are only lures to individual debasement and ultimate loss. It has touched upon the limitations of reason. It has offered to point out the proper function of intelligence and to assign to it its proper place and most becoming attitude. These preliminary notions established, the plan proceeds to take up the insensate clamor that there is no religion, no God, no hereafter, no hell, no eternity, and of course does not omit that pivotal dogma that Christ is neither a myth nor a man only, but God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God. That the work has been imperfectly done is transparent. These chapters are skeletons, in the literal sense of the word. There is no flesh upon the bones, there is no blood in the veins, there are neither

veins nor arteries. The compilation is only a suggestion, but as such not entirely valueless. There is no doubt that churchgoers need instruction and need enlightenment upon the very subjects treated herein and, are avid of information that makes no call upon their faith, but rather on their minds. The matter for these sketches was found already prepared in the theologies and philosophies used in our colleges and seminaries. With these remarks we leave our experiment to the merciful consideration of all who may be patient enough to look over these pages.

THE AUTHOR.

Apologetica.

A Course of Fifty-two Sketches for Short Sermons on Popular Topics and Questions, Maintaining, Explaining, and Defending the Catholic Position.

I. Catholic Loyalty.

Introduction.—The need of Catholic loyalty, that is, the habit of fidelity to our Catholic Church in its teachings and precepts. This loyalty which is needed always, but especially now, is compacted of loyalty of life or living, loyalty of will, loyalty of reason.

1. Loyalty to the life enforced by Catholic principle is the best and only life worth living.

2. Loyalty of will—adhesion of our will to all God proposes to the Christian through the Church.

3. Loyalty of reason, which rounds off the whole loyalty of the Catholic.

Loyalty is fidelity. It may mean being true to friends, to country, to ourselves, to principles, to God. Fidelity to God is highest and most imperative. This loyalty is an adhesion to God in all His relations to man. God's relation to us finds its most perfect expression

in what He has taught us to believe and to do. In other words, it is the religion or the Church which He has established for our guidance in belief and conduct. This loyalty is always a duty, but in these times wherein so much opposition to the Church exists it is more than ever an obligation. The loyalty of the Catholic to his religion manifests itself in three ways. It is threefold devotion or loyalty of mind, of will, of life.

I. *Loyalty of Life* is living according to the dictates of religion. It is shaping our whole conduct according to the precepts of the Church. It is unnecessary to state that the Catholic Church is the *oldest* and the *only* Church. By the excellence of its notes and marks it should elicit devotion. It is the essential pattern of all living. It makes for the only life worth living. There are outside the Church beautiful lives, but they are beautiful only inasmuch as they approximate the teachings of the Church and are imperfect wherein they recede from those teachings. Among the reasons which call for this loyalty of life are the splendor of Catholic truth and Catholic ethics and all that the Church has it in her power to do for the individual here and hereafter, for the family and the country—loyalty during life and until and in death.

II. *Loyalty of Will.* This is adhesion of our will to the will of the Church. It is implied in life-loyalty, but it goes to the further length of not only strengthening exterior living, but of permeating the interior man with the beautifying and vivifying principles of Catholicity. The will must be loyally Catholic. It must, as it can, control the whole man. It must dictate loyalty to all the faculties and senses of man. It must command unquestioning faith and heroic, if necessary, charity. It is well to remember that our will is our own. We may do with it as we please. If inclined to doubt, the will may compel assent; if disinclined to righteous conduct, the will may

compel action. The life and the strength of the will are maintained by grace and the channels of grace—i. e., sacraments.

III. *Loyalty of Reason.* We have, perhaps, against all laws of sequence reserved this for the last place. This plan is introductory to a series which aims at showing the rational foundations of our faith and at presenting answers to the flippant, though dangerous, objections which are the cant words of the age. Reason-loyalty is the most needed. This loyalty is the subjecting our reason to everything taught by the Church. It means unconditional, though not servile, surrender. The first element of this devotion is found in humility of reason, in acknowledging its limitations, in an unwillingness to take for granted what is alleged against revelation, in a disposition of allegiance running through all discussion. The essential altitude of reason is one whereby it confesses that God and the Church can not be mistaken, but that it itself may and can be at fault. The province of reason will be examined hereinafter and its legitimate obligations established. Many are the advantages to be derived from this triple loyalty. Enough is it to enumerate peace of mind, loftiness of principle, happiness in this world and the next.

II. The Rocks Which Wreck Faith.

Introduction.—There is none of a man's possessions which is to be more carefully protected than his faith. There is not one of his holdings which is more constantly threatened. Sailing over life's sea, rocks imperiling his faith are piercing the waves everywhere, and narrow indeed is the channel through which he is to pilot his way in safety. We assume that faith is more precious to him than anything else that is his. It is not an assumption; it is a certainty, and a dread one.

I. *What is a man's faith to him?* Faith is the "argument of the unseen." It is a chart well mapped out and marking unmistakably the points of danger on the ocean of life. It describes the port whence he sails; it directs, in all kinds of weather, his journey toward the haven of his destiny. It assures him that he derives his being from God—that his whole being must tend Godward, and it shows him the only way. It speaks of the unseen—of the unseen of his past, of his present, of his future. It furnishes him with the knowledge of the things that have been and are and will be. It brings within his ken the whole path of salvation. Impossible is it to calculate the advantages of faith. Impossible almost is it to enumerate them. Such being the pricelessness of faith, what are—

II. *Its perils?* The *perils* which faith is exposed to are *manifold* and *ubiquitous* and *extreme* and *insidious*. They spring from every quarter. They wear the guise of friendship; they borrow the garb of angels of light; they underlie adversity; they go hand in hand with success. Society is bristling with those dangers; so is wealth, and so, beyond a doubt, is the flesh. The arch enemy of mankind

has his spear raised ever to wound and, if possible, kill faith. The world passes it by—faith is not fashionable; it savors too much of poverty and low birth and ignorance. Society sometimes wears its livery because it is a token of respectability. But faith is a reproach to the thoughts and workings of society; is a hindrance; is a menace to its pleasures. The flesh has views diametrically opposed to those of faith. Let us eat and drink and be merry, for to-morrow we die. Such is the chorus of the flesh, and the tones of faith can not be heard, so boisterous is the singing of the flesh, or, if heard, they weaken the enthusiasm and mar the gaiety. As for the devil—he is a murderer and a liar from the beginning, and faith is his persistent and indomitable foe and accuser and judge.

III. *Other dangers.* Ignorance of the individual. He does not know even the essentials of his faith. What he knows not, he loves not, and if it bars his way, he hates. The ambition and the greed and the selfishness of the individual weaken faith. So does riotous living; so do the passions gratified unlawfully; so does evil companionship; so likewise free and loose thinking about matters of faith. More than anything else the lawless literature of the day—books that are immoral, books atheistic, books cynical, books without ideals higher than the inspirations of mere nature, books ridiculing, caricaturing religion, its tenets and practices. These are the dangers. The need of guarding against them is obvious. Keep the faith. It will keep you here and hereafter.

III. Reason is a Sufficient Guide for Me.

Introduction.—It is hard to say which is the more culpable or more dangerous—disloyalty of words or disloyalty of action. Wherever the greater guilt lies, this much is certain, that expressions against our faith—so-called maxims derogatory to our Church—are caught up even by children, and so are more widely spread and in this time of so-called independent thought become war cries around which the masses unfortunately are only too glad to rally. I must use very frequently the epithet "so-called" because investigation will reveal that the terms express principles or facts which have no foundation in reason or reality.

I. *What is the meaning of the phrase* at the head of this sketch? It means that my reason is sufficient for me in everything. It means that by the unaided light of my reason I find the solution of all the problems of existence. It means that I need neither God nor the Church nor any man for my teacher. I can discover alone all that is needed to be known regarding this life and the other. This crude putting of the significance of the phrase used by so many is startling. Nay, it is more—it is shocking. What is the truth of the matter? It is not a phrase that fact or reason is able to substantiate. What facts can it bring to its aid? Collect all the experience of the past. Has any one man's reason sufficed to enlighten him as to all that is required for his development as a man living with other men and depending on some force outside of himself for his coming into or his going out of life? Has the collective reason of the race been sufficient? The pages of history give the reply. What has been the teaching of Paganism? What is the teaching of philosophy so-

called? Has there been certainty, or conviction, or persuasion? Has there been accord? Have all discovered the same God, the same duties, the same obligations, the same meaning of life? What has been said about God and religion in previous ages and what is being said now? No single man has found out every truth or any truth plenarily. The same is to be said of the combined efforts of the learned when they relied on reason alone, and the same will have to be said until the end.

II. The "principle" is not supported by reason. Reason can not prove that of itself it is sufficient to guide man in the intricacies of existence. First, fact disproves emphatically the assertion of the all sufficing quality of reason. Reason shows us the impotency of itself in the settlement of what is most obvious. What is the first fact that is forced upon individual reason? The fact that it is limited; that its vision has a very near horizon; that there are things not only above or beyond it or below it, but apparently upon its level which it sees not, or, if it does see, sees very dimly. Reason knows that it is fallible as well as limited—fallible inasmuch as from very patent facts it deduces wrong conclusions. A man knows that his reason has been busier correcting old views than making new ones. The reasonable conclusion that the most experienced man evolves is that he has made many mistakes in the use of his reason, that it is very dark therein, that his whole being yearns for a light which reason alone can not enkindle.

IV. What is Faith?

Introduction.—The more we inquire into the nature of the great gift of faith, the more we may be impelled to withstand all attacks against it, the more we may be animated to estimate its value and to prize it at its true worth. So let it be considered first, that:

I. *Faith is a gift.* It is ours only by presentation. We have not begotten it; we have not stretched out our hands for it and seized it. It is not ours to summon as we please. There are myriads in the world looking for it. It is a donation. It is gratuitous. It comes from God, and no one forced Him to bestow it. Every Catholic, as his reason shows, as he awakens into consciousness sooner or later, finds himself in possession of it. God is not an "Indian giver." He never takes back faith from an individual once He grants it. Yet it disappears sometimes, or rather often, from the hold of the possessor. Like every other gift, the gift, for example, of existence, God's concurrence, in order to conserve it, is absolutely indispensable. When a man loses his faith he interposes between God's action and his possession an obstacle something like the short-circuiting of an electrical current—the burning out of a fuse, for instance—and lo! there is no intermediary between God and the soul in the matter of faith, and the grand, bright light goes out, and "life eternal is lost and the man does not know" Thee—only true God and Him whom Thou hast sent Christ Jesus (John xvii. 3). It is to be understood that nc man loses the gift of faith save by his own fault. God never takes it away. Man rejects it or man throws it from him.

II. *Faith is a gift of transcendent excellence.* (*a*) It is the foundation, the corner, the keystone of the Church. (*b*) The root of that tree Nabuchodonosor saw in his dream (Dan. iv. 7). (*c*) The beginning of salvation, the origin of justification. (*d*) It raises us above brutes, above the senses. (*e*) It elevates us above nature; it supernaturalizes us. (*f*) It is the assimilation of our nature with the divine nature. (*g*) It is the dawning of the beatific vision. (*h*) It is a new sense, telescopic in its powers. (*i*) It is certainty in doubt. (*j*) A haven in the storm. (*k*) It is the way, the truth, and the life.

III. It is delicate beyond the delicacy of anything in nature. The hot breath of passion melts it as the sun dissolves the frost creations on our windows or in the forest. It is as delicate as chastity, as charity. The Christian graces are Chastity, Charity, Faith. They wither at a touch—they are killed by a thought.

Conclusion.—Our care of this rare gift should be commensurate with its preciousness. (Cf. Hurter, Vol. I, and S.S., *passim et ubique.*)

V. The Uses of Reason.

Introduction.—Reason is the greatest human prerogative. It distinguishes man from all the inferior orders of creation. By it he is superior to the inanimate, the vegetable, the animal world. Reason is given man to keep him from sinking below his inherited level, below the beasts, below inert nature. It is a superadded sense, if the term may be used. It is within his control to a large degree; it is beyond his command in, perhaps, a still larger degree. What is it and what are its uses?

I. It is a seeing faculty; it is the immaterial eye of the individual. It perceives. Its object is truth. It does not make truth, no more than any eye creates the objects depicted upon its retina. The eye does not bring into being the thing it looks upon—that thing simply floats into the area of its vision. Were there no such object man would not behold it. For instance, the reason, or the intellect of man, does not make it true that two and two are four, but because two and two are four the mind sees it to be so. Run through the wide domain of facts intellectual, axioms, maxims, principles and the like—these facts are not products of the mind; they simply are and present themselves to the mind under investigating or favoring conditions. All this makes for the dependence not of truth upon the reason or mind, but for the dependence of mind, reason—call it what you will—upon truth. We talk of creation in a literary sense. In the strictest meaning, *creation,* that is, in the sense in which the term *creation* signifies the making of something out of nothing, there is no such thing

in the intellectual order, whether it be angelic or divine. Even God does not create truth. God *is* Truth, and from Him all truth flows into every created mind. Literary creation would, at best, be only the harmonious wedding of truths already known or the offspring thereby generated.

II. *Another* use of reason is the comparing one truth with another, and from the comparison deducing other intellectual facts—in weighing the values of arguments adduced in support of some proposition advanced. Hence, may be deduced the principal function of reason—in other words, its principal use. Its duty is not to imagine; imagination is another faculty below and subordinate to reason; nor to fancy, which is practically the same thing. Neither is its duty to originate. There will be no difficulty in understanding how originating in all matters, and especially in religious matters, is the parent of absurdity and error. If reason, unbiased, keeps its eye not on itself or its own vagaries, but on the light; if it consult neither feeling nor interest, but only fact or truth, the outcome will be the discovery of all that is needful in many things, but especially in discriminating between what is false and true in religion.

VI. The Abuses of Reason.

Introduction.—Reason is given man to enable him to ascertain the truth in all things beneficial to his material welfare. Above all to his spiritual welfare—the welfare of his higher, or rather, highest nature. Properly used—used as indicated in the last instruction—used as its very nature imperiously demands—it will lead to good; abused it will just as inevitably lead to disaster. It is a pity that we must confess that man, a reasonable creature, has been most irrational in the use of that very faculty whereby it is in his power to rise to a height just a little lower than that of the angels. Man abuses his reason.

I. Naturally all the misuse a man makes of his reason comes from his misconception of the nature and object and limits of that sublime faculty. He mistakes its nature, and, therefore, supposes that it is in its power to make or unmake truth, that within the grasp of his denial and admission lies the existence of truth. In another instruction we learned that reason does not make truth, but that truth is made, or, rather, is for it, that truth existed before any human mind, as the spectacle of the universe was before any human eye.

II. Man abuses the reason which God has given him by supposing that the whole region of truth is his to discover, to roam over, to command. He so much revels in his reason, and his reason is so much of a joy to him, that he allows it to gallop blindly, reinlessly, hither and thither, as its own sweet will dictates. In other words, liberty of thought is his slogan. A man can think what he pleases and as he pleases. It is noticeable that one allows reason more

liberty than one allows the senses, say, for there are things from which one turns away and against which one shuts one's eyes. In thought, so the axiom permits, there is no restriction. This freedom of license of thought leads to boldness. And so another abuse of reason is,

III. *Unlimitation.* No bounds to the gambols of this faculty. No sacredness. No horizons. No remembering that there are things twixt heaven and earth that are not dreamed of by reason. This limitlessness of reason's prerogatives begets a spirit of reckless intrusiveness, for it assumes to be the sole umpire in matters of truth and falsehood, of good and evil. In its wanton sportiveness it is—is reason—its own law, and it legislates for God and man, for time and eternity. This little farthing rushlight aims at lighting up the darkness of the immensities. Alas! What is the corrective? Watch the reaction of such excesses in history and in the race, in the family and the individual.

VII. Some Safeguards of Faith.

Introduction.—If it is important to save one's life, it is more important to save one's soul, whence arises the momentousness of protecting one's faith. Our view is rather a rational one than a spiritual one, and hence the means indicated are all in the line of reason, and directed against the difficulties which an inflated and rampant rationalism creates against faith and in favor of so-called mental independence.

I. One safeguard lies in a man's using his reason, not his imagination nor his fancy—lies in his following not the bent or dictation of his passions, or of self-interest, or of policy, or of human respect, but the inexorable rules of logic. To put it more simply, he must be *really* reasonable, *truly* rational. Where a man can, let him think for himself; where he can not, let him consult those who are in a position to help him. This will form for him the very profitable habit of not readily accepting all the teachings and gospels on matters of faith which are continually coming into existence and just as rapidly disappearing. The one great fact which takes up nearly all the spaces of history is the extravagant caperings of the human mind in matters of religion. This fact is as instructive as it is vast. It forces one to a salutary distrust of one's own views. It compels one to look beyond one's self for light and guidance. To the honest man all seems so dark and uncertain that he looks around for some landmarks to keep him in the path. Thus, an indispensable condition of safety in this all important matter of faith would seem to be the need of being on one's guard against what might be called the un-

tutored impulses of reason which invariably culminate in irrational conclusions. The secure attitude seems to be one of distrust. All this might be maximized thus: Slowness in admitting what the populace readily catches up. Find the one who knows—find the accredited teacher.

II. The second safeguard is the search after instruction, after full information, after facts. The ignorance of Catholics concerning their Church is as widespread as it is lamentable and fatal. Their ignorance of the textual or surface meaning of the doctrines of the Church, their misunderstanding of Catholic practices, Catholic devotions, their utter misinformation on points of Catholic history is appalling. Many are not aware of what Catholics are obliged to believe. Few are able to give an honest inquirer the mere formula of the simplest tenets of the Church. Many admit, through ignorance, the false doctrines imputed to the Church, are unable, I will not say to refute, but even to deny the frequent and patent calumnies which are uttered. A man must know his faith. To this end he must read, must hear, must learn. In this wise, his knowledge of his faith increasing, his love for it will grow, and there will arise in his soul an ambition to protect his grand faith for himself, to defend it against calumniators and to propagate it among his kind.

VIII. The Boldness of Unbelief.

Introduction.—In contrast with the modesty of faith and virtue in general is the effrontery of unbelief. Enemies of religion accuse its votaries of dogmatism. By dogmatism they mean arrogance in stating opinions and positive assertion without proof. This definition, as all history attests, recoils on themselves. Recall all the propositions which have been uttered by so-called reformers, so-called scientists, so-called philosophers and infidels. We find that their affirmations are:

I. Bold in the extreme. *They are bold with the shamelessness of hostility.* Who can recall without shuddering the vituperations of Voltaire and the French philosophists? It would be almost not only beyond good taste, but unpardonable to repeat what has been said by the Gnostics, by Luther and his school, by the English Atheists, by Diderot, and others too numerous to mention. They are bold with the *impudence of the unscientific nature* of their averments. Their conclusions are unfounded. They reason contrary to all the laws of reason. From a particular and isolated fact they deduce general laws. With a single misdemeanor or a few criminal acts they frame an accusation against all religionists, all Churches, all authority. Witness the progress of geology as against religion; witness biology and the cognate sciences. Notice the hastiness with which they pronounce against faith on the strength of a single discovery in any of the sciences. It is impossible for a new planet or new star or a spot on the sun to be proclaimed, it is impossible for a new element or new combination of substances to be declared, without their seizing

the discovery as a flamboyant herald dishonoring Holy Scripture or foretelling the existence of all creeds. *They are bold with the dastardliness of falsehood.* They stick not at a lie. They utter calumny after calumny. Their whole warfare has usurped the domain of history with battalions of lies. Their whole procedure has been a "conspiracy against the truth." The whole labor of Apologetics may be reduced to the task of again and again hurling back the same falsehoods in the teeth of the adversaries of faith. From all this we may learn:

II. *How to meet this boldness of unbelief.* 1st. It behooves us to be as bold as they are, as bold in denying as they are in affirming. 2d. They throw the burthen of proof on us, whereas all the laws of ratiocination compel them to exhibit the evidence which supports what they allege. 3d. To be assured that somewhere among the enlightened, among our pastors, our theologians there is a satisfactory answer to their bold, ignorant, false allegations. 4th. We must remain undisturbed, undismayed. We are in possession of the truth. We may not understand, but we know what we hold is true. We know that we are passing, or rather that our faith is passing for the moment through a trial which the faith of millions in the last two thousand years sustained. Their faith came out vindicated, purified, glorified, and so will it be with ours after this temporary struggle.

IX. Why Men Doubt in Matters of Faith.

Introduction.—We say advisedly *doubt,* because no one, Catholic or non-Catholic, has ever been *certain* of any proposition which contradicts the great truths of religion, revealed or natural. These doubts exist in the minds of believers and unbelievers. The wonder to the thinking man is how there can exist any hesitation in assenting to the teachings of the Church, which has been in the forefront of evidence since the coming of Christ. Two thousand years in existence, and it wears no wrinkle on its majestic brow. The longest lived of all the so-called Churches, it has lost none of its vigor; it is still erect and has not yet been attacked by any of the forerunners of decrepitude; assailed more repeatedly and with more hatred than any other creed, it shows not the mark of a single scar. Why, therefore, do men doubt?

I. *Because of indifference.* Men are too busy in seeking a livelihood, too busy in the pursuit of wealth and fame. They permit themselves to be absorbed by the cares of existence. The visible world intrudes itself more strenuously upon their attention. They look not beyond these horizons. The body and all that goes to make up its comfort completely fills their vision. The interests of earth seem paramount, and they hesitate when they are summoned either by the voice of their conscience or by the voice of the legitimate teachers. They have learned the lesson by their habits of thought and by environment that this world is everything to which everything else is subordinate, and so they walk along the pathway of life in ignorance and indifference in the question of the eternal truths, and hence no wonder their attitude is one of doubt.

II. Because of the passions. They deliver themselves up to the exterior dissipations of life. They follow wherever their senses or the gratification of their inclinations calls them. They become the slaves of their desires, immersed in libertinism. The flesh is all in all to them. The spirit is weakened. Yet they must solace themselves in their saner moments. To admit the teaching of faith would be to admit the folly and the danger of their condition, would make them dread future retribution. Reflection becomes agony for them, and they console themselves by a doubting *perhaps* that what is said of God and heaven and hell may be fiction, or, at any rate, exaggerated. When does a Catholic allow doubt to enter his soul? Is it when he aspires to a better life? Is it not rather when having thrown all the commandments of God to the winds he elects to remain on the forbidden paths?

III. *Because of what we might call the glamour of science.* This is a scientific age. Science seems to have run a prosperous race and to have left faith behind. Science, when its voice is heard indistinctly, seems to proclaim itself queen, arbiter of matter and thought in the universe. Among the aristocracy of intellect it is more the fashion to assent to the conclusions of science than to the declarations of faith. One can not be a scientist and a believer. Hence belief seems to smack of lack of culture, of ignorance, of the masses, of the proletariat. How many are misled by such views as the foregoing! Yet how superficial it all is, and how uncertain the foundation on which it rests and how easily refuted! It may be said that of these causes of doubt the most dangerous and the most prolific is indifference.

X. Of What Use is Religion?

Introduction.— This is a question not seldom asked. The motives for making this query are not a few. Some urge it because they are indifferent, because it makes no difference to them whether there be such a thing as religion or not. Others because they see so many religionists no better, but rather worse, than those who profess no religion. Others because they do not understand the meaning of the term. Others because they are unwilling to admit the existence of anything beyond this life. Others again because, so they pretend, man has no obligations except to himself and his fellow men. The adversaries of religion in general are those who care not for it, i. e., those who are indifferent, those who are ignorant, and the materialist or atheist. It is to be considered, therefore,

I. *What is religion?* A definition is hardly necessary, for it can not be reasonably doubted that every one, though unable to give it expression, has a conception, dim or clear, of it. This fact is already an argument in its favor. It is an acknowledgment, is religion, of our indebtedness to a superior Being, to whom we owe life and all that life brings, and to whom, as a consequence, we owe gratitude, honor, and obedience. If this Supreme Authority has declared in any way His will to us, that will we are obliged to submit to. Religion is the sum total of our duties to God. To call, therefore, into question the use of religion is a misunderstanding of the nature of the highest Being as well as of our most important obligations. When a man says, What is the good of religion? it is as if he in so many words said, What is the use of God? What use is there in man's fulfilling his most essential duties in life?

II. *The importance of religion.* Put plainly, the question we have undertaken to answer sounds blasphemous. It sounds so because it is so. It is well to translate the utterances of unbelief into their every-day, commonplace language. Religion is of use because it is important, and more important, than anything else in this world. It is the first of all conceptions, I might say. It is fundamental. It is the admission that God has created and, therefore, owns us, and because He owns us He has inalienable rights with regard to us. The fact remains that if the creature comes from God, and subsists through Him, man may do only what God wills, and go through life along the path appointed by Him, and tend toward the end God had in view in bringing him out of nothing.

III. *A few questions.* Is this important? Is it important that man should at every moment of his existence acknowledge his dependence upon God? Is indifference in this matter rational? Is it safe? Because some who profess religion are not what they should be, is it reasonable to blame religion for it? Are they not wicked in spite of religion? Does religion teach them iniquity? On what does the materialist base his view? Is he sure there is no after life? Quite sure? What is his proof? Where is his authority? Is there no use in an institution which declares man's origin? In an institution which enlightens man as to his primal duties? In an institution which makes for righteousness here and security hereafter?

XI. One Religion is as Good as Another.

Introduction.—The error implied in this assertion is of close kinship to the falsehood which is contained in the blasphemous question, "What is the use of religion?" They both are tainted with the guilt of what may be called indifferentism. There may be said to be two kinds of indifferentism. One is general, and applies to all religion. It might take this form of expression: It is a matter of no concern whether one professes religion or not. About this misconception enough has been said already. The second species is expressed in the heading of this sketch. What a sweeping declaration it is! What arrogance and what ignorance it displays. It displays arrogance first.

I. The presumption of the opinion is readily perceived when we consider that it runs counter to the prevailing practice of mankind, of whom the majority profess some form of belief with a persistency and a loyalty which admits of no other form. It is a slur on the early history of religion, of which so many members clung so steadfastly to one rather than to another creed, that they suffered exile, persecution and torture, and death rather than surrender or change in the least their faith. It is pharisaical inasmuch as the indifferentist thanks God, if he ever thanks God, or if he has the crudest notion of the Divinity, that he is not like other men. It would be difficult to characterize the indifferentist; it would be difficult to tabulate his mental conditions, and it might be dangerous to diagnose his moral symptoms. As for his logic—and individuals of the indifferentist stamp pride themselves on the inerrancy of their rational processes—

it is almost ridiculous enough to excite inextinguishable laughter. For it is not to be sanctioned by reason that it matters not what religion one professes, that one religion is as good as another. One religion is not as good as another:

II. (a) There are religions, and their dogmas are contrary to truth and their ethics an abomination. They propose what is untrue for belief and for practice what is wrong. One religion, therefore, is not as good as another, because there are some religions which are bad. (b) In the variety of creeds which exist, some contradict each other totally, and all contradict each other in part. Is it logical to admit both the yea and nay of doctrine? (c) God is the founder of religion. Is He equally the founder of contradiction and falsehood? Are all religions equally acceptable to Him? (d) Christ established one religion. He said to His apostles, teach all nations to "observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Did He teach His disciples all the errors, all the heresies, all the schisms with which the religions of the world have been inundated? Did He establish one or many religions? If many, well might we exclaim, What was the use of His preaching? What has He brought to mankind? Heresy, schism, error did not need a divine propagator. These things are human creations. Truth is one; God is one; Christ is one; religion is one. Is the God of indifferentism an adorable God? Is He the most perfect being? Is He substantial sanctity and substantial truth if one religion is as good as another? Arrogant, ignorant, criminal, and blasphemous is the affirmation of the indifferentist.

XII. There is no God.

Introduction.—The expressing, the writing down of the above affirmation shocks universally. It is an assertion which points to a revolting order of intelligence and conduct. Not in all the languages of the world, not in all utterances of mankind is there an averment so horrible, so blasphemous, so ignominious. It reveals mental and moral degeneracy of the lowest type. So abominable is it that with exceptions which may easily be counted there is not a philosopher who refuses to affirm that any one professing atheism is insincere or brutalized. This is true of thinkers before and since Christ. Says Cicero: "The existence of God is so manifest that I can hardly believe in the sanity of the one who denies it" (De Nat. Deorum. II., 44). "Nobody," says St. Augustine, "denies God save one whose interest it is that there be no God." We may safely admit that God is. Atheists there are, but not atheists of the mind, but of the heart and the passions. It is false that there is no God, for it is true that God is.

I. *It is false that there is no God.* One grows weary of defending the glorious truths of Christianity against enemies who advance no new difficulties, but persistently repeat those which have been urged since the beginning. Let us just as defiantly deny the atheistic proposition as they boldly put it forth. Let us ask them to prove that there is no God. Have they ever proved it? Have they ever, with all their ingenuity, framed an argument of which the propositions are undeniable, and from which is logically deducible the conclusion: God does not exist? All they have alleged amounts merely to a

slender, perhaps hanging on the gossamer thread of an unreasonable doubt. Have they ever propagated their irreligion? that is, propagated so as to plant in minds a conviction immovable, or to touch hearts with a persuasion which remains in spite of threats, persecution, and death? It is to be remembered that we are treating of what is termed theoretical atheism. Until more forcible proofs than mere assertion are forthcoming, the belief in God's existence will be an undisputed possession in the thoughts of men. This is only a negative reply, but positive answers are not wanting.

II. *While it is false that God does not exist, it must be true that the existence of the Supreme Being can not be questioned.* It must not be forgotten in all these sketches we prescind from faith. Faith makes every thing clear. Here and now we are appealing to common sense. It is obvious to the most uncultured mind just on the confines of sanity that God is a word we have used and heard since our childhood. Not only we have heard and used it, but, moreover, we understood its meaning. Perhaps we grasped its meaning more readily than the signification of anything else proposed to us. What does this fact prove? It proves that the idea of a Supreme Being is natural to the human soul, that this voice of nature is sincere and unalterable. Says Cicero: "An opinion which has in its favor the positive testimony of the human race can not but be true" (De Nat. Deor., 1, 17). And Aristotle declared that, "What all men hold instinctively as true, is a truth of nature." This belief grows with our development. If it weakens during the storm of passions, it breaks out like a blaze at the hour of death. Like a rainbow, it reaches from our cradle to our grave, and life would be dark without it. This is a fact. Have atheists such a fact in their repertoire of sophistries?

XIII. There is no God.

Introduction.—Once more let us stigmatize this declaration as the most shameless, the most profligate ever made. To utter it there is required an effrontery and a corruption which can proceed only from a mind given over to pride or from a heart abandoned to every wicked desire, and perhaps to the most grasping greed and the most abominable lusts. The voice that speaks it is the voice of one dead to the strongest instincts of nature, the voice of one who sets himself in opposition to his whole environment. Every tongue—the tongue of man, all the tongues of earth, sea, and sky—proclaim the glory of God. The tongue of the atheist alone emits the only discordant note in this grand chorus of creatures hymning the praises of the omnipotent Creator of the Universe. "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy face? If I take my wings early in the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there also shall thy hand lead me and thy right hand shall hold me" (Ps. 138). What sphere, or what land, or what depth, or what height shall the atheist and the scoffer inhabit to be screened from the face of God? Repellently and indignantly we deny the colossal falsehood, and confess that God exists, because,

I. Mankind has been in possession of this truth from the beginning. Collect the votes of mankind, and the verdict will be an overwhelming majority in favor of God's existence—a majority so overwhelming from the beginning until this third year of the twentieth century of the modern era that the opponents will be nowhere discoverable. East, west, north, and south—wherever a human being

breathes or has breathed, savage or civilized be he, every eye looks Godward. Every heart has throbbed with a sentiment of the Infinite. No matter how impoverished a language may be, it has always the word God. Cicero sums up the experience of all history anterior to his own day, and predicted infallibly the whole future until the end of time in this regard when he says: "There exists no people however barbarous which has not had the thought of God" (De leg. 1, 24). How many countries have been explored since his age, and the word of the Roman philosopher remains unshaken. This is a fact universal and incontestable. It is an assured sign of truth. Hence the religious sentiment always alive is founded on reason and verity. Before advancing any other proof, let us examine,

II. *An Objection.* But priests or legislators may have invented religion, and thus have inaugurated the idea of God. We ask, are heart-sentiments invented? Are instincts promulgated by law or exhortation? Were priests before religion? Can the existence of the priesthood be explained otherwise than by the preexistence of the religious sentiment? Does not the fact that from the very beginning legislators like Minos, Solon, Lycurgus, Numa admitted that religion is necessary as a foundation for social stability? Does not this fact prove that the religious sentiment was deeply, powerfully, and universally alive in souls? Moreover, where does history narrate the invention of the religious idea? Again, let us demand from unbelievers whether all history does not mark them as isolated monsters in the domain of events. The pity of it! They have wickedly departed from their God.

XIV.—There Is No God.

Introduction.—This denial of a universally and admitted fact can not be scarified too deeply. It is ever received by the generality of mankind with instinctive and immediate repudiation. It is an insult to intelligence; it is an insolent disclaimer of the best and highest thoughts and aspirations of all the ages since chaos first obeyed the divine summons: "Let there be light." It was first uttered, not in conviction, but in hatred and pride by the dragon with whom the archangel contended while silence held the hosts of God. It is a cry of rebellion—it is an echo of hell. It is impossible to fathom the degradation of the heart whence such an apostasy will rush to the lips. Scripture has put an indelible mark of infamy on this treacherous denial in the fifty-second Psalm: "The fool said in his heart: There is no God." Notice his heart, not his mind, spoke, and his heart was the heart of a fool made foolish by corruption and selfishness. It is well in this all important question to profess our faith in God's existence vigorously and fearlessly. Let us see what more is advanced against the Christian, yes, and pagan and universal doctrine—the doctrine of all times and all peoples.

I. *An objection.* Our adversaries say that this idea sprang from the fear which shook men in presence of the great phenomena of nature. We can not think this. Man's fear of God is not a mere physical fear; it is not the fear of the brute; but it is a fear, or rather, an awe, mingled with respect. Besides, men do not only fear God, they love Him. Can this sentiment of love spring from dread? Moreover, these phenomena are merely material. They

beget only an impression of themselves. For example: Thunder might make men dread thunder—but why dread God? What would make men rise from them—from a dread of them—to a fear of God? Evidently man's intellect perceives some necessary relation between these elements in wild confusion and the author of these elements. The pagans converted these elements into gods and goddesses. The Jews, and the Christians, and unnumbered minds of antiquity soared beyond these entities to the infinite Being. Always, however, is noticeable the instinctive idea of God.

II. That idea of God, moreover, is rooted deeply in the human soul, is universal, and thus can not be the offspring of fortuitous, exterior, and isolated causes. The cause is the nature of man created by God and for God. These empirical reasons for the existence of the conception of God—these assertions which endeavor to establish as a cause of it fear or priesthood or legislation are unphilosophical and baseless. One might ask why would priests or rulers make use of religion in order to keep nations in awe if they were not aware that every mind and every heart would receive an idea which their nature in its first impulses had already inspired. What is the faith of our entire humanity? It believes in God. How did this belief come into the world? Did any preexisting law impose it? Did it result from a whim—a caprice? No! this belief, so common, so persistent, so indestructible, is a tendency which antedates reflection, which is irresistible, which is involuntary, and which has been planted in the soul by the author of nature. Is it within the power of the atheist to give as good an accounting as this of his unbelief?

XV.—There Is No God.

Introduction.—It would seem that the further we enter upon the analysis of this assertion, the more it becomes apparent that it is an affirmation not only flagitious in its nature, but helpless and hopeless in its logic. No Catholic need mistrust his faith. He may fall in with men whose sophistries will bewilder, but let him rest assured that he himself is standing upon the security of truth, while his opponents are building upon the shifting sand of falsehood. He may not be able to pierce the armor of his assailant, but abiding with him always must be the conviction that his position is safe. Truth is not afraid of the light, nor of investigation. On the contrary, error stands in dread of publicity. The longer truth is propagated the more brilliantly it shines. Whereas the wider the expansion of error, the more visible do its vagaries and contradictions become. Against the fundamental truth of God's existence objections are constantly being urged. It does no harm to meet them.

I. *Objection.*—God and the other life are fables, myths. Belief in the existence of God is the one belief that has taken the most universal possession of all ages and peoples. Is it so with fables and myths? Where are the old mythologies? How widely they were spread! How eloquently they were preached by the persuasive elegance of poets and orators! The sword was drawn for them, and the highest literature marched with them to conquest. What is the attitude of the human mind toward them to-day? They are laughed to scorn by all civilization. Is it so with the idea of the existence of a Supreme Being? These myths and these fables are only

isolated phenomena—parasites and unwholesome fungi of diseased and decaying intelligences. Moreover, let it be said right here that these simulacra of religion make strongly for one great truth, or rather for one splendid fact. They all of them admitted the existence of gods, admitted the existence of a supreme God, "call him Jove, Jehova, Lord." Nay, further, hanging above even Jupiter was that still higher being they called Necessity, Fate. There never was a religion professing atheism.

II. They object—our enemies do—that this universality of time and space which we claim for the Christian tenet suffers many and notable exceptions. There were in parts of the world, they say, sovereigns and peoples who never felt the need of a God, who never had a notion of religion. Were even this true, it would detract in nothing from our argument. It would prove only that there are certain families of the human race phenomenal in this regard; whose condition is below the normal, who, in fact, mentally and morally have reached an exceptional and unparalleled degradation, who have lost everything human save the outward semblance. But, fortunately, it is not true. More thorough investigation has revealed that these peoples have in the main been calumniated or misunderstood. Our foes are hard pushed when they are driven to oppose against the large civilized world a handful of unknown, unintelligible and mumbling savages. Evidently they prefer to herd with lower natures and be one with them in feeling and thought, as they run the risk of being one with them in perversity and degradation of character.

XVI.—There Is No God.

Introduction.—There is no language too scathing wherewith to rebuke the man who asserts that God does not exist. His position should entitle him to no respect. He is an eyesore in creation. His presence defiles humanity. He jars upon the tenderest chords of the human heart. He insults the human family, of which he is a worthless and pestilential member. He is an outcast. He has no community of thought with the race. He is a murderer and a liar. Intellectually and morally he is a leper, and undeserving of anything save loathing. His doctrine places him beyond the pale of commiseration. He is to be left a prey to the gloom of his own thoughts, and were we not influenced by Christian charity, his condition in time and eternity would put him beyond the reach of our prayers in his behalf to the throne of pity, whereon sits in undiminished infinite mercy the great God whom he so unreasonably repudiates. He may doubt, he may find insufficient the proofs furnished by common sense and sound reason in favor of God's existence, but he ought to know that no atheist has as yet demonstrably proved the contrary thesis.

There are other proofs of the Christian belief. I. "Nevertheless He left not himself without testimony" (Acts. xiv. 16). Everywhere we find the testimony of the existence of God—in the arching heavens, in the restless sea, in the fertile earth, in our heart beats, in the very dust of the road (Rom. i. 19). The visible world exists, therefore God exists. Whence come creatures? From themselves? When and how? Have we been from all eternity? If we made ourselves, should we not have it in our power to limit or expand our

being? Who could impede us? Would we not exist by the very force of our nature? Abstruse yet simple questions. If man did not bring himself into existence, is it reasonable to suppose that irrational things or inanimate objects made themselves?

II. Not only the world exists, but there is life, activity in creation. This is but a repetition of the preceding argument. If there can be no existence without some self-existing, unproduced first being, neither can there be life or activity. It is worth while meditating upon this. It grows clearer on reflection.

The same may be said of the order which regulates creation and which offers such superb testimony to the actuality of a being who made all these things that have their movement, number, measure, and weight. There have been not many, but some, objections advanced against this process of ours. They say that all beings are parts of one chain, one depending on the other for existence. We may go from link to link forever, and need no first being as an explanation. This, of course, may be gratuitously denied. It is nonsuited. It is thrown out of court. It is not proven. Were it proven that such was the condition of things, it would yet be required to substantiate that this chain—a line or a circle be it—came into existence of itself. Fancy, imagination, may admit this, but not intelligence. By a reference to the palpable argument of cause and effect we will always discover wherewith to satisfy us—that not only this vast universe, but not even a mote in the sunbeam can produce an adequate explanation of the why and wherefore of its being, except by conceding that God is, and in Him all things live and move and are. The contradictory hypothesis is as unintelligible as the development of an atheist.

XVII.—There Is No God.

Introduction.—Again this blasphemous assertion calls for our attention. It is a pity and a calamity that this phrase has ever burdened human language. It is a disastrous declaration, for so many will be tempted to make use of it as an opiate to dull any recriminations of a guilty conscience. It has never been dictated by natural instinct or by reason. The atheists, whom history portrays to us as publicly manifesting their unbelief, have been proclaimed as men of high uprightness of life. This testimony is by no means unimpeachable. We know nothing of their inner life, of their thoughts, their aspirations, their desires. They were not, as far as is known, convicted of adultery or dishonesty. But they were guilty of insolence toward their fellow men, which betokens a selfish and unsavory pride. They were criminal in the highest degree, of treason not only to God, but to individual man, to the family and to the state, because they endeavored to remove the primal and most effective check to all wickedness. If a man is led to think there is no God, no judge, no eternity, no heaven, no hell, what is going to restrain him when passions or opportunity urge? What is going to cripple his arm when stretched out in greed or lust against his fellow man, society, his country? We imprison our anarchists for their rebellious speech, but what is the doctrine of anarchy compared with the propagation of atheism? These men are ignorant, for *God does exist.*

I. It is an admitted principle that what is implanted in every human breast, what is in the heart of man, in all places and all ages, a constant desire, a desire irresistible, points to an incontrovertible

truth. Every man is impelled by the desire of happiness. This desire never sleeps. It is innate in the most savage breast. Nor is this happiness any kind of happiness. The human yearning is for boundless, for perfect happiness. Who has fixed this hunger? Who has lodged it in universal rational nature? Clearly the author of that nature. It is an effect, and must have a cause. Man can not be its originator. It seems, therefore, to point eloquently to some being who planted it, some superior being. That being is responsible. Superior in every way to man, he must have in his possession somewhere an efficient cause of that bliss man so pantingly thirsts for. There can be no perfect bliss except it be limitless. Supposing a limit, there would be a desire for a possible beyond, and, therefore, beatification would be incomplete. There is needed, therefore, an infinite being. An infinite being would be God.

II. This argument, from universal desire, might be supplemented by a consideration of Conscience. In the voice of Conscience we notice two facts: Conscience forbids and Conscience threatens. It forbids the performance of such or such an action. In that prohibition there is transparent the existence of a law. Not only does Conscience proclaim the law, but simultaneously there is heard that the offense will meet with retribution. The law manifested by conscience and the guilty knowledge that we have of our wrong doing are accompanied by the fear of the sanction of the law emanating from a legislator. Who is this legislator, this legislator that lords it so imperatively over every man coming into the world? Can this Lawgiver, so unmistakably forcing by the process of conscience His power and authority over entire humanity since the beginning, can this Lawgiver be anything or any one save the Creator of heaven and earth—God?

XVIII.—There Is No God.

Introduction.—That the atheist is to be relegated to the last ranks of the race, if, indeed, he does not lose his family rights and descends to the level of the brute, will be conceded by the overwhelming majority of his fellows. Morally, his condition is, even with the best construction we put upon it, unenviable, and if he claims to be irrefutably convinced of his opinion, he is unreasonable beyond expression. Morally, he is guilty of apostasy of the deepest dye; mentally, he is guilty of a disloyalty to truth which is inexcusable. It is granted that there are no theoretic atheists. Yet there may be men like those who lie in the beginning consciously and by repetition of their falsehood grow to look upon their lie as truth; there may be those who through bravado or blasphemy or despair began by speaking atheism, and have come in the end to believe in their vile and unpardonable assertion. Can we imagine a more terrible chastisement than that which God inflicts by withdrawing Himself from the mind as well as from the heart of man? Romans, chapter one, would seem to hint at precisely such a penalty. Man extrudes God from his mind, and God departs. Inconceivable plight! Darkness here, and hereafter, what? No God in time, no God in eternity! We have considered some of the protests made against the first truth of reason and the first truth of faith. Some more may be pointed out and briefly examined.

I. *Objections.* Granting that order which is so remarkably displayed in creation, it is only proven thereby that the world has had an Architect, not a Master, but one who simply shaped and fash-

ioned pre-existing material. If so, at any rate, we must admit the superiority of the builder to the building. Furthermore, what is meant by the Cosmic order? It does not imply merely the external appearances, accidental shapes. It goes to the very essence—it controls the entirety of the being, its forces, and its innumerable relations. This can be seen in a grain of sand, in a drop of water, in a blade of grass just as clearly as in the boundless ocean or illimitable forests, or solar systems and planets and stellar orbs coursing without conflict in appointed paths and through the vast territories of space. Whence it may be concluded that the structure of the universe imports that, as forces flow from essences the architect could not rear this magnificent temple without commanding essences as well as forces, and thus must be hailed not only as the Builder by excellence, but the Creator as well—commanding the totality of every individual thing that exists. He is not only the Constructing Agent, but the Designer and the Creator.

II. A second objection has been raised. Creation, it is said, is the producing of something out of nothing. But out of nothing, nothing can be made, therefore, creation is inadmissible. This without any hesitation may be pronounced puerile. It is an old protest, as old as the Epicureans. Nothing, of course, can not be the material cause of any existence. Though there was a period when all created things were nothing, there never was a period when God was not. God did not create out of nothing as a something from which He produced things. He said, "Let creation be," and creation was. He waved the sceptre of His omnipotence over the empty void, and lo! the abyss teemed with beings. When driven in one way the atheists clamor, "There is no cause, but only succession;" when driven in another, they cry, "No succession, but only cause."

XIX.—There Is No God.

Introduction.—The attack upon the great truth of the existence of God has been virulent and constant. It has been perpetrated by men of erudition and influence at times. They have been followed by a mob of shallow individuals who have endeavored to spread broadcast their pernicious doctrine. How have they succeeded in their attempt? What impression have they made on humanity? The belief in God is an instinct of our nature. It is inborn. Hence with every individual and every generation the blasphemous warfare has to be begun all over again. Man remains the same. Trumpet a call to the race to rally around the standard of Atheism and how many will answer? Of those who do answer, how many have convictions of any kind? How many wear the livery of spotless lives? How many persevere in their Apostasy? How many die with the cry, "God is not" upon their lips? There is a dogma of our faith which proclaims that God is, that He is the Creator of the universe, that His existence is not only demonstrated by faith, but is, moreover, demonstrable by reason alone. We are obliged to believe that it is in the power of human reason to prove that God exists. This is a consoling doctrine. It does not mean that you or I can prove by reason the existence of God, but that the proof thereof falls within the domain of human intelligence. The arguments already proposed would seem to prove that God is. Others may be added.

I. It may be concluded from the many ideas or principles which prevail throughout humanity. There are the indisputable principles which control every other principle, and without which

knowledge or certainty would be an impossibility. They are called intuitive, necessary, fundamental principles. Whence do they get their imperative necessity? Whence derive they that something which can not be gainsaid, which must be admitted by all minds? I might ask, Whence do they deduce the characteristics of eternity and irrefútability? For they are true, and they are true ever. From the unchangeable nature and essences of things. Whence do these essential properties of all things derive their immutability? Evidently from some immutable intelligence which is boundless and substantial truth, which, in other words, is God, whose nature is the prototype of all that is permanent and unvarying in the universe.

II. Let us ask whence comes the undisputable difference between good and evil? justice and injustice? the fundamental laws of morality? conscience? Do they depend upon the will of man, upon his good pleasure, upon his caprice? The impossibility of this is patent. What man makes is of short duration. Conscience is everywhere and always. It is in man, born with him, not originated by him—in him in spite of his will and in spite of all his efforts to destroy it. Conscience tells of a law, a law connotes a superior. Man is not his own superior. Who is this irrepressible legislator, and what is this enduring law? Follow the same reasoning for the ideas of justice and good and wrong and injustice. Listen to Cicero (Deleg. ii. 4): "The real and only reason of this law of conscience which forbids and commands is to be found in the incorruptible mind of the Supreme Being. God's existence may explain much in the world. Atheism can explain nothing in any order, whether the material, the intellectual, or the moral. Let us hope, for the sake of these defamers, that for them God's mercy will be above all His works."

XX.—God Can Not Be Known.

Introduction.—The last refuge of those who deny the existence of a Supreme Being is the proposition that it is impossible for man to know anything about God. So strong is the evidence in favor of this first great truth that, unwilling to shoulder the responsibility of an absolute rejection, they assert that human reason is impotent to discover anything about the Deity. They imply that there may be a God. The atheist says God is not because there is nothing in existence beyond matter and blind force. What this affirmation of theirs amounts to may readily be gathered. We call (or rather, he calls himself) the one who refuses to grant the existence of an infinite Creator, an Agnostic. The term explains itself. He builds up his belief on baseless assertions, he strengthens it by abstruse metaphysical discussions on being, the "infinite," relations, causes, effects, succession, or interdependence, unlimited, of things on each other. Their watchword is that nothing can be known save by experience. Here are some reasons alleged for their doctrine by some in the forefront of their ranks. I am an Agnostic, say they,

I. Because "you Gnostics or Christians do not prove your assertions." This can be put down as a declaration more easily made than demonstrated. We do not know God and His perfections with any but a small measure of adequacy because God is infinite, and, therefore, no finite mind can comprehend Him or His attributes. Is there any finite thing, any chemical sub-

stance, say, any planet, any fixed star, any stellar system, any natural force which man has in centuries of scientific investigation and with constantly improving appliances ever thoroughly exhausted the knowledge of? How, then, can God be possessed completely by any mental effort? But it is in our power to prove that He exists; it is in our power to predicate certain perfection of Him. We argue from effect to a first cause, and from the fact that that cause is first and necessary being, we deduce its wonderful perfections.

II. *They are Agnostics, they say,* "Because we do not agree among ourselves." That there is disagreement among the sects is very evident. There are as many doctrines as there are sects. There is no unanimity among them save when they combine to attack the Church of Christ. However, regarding the fundamental truth of which we are speaking, regarding God's existence, they do not differ. All (Catholics, heretics, schismatics, pagans) proclaim their adherence to the primal doctrine of all religion. All religionists, of whatever stamp, profess that there is a God, and that He is the beginning and end of all things, that He is the Creator and the Ruler of the universe.

III. *The Agnostic furthermore protests that "even if we proved* our doctrine, even if we agreed on all points of doctrine, those tenets would be void and meaningless." To this allegation we reply by question only. Is there no meaning in the doctrine of God's existence? No meaning in His attributes, His goodness, His mercy, His redemption? Is there no meaning in heaven, hell, judgment? If these words are not impregnated with signification, then all language is sound and nothing more. So much vitality

have all these terms, so persistent are they, so intelligible do they make all human expression, so much faith of heart and mind goes into their use by the sons of men that without them the sum of all that is beautiful and inspiring in human speech would be lost. These words are what they are not because men invented them aimlessly, but because they were the only terms they could find to express the great truths they convey.

XXI.—God Can Not Be Known.

Introduction.—We have always, on general principles of logic, the right to deny the above assertion and every kindred assertion. In spite of centuries of attack in which every ingenious argument has been put forward, and always at its full value, the efforts of the infidel have never culminated in proof. It will always be the case that atheism will be characterized by denial. The atheistic school is really a negative school. There is no limit to its repudiation of accepted truth. There is no truth which, under given circumstances, it will not refuse to admit. If by admitting that two and two make four, they were logically compelled to profess the existence of God, they would deny that arithmetical fact. When we consider how easy one may become a victim of this pernicious doctrine, when we consider how easy it is to lose one's faith by a disregard for its moral obligations, we can not be too much on our guard. Faith is more easily lost than recovered. Yet to one who has gone to the guilty extreme of denying God's existence, and who begins to enter into himself and to behold how far he has wandered from the Father's house, to one upon whose tastes the husks fall, to one in whose breast home yearnings are awakening, there is a path of deliverance always open. There is prayer, there is reflection. As helps to meditation whence light may come and whereby the soul be prepared for the renewal of faith we suggest the following:

In our efforts to aid them we are to trust not so much to science, reasoning, eloquence, as to prayer, virtue, gentleness.

I. We must inquire what our patient admits, denies, or doubts. In all cases the process of enlightenment will reveal some ignorance and much contradiction. The infidel will grant and deny without stint. He is to be questioned about the meaning of the terms he uses, about miracle, mystery, and revelation. He must have gently but firmly forced upon him the weakness of the arguments advanced by those in whose footsteps he is walking. Nothing about the moral character of the leaders of incredulity is to be concealed from him. He is to be referred to their biographies. More than anything else, is the insufficiency of these men to be emphasized. What have they done, what can they do in the light of their principles for the individual, the family, the state? What have they done him? Has he been uplifted or plunged into depths from which he is eager to be rescued? Have they made him proud of himself or has he been deceived and humiliated? Let him be shown how their works are full of misrepresentation and of lies, full of calumnies against religion as old as the world. They have been unfair, unjust. They have conspired in their histories against the truth to such a degree that their pages are criminal with patent forgeries. They boast of freedom of thought, and yet they have been, mentally, slaves to error and falsehood. They have expelled light from their minds, and lo! there is nothing therein but darkness. They are not among the best of mankind—not among the benefactors of the race. Had they been the leaders of humanity, how long would mankind have flourished?

II. How deplorable would be man's condition without belief in God! So necessary is God, that were He not, that one would be the truest benefactor of man who would invent God. Stress is to be laid on the fountains of atheism, pride, lust, moral corruption of any kind, bad logic; in fact, anything which con-

tradicts or threatens or destroys the purity and dignity of man's body and mind and soul. In this wise, and with God's help, he may be brought to the truth. The more we reflect, the more we become convinced that, of all men, the atheist is the most criminal and the most degraded. His guilt is deicidal. To think of it! He is unwilling that God should be, God all perfect, but he is satisfied that he, such a pygmy and so full of imperfections and limitations, should possess existence.

XXII.—Miracles Are An Absurdity.

Introduction.—This is another rallying call of infidelity. It is unsupported by truth, however, and is unreasonable in the last degree. It is a pity that there is not a counter cry ever on the lips of those who believe. The Christian should be as strong to proclaim his doctrine as is the unbeliever. The boast of the atheist would not be so ubiquitous and loud were the believer as brave in his truth as the infidel is valorous in his lie. Our cry should be, "There must be a God." There must be a knowable God. Man is helpless without God, or, to put it in their style, man can not get along without God, he can not be, he can not live, he can not breathe, he can not think without God. He would never be were it not for God. It is really tiresome to have to go over and over again the ground that the defenders of the faith have traveled over and over since the beginning. It is tiresome, yet it must be done. Just as soon as we go behind the walls to rest, immediately swarms of invaders arise as if by magic, and once more the fight is on. To the fling of theirs against miracles our answer is that they are not absurd. They have been and they are every day.

I. A miracle is not an impossibility. Miracles are denied by those who refuse to admit the existence of God. That they are possible is also rejected by those who believe in God but reject any interference on the part of the Deity in the affairs of creation. All they allege against the miracle is but a tissue of statements without demonstration. We might answer them by stating that miracles are possible, because they have occurred. Apply the his-

torical test to any of the stupendous happenings of Christianity—to the resurrection of Christ, let us say. Is there anything more luminously attested in the annals of the world? But the enemies of faith say No; there was never a resurrection from the dead, because a miracle is an absurdity; that is, something which should neither be spoken of nor listened to by any one claiming to be a reasonable being. What is a miracle? It is an event which can not be brought about by any process of nature, nor by the action of man, or of angels, good or bad. It is just the fact that no natural agent can perform it that makes it possible. We have to ascribe it to God, to whom all things are possible. God can not change the law of nature. Were He to wish to do so, He could. But the miracle does not suppose a change in the laws of nature—those so vaunted laws of nature about which scientists know so little—it merely supposes that the action of such or such an agent is for the time suspended. Witness the security of the youths in the fiery furnace. Has not the Deity the same privileges as are granted to any other framer of laws? To what does he, who rejects the possibility of the miracle, reduce the great Creator of the universe? To the position of a grand inert Lama in an Asiatic temple.

II. Miracles are probable. There is a law of nature, but there is a law of humanity, of love, of providence. Man is to be looked after. There are emotions of his being which must be respected. If there are no such things possible as miracles, then let man never lift up his eyes heavenward, let him never fall on his knees in prayer before God. Let him address himself to the laws of nature. I might say, what is the use (pardon the expression) of God if He can not perform miracles? When there is question of propagating religion the people preached to ask for some wonder, that is, they asked for miracle. The demand for miracles is ubiquitous. The

farmer asks for rain. The mariner asks for the calming of the tempest. Says St. Thomas equivalently (Contr. Gent. iii. 96): "All heard prayers are not miracles, but many miracles are heard prayers." We may go a step further and say not only is the miracle possible, not only is it possible, but it is certain. Consult history.

XXIII.—Miracles are Incredible.

Introduction.—This means that no mind which respects itself can admit miracles. Of this something has been said already. The warfare against God which has been going on since the beginning may take different aspects, but the difference is superficial only. The conflict is waged against God. It has for its aim the extinction in every mind of all thoughts of God; in every heart of all aspiration toward Him, in all the energy of mankind of every deed which directly or indirectly may acknowledge His existence or His supremacy. The campaign proceeds directly by repudiating His being, indirectly by limiting or by affecting to misunderstand His infinite perfection. Take away or diminish in any manner His attributes, and the logical inference is that He is not. We must grant Him infinity in every relation, we must grant Him power, knowledge, goodness, justice, mercy without bounds; otherwise He ceases to be God. Something has already been hinted about miracles, but a few more ideas will usefully find place herein, and, moreover, what we advance about His power may be advanced concerning His knowledge, concerning, in fact, any of His perfections. Again we profess that in the light of reason we can not consistently, a priori, reject miracles.

I. *Miracles are Credible because they are Possible.*—It is to be remembered that a miracle is an effect which only God can produce. If there be effects which in themselves seem producible by a finite

cause, there is something in the method of their production which can be ascribed to God only. If miracles are impossible, it is because God is not omnipotent. To deny infinite power to God is to deny His infinite nature—it is to hem Him in with obstacles or limits. He can not be hemmed in by His own nature, which is boundless. He can not be impeded by one above Him. No one is above Him. Certainly He can not be shackled by any one beneath Him. If He can not produce an effect beyond the forces of nature, beyond the entire forces of entire nature, if He can not suspend the laws of nature, if He can not act against those laws, it is because He is dependent upon those laws. This idea must be rejected, for He is the framer of these laws, and they are His to dispense with as He deems fit. Grant that some hitherto undreamed of miracle were performed, an occurrence divinely ordered whereby a change would be introduced into the order of things, we ask, Is the present the only order possible? We ask, Is not God Master, and is it not in His power to change even the very order of things, and while so doing, counteract all evil consequences? Moreover, what we understand as evil consequences may in some higher plane be harmony ineffable.

II. A God who reveals truth must mark His revelation, which is His official declaration to His creation, with some unmistakable stamp. The seal which will gain universal credence more easily is the miracle of deed or the miracle of word which we call prophecy, and which is the certain announcement of a fact to take place in the future, a fact which can not naturally be known in the present. It is a prediction, not a guess, not a conjecture. It is in the order of miracles and generally communicates supernatural facts. It is not made at random. It is always solemn. It is evident that prophecy proceeds from the spirit of God only. It can be ascribed

to Him only who possesses the whole domain of truth. In all times and among all peoples prophecy has been considered as a communication from the Holy Spirit, and is an infallible mark of the intervention of the Deity. Miracle and prophecy are both within the perfection of God—for He is all powerful and He knows all things.

XXIV.—Mysteries are Unworthy of the Human Mind.

Introduction.—This assertion is at the bottom of all the assertions against revealed truth, because fundamentally in the intellectual order, man's pride is hurt, for that he can not understand and hence, in his unreasonable indignation, he does not blame his own finiteness, but the vast cycle of verity which lies beyond his comprehension. There should be no mysteries for him. Everything should float within his mental ken and nothing should be outside the grasp of his intelligence. It is the drop of water that clamors to be a sea. It is the glow worm which wishes to be a star. Still, more deep yet, is the reason that he wishes to find some excuse for wandering at his own free will among forbidden pastures. Give me something that I can understand, and I will surrender. This is his protest, flat, unprofitable, stale. Very little consolation in this attitude. The proper disposition of the human mind is merely to accept without understanding what is proposed by an infinite intelligence through an infallible teacher.

I. What is a mystery? It is a supernatural truth or fact. It can neither be understood nor disproved by human reason. It contradicts no law of the understanding. Even the German rationalist, Goethe, insists that the intelligence of man and the intelligence of God are two very different things. To deny the possibility of the mystery, to deny that mystery exists, is to elevate the limited mind of man to a level with the boundless mind of God. To deny that God can reveal a mystery is to deny conscious life and free will to

the Divinity. Man can not arrive at a clear and adequate idea of the essence of God and of His attributes. How many varieties, therefore, in the very being of God which, soar as he may, he can not find? These are the mysteries. Without revelation there are facts and truths which man would never think of, much less understand. It must never be forgotten that man only perceives truth, and so, since the expanse of truth is limitless, since God is substantial truth, mystery is not only a possibility but an actuality, a necessity.

II. There are mysteries everywhere, and we admit them. Has the naturalist penetrated the intimate nature of any body? How much is known about forces? About life? About death? We may know the mechanism of a watch, because man has made it. Man may dissect a corpse—can he revive it? There is mystery in the grain of sand on the ocean's margin, mystery in the drop of water, in the flower, in the tree, in the small insect, in the largest animal, in man. No man possesses complete knowledge of any one thing. The scientist has imprisoned light and electricity; does he adequately comprehend a ray of the one or a spark of the other? Does he understand the human eye, the human soul? The atheist denies God because he can not understand the existence of a being eternal and everywhere present, but is not a universe without a God an enigma still more inexplicable? The Pantheist denies creation because he can not conceive of a world coming from nothing, but is it not as difficult to believe in the world as an emanation from God as a finite being infinite? So it is for the professions that reject mystery. They refuse to admit one mysterious truth, and they throw themselves into the arms of a thousand incomprehensibilities. There is no contradiction implied in the mystery. In the Trinity there would be an absurdity were we called upon to admit the existence of one God and of three Gods. No! Revealed mysteries

are the landmarks of truth. They keep the human mind within bounds. In their light—if I may use the word while speaking of mysteries—the human mind will be prevented from going astray in its conclusions. Moreover, they dignify man's intelligence. No humiliation in bowing down to them in willing surrender. On the contrary, one bends to a royal Master, and one rises ennobled, and with the light that illumineth upon one.

XXV.—God Does Not Care for the World.

Introduction.—Theism and Deism are radically the same words, but there may be a distinction drawn between them. Theists, as we are at liberty to conclude from their writings, maintain the existence of a Deity who governs all things by the constant exercise of His beneficent power; Deists admit the existence of a God who created all things, but affirm that, having laid down immutable laws for their government, He does not further interfere. The declaration that God does not care for the world implies that it is of no service whatever to refer to the great Ruler; that His solicitude ceased with the termination of His creative act, and that men and women are mere crawling things on the surface of His footstool, and whether they come or go, live or die, are happy or unhappy, is a matter of complete indifference to Him. It is hard to conceive anything more blasphemous than this. It is cruel to man, it is unjust to God. As well might God not be as to show no concern for His creatures. It is simply a denial of Providence.

I. *What is Providence?* It is forethought on the part of God. It expresses His never ceasing power exerted in and over all His works. It is the opposite of "chance," "fortune," "luck." We may call it a continuance of creation. In relation to all things it is universal, and nothing is too minute for its regard. For moral beings it is special. Each object is watched over by Providence according to its capacity. God's providence is concerned in a sparrow's fall.

His children are of more value than many sparrows, and so are assured of His providential care in all their concerns. Its acts are threefold: preservation, cooperation, and government. He controls all things for the highest good of the whole, acting upon every species according to its nature; inanimate things by physical influences, brutes by instinct and free agents, according to the laws of free agency. Providence displays God's omnipresence, holiness, justice, benevolence. If the telescope reveals the immense magnitude and countless hosts of worlds which He created and sustains, the microscope shows that His providence equally concerns itself with the minutest animalcule. Nothing is really small with God. He hangs the most momentous weights on little wires. We have quoted from a non-Catholic source (Fausset) because it describes clearly the philosophical notion of providence, and without a proper understanding of the same it is impossible to explain satisfactorily to ourselves the objections which in the eyes of many militate against this wonderful and adorable attribute of the Divinity. In favor of providence we may advance general proofs.

II. *There must be a Providence. God must have a care for His world.* What would the absence of providence argue in the Deity? It would accuse the Supreme Being of cruelty. It would imply that the material and animal worlds are dearer to Him than the world of man. For it is chiefly that God does not take care of man which originates this implied censure of God's providence. It would mean that God's attributes of omniscience (which has been called the eye of providence), of mercy, and justice are nothing but limited vision, pitilessness, injustice. It would deny His power, His wisdom, His holiness. In a general way it would reduce the God of the universe to a blind, feelingless entity. It would afford an excuse for man to

listen to every voice of passion and make him curse the day he came into existence. There is no crime which would not follow in the wake of this misconception of divine providence. This is only a general argument. Yet, general as it is, it forces conviction. It drives us to the dilemma, either God is provident or He does not exist at all.

XXVI.—God Does Not Care for the World.

Introduction.—Probably there is no cry goes up to heaven so frequently as this cry of the discontented. The world is largely made up of the discontented. They are found in every situation of existence. They are not confined to the poor and suffering alone. The clamor of discontent frequently rises from the hearts of the well and the prosperous. Here we have a proof that perfect happiness is not found here below. It is evidence that nothing on this earth can make a man supremely happy. It is well to understand that flawless happiness is not of this world. Man may be contented here always; happy, in the true sense of the word, never. Man is not made for this world. Man is made for God, and until he obtains possession of God his heart-hunger will never be appeased. It is the losing sight of this great truth which makes man dissatisfied, begets misunderstanding and fills this world with unreasonable recriminations against Providence. As soon as man realizes this important verity, he will begin to understand, in some small degree, at least, the ways of God in His dealings with man. Man complains of the physical evils which he encounters on his journey through life, but

I. *Physical evils are no arguments against providence.* By physical ills we understand the calamities which visit mankind. We understand the three great evils of the world, war, pestilence, famine, and everything which follows in their wake. This is why, according to Lactantius l. c. c. 13, epicures denied that the Deity exercised providence toward His creatures. Says St. Augustine, "We refrain from censuring the workman in his workshop, but we are not afraid

to blame God in his world." An unskilled man entering a workshop sees many tools of which he does not understand the nature and the use. Perhaps he may even go to the extreme of considering them as superfluous. In handling them he may wound himself; then he cries out against them as harmful. So in the world, says the same doctor, men reprehend God, the creator and the administrator of all things, because they behold causes in action, causes of the nature and tendency of which they have not the slightest knowledge. Man, hence, instead of censuring, should profess his ignorance, and wonder and adore. Man, in presence of physical evils, should remember that a careful ruler must look out for the general good; should remember that in all things care for the universal weal must at times bring about private inconvenience and damage. Man should not forget that the perfection of the universe calls for veracity. He should not forget that what displeases him may bring pleasure to others. Therefore, unless he wishes to lay himself open to being considered ignorant and selfish, he must remain silent in presence of the happenings in the universe.

II. *Faith proves that there is a providence, and that God does take care of the world.* When we open the eyes of our faith, providence is immediately vindicated. Our faith teaches us that all these evils are consequences of man's first disobedience, and hence are to be ascribed not to God, but to our first parents. They may reasonably be considered as the penalty of actual transgression. They are, besides, the occasion of satisfying and of meriting. They are, moreover, a wholesome stimulus in the formation of character, and they keep our hearts uplifted toward that home for which we are all destined. These considerations are based upon faith, but they are also built up on that great primal prevarication which, while it is a religious dogma, is at the same time a fact historically attested.

XXVII.—God Does Not Care for the World.

Introduction.—This libel on the perfections of the Divinity is an emanation rather from a morbid disposition than from a well balanced mind. Even among the pagans, whose conception of God were so blurred by egotism and prejudice, were found philosophers who, following the dictates of reason alone, argued wisely and convincingly in favor of the important fact that God does not abandon His creatures. They listened to and they were familiar with the complaints of querulous, shortsighted men; they heard the clamors that incessantly rose about them—clamors accusing the Deity of partiality and unwisdom in dealing with the human race. On all sides their ears were assailed by the cry that the wicked prospered while the good were plunged into the depths of all sorts of adversity. We may hear the ululations of David, "My steps had well nigh slipped . . . seeing the prosperity of the wicked" (Ps. lxxii. 2), and of Job, "Why, then, do the wicked live, are they advanced and strengthened with riches?" (Job xxi. 7); and of Jeremiah, "Why is it well with all of them that transgress and do wickedly?" (Jer. xii. 1). This is one form which the allegations against Providence take.

I. *But there is a Providence.* These reproaches are exaggerated, for not all the wicked abound in the things of this world, nor are all the deserving deprived of them. Besides, there is no account taken of the other good things which the virtuous enjoy. Reputation, for example, health, worthy children, peace of mind, and

resignation. These things are more than compensation. Again, evil doers are not happy. They alone know the mental tortures which are theirs—remorse, fear, suspicion, envy, jealousy, and the like, so many spectres that render unbearable the banquet of delights which seems to be their share. Moreover, none of these exceptions taken against Providence are of any weight save to those who believe (?) that the grave is the end of the whole man, that consciousness extinct on this side is not reawakened beyond. But for those who know that there is perfect felicity for them somewhere, though not in this world, all the calamities of existence are as nothing. To quote St. Augustine: "These ills are profitable, when piously borne. They diminish wrong doing, they try virtue, they demonstrate the vanity of existence, and they awaken a desire for the quick coming of that kingdom wherein alone beatitude is real and perpetual."

II. *Our authoritative teachers explain the reason* or advance the reasons of this inequality of distribution in the matter of the good things of earth. St. Augustine (De Civ. Dei): "Were God to punish now all manifest sins, nothing would be reserved for the last judgment. If He punished no sin here, His providence would be discredited." So in things of secondary importance. If God did not bestow them on some abundantly, we might be inclined to say that He was not Master of them. Likewise, if He gave to all who asked, we might conclude that He was to be obeyed simply on account of these gifts—an idea which, instead of rendering us pious servants, would fill us with cupidity and avarice. It is to be kept in mind that the verdict of the holy fathers in matters of religious truth was not based upon revelation only. They were men who met and faced honestly all the difficulties which the op-

ponents of religion brought to bear against truth. Hence they answered as the occasion demanded. They met revelation with revelation, authority with authority, Scripture with Scripture, and reason with reason. When we quote them here we quote them for the value of the reasons they furnish forth.

XXVIII.—God Does Not Care for this World.

Introduction.—In dealing with the Creator in His acts toward mankind there are two facts which should not be lost sight of. These two facts are the free will of God and the free will of His rational creatures. The Lord is Master, and His sway supreme. Whatever He wills we must submit to without repining. This resignation is demanded of us by the very nature of the revelation which exists between Him and us. His reason for all His operations lies in this one assertion of His, "I am the Lord, thy God." Sometimes we may be able to understand the why and the wherefore of His performances. Sometimes they are too deep for our fathoming. In either case ours only to listen and follow. Besides the free will of the Deity and His power over all the works of His hands, there is a negative attitude of God in the affairs of the race. He does not will. He concurs physically, it is true, but He simply does not check, He permits. This brings us to the second fact that many occurrences are attributable only indirectly to God and directly to man. Yet is the providence of God so manifest that out of evil He produces good.

I. *The holy fathers are strenuous advocates of God's providence.* The reasons advanced by St. John Chrysostom for the unequal distribution of temporal benefits are cogent. He affects the saints, lest they be puffed up; that they may not have an overweening opinion of themselves; that others may not esteem them too highly; that

the power of God may be evidenced in their regard; and that their labors for the salvation of others may be more fruitful. The just suffer in order that their patience may shine in a dark world, that their thoughts and the thoughts of others may be lifted up beyond this sphere, in order that their mode of life may run in ordinary grooves, and that this example may not be pitched too high for others to follow.

Let us add to these reasons, which certainly go far toward proving that in all that God does or allows He is exercising a care over the members of the human family, let us add that even if we look at suffering in the light of punishment and at prosperity in the light of reward, it is, nevertheless, true that no one is so utterly abandoned that he has never done a good deed, and no one so perfect as never to have been guilty of some transgression. God is so just that He never forgets to reward, as He never is unmindful of the sanction which attaches to all His laws.

II. *History vindicates providence.* That masterpiece of all time, "The City of God," by St. Augustine, and all the philosophers of history written in a fair spirit, make clear to all who read the intervention for good of God in the affairs of the world. Looking upon Scripture as the authenticated chronicle which it is, we find that the histories of Israel and of Gentile nations show that righteousness exalteth a nation. The preparations made for the coming of Christ, the distinct prophecies, the saving of the sacred Scriptures, the fate of the Roman Empire, the multiplication and dispersion of the Jews, all the many events narrated of private individuals or nations in the Bible—all this and more makes us realize that the very hairs of our head are numbered, that not one is forgotten among countless multitudes, that God upholdeth all things

by the word of His power, that by Him all things consist, and that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men. There are mysteries undoubtedly connected with special acts of divine providence. It must be so, for His providence, like all His attributes, is infinite. We may trust God, for

> "All discord (is) harmony not understood,
> All partial evil (is) universal good."

XXIX.—God Cares Not for His World.

Introduction.—The more we study the affairs of life in connection with the Creator, the more we become convinced that the Lord is not a meddler, but a guardian. He meddles not, because He respects the great gift He has bestowed upon His creatures, the great gift of free will. He has not made men automata, He has endowed them with the liberty of action. He created them without consulting them; but once created, He leaves them to work their way unhampered toward the glorious end for which He gave them being. We have, therefore, to take into consideration the end of creation. Providence implies practically an act of intelligence which grasps the ends and the means thereunto, and involves an act of the will which approves of those means and decrees that the end must be attained. We may call the execution of this decree God's governance of the world. This providence divine has been attacked in divers ways. Among its opponents, besides materialists and epicureans, evolutionists of the Darwin and Spencer type are found. Against them we may file this proposition:

I. *God protects all His creatures, and in a special way man, by His ineffable providence, and leads and helps them toward their destiny.* He can do so because He is infinitely powerful. He must do so because He is all wise. He does and will do so because He is boundless goodness. His power controls all things. His wisdom directs all things. His goodness safeguards all things, and through it His will is sincere in its determination to consummate all things according to the end prescribed by their nature. As man is the most precious of His creatures, it goes without saying that

over him He exercises a special watchfulness. It really matters not what happens to man, provided within his reach are placed the means to help him toward the purpose for which he has been given existence. Man by unaided reason is able to discover that God exists, that his soul is to endure beyond this life, that by the possession of God alone will he be made happy, that this beatitude will consist in knowing, praising, and loving God, that God can be possessed only by those who love Him in this life and exhibit that love by observing the natural law according to their lights, by observing also other laws which are known to have been promulgated directly or indirectly by Heaven, and by migrating from this world in a state of friendship with the Creator.

II. *That God supplies these means in sufficiency is beyond all question.* It is a conclusion deducible from the most superficial consideration of the divine perfections. Some of these means are furnished by all created things, all of which are placed in this world as helps to man. Where revelation is unknown, God will grant this sufficience either by external assistance or, if necessary, by illuming the intelligence and moving thereby the will. What man in this regard is unable to acquire the knowledge of by himself he is generally in a position to learn of others. Even by the very calamities which enter into his experience, and which tempt him at times to blame Providence, even by these may he be enabled to read the happy consummation for which he is intended. In the eternities it will be part of our enlightenment to understand that the very occurrences which made us most inclined to doubt God's providence were the very happenings that vindicated God's love for us and the securest means of putting it in our power to achieve a glorious immortality. "Although he should kill me, I will trust in him" (Job xiii. 15).

XXX.—God Has No Care for His World.

Introduction.—The clamor that God is an improvident Master is louder and more frequent than any other against the Deity. The accusation is far-reaching and assumes divers forms. He does not exist, it is said, or, if He does, He shows no concern in the affairs of His world. This is, they urge, true not only in matters temporal, but in spiritual as well. Some men are more highly favored than others, even where there is question of the interests of men's souls. Salvation, they allege, is not within the reach of all. There are men, and not a few, who pass through life without a single chance of saving their souls being offered them. This is a calumny and a blasphemy. Moreover, it directly antagonizes the perfections as well as the existence of God. We must concede in the first place that,

I. *God sincerely wishes the salvation of all men.* The contradictory of this thesis has been held by Calvinists and Jansenists. The Church, through the Council of Trent, utters this doctrine: "If any one affirms that the grace of justification is granted to the predestined only, and that the rest of mankind are called but receive no grace because they are predestined to evil" (A. S.). Without opening the door which leads to the thorny mazes of the mystery of predestination, our reason compels us to admit that God is infinitely good and infinitely powerful, that He wishes all to be saved, that He gives all the means, and that it is within the domain of His omnipotence and goodness to desire and to be able to do this. There is only one obstacle which prevents the effect of His assistance, and that obstacle is the impediment which is opposed to the divine action by the free will of

man. From the consideration of the goodness of God and of His justice, we are justified in concluding that no man who has reached the age of reason will, in the moment of judgment, be able to excuse himself for his misdemeanors and his plight with the plea that he never had the wherewithal to act differently in life. God could not condemn a man truthfully putting forth such justification of his conduct.

II. *God amply provides for man's eternal welfare.* This can not be denied in its application to those who are the disciples of Christ. "And this is the will of my Father that sent me: that every one who seeth the Son and believeth in him may have life everlasting" (John vi. 40). "For God so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son" (John iii. 16). There can be no doubt, therefore, of God's earnest will to save all those who believe in His Son and abide by His teachings. That God sincerely desired the salvation of the Jews is expressed by the words of Christ (Matt. xxiii. 37): "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered together thy children, as the hen doth gather her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldst not?" This plaint of the Saviour, and the wonderful deliverance of the Jews from bondage, and the long line of prophets appealing through doctrine and miracle—all this proves luminously God's paternal watchfulness over the chosen people. That over them yet, and over all other divisions of the human family, the same fatherly care is extended, not so largely, but always sufficiently, will be apparent from later considerations. The little that has been said makes it evident that it is impossible in any rational conception of the Deity to exclude providential action over all beings in all things, and especially in things that appertain to the welfare of immortal souls. Let us bear in mind two things. If ever a man is lost, he is lost

through his own fault. Deliberately he has wrought his own undoing. "And thou wouldst not," said Our Lord, speaking of the Jews' rejection of His mission. God, the Supreme Judge, will be within the right of His justice to say to every condemned man, "And thou wouldst not." Besides, what have those who assert that God's providence does not stretch itself over every adult soul to base their claim upon? The consummation of divine justice is beyond the grave. No traveler has returned to tell mankind the story. The "Beyond" is luminous in itself, but not to us sojourners. I know not what man has been condemned. The salvation of any individual or his reprobation is outside of the horizons which limit my vision. I know what each one must do to reach eternal happiness. Here I will never know whether after death he has met with failure or success. Of all who have gone to God, I can not affirm of a single one that he is lost. A consoling truth this, but awful is the fact that out of that innumerable multitude I am only sure that the canonized saints are in the halls of the blessed. As a corrective of this uncertainty I have the certainty that God's mercy is above all His works.

XXXI.—God Has No Care for This World.

Introduction.—The fountain of all spiritual evil, yea, and in a measure, of much physical evil, is the free will of the creature. In other words, man, not God, is to blame for all the immorality (we use this term according to its primitive meaning) existing among men. Immorality in its first sense signifies thoughts, words, and actions which are vicious, which are contrary to natural law and order. In the material order many of the happenings which are characterized as injurious, as impending physical comfort and welfare, might be traced to culpable negligence, and, therefore, are to be imputed to the voluntary agency of man. That God wishes the spiritual weal of the race is outside of all cavil. What we must always reckon with is man's cooperation or want of cooperation. It is a leading and established truth in ethics that though God's purpose, or rather will, in the question here submitted is genuine, real, sincere, yet it is not absolute; it is conditioned. God, by the very nature of things, wills man to be saved, only provided he surrenders to the divine assistance, which theologians call grace, and provided, that is, that he makes use of the helps proffered, and thus perseveres in rectitude. This is the correct statement of the nature of the "Salvific" will of God. Of course, there are:

I. *Objections. God is the cause of moral evil.* To this statement we make answer by asking, In what way is He the cause? Is He directly or indirectly the cause? If we are told that He is directly the cause of sin, then God, who is substantial and infinite perfection, acts contrary to His nature, which supposition is absurd, because it

involves a contradiction, and blasphemous, because it pushes irreverence against the divine attributes to the pitch of impious abuse. Sin proceeds directly from the will of the sinner. That God gave man his free will does not make human transgressions imputable to the Divinity. Did moral evil spring from a blind instinct, then we would be compelled in reason to hold the author of that irresistible inclination responsible for it. Surely we are not willing to go to the length of demanding that the Creator should not have endowed His highest handiwork with a power as fruitful in good as in wrong doing. If I am deprived of my will in its native integrity, then perforce must I lose my reason. Without reason and free will, what would I be? A mere animal—an automaton. Praised be our Maker, who loved us more wisely and better than that! God wishes the existence of the will, but moral evil proceeds therefrom, not necessarily, but from the deliberate misuse of freedom. Evil acts happen independently of God's will. They are not, can not be intended by God. But,

II. *God does not prevent sin.* This involves the previous objection. It is identical. It is framed differently. It is not repugnant to the divine attributes that, in this way, in the way we have just explained, there be actions which are wrong. God's purpose in bestowing freedom of action upon man is of the highest and in thorough harmony with His ineffable perfections. That purpose was eternal happiness for man and glory for Himself. Man free, and only as free, has it within his power to practise virtue, to keep in the strait path, to exercise heroic deeds, to master himself, to live the only life worth living, to go through this existence unspotted, and thereby glorify his Creator and enjoy consummate bliss. Furthermore, even out of sin may glory ascend to God. God by pardoning sin manifests the glory of His mercy; by punishing sin, manifests the glory of His justice; by forbidding sin, manifests the splendor of His sanctity.

XXXII.—God Exercises No Providence Over His World.

Introduction.—The Church of Christ has made many enemies for itself. They are of such a stripe that their hostility is an honor rather than a reproach. We love Mother Church for the enemies she has made. She brings to men doctrines which by their very nature call for the exercise of duty under circumstances which do not pamper, but are repugnant to human nature. The entire round of Christian obligations is summed up in the words of St. Paul: "For the grace of God our Saviour hath appeared to all men, instructing us that, denying ungodliness and worldly desires, we should live soberly, and justly, and piously" (Titus ii. 11, 12). Adhesion to the faith demands submission both of mind and will. This surrender implies so much self-repression that man revolts, and his rebellion is not against himself, but against his divinely appointed teacher. Hence fault-finding. Hence accusations and calumnies and attacks against doctrine. Hence every truth promulgated finds an opponent. Infidelity has its birth not in the highest, but in the lowest levels of man's being. Divine providence in one way or another is perhaps the chief target of our adversaries.

I. *God does exercise a providence over men in all things and over spiritual concerns in a special manner.* Providence is inseparable from Deity. Yet we are asked how is it that if the Church be the one teacher of mankind, how is it that its voice has not been heard by all? How is it so many have never known the Church, in fact, could

never have known the Church? This question states an incontrovertible fact. Yet the fact does not militate against providence, nor against any of its attributes. It would undoubtedly be an unanswerable objection were men so circumstanced in the impossibility of saving their souls. But they are not. There is no damnation where there is no fault, and there is no fault where the liberty and the power of acting do not exist. The individuals referred to had no chance of having the Gospel preached to them. Their paganism may not be voluntary, and hence the sin of ignorance of God and of idolatry could not be imputed to them. They will not be lost for not having heard the Gospel. So the Church condemned the proposition of Bains, who asserted that "negative infidelity in those to whom Christ has not been preached is a sin." Who the more liberal, the Church or the heretic? We must pause here to praise the Church, which has never ceased to protect the rights of reason and humanity.

II. We are forced to conclude that God must have in all times and places delivered to all men the means to escape perdition. At all times, we say, and in all places, and to all men from the beginning of the world. This we know in general. How the means of salvation were afforded in all cases we do not pretend to know. Suffice it for us to have the certainty that the Lord has looked after the eternal interests of man since the beginning, and that every man has been judged by his lights, and rewarded or punished accordingly. God has promulgated two laws—one written, the other unwritten, or, better, the other pencilled on the heart of every man. This latter is known to every rational being. It is called the natural law. It is the reflection of the divine law in the mind of man. It is immutable. Its general precepts or dictates are known to each individual, and in this respect no man can plead invincible ignorance. There has been

no member of the human family, and there never will be one, into whose intelligence some shining of this law has not entered. According to this law and according to the measure of their knowledge of this law will the men be judged to whom Christ has never been preached. With this explanation even the simplest may understand that God's providence is as ubiquitous as His presence.

XXXIII.—God Is Unsolicitous for Souls.

Introduction.—The Catholic Church, as the accredited teacher in matters of faith and morals, besides being thoroughly equipped for her mission, possesses all the qualifications and is endowed with all the characteristics which are essential to such teachership. Like the truth which she delivers and protects, her pronouncements are clear, unhesitating and consistent. Consistency is her jewel. She shrinks from no legitimate consequence of her averments. She stands by all logical inferences deducible from her dogmas. This is noticeable always, and not least in the matter before us. Advocating the existence of a God, of whom we affirm a benign and impartial providence, we assert that to every man God furnishes a chance of salvation. Including within the zone of that providence even those to whom the God of the Christians has never been preached, we are immediately and almost triumphantly met by the objection: "But according to the Church there is no salvation without Baptism, a sacrament which most assuredly is out of the question with regard to peoples who have never heard of Christ or his Church." They consider this a dilemma on one or other horn of which the propounder of Catholic doctrine must find himself impaled. Let us listen to the explanation of the Church.

I. *Baptism is necessary for salvation.* When we say that Baptism is necessary, we mean that it is an indispensable means to salvation. In other words, without Baptism no one can be saved. This is certainly making our statement as strong as possible. However, this

necessity is not so absolute as not to suffer some exception, not in the matter of the effects produced by the sacrament—these are always rigorously exacted—but in the matter of the rite or administration of Baptism. In other words, there are more ways than one of receiving this sacrament. In adults, i. e., in those who have reached the years of reason, the effects of Baptism may be supplied by an act of contrition made perfect by charity. This act includes the desire for the sacrament, and this desire will supply for the absence of the rite. There is a baptism of water, of fire, of blood. The first is Baptism as it is ordinarily administered. The second is the fruit of perfect contrition coupled with the desire or purpose to receive the sacrament. The third is martyrdom, or the dying for the faith of it (Acts i. 5, Mark x. 39).

II. This teaching of the Church with regard to the Baptism of desire is not an innovation, nor is it a loophole. It is based on the authority of Scripture, and is corroborated by the testimony of the fathers. Says St. Augustine: "This baptism is as of much avail for the remission of sin as if the individual had been washed in the waters of fontal baptism." How does this meet the difficulty relative to those who are beyond the knowledge of Baptism and its necessity? Simply because it shows us a way opened by Providence which all men may follow to salvation. God works in wondrous ways and the acts of His love can not be numbered by the sands of the sea. To all outside of Christendom He gives light, more or less, but always sufficiently abundant, to see the path of rectitude. Every man knows the general principle of morality, which is that good must be done, evil must be avoided. Adhesion to this principle, no matter how many or how heinous mistakes are made, renders the man upright in intent, which is the only thing God considers. This uprightness

must have its reward. If Sacramental Baptism can not be secured, then providence in God's own mysterious way will come to the rescue. St. Thomas says that God will deny nothing to the man who does all he can. This is only reasonable. If there is no other way out of it, He will provide even to the limit of miracle. The Spirit of God worketh incessantly, and what is to hinder the human soul from being touched to love and contrition and the desire for the regenerating laver? No one knows how many may be lost who were held in loving arms over the baptismal font. Neither does any one know how many are saved whose infancy was passed in barbarism and who waxed into manhood and old age amid the excesses of the wildest savagery.

XXXIV.—God Is Not Solicitous For Souls.

Introduction.—The consistency with which truth is always garbed is evidenced in every doctrine of the Church from its widest generalization down to its most particular application. It is this consistency which is a distinguishable element in the beautiful harmony which is so characteristic of all Catholic teaching. Mistress of the whole domain of moral and dogmatic facts, she is unafraid of any of the consequences of her utterances. Along with this established prerogative is seen the benignity of her universal sway. Noble, all her mandates are elevating. Infallible, all her tenets are permanent, immutable; she changes with none of the vicissitudes of the race. Tender, she is domineered in the exercise of her queenship by the divine spirit of charity. There is nothing cruel in any of her manifestations. A benefactress, the whole world is better for her advent. It may be sometimes the case that we are unable to fathom everything within the deposit of faith. Mystery, however, detracts not necessarily from verity. It does not follow that because we do not understand we must repudiate. This is especially true relatively to the subject of infants who die without Baptism. Yet we must avow that even here God's goodness must in some way be patent.

I. *The necessity of Baptism is as rigorous for children as it is for adults.* Yea, it is more rigorous. All who have attained the use of reason while in the impossibility of reaching eternal bliss without the sacrament, may, if not baptized in reality, be regenerated by martyrdom or by desire. This latter is an impossibility for babes—born or unborn. The status of the Holy Innocents falls outside of our present

scope. Must we, then, conclude that the gates of heaven will never open for children who die without Baptism? This is the only deduction admissible. Does God wish their salvation with divine earnestness and sincerity? There is only one answer. Yes; God does wish their eternal welfare, and He wishes it earnestly and sincerely. Suppose there is no explanation possible; then "ours not to make reply, ours not to reason why," ours only to bow down in submission to the overwhelming majesty of infinite truth. Still let us consider first that, had the human race persevered in the primal justice with which it was adorned at its creation, this contingency would not have occurred. Hence the present sad condition of man has not been brought about by the Creator, but by the creature. The transgression introduced a new state of things, and all its consequences are primarily to be attributed to man. We know that many untimely deaths happen through the fault of parents—the fault of negligence —the fault of crime.

II. Yet this view does not compensate the babe for its unutterable loss. We find ourselves confronted by what can only be considered as an irreparable calamity. Let us put the matter at its worst. Beings irresponsible are punished? Beings to whom all voluntary action is an impossibility are subjected to the same negative penalty as men who transgress in the fulness of light and liberty, and all because, without any fault of theirs, they have not had poured upon them the saving laver! Again an affirmative reply is the only one we can make. Could not God interfere? Undoubtedly it is in His power to do so. Why does He not? Who can say? He alone knows, and because He knows we have the assurance that somewhere or other in the harmonies of the Infinite there is compensation. God is just beyond conception, and God is good beyond any effort of ours to con-

ceive or express. Somewhere and somehow in the eternities His justice and His mercy will kiss. We have admitted, and it is all Catholic teaching requires us to admit—we have admitted, in the question here submitted, only a negative effect of the lack of Baptism; we have admitted only their exclusion from the face to face vision of their Maker. They are unconditioned for heaven. They do not belong there. Have we not customs and regulations somewhat similar? Do we allow every one that reaches our shores to disembark? Do we permit unconditional citizenship? What makes a citizen? Certain terms to be fulfilled and then the lifting of the applicant's hand as he makes his bow of allegiance, and, lo! all the privileges and protection of the national banner are bestowed upon him. Should we wonder in a spirit of scepticism that God is in His way exclusive, exacts conditions, and to the sacramental sprinkling of a little water vouchsafes the right to the unending bliss of His kingdom? Because we do not understand, let us not reject. I know that He is just, and, therefore, no wrong is done the helpless child. I know that He is good, and that in some way and somewhere in His vast spaces His hand is caressing tenderly the little children outside His realm.

XXXV.—God's Providence Stretches Not Out Over Souls.

Introduction.—Possibly there is no decision of the Church which grates more harshly on the sensibilities of men than that which affirms that unbaptized children can not enter the kingdom of heaven. But feeling is the poorest guide which reason can follow. In fact, it is but a blind guide, or worse, no guide at all. What we are most concerned with is truth. It would be very easy for the Church to win the applause of the world. However, she is not "playing to the galleries." She is the inspired teacher. She has but one mission, and that is to preach the word of God, baptizing all men in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. "Amen, amen, I say to thee, unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost he can not enter the kingdom of God" (John iii. 5). This is the word of God, and the Church must promulgate and defend it. Still it must not be thought that the opponents of Catholic doctrine are the only ones to whom the difficulties of this question are apparent. Nor must they think that they alone are moved by the awfulness of the verdict. Since the beginning the fathers and doctors have been exercised, and it is not out of place to put on record some of their views.

I. *Opinions vary.* St. Augustine, adhering to Scripture, goes to the length of asserting that these children are in the same dungeon house as the reprobate. He was influenced by the absolute pronouncement of Christ and the terrible nature of original sin and its consequences. He seems to be alone in his attitude. Calvinists,

urged by what motives or principles I know not, assure the salvation of the unbaptized children of the predestined. Cajetan holds that the children of faithful parents are saved by the prayers of their progenitors. This was very nearly condemned at the Council of Trent. We are admonished by theologians that it is an unsafe view. Bonaventure believes that such children will owe their salvation to the piety of those who brought them into the world. One theologian asserts that there is given to these unbaptized ones a lucid interval during which they are baptized with the baptism of desire. Others again suppose that there is some unknown way opened to these unfortunates. We have advanced the above to make it evident how the hearts of many of the teachers in the Church have been stirred in order to bring not alleviation to the departed, but comfort to those who are left behind.

II. These opinions have not been condemned by the Church. They have not been approved either. If they afford consolation, so much the better. They all imply sound doctrine. They all admit that without Baptism it is impossible to be saved. They all aim at finding some way or other by which the effects of Baptism may be caused in the absence of the sacrament. They are mindful of original sin and its consequences, which are removable only by Baptism of some kind. This sin, in which all are born, is not a positive act. It is, rather, a condition. By it the soul is in a state of privation. The situation is a negative one. There are no rights to any of the rewards promised to those who have been freed from this taint. We are aware that in the beginning our first parents enjoyed prerogatives which were not essential to their nature and which they were to transmit to their descendants. Their disobedience stripped them of all these extraordinary privileges—stripped them and all posterity.

Among the gifts was the right to and a certain fitness for life eternal. What they had not they could not give. Their descendants come into existence in this denuded condition, and so, until all impediments are removed by Baptism, they possess neither the right to nor the fitness for the kingdom of heaven. Herein is the root of the difficulty. There is original sin. Every one is born with it. Baptism alone effaces it. Children dying unbaptized die in their original sin, and so the gates of heaven are barred against them. The question will still arise: Why all this? Our impotency to find a reply does not militate against the truth; it simply is one of the constantly multiplying proofs that our minds are small, very small, islands in an ocean of limitations.

XXXVI.—God's Providence Does Not Protect Souls.

Introduction.—Among the many adversaries who oppose against the existence and perfections of God the objection drawn from the case of infants who die without being baptized, probably the hardest to be convinced of their error are those who, for want of a better name, we may call sentimentalists. Sentimentalism is a perversion and a monstrosity. They extinguish the light of reason and they sin against sound sense and the most elementary laws of logic. Sentimentalism is mawkish—nay, more, repulsive. It is not true pathos. It is not genuine feeling. It is sensibility running wild, and it swarms with the germs of disease and corruption. It is artificial, and, therefore, begets lies. It contradicts all perspective. Truth in its eyes becomes distorted, and loses all its significance and substantiality. It is chiefly manifest in the difficulties which it proposes against the fundamental teaching of Christianity. It is most clamorous in opposition to the justice of God, inasmuch as that justice abides by the reparative or punitive sanction of divine law. It seems to imply in all its utterance this one calumny, that the Church of God holds more for justice than for mercy, and that it is inexorable in its attitude of unforgiveness. It was not a Catholic who wrote in his hymns the following description of the heaven of Christianity:

> "In heaven above, among the blest,
> What mortal tongue can tell,
> The joys of saints when looking down
> On damnèd souls in hell?"
>
> —Watts.

This is not the ideal Catholic paradise.

I. The mind of the Church and the heart of the same universal and tender mother are revealed in the serious investigations of her saints and scholars. Relative to the fate of the unbaptized infants, we have the assertion that it is better for them to have been than not to have been. This, of course, can hardly be affirmed of those who are eternally doomed. These children possess natural knowledge of God and a natural love for Him and a natural joy in Him. They are by their very condition precluded from all supernatural knowledge, joy, and love. St. Thomas proclaims that they have no sorrow, but, rather, will be sharers, according to their nature, in many gifts of the divine goodness and perfections. "Although," he continues, "they are not united with Him in glory, they are not entirely separated from Him. Nay, they are in union with Him by participating in His bounty and by the joy that comes from such knowledge and love that it is in the power of their nature to attain." There are floods of consolation in this view. They can not be insensible to the wonderful privilege that is theirs in having left the world one "white personal integrity," and are out of the danger of being consigned to the rigors of everlasting punishment. The man raised by baptism to a supernatural status could not be happy in their circumstances, because he would have missed the end of his elevation. This lack will bring no pain to the infant unregenerated, because the heart desires only what the mind knows, and they remain in blissful ignorance of the higher purpose of God in creating.

II. This benign view of the situation is, of course, entirely a personal one. It is worth only the reasons which are brought forward in its support. It has affixed to it neither the approbation nor the condemnation of the Church. It is valuable because, while it shows that the ill-fated children are not entirely lost, while it proves that

Catholic doctrine is as cognizant of God's mercy as of His justice, it also establishes the wonderful freedom Catholics enjoy in all the zones of intellectual activity outside the area inclosed within the luminous pillars of dogma or revealed truth. Dogmas are safe guides. The mind which works under their radiance operates toward truth always. It is security for us to know that without baptism no one enters the kingdom which is coming. If we understand, let us rejoice; if we are confronted by mystery, let us adore. This subject may well be closed with the remark of Bellarmine: "Our pity for these children avails them nothing, our severity hurts them not. But it would be much to our own injury if, on account of unprofitable mercy toward them, we were to defend with obstinacy any teaching opposed to the Church or to the Scripture. So let no mere human sympathy be our guide, but let us in all things be conformed to the doctrine of Scripture, of the Church and of the Fathers."

XXXVII.—There Is No Hereafter.

Introduction.—It is impossible to fix a point beyond which impiety will not go. It is a school of negation. "To deny is easy; nothing is sooner learned or more generally practised. As matters go, we need no man of polish to teach it, but, rather, a hundred men of wisdom to show us its limits and teach us its reverse." This is true to-day, as true as it was in the days of Carlyle. It is a ruinous vice. It essays to pull down; it never builds up. It has attacked all the cherished ideals of humanity, and has never substituted anything for them. It has contradicted everything; it has neither proved nor disproved anything. What does it give us in place of God, in place of religion, in place of immortality, in place of eternity? It has strewn the shores of the ages with wrecks of all splendid things. It has made of the minds and hearts of men blackened ruins. It has driven the soul of man into exile here, it has forced that soul to herd with lower natures in the present, and pictures its future as an eternal and unconscious blank. Matter is the only thing which exists.

I. *Materialism does not approve itself to any sound mind.* Long ago this teaching was condemned by the voice of Wisdom: "All men are vain in whom there is not the knowledge of God; who have imagined either fire or the circle of the stars or the great water or the sun and moon to be the gods that rule the world; with whose beauty being delighted they took them to be gods" (Wis. xiii. 1-3). It is our privilege to ask these philosophists for their proof. If they

are not secure in their position, if they put forth only a baseless theory, how arrogant and reckless and audacious must they be to attack the truths that are nearest and dearest to the mind and heart of man! Triflers, they should be treated only with the silence of contempt. It is consoling to know that from the very beginning until the present time, all their so-called arguments are reducible to mere reiteration of their views. They have only changed their phraseology to suit the accidental modifications of language brought about by the advance of the positive sciences. We can not oppose the progress of human investigation. We can not, nor would we. We feel, however, that incredulity and impiety have impeded the advancement of genuine knowledge in the regions of higher thought. "In the beginning," says St. Thomas, "the ancient philosophers, looking at the universe with gross and carnal eyes, saw nothing but what fell under the senses." It was only by slow stages that they reached any knowledge of the truth. The materialists of to-day have gone backward. They have returned to the infancy of thought. They teach substantially what was taught before Anaxagoras and Aristotle. They are as much in the dark concerning the origin and the essence of things as was Lucretius and his adherents. The world is as much a puzzle to them to-day as it was to the early thinkers who, like them, denied the existence of a living and personal Deity anterior and superior to the creation of things.

II. *What is materialism?* Doctrinally, it holds that everything which exists in the universe, from the inanimate rock to man, originated from primordial, non-intelligent, lifeless matter. They predicate of this matter that it and it alone is eternal. There is no such thing as everlasting spirit, conscience, virtue, or God. Say what they will, protest as they may, this, no matter how the colors

or the shadings of their view may change, is their fundamental axiom. As mentioned, this theory is not a production of modern times. It is as old as thought. We might excuse it when the world was young. What must we say of it after the lapse of so many centuries? We are inclined to ask, Do they really assert this rank materialism? Here are some of their own expressions: "Matter is the sole principle of all that exists" (Büchner). "The affinity of matter is the omnipotence which creates all things" (Moleschott). "Matter is absolute. It is without end and without beginning. It is unconditioned, independent, and absolute" (Loewenthal). What are we? Creatures of matter, products of fire, earth, air, and water. What are we? Bubbles on this great ocean of matter floating in sun or shadow, disappearing in the vast bosom of that lifeless sea to make way for other air bells. Away, therefore, with all conscience, with all virtue, with all noble living! Let us dance our short bubble life in the sunshine, let us color brief existence with all the rainbow hues. Let us eat and drink and be merry, for to-morrow we die and are not known, nor know ourselves forever. Eat and drink we may, but with such a fate hanging over us, to be merry is simply to be intoxicated; is simply not to think; is simply to forget. This is all materialism holds out for us.

XXXVIII.—There Is No Hereafter.

Introduction.—Not seldom the statement of a doctrine proves sufficient for either its victory or its overthrow. The more clearly materialism is presented, the more swiftly is it doomed to repudiation. As it stands to-day, it is abhorrent to every instinct and every yearning of human nature. It brings comfort to nobody. Even were it true, it would seem kindness to man to withhold it from his knowledge. It is untrue, and yet its propagation is so harmful that, wherever it is adopted, ruin of every description follows in its wake. It undermines personal integrity, loosens domesticities, and, as history attests, it threatens the downfall of authority in the state, as well as rebellion, revolution, and anarchy. It is the parent of the crimes which are committed in the name of liberty, as it understands liberty, that is, in the name of unbridled license. When the system flourishes, it flourishes not because it appeals to man's reason or to what is noble in him, but because it flatters either ambition or sensuality.

I. *Materialism,* of course, by its very nature, eliminates God. Its first cry is atheistic. Its last clamor is blasphemous. Perhaps the best way to meet the materialist is by denial. We can not but admit that all the forms of corporeal existence spring from a material source. Nor is it necessary to deny that this is true even of living things—of the plant, of the mere animal. Thus much has generally been accepted by Catholic science just as it was positively declared by Plato and Aristotle. Here we might pause to interject the remark that Catholic doctors have not invented a logic or a

metaphysics to suit the teachings of the Church. They have only applied the principles of right reasoning and abstraction, which were established by the light of pure intelligence, by the investigations of the nature and the essences of things as carried on by such minds as Aristotle and Plato. These principles were maintained three hundred years before Christ—three hundred years before the redemption of mankind was achieved, and all the dogmas involved in that redemption were uttered by lips divine for the emancipation of humanity.

II. We have defined the lengths to which we are compelled to go with materialists. Our position is that out of matter only matter can come, and that out of life alone can the living thing proceed. These two claims we are not unwilling to concede. The life, however, which we are free to grant, is the life we discover in plants and in animals—plant life, animal life. The life we find in man, especially his rational life and his liberty of action, human life, transcends all the resources, all the potentiality of matter. Matter can not produce a human thought, an act of human will, a human word, a spiritual soul. Matter may become the tenant of spirit, but spirit can not owe its origin to matter. Develop matter and refine it to the utmost, reduce it to the atom, confine it to a line or a point, put it into whatever alembic filled with the most powerful agents and reagents, submit it to all the material forces of the universe, it will never emerge anything but a material entity, and the chasm between it and spirit no finite power can bridge. This is only a statement, but it implies an argument which has never been answered by the materialist, and which is always a voice saying to him, Thus far, and no farther. This thesis of ours is provable. Moreover, it does not bristle, like its contradictory, with difficulties

insuperable. They deify matter, but their god from first to last has only material characteristics. They style him infinite; he is limited; he is a congeries of limits; he is a mass of atoms. They call matter indestructible. The most they can prove, perhaps, is that up to the present the mass of matter has undiminished since it came into existence. If by indestructibility they mean that it will not be destroyed, I neither affirm nor deny. But we must deny their allegation if they hold that it can not be destroyed. A superior power can destroy it. If they say He will not, our position is neutral. If they say it is beyond His power, then we part company, for there is One who said of the human body, to dust it shall return, who can lay waste the mountains and the hills and the cities and all the pride thereof, who can put out the sun and the stars and reduce all His creation to the nothingness whence it sprang.

XXXIX.—There Is No Hereafter.

Introduction.—Materialism is the grossest conception of the essences of things as well as the most imperfect and inadequate theory ever advanced for the explanation of the universe. In fact, in matter, as in everything created, we have the same unceasing cry, "Know ye that the Lord, he is God: he made us and not we ourselves" (Ps. xcix. 3). We find some qualities in matter, but in none of them, for example, is the power of moving itself, for motion is something outside of the body and its extension. In fact, the insufficiency of matter is a characteristic everywhere emphasized by men of science. Says de Maistre: "Everywhere what moves precedes that which is moved. Matter is nothing but a proof of spirit." Hence, when materialists insist upon matter as being eternally in motion, they emit an opinion not only gratuitous, but contradictory and absurd. This is the verdict of Newton in his century and of Virchow in ours. If motion can not be explained by matter alone, the difficulty becomes greater when there is question of the composition of organized bodies, and the order and regulated energy which they display. Fortuitousness, hazard, chance, none of these things afford an elucidation. How long would it take for all the letters that spell the words that constitute the Bible or the Iliad, how long would it take them unassisted by an intelligence to fall into the places and the lines which they now occupy in these two great productions?

I. Materialists deny that the human soul is immortal. What has reason to say on this momentous subject? Will man's soul survive

its separation from the body? What is man? He is a rational animal. His body will go the way of all material things, but the elements will not absorb his whole vitality. He is a conscious being. He has a perception and an understanding of himself, and he distinguishes himself from everything that is not he. He determines himself freely to act or not to act, and he can steer himself even against his strongest inclinations. He is an individual. He has a personality. He lives his own life. He has a domain whither no one can penetrate—the sanctuary of his thoughts and aspirations. There is in him a faculty which is above matter, above all the forces of matter—a faculty which can control and deify matter. He has two natures, a corporeal and a spiritual nature; he has two lives, a corporeal and a spiritual life. Those two lives conspire and make one person, and the principle which communicates vitality to his lower nature, and which is his higher nature, is his soul.

II. This soul has in its essence nothing in common with matter. It has powers above the compass of matter. In fact, its powers rise so high beyond the circuit of matter that we have to apply to it a term which excludes everything that is matter. We call it immaterial. It is the negation of matter. How do we know it has these properties? How do we distinguish it from matter? We do not see the soul. It is as viewless as the air, but it is just as palpable by the signs it manifests. I know its nature as I know the nature of other entities. I know its nature by its operations. Our Catechism—that sublime and yet simple compendium of all theology—our Catechism speaks of three operations. They are the will, the memory, and the understanding. Can matter will or remember or understand? Take all the qualities of mere matter, change, combine, refine them as you will, what will the outcome be? Simply

a something characterized by extension, inertia, weight; a something cognizable by the senses; a something from which it is impossible to evolve a thought; a something in which an abstraction can find no place; a something dull and senseless, which can not look backward to the past nor forward to the future; a something which, even if animated, hardly realizes the present; a something which can not reply or resist when forced by agents outside of itself. It is not so with thought or with memory or will. They are endowed with properties of a different order. They are not weighed down or confined. Matter is no barrier to them. Neither is space. No scalpel can divide a thought. No forceps can seize it. No power can imprison it. It can compass the ends of creation, the limits of the universe, it can traverse the interstellar spaces and fathom the ocean caves. This is thought as we may inspect it in ourselves or study it as communicated to us by others. No one can fail to see how vast is the difference between matter as we know it and thought as we know it. From the thought we go to the vital principle, to the source, and we reach the soul; that is to say, a substance, not material, but gifted with all that accentuates thought. This soul, say materialists, is matter. This soul, all Christianity and all Paganism exclaim, this soul is immortal, i. e., it can not die.

XL.—There Is No Hereafter.

Introduction.—To make the above declaration is to assert that when death comes to a man it annihilates him; when dust returns to dust, in that dust will be found the atoms of the triturated soul. It means that wherever we go to look for the one that is dead our search is bounded by the visible horizons of the universe. There is no God, no heaven, no hell. The outlook is one of despair and gloom. Against this teaching there is rebellion in every man. That rebellion is nothing but the spiritual soul proclaiming its immortality. "I do not all die" was the faith wrung from the heart of a pagan. Christ called His Father the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. This was long after those patriarchs had been gathered to their forebears. He then added the inevitable conclusion: "He is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (Luke xx. 38). There is not a single consideration of man's nature by which we are not led to affirm that the soul will go on existing after the disintegration of the body. It follows from the nature of the soul, from the characteristics of each operation of the soul.

I. *Yes; reason approves the conclusion that man's soul is immortal.* There is the physical condition of the soul. It is simple. It is not made up of parts. Death is corruption, but this breaking up into components can be alleged only of what is compound. This is evidenced by the acts of the soul. Apprehension is simple, and likewise judgment, as well as ratiocination and the expression of a wish or a desire. Take the power of reflection, whereby

the mind views its own thoughts. There is no such flexibility in mere matter, nor in any of the forces springing from matter. Nay, more, the soul is independent of matter. It does not depend on anything corporal for its existence or its operations. It is immaterial. It is a spirit joined to and vitalizing matter. This spirituality is made manifest by the soul's acts. They are all spiritual. They are all independent of matter. Matter can never beget the spiritual. They belong to two different worlds and demand different origins. As easy would it be to generate light out of absolute darkness as to produce spirit out of matter.

II. Take, moreover, into consideration the ideas of which the mind is the cause; consider how in themselves these ideas transcend all matter, and how they rise beyond all powers of mere bodies to produce them. They have the fine aspirations which surpass any suggestion of matter. What kinship is there between sensible objects and virtue, and right and wrong, and heroism and self-sacrifice, and patriotism and what we call moral courage, and so many other concepts that originate in the intelligence of man? When a man is conceived and born, a material agency may explain the origin of his body. But what of his soul? What, who is its producer? Does it spring from matter? It can not. Is it an effluence of some spiritual entity? Again we have to say, No. It can not spring into being of itself. No spiritual emanation can account for it. Spiritual beings are one and indivisible, and therefore suffer no partition. There remains only the solution that it is summoned into being from nothing, by a creative act which God alone can perform. So each individual soul is a distinct creation of God. Away with materialism or any other "ism" which proclaims a lower origin for the human soul! This is all advanced by way of a prelude to a

closer investigation of the destiny of man's soul. In all that is advanced there are latent cogent reasons why the mortality of the soul is inadmissible. The very nature of man is a demonstration of his immortality. We may adduce the proof derivable from the universality of man's belief that his spirit will not die. The race has always professed that there is an everlasting life, and has professed it with the same unanimity with which it has asserted the existence of God. This is attested by Cicero, whose words contain an argument: "If universal consent is the voice of nature, and if all men in all times and all countries unite in admitting that everything does not end with death, we find ourselves compelled to acquiesce in their belief" (Quaest. Tusc. i. 15).

XLI.—There Is No Hereafter.

Introduction.—Why do men refuse assent to the noble and consoling doctrine of the soul's immortality? Is it in the interests of truth? Is their ultimatum in this matter extorted by conviction? Have they any solid foundation whereon to base their assumption? They certainly have not advanced the cause of truth. They certainly have not expanded the area of knowledge. They have driven their votaries back to the very beginning of investigation and have succeeded in so obscuring the most elementary data and principles as to bewilder ordinary minds. Their efforts in behalf of education and civilization have been bootless. There can be only one effect of their propaganda. Their doctrine gives free rein to the individual, disrupts the family, and undermines the state. According to them nothing is real save what comes under the senses, and sensual pleasure is the supreme end of existence.

I. In spite of all their slavering, the weight of reason is on the side of the teaching that the soul of man is immortal.

In the impossibility of verifying by reason alone this great truth, the arguments advanced in its behalf go much more nearly proving it than their allegations go toward sustaining the opposite. In other words, we are impelled by many motives to give credence to the doctrine of the Church, whereas not a single argument worthy of consideration is found to confirm the contention of materialists. If we inspect closely the nature of the human soul, it seems patent that it can exist and act without the body. The

principle of life is essential to the body. The reverse does not hold. The soul is in itself incorruptible. This we conclude from those thoughts, those concepts, those discursive powers, those wishes, those desires, those operations of man which have no relation whatever to the body, which are higher than any possible suggestion of the senses, which so often imply a contempt for what is carnal and for death, that enemy which haunts sensualists like a spectre. It is from these considerations we derive the absence of all composition in the soul, the absence of all parts—a condition which emancipates it from corruption. Can anything be more living than life? Can anything be more antagonistic to death than that which, alive itself, makes everything in man to live?

II. Is the desire of total extinction natural to man? Is there not a recoil of his whole being from such a fate? It is a vain inquiry to ask how the soul will live after death. What manner of life will it lead? It will follow the lines of its own activity. It will be within its power still to will, still to remember, still to understand, and the acts of those mental agencies will be blissful or wretched according as the soul has conditioned herself during the days of her exile. Over and above this instinctive repugnance to cessation of the totality of individual existence, which is as universal as time and space and the race, which is congenital, and which, as we have every reason to assume, is a gift to nature from nature's God, a gift which He must, for the having given it, ripen into fruition, over and above this is the omnipresent, irresistible desire for perfect happiness. This is found in the heart of every man. It comes from God. Has he planted it in every breast simply as a hunger that will never be satisfied? Is God crucifying humanity on the cross of a yearning never to be sated? No one will say anything but nay to

such a question. Every one will answer, He has given the longing for flawless felicity and, therefore, is He bound, at least by the perfections of His own divine nature, to make it possible for every man to reach that blessing. Man can not be happy in completeness here. This must come to him in some other world. Even in that other world it is not realizable save in the possession of eternal life. Eternal life is immortality, and hence the significance of the question of Christ, "For what shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his soul?" (Mark viii. 36).

XLII.—There Is No Hereafter.

Introduction.—There is a law made manifest, in some or other way, to every individual conscience. Its legislator is God. His right to make it is deducible from His creative act. That He exercises this right follows from the perfections of His being. We call it the law of nature. Of its existence there can be no reasonable doubt. God not only knows what is intrinsically good or evil, but He must love the one and hold in hatred the other. Nay, more, He must will the one and condemn the other. As man has been created free, God can not compel his actions, but it must be His purpose that man do good and avoid evil. This implies legislation, law. As a perfect ruler He must prohibit what is against and command what makes for order in His dominion. A law which by its very nature is so essential for man must be promulgated, that is, man must know it. That so it is, is revealed by conscience.

I. *This law implies another existence besides that of the present.* Hence we infer the survival of the soul after death. Every law must have a sanction. Every law must have attached to it a reward or a punishment. The establishing a sanction is a function implied in legislative action. The sanction must be one which approves itself to reason as sufficient for its purpose. Suppose that God affixed no sanction to His law. In this case the inference would naturally be that God was indifferent as to whether His law was observed or not. In other words, contempt for His dictates would be of as little concern to Him as observance.

What, then, becomes of the sanctity of God? How could we call Him thrice holy? How could He punish infractions? What obligating force would His laws have? What a useless thing the law would be! These conclusions militate against the most elementary conception of the Deity and can not be entertained. A sanction, therefore, must there be. Nor will any kind of a sanction be satisfactory. It must be adequate. If not adequate—if by its qualities it be insufficient to deter from wrong doing or to incite to the fulfilment of the law, then it is nothing worth, it is not a sanction. Is the sanction as it can be enforced in this life possessed of these conditions?

II. We must admit that there are rewards and punishments here below. We know that virtue begets true peace and genuine joy of heart. It avails much to helpful conditions not only of mind, but of body. It conciliates the majority of civilized men. It secures the esteem and affection of our fellows in many instances, and it redounds to the prosperity and general welfare of communities. We are aware that vice is attended with many evil consequences. Yet does all this constitute a competent sanction? We think not. A sanction worthy of the name should be in proportion to the degrees of virtue or of vice. It should outweigh whatever disadvantages follow from the observance of the law, as well as any emolument gained by its violation. This does not appear to be the case in any sanction that can be presented in this existence, as we know it. Virtue has many rewards, but it does not always compensate for the trials and the losses sustained in practising it. Vice, too, in this world is at times attended by many and great evils. But how often are these evils nullified by success and prosperity and enjoyment? Take the case of a man to whom is presented this

alternative, "Do wrong or die." If he breaks the law, he may be tortured by remorse, it is true, but he retains his life, a blessing which all men prefer to any of the goods of earth. If he keeps the law, what reward does he receive here for his heroism? It would seem, then, that the sanction furnished here is incomplete. Therefore, there must be a somewhere else in which, when the body dies, the soul lives. This conclusion is demanded we think, by God's sanctity and justice.

XLIII.—There Is No Hereafter.

Introduction.—There is nothing so wearying and, which is the same thing, so wearing as the confrontment of objections in the matter of religion. It is simply a brushing away of the same obnoxious insects. Their buzzing is monotonous. It is the same insistence of the same unreasonable protesting. The opposition of incredulity to-day is identical with that of yesterday. If there be change at all, it is a change of phrase merely. We venture to say that against the principal tenets of Christianity there has been offered no new counter argument, let us say, since the days of Simon Magus. That these arguments have been answered goes without saying. They were riddled by Tertullian, by St. Augustine, by St. Thomas, by Suarez. Still they incessantly appear. This is true not only of the existence of the Deity, but as well of the immortality of the soul. The difficulties raised in every age have a familiar appearance. What is more, we may safely affirm that all these demurrers are reducible in every case to a negation. The watchword is, Deny! Deny! Deny! The importance of the dogma of the incorruptibility of the soul is of equal degree with the dogma of God's existence. Hence, with regard to the soul we must assert that its survival after the death of the body is eminently consonant with reason.

I. Immortality belongs to a being by its very essence; example, God. It is of the essence of God that He be and live always. Or it belongs to a being by reason of the nature which God has given it. Or, it is a privilege granted to an entity,

as is the case with the human body, which will rise again never to die. The soul of man falls into the second category. So we say immortality is natural to the human soul. In other words, it is of the very nature of the soul to live, when once created, forever. If it is to cease to live, then its breaking up will happen through annihilation only. The objection is that it may be annihilated. The soul can not destroy itself. Self destruction or suicide on the part of the soul is an absolute impossibility. It is simple. It is spiritual. Fancy a thought annihilating itself. Yet a thought is only an accident of the soul. Fancy the will or the intellect reducing itself to nothingness. They are only faculties of the soul. If, therefore, the soul is to sink into non-existence it must be by the action of another. God alone can be that other.

II. *God will not annihilate the soul.* That God can destroy the soul is beyond a doubt. Such a consummation is within the reach of His absolute power. But God has other attributes besides omnipotence. These attributes militate against the destruction of the soul. We might ask, Is it in accordance with the divine wisdom to suppose that having gifted the soul with an immortal nature, that after the lapse of time, He is going to contradict His purpose of immortality by the extinction of that soul? God endowing the soul with a natural immortality expressed His will with regard to that soul. Can we conceive any reason why He should mutilate its destiny? Scientists affirm that matter is indestructible. Why will they not concede the indestructibility of the soul? How superior spirit is in all its functions and characteristics to matter! There is man's reason, a faculty of his soul. When we consider the flights of that power and its lofty beckonings to the will and aspirations and desires of man, are we at liberty to think that God, who by

His special creation of the soul gave rise to those yearnings, is going to frustrate them all? "Every intelligent being," says St. Thomas, "naturally desires to be always." But no natural desire will be unsatisfied. There is the hope of perfect happiness. Will God, who inspired that hope, defeat it? The perpetual duration of the soul is a postulate of divine sanctity and justice. Would God be holy? Would He be just were He to fling back the soul into the abyss of extinction? What of reward? What of punishment?

"Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:
Thou madest man—he knows not why.
He thinks he was not made to die;
And Thou hast made him: Thou art just."

XLIV.—Jesus Christ Only a Man.

Introduction.—This is eminently a skeptical age. Men call it a scientific one. Science is the knowledge of things in their causes. Infidelity is the most unscientific of all persuasions. It advances no proofs. It attacks everything. Its touch is sacrilegious. Socinus declared Christ was a man only. Renan made him a Frenchman. "Nothing is so gullible as an unbeliever." To quote, "They have gnawed away the Old Testament, they are nibbling away the New. They believe the impudent lies and monstrous arithmetic which babbles about a million years, a period actually beyond the comprehension of the human intellect." How many lies skepticism has swallowed, instead of assimilating the saving truth! So Christ, they say, was a myth. Against this affirmation we have Christ's own assertion that He was the Messiah, that He was God.

I. *Christ was the Messiah.* The Jews expected a Messiah, an anointed one, the one sent, the deliverer of the Jewish people and of the world. Some expected a triumphant King, who was to restore to Israel its departed earthly glory. These misread Scripture. They misunderstood the prophecies. In His dealing with the Samaritan woman, who told Him that she knew a Messiah was to come, He answered, "I am he, and I am going to Jerusalem, and all that has been said by the prophets will be fulfilled." He reviewed at another time all the prophets, commencing with Moses, had said of Him, and explained all that had been written about Him in the holy books. He declared His dignity as Messiah and as King of the Jews before the grand

tribunal of the nation. This declaration was the chief accusation brought against Him by the Jews (John xix. 12). They put over His cross, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." It is very hard to reduce such a large personality, a personality foretold by the prophets, a personality unafraid to proclaim His mission and His divine descent, a personality who proved in every way that the Old Testament spoke of Him, it is very hard to reduce such a personality to a myth. Is there an individual in all history, modern or ancient, who looms so largely as Christ? That He was the Messiah is an established fact. All the indications noted by the prophets as to the time of His coming point to Him luminously. He appears at the moment Israel is losing her political autonomy, a short time before the final dissolution of the Jewish state, at the expiration of the sixty-ninth week of years. He appears when the second Temple has been built by Zorobabel after the captivity. He graced the Temple by His presence just before its final destruction. The priesthood of Aaron was still dedicated to the services of the altar. The precursor was preaching penance in the desert, and in Israel and in the whole world there was a yearning for the coming of a deliverer. He is the descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Juda, of the family of David; He is born in Bethlehem of a Virgin; He is born without splendor. We quote these facts to offset the affirmation that Christ was not the Messiah and that other hysterical pronouncement that He was a myth.

II. *Christ was not a myth.* His career was not a fanciful invention. He was not the creation of imagination, a poetic fiction. There is no character of all history whose existence stands out from the records in such colossal and substantial proportions. Let a man proclaim to-day on any of our thoroughfares that he is

the Messiah, that he is the Son of God, that he is God. In what way will he be received? They will pass him by with scorn and laughter. They will insist on his being incarcerated. Christ was not received thus. He was taken seriously by his followers and his foes. What has been the purpose of all unbelief? It has used all its efforts, intellectual and material, to oust Him from His historical position. His impress is upon the whole world. Men of mind and men of station are His adherents. Would it be in the power of a phantom to revolutionize and agitate the world as Christ has done? If the existence of Christ is a mere invention, then history and all the notable characters that live in its pages are myths and nothing more. Then are we ourselves and all our environment but the stuff out of which dreams are made.

XLV.—Christ a Man Only.

Introduction.—The conflict between so-called science and religion since the establishment of the Church has reduced itself to the contention on the part of the former that the Bible is uninspired, and that Christ is not God. The Catholic Church has fought her side of the discussion more than well. In every battle, when the smoke of the struggle has cleared, it is always discovered that the Church is firm on her foundations and she stands in all her beauty with her divine charter intact and her lips still proclaiming that her mission is from heaven and that God is God and Christ is His Son, and that Christ is likewise the upholding power, who centuries ago promised, and held to His promise, that He would be with her until the consummation of time. Christ or Diana? was the interrogatory put to the faithful in younger days. Christ or science? is the dilemma confronting every man coming into the world in all the centuries, and as well in this twentieth era of civilization. We refer to the Bible as an authentic historic document to evidence the fact, a fact as lucid as any fact in the annals of the world, that Christ proved to the Jews beyond the possibility of doubting that He was the Messiah foretold by the Scriptures. It is noteworthy that Christ appealed to their Scriptures. Search the Scriptures, He said, and you will find that I am the one so emphatically spoken of by the prophets. There is no doubt in any honest mind that the Scribes and Pharisees were only too conscious that Christ, the Son of Mary, was the one indicated by all the seers from the promise in the Garden of Eden

down to the days of Daniel. Among the strongest proofs of the divinity of Christ is His own affirmation:

I. *Christ is God.* The question of antiquity, Jewish and Roman, was: "Art thou he who is to come, or look we for another?" (Matt. xi. 3). "Go and relate," was the answer of Christ, "what you have heard and seen." Christ made His declaration and He confirmed it by the holy and thaumaturgical life which He led. There was no need of looking for another. The plenitude of time had come, and pagans as well as Jews were in expectation. He was predicted and He appeared. The desired one appeared. St. Peter (Matt. xvi. 16) said in answer to a question from the Master: "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God." The Master approved of the answer. He reaffirmed the assertion. He was His own great deputy. He declares that He is the omnipotent Master of creation, and of man, and of heaven, and of the world of pure spirits, preexisting before all creatures, the light and the life of the world, in all things like unto the Father, having a right to the same homage; He declares accomplished in Himself the prophecy of Isaias according to which He was to come to save the people; He is the Legislator and King of the universe; He forgives sins, He brings the dead back to life; He is the Judge of the world.

II. We ask, could any one utter such language save God? Is it possible to employ stronger or more sublime expressions to affirm His divine individuality to the world? The people understood Him. They did not hear Him say that He was a man favored by heaven, or a messenger from God. They heard Him say, and they comprehended fully, that He identified Himself with God. He never faltered in His proclamation of His divinity. When He knew that

His fate was sealed, in presence of Pilate, who asked Him, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" "I am, but I have a kingdom that is not of this world. You shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of the power of God and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Matt. xxvi. 64). Not only no faltering in his asseveration of His godhead, but an emphatic and ever increasing impressiveness of assertion. Was there ever such an assertion? Is there a single trace of fanaticism therein? We find, on the contrary, good sense, calm, moderation, clearness, caution. What must be the conclusion? Either Jesus Christ is the Son of God, which He declared Himself to be, at the adjuration of the high priest on the day of His death, or He is not. The pathways divide. Whither go we?

XLVI.—Christ a Man Only.

Introduction.—There can be no doubt about the importance of the dogma of the divinity of Christ. It is as momentous as the existence of God is. In fact, all the Christian tenets hang together. Remove one and the others are foundationless. Deny the divinity of Christ and you deny the existence of God and the immortality of the soul and the whole hereafter. Repudiation of Christ's godhead means an insult to the Deity. It impugns His veracity and overthrows all evidence. Christ was one who came credentialed from God. His testimony unto Himself was backed by prophecy and miracle, which are the only voices wherein, as far as we know, God does or can speak to man. The spoken declaration whereby Jesus announced His message is transcendentally marvelous. No such utterance was ever made before or since. It is impossible to mistake the meaning of His words. There is nothing hazy about them. Nor did the leaders among the Jews make any mistake. They knew and understood what He said, and the very lucidness of His terms appalled them and stirred up their lowest natures, whence their jealousy and hatred. No violence of theirs was of sufficient force to make Him yield one jot or tittle of His claim. It is no wonder that, when viewed from all sides, His announcement of His divinity grows into an irrefragable argument thereof.

I. It is undeniable, and herein lies the strength of His position, that Christ said He was God and the world believed Him. Men, in confirmation of what they allege, resort to the help of matter, of

the senses, of mind. Christ made no use of brute force. On the contrary, He surrendered to it His whole career. He was no conquering hero. He came to sheathe the sword, not to wield it. Babylon and Rome and Mahomet overran the world by the strength of armed hosts. Where lie their empires to-day? "Put up again thy sword into its place" (Matt. xxvi. 52) was the proclamation of Christ. He fomented no revolution, He aroused no anarchy, no Socialism. "Give unto Caesar what is Caesar's" was His political formula.

II. Christ made no appeal to the senses. His teaching was an irreconcilable enmity with the senses and the passions. He forbade anger, hatred, revenge. He inculcated charity, purity, poverty of spirit. Sensuality was not written on His standard. Here is His device: "Whosoever doth not carry his cross and come after me, can not be my disciple" (Luke xiv. 27). He was the son of the carpenter, and the army He led to revolutionize the world consisted of twelve Galileans, fishermen and a publican. His word emphasized a mortification of the senses. His rewards were in eternity and He promised persecution and martyrdom to His followers.

III. What were His intellectual resources? The simplicity of His doctrine removes it from the exclusion and loftiness of the schools. Greece reached its eminence by the superior excellence of her arts and her sciences. No such means were employed by Christ. There was no effort for effect in all his speech. When He addressed Himself to the populace the sublimest doctrine fell from His lips, and yet the very children could understand. So we find ourselves driven to exclaim that His assertion of His divinity was unsupported by any natural help. It had only its intrinsic strength to confirm it. It was substantial truth. What was that declaration of

His? The speech of a fanatic? There is no trace of fanaticism in His whole life. No one can characterize His opinions as wild or extravagant. The speech of a fool? What is there in all His demeanor that savors of folly? If His speech be not that of a fanatic or a fool, what is it? The speech of one speaking the truth. There is no other inference left us. He was God and man and He came as God's ambassador as man, and He came as His own representative as God. His word was the speech of God. That word in the beginning created the world, and in the fulness of time that word was God. There is only one equation for this divine declaration of His own divinity. We find it in John: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

XLVII.—Christ was a Man Only.

Introduction.—Sacred Scripture serves two purposes. It is not only an inspired, it is also a historical document. In its inspiration it is the basis and the proof of all the dogmatic teaching of the Church. As a veracious chronicle of the past it occupies indisputably the first place among the testimonials to the truth in the matter of God's dealing with His creation, in the matter of Christ's life and mission, and in the matter of the upbuilding of the Church. Any hypothesis which asserts that it is fraudulent or mythical is absurd. It is incontestably proven that every one of its assertions is historically placed beyond the reach of doubt. "If we were as exacting and as critical in regard to ancient and modern works as we are in regard to the New Testament, history would still be unwritten for want of duly authenticated records; we would be still in the mythological age" (Lacordaire, 6th conf. on Jesus Christ). It is in this sense that we refer to the Bible in our proofs of the divinity of the Saviour.

I. It is indisputable that Christ, who has been adored as God for so many centuries by followers who glory in bearing His name and in accepting His doctrine, is entitled to this worship because He is really God. We have already appealed to His own declaration concerning Himself. He proclaimed Himself God equal in all things to His Father. *He claims for Himself that which is the attribute of God alone:* John xiv. 6; John viii. 12; John vi. 51; John vi. 55; John xi. 25; Mark xiii. 27; Matt. xiii. 41; John vi. 21; John xv. 16;

John xiv. 13; Matt. xix. 29; John v. 19; John xiv. 23; Matt. xvi. 15. *He forgives sins:* Luke v. 21. *He proclaims Himself eternal:* John viii. 58. *He knows all things:* Matt. xix. 4. *He is omnipotent:* John x. 18. *He asserts His identity with the Father:* John x. 30. We append the above as corroborative of what has already been stated.

II. Let us just mention the proofs of the divinity of Christ as they are formulated by Rev. W. Devivier, S.J., in his defense of the Catholic faith. These arguments expand into a cumulative confirmation which is simply irresistible. There are the miracles performed. The miracles have not all been narrated, for St. John tells us: "But there are also many other things which Jesus did, which, if they were written every one, the world itself, I think, would not be able to contain the books that should be written" (xxi. 25). Yet how numerous these wonders are! In them He sways all nature as He pleases. Investigate the cure of the paralytic; Matt. ix.; Luke v.; and the two multiplications of the loaves; Matt. xiv. and xv.; and the healing of the man born blind; John ix.; and the resurrections from death: Matt. xi. 5. To this we must add the consideration that they were performed publicly, that they were notorious, that these wonders have been examined by friends and foes for nineteen hundred years, and that they were all done with the view of proving that He was of God and that He was God; John xi. Then we have the crowning miracle of all, that is, His own resurrection. This resurrection He predicted. All the circumstances connected with it, instead of detracting from its veracity, go to place it among the great and unique facts of history. Rather it stands alone. There is no other happening in the past like it or so duly authenticated. The mere reading of it in the pages of the Evangelists appeals to us with an eloquence that is bewitchingly irrefragable in its evidence.

No fact has ever been so thoroughly attested. It is the strongest brief in the possession of the Church. It was the banner miracle. It revolutionized and converted the world.

III. Other proofs of the divinity of Christ are found in the prophecies and their literal fulfilment. They point unmistakably to the person and mission of Christ. They foretell the coming and the qualities of the Messias, His birth and youth, His apostolic career, His Passion and death, the establishment of His Church, the sacrifice of the New Law. He directed His hearers to those manifold predictions of His advent: "Search the Scriptures, for you think in them to have life everlasting, and the same are they that give testimony of me" (John v. 39). Pascal calls the fulfilment of the prophecies a perpetual miracle. Hence the striking conclusion of Lacordaire: "Supported by all that is most illustrious before and after Him, His personal physiognomy still stands out from this sublime scene, and reveals to us the God who has neither model nor equal."

XLVIII.—Christ a Mere Man Only.

Introduction.—There are many reasons which militate against the thesis implied in the above assertion. Foremost among them is the inexplicable attitude of its supporters. We ask the question: "Why have the Gentiles raged and the people devised vain things? The kings of the earth stood up and the princes met together against the Lord and against his Christ." Yes; we ask why they are animated with such fierce hostility against God and His Christ? What is there in the conception of the Deity to arouse such hatred? Why do they seek to obliterate the idea of the divinity? Is there anything in that idea that is subversive of the moral order? Does that idea awaken or help to subdue the passions? Is there anything that is good or lofty in the thoughts of men or in their lives which it antagonizes? We wait in vain for one reason why the concept should be banished from the intelligence of man. In fact, everything we know about man and his propensities should make us hail—even were the concept a human invention or fiction—it as an emancipating agency. The same is true of Christ. What has He done to become the target of so much hostility and abuse? As a mere man He sparkles like a "jewel on the outstretched forefinger of all time." Had He not lived, what would all history since that time have been? He is the exponent of sublime ideals. His teachings have reformed the world. Hence a mere man, He should be niched higher than any other who has played a part on the stage of the world. But He is not mere man.

I. He is God. We adduce as proof of this the miracles of the apostles and disciples. These wonders they performed in virtue of the promise and omnipotence of Christ (John xiv. 12; Mark xvi. 17). The acts of the apostles recite continual and stupendous marvels operated by the apostles and their followers in the name of Jesus. The new religion had to be confirmed, and nothing is so corroborative as a miracle. Among the numerous prodigies after the ascension stand out conspicuously the descent of the Holy Ghost and the conversion of St. Paul. (See Acts ii. and ix., and the Epistle to the Galatians i. 15.) This gift of miracles has endured till the present time. One genuine miracle is enough to prove that in favor of which it is performed. How irresistible, therefore, to any honest thinker must be the cogency of centuries of miracles?

II. There are the prophecies made by Christ. They were all verified. He foretold His Passion, death, and resurrection (Mark x.; Matt. xvii.). He announced the coming destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jews (Luke xix. and xxi.; Matt. xxiv.; Mark xiii.). He prepared, by prophecy, all His followers for the days of persecution, which began with the synagogue and ended with the Roman emperors (Acts i. 8). The propagation of the Church of Christ is among the most stupendous occurrences in the annals of the world. No natural reasons can explain it. It announced itself everywhere, and everywhere was it received, and among all classes and in an incredibly short time. It had everything against it. It had secular authority and secular force; it had wealth and learning. It had the opposition of every element that went to make up the then civilization. On its side there was nothing except what was repugnant to the world spirit. To the human mind it presented mystery, to the human passions it presented restraint and

penance, and yet it flooded the world like an invading sea. It had only one banner. It was a dead, helpless, bruised figure on an ignominious cross. Nothing, absolutely nothing, was in its favor, everything, absolutely everything, was against it. Impossible to conjecture the number of its adherents. We know that ten emperors fell upon the new religion with all the weight of their authority and cruelty, and that during that period a million died gladly for their faith. Add to this that we have the testimony of two thousand years proclaiming the verification of the utterances of Christ concerning His Church. As it was in the beginning, so shall it be until the end. "Why have the Gentiles raged and the people devised vain things?" When will the world learn the lesson that the Galilean will ever conquer, that He will be with His Church until the consummation of time, and that the gates of hell will not prevail against His Church forever?

XLIX.—Christ a Mere Man.

Introduction.—It is a matter of history that wherever religion has been at a low ebb among a people, that people were possessed of a very inferior standard of morality. Their ideas were lofty in proportion to their concepts of the Deity. Monotheism has always revealed a high standard of thought and action. Idolatry has always been accompanied by a degraded misconception of conduct, even in the most elementary perceptions of wrong and right. Barbarism was a lapse from the saving primeval traditions of the race. It may be securely asserted that no barbarism has ever brought man down to such depths of iniquity as the lapse from Christianity wherever it has occurred. Witness the excesses of the French revolution. History has still one experience untried. The story has yet to be written of a nation or a colony established on the principles of infidelity and inscribing on its labarum, "No God. No Christ. No religion." We shudder to think of the crimes, of the enormities that would prevail under such a banner. We know what atheism is productive of in the individual. Fancy a nation of atheists! Fancy a people of Voltaires, of Diderots, of Rousseaus as leaders and their followers, disciples impregnated with their blasphemies, with their infamous views of man, his origin and his destiny! Where would be authority, law, order? How long would such a republic endure? Is such a condition of affairs among the probabilities of the future? We answer, Why not? And yet we are compelled to say we not only hope not, but also that we believe not. We must remember that,

though the world forget God, God will not forget the world. The only salvation lies in submission to Christ, who is not a mere man, but God.

I. Emphatically witnesses to this great truth are the martyrs. A martyr is essentially a witness—martyrdom means testimony. When we consider their very large number, from Nero to Constantine, that is for two hundred and fifty years, when we consider the terrible nature of their tortures, when we consider their courage, the many conditions of life in which they moved, the manner, calm and joyful, in which they suffered, the marvels that so frequently attended their valiant patience, the multitudinous conversions which were the fruit of their sacrifice, we can not explain their conduct in any other way than that the religion for which they laid down their lives was a divine religion, and its Author divine as well. There is very little doubt as to their number. It must be admitted that they were persecuted through hatred for the Christian religion. They died, not through blind fanaticism. They were clear eyed witnesses. They understood their creed. They submitted to all their tortures because they knew that Christ was God.

II. Again in confirmation of all our assertions we have the wonderful change operated in the world by the introduction of the religion of Christ. We know what the world was before Christ and at the time of His coming—the state of private and public morals, of the family, of society. We have the startling evidence of a sudden and gradually universal change of thoughts, ideas, principles. We have the creation of a new public conscience. All this proves divinity, for it is impossible to adduce a single human agency or a collection of human agencies capable to account for this transformation. Add

to this the doctrine which Christ taught. His doctrine was never taught in its entirety and in its unity before His time. He taught concerning the Father, God, and His attributes, concerning man and the world. There are His moral precepts. They are perfect, ideal, model, regenerating. He was the first to make clear in His own words and through His Church the nature of divine worship. His doctrine stands out unique in presence of all the doctrines of the world. It moved the admiration of His contemporaries, and has compelled the wonder of all subsequent ages. In itself it is divine. And He proved that it was from God and that He was God. A careful investigation will disprove the objections which have been urged from the resemblance between the teaching of it and that of other religions. Buddhism, as inquirers pursue honestly their researches, Buddhism ceases to be in any way a teaching which can lay claim to the excellence of the doctrine of Jesus. Let what they like be vindicated for Buddhism or any other "ism," it still remains proven that Christ is not a mere man, but God.

L.—There is no Eternal Punishment.

Introduction.—Men, it is a very remarkable fact, never quarrel with heaven. They are willing to concede that there may be beyond the confines of this earth a place where every one will be supremely happy. When, however, they are called upon to admit that there is also a place where God's creatures are to suffer unimaginable and unconceivable pain forever, forthwith they recoil and they deny. But it is very patent that denial will not obliterate everlasting penalty, no more than the convict, by refusing to believe in a penitentiary or a dungeon, will find himself free instead of passing months or years or a lifetime behind prison bars. No denial of ours will change the words of Christ. His words are explicit. We find the doctrine of everlasting punishment emphasized (Mark ix. 41-47). On this occasion Our Lord repeats three times the statement of the unquenchable fire of hell where the worm never dies. Some repudiate the idea of hell being eternal. Some contend that on a future day the rigors of the flames will be mitigated and that there will be a modicum of happiness introduced. Others claim that there will be a new period of probation granted each sinner in eternity. Others simply say there is no hell. We may find it difficult to prove from reason alone that the sentence of condemnation will be an eternal one. In this case we have to fall back upon the divine and infallible teaching of the Redeemer.

I. Whatever opinion mentioned above may be sustained, this answer is always in order, that mere statement is not proof, nor is

mere contradiction a successful rebuttal. St. Augustine tells us that every one who denies God's existence makes the denial because he has a reason for wishing God not to be. Something similar may be advanced regarding those who assert that there is no hell, or, if there be, it is not everlasting. It is to be feared that all these individuals repudiate the dogma because their conscience makes them afraid that in their moral condition were they to stand before God for judgment, they could expect no other verdict than an adverse one. However, be things as they may, the teaching of the Church is safer to follow than their denial. They, of course, advance some reasons. Let us see what they are worth.

II. There is no hell because a punishment such as is that professed by Christianity is repugnant to the divine perfections. It can not be reconciled with divine justice or with divine goodness. It is irreconcilable with God's justice for the reason that there is no proportion between a crime committed, however great, and the penalty. It is very hard to decide as to the proportion. Yet we are justified in claiming that the one whose law and whose dignity are offended by a deliberate and grave wrong is infinite. There should be something infinite, it seems to us, in the retribution. It can not be in the torture itself inflicted, because no finite being could bear the weight of an infinite woe or pain. There appears to remain only what we might call an external infinite, and that is perpetuity of duration. There can be no doubt that God's law must have a sanction, and a sanction commensurate with the importance of the law and the majesty of the Law Giver.

III. With regard to the divine goodness we must keep in mind that God's goodness is a perfection, and while it includes boundless

mercy it excludes all vacillation and impotent condescension. Pardon me if I say that God is good, but that He is not "goody-goody." If we carry the argument from goodness to its limit, then there will exist no sanction. In this case God's goodness would be the cause of innumerable disorders, and would render the divine will of no account in the eyes of creatures. God, besides, does not punish as if moved by what we conceive as revenge. God hates only the sin, and were it possible to detach the sin from the sinner, then He would doom the sin alone. The divine goodness, by its very nature, must abhor sin, must hate it because it is an attack upon all the Maker's attributes, and so He must punish it, and who can say to Omnipotence outraged, "Thus far and no farther"? It is not so much the length of time it takes to commit a crime we have to consider, as the ingratitude of the criminal and the ineffable majesty of the offended Deity.

LI.—There is no Eternal Punishment.

Introduction.—Between theory and fact there is an immeasurable and, in many cases, an impassable space. The same distance intervenes between negation and proof. It is very noticeable that when a scientific theory is broached and enunciated only as a theory, there is always a mob of sciolists who seize upon the hypothesis and proclaim it as a fact, especially when it in any way impugns the dogmas of Christianity. This is evidenced by the one time wide spread of Darwinism and Positivism and Agnosticism. There are some facts which scientific investigation never can touch. We have in mind the existence of the human soul, which has been contradicted because forsooth the dissector's scalpel has never laid that immortal spark bare; as if a principle of life could be found in a body, in which all vitality is extinct. This view is applicable to the protestations of those who oppugn the teaching of the Church regarding hell. All that they have advanced is reducible to a negation. As in the case of the existence of God, so in the question of eternal punishment, not a shred of proof is to the fore against either one or other truth.

I. Reason has not disproved the everlasting rigors of God's justice against sin. Must sin be punished or not? Surely, every one will grant that unto crime there must be meted out a penalty. This penalty rests beyond a doubt with the lawgiver. The legislator in this case being the Supreme Legislator, who has not to render an account to any one of His decrees, ought, at least, be allowed the privilege to affix the sanction which in His infinite wisdom He deems efficient. From other sources we have the assurance that

His sentence under given circumstances will be eternal doom. Is this sentence too severe, too disproportionate? Severe, it certainly is; unjustly severe who dares say? Disproportionate? Again who will have the temerity to make this assertion? On what basis will he ground the accusation? Is it not within the limits of reason to say that God must determine a punishment which by its very nature is sufficient to deter man from crime? Independently of other legitimate considerations, are we not obliged to say that the human race would stop at no infraction of the divine law were the mulct not the eternal forfeiture of happiness? Even the knowledge of the consequences does not prevent the violation of the law. Yet as far as punishment is viewed as a deterrent, hell from this standpoint seems to be inevitable. We expect not too much when we affirm that certainly there is more in favor of, in our philosophy, than against eternal punishment.

Let us (II.) subjoin here, from another repertory of argument, but only as corroborative, the fact of the Incarnation. The sacrifice of Christ was necessary for our salvation. Is it safe to infer that an infinite victim was demanded unless there was a forfeit in some way infinite to be canceled? Would the shedding of blood divine have been justified were there only question, as far as man is concerned, of liberating the race from temporal disaster? Undoubtedly there is the cloud of mystery hanging over this puzzling problem. Faith will penetrate the cloud. Reason must simply bow down and adore. I know God is just. He makes a compact with temptation that we will not be tried beyond our strength, and He will not punish beyond our deserts. In the uncertainty, what should reason suggest? Better, our sane sense will tell us to be on the safe side. Security is where the Church is. Let us pray the prayer of St. Augustine: "Lord, try us; punish us here—only save us in eternity."

LII.—There is no Eternal Punishment.

Introduction.—Protestantism is protean in its nature. Its history is the history of mutability and variation. Little by little it extruded all Catholic doctrine, either expressly or by implication. In one or other of its forms it denied purgatory and then hell, and in recent years there has been proclaimed not the purgatory of tradition, but a parody or burlesque thereof. The large charter of liberty granted to all its votaries makes not only possible but inevitable the introduction of views which reflect not credit but ridicule on the minds of the abettors. What is there essential to Christianity which has not been denied by leaders outside the Church? Free to use the Bible as they please, a bishop attacks its veracity; free to find in the Bible whatever caprice suggested, some of their preachers denied the Trinity, the divinity of Christ and the eternal sanction of God's law. In the rebound we have the opinion of those who hold that there is another life, but that in that life man has another chance. If he profit by this new, unauthorized, unfounded dispensation, his will be an eternity of bliss unalloyed; if he does not, then divine justice must take its course.

I. We are unable to see how it can be logically advanced that the time of probation extends beyond the limits of this life. We ask where and what is the proof? It is not mentioned in Scripture. It is not found among the traditionary utterances of Christ or of the apostles. Moreover, it is not an intuitive or a priori truth. Vox

et praeterea nihil. Let us suppose that after death would begin a probationary period. What about the moral law and moral order here? What regard would the legislator evince were such the case? It would be a declaration on his part that the natural law here was of very little significance in his eyes. It would be simply throwing all integrity to the winds. There would be no inducement to practise virtue. The world is bad enough as it is; what would it be were there this so-called post mortem probation? To support it, is insulting to God. Certainly this seems to be the very strongest kind of an argument against such a theory, for theory only it is, were it even worthy of the name. It would be very difficult to imagine an opinion more repugnant to the ordinary views of men upon such momentous questions as public honesty and domestic and social uprightness.

II. Another class of "anti-sheolists" are what one might term spiritual "Nihilists." Their contention is that the sanction of the law consists in annihilation. They hold that eternal unconsciousness will be the penalty. The same query is again, as always, forced upon us. What is the basis of their system of ethics? What is their proof? Who is their prophet? Who their Messias? There is blasphemy in this taking the punishment out of the hands of the Creator and placing it in the will of the creature. First, annihilation would not be a penalty. Penalty supposes pain. Where there is eternal unconsciousness there is no pain. They contradict themselves, saying that crime deserves punishment, and then affixing annihilation as the sentence. But it is needless to proceed. It has been a fixed belief everywhere and at all times that the soul will survive the body, and that there are rewards for virtue and punishment for crime. Plato, in his Phaedrus, having determined the im-

mortality of the soul, says that after the separation souls will be led to a supreme tribunal in order "to be judged as to whether they lived well or not. Those who are found *incurable* on account of the magnitude of their enormities, their many colossal sacrileges, their murders, and inexcusable iniquities, or other crimes, them fate will cast into Tartarus, whence they will escape never." Thanks sincere and incessant be ours, that our faith has erected in the world the dogma of an eternal hell for the impenitent—a dogma that warns, deters, and saves.

NOTE.—The matter for preparing the foregoing sketches has been taken from Hurter, S.J.; Devivier, S.J.; Hettinger, and other philosophers and theologians.