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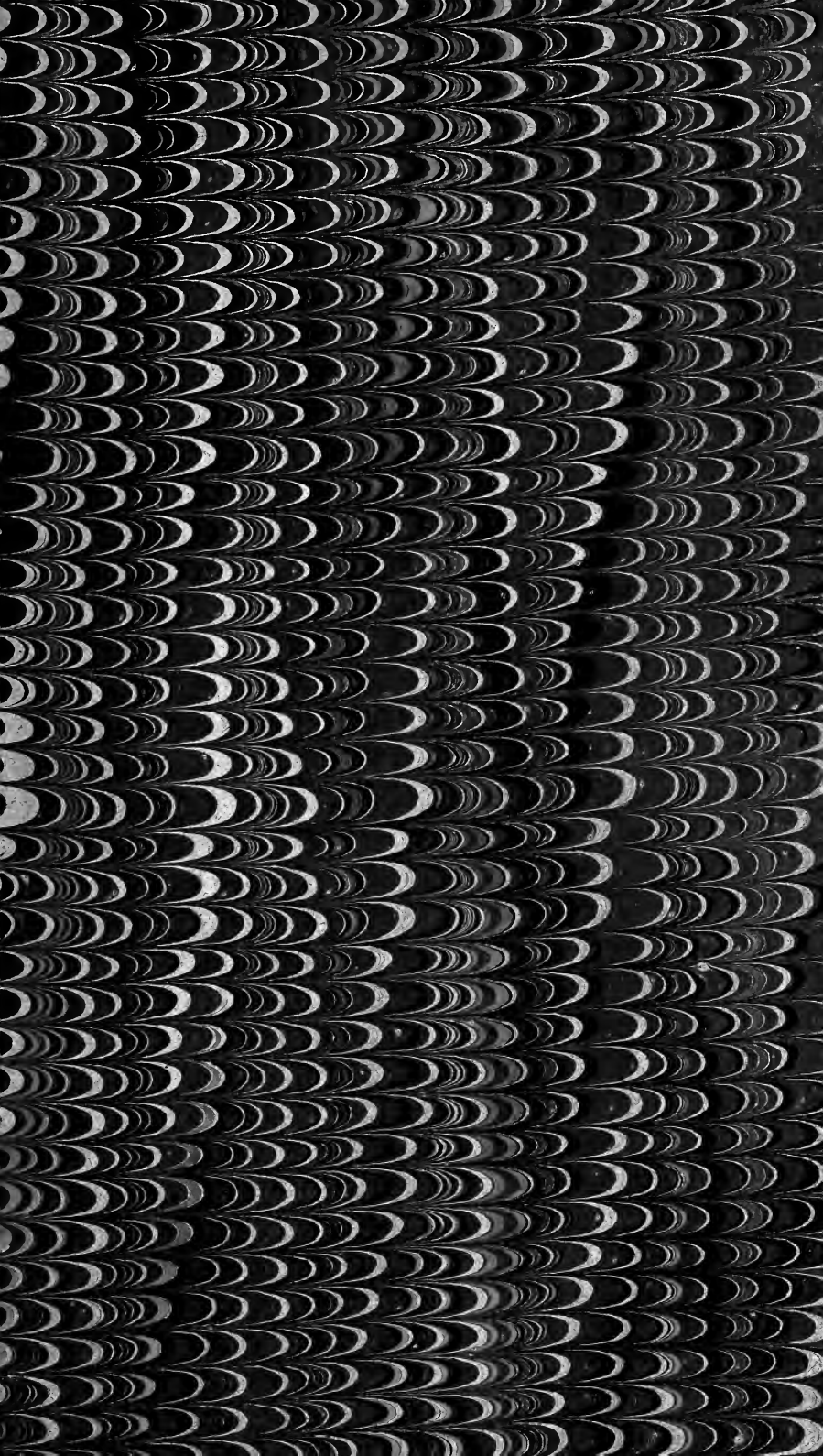
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FOUR YEARS' EXPERIENCE

OF THE

CATHOLIC RELIGION:

WITH

OBSERVATIONS ON ITS EFFECTS UPON THE CHARACTER,
INTELLECTUAL, MORAL, AND SPIRITUAL.

BY *John M. Capes* J. M. CAPES, ESQ.



PHILADELPHIA:
PRINTED BY T. K. AND P. G. COLLINS.
1849.

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BY

P R E F A C E .

MR. CAPES, the author of the following pages, was formerly a distinguished member of the Oxford University, and a divine of the Protestant Episcopal Church. In 1845, he was received into the Catholic Church, and, since that time, he has had ample opportunity to view her in all her phases, and the little work before us shows, that he has turned this opportunity to good account. He has, in a condensed form, brought under review the principal doctrines of the Church, and shown their adaptation to the wants of man. The clear and logical manner, in which he treats his subject, proves, that he is well versed in theological controversy, while the honest and open earnestness, which is apparent upon every page, will convince all of his unaffected integrity and cheerful piety.

All, who will give these pages an attentive perusal, will be amply repaid; and the sentiments contained in them will command great weight, when the character, talents and experience of their author shall be taken into consideration. The testimony of one such man alone should, of itself, be sufficient to break up the monstrous deep-rooted prejudices, which exist against the Catholic Church.

The expense of this little publication has been mainly defrayed by the self-prompted contributions of two or three charitable gentlemen. The proceeds from the sale of it will, therefore, be appropriated to one of the charitable institutions of the city.

E. Q. S. WALDRON.

PHILADELPHIA, *December 7, 1849.*



FOUR YEARS' EXPERIENCE
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WITH

OBSERVATIONS ON ITS EFFECTS UPON THE CHARACTER, INTELLECTUAL,
MORAL, AND SPIRITUAL.

BY A LATE MEMBER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.

It is not too much to suppose, that there is a large class of persons in this country who feel a deep interest in the present mental condition of those numerous converts who, during the last few years, have submitted themselves to the faith of the Catholic Church. There are, perhaps, thousands who would rejoice to be able to see into the minds of those, who know the Catholic Church by personal experience of its influence upon themselves. It cannot be doubted, that the Church of Rome presents to those, who are without her pale, an aspect, which is partly terrifying, partly confounding, and partly mysterious, even in those instances, where it is admitted, that she undoubtedly is a portion of the true Church of Christ, and even may after all be that spiritual home, for which so many anxious souls are eagerly yearning. From the ferocious anti-Popish zealot, up to the ultra-Puseyite, or the observer of extreme candor, all agree in regarding her with a species of painful curiosity, as something awful, strange, incomprehensible, and self-contradictory; as uniting the noblest with the vilest qualities; as producing, apparently by the same means, heroes, villains, knaves, and dupes; as a strange compound, in short, of evangelical purity and worldly craft, of apostolic zeal and grasping ambition, of inspired truth and debasing delusion. Whether, therefore, as a mere psychological phenomenon, or as a branch, though corrupted, of the true Church of Christ, or as a body, which has attracted to itself some of the most learned, able, and self-denying of English Protestants, the Catholic

Church is, at the present hour, an object of deep interest to vast numbers of the best of our countrymen, and they long to comprehend the precise nature of the power she exercises over the minds which are subjected to her sway. I propose, then, as one who has thus made personal trial of her powers for some considerable period of time, to communicate the results of my experience to those, who are interested in knowing what it is really to *be* a Catholic.

In so doing, I must request pardon for the apparent egotism of the following pages. The very nature of the case will compel me to speak of myself in a manner, and with a frequency, which, unless absolutely necessary, would be absolutely intolerable. The statement I am about to make is so eminently a personal statement, and so essentially connected with the individual, who puts it forward, that it will be impossible to avoid a repeated reference to myself and my ideas, opinions, and feelings, for which some little apology may perhaps seem due.

The first question that will naturally be asked of a person who professes to give a true picture of the influence of the Catholic religion, and of its features at the present time, refers to his own competency as a witness. "What are you?" it will very justly be said; "what opportunities have you had for forming a correct judgment? what are your personal qualifications for so delicate an office? what were you before you entered your new state, and what means did you then possess to enable you to institute a correct comparison between the influences and facts of Catholicism and Protestantism?"

In all these points I believe that I may legitimately claim to be heard as a competent witness. Since I entered the Catholic Church, circumstances have made me acquainted with a very large number of English Catholics, of various ranks and different ecclesiastical positions. I have known personally, with various degrees of intimacy, seven or eight Bishops, several presidents of colleges and superiors of religious houses, a large number of the clergy, both secular and regular, in different parts of England, and of the laity, of different professions, occupations, and rank, with a considerable proportion of those converts who, during the last five or six years, have left the ranks of Anglicanism and submitted themselves to the Catholic Church. With many of all these I am on terms of intimate friendship, while chance and the course of events have put me into positions for seeing an unusual number of eminent and influential personages, in circumstances of trying character, and such as reveal not only a man's strength, but his weakness, and test both himself and his religious faith and principles to the very foundation.

Before I was a Catholic, I had also as many opportunities of examining into the true character and genius of Protestantism, as fall to the lot of most men; indeed, few Protestants have had such ample means for forming an unbiassed judgment as those which fell to my lot. From the time of my boyhood, until I submitted to the Church of Rome, I had met with, and, in many instances, had entered into close bonds of friendship and affection with men of almost every class of opinion, which is to be found in the Church of England, having also been acquainted with individual Dissenters, who were very trustworthy examples of the dissenting schools. I numbered among my near friends and relatives old-fashioned High Churchmen, cautious Tractarians, zealous Puseyites, unhesitating Romanisers, conscientious Latitudinarians, with Evangelicals, old and young, of every shade of Churchmanship; and persons of the untheoretical, amiable, do-their-duty Church of England school, who go on their way as their fathers taught them, and live and die seeking only peace and quietness, and sober yet sincere practical religion. From an early age, also, I had been accustomed to notice and reflect upon the various characters and principles of every one with whom I associated, to form opinions upon their conduct, and investigate the connection between their religious views and their actual life and state of mind.

Nor could it be reasonably alleged against what I have to say, that I entered the Church of Rome under the influence of those ardent feelings and determined prepossessions, which might, perhaps, warp my judgment of the facts, which I really encountered, and render the history of my experience, a history of my personal emotions and fancies, rather than a detail of unvarnished realities. So far was I from submitting to the Church under the power of an unreasoning enthusiasm, that it was in most respects, with the greatest reluctance, that I took the step. It was simply on a clear, well-argued conviction, that it was absolutely necessary to my salvation, that I broke through every barrier which kept me back. I had none of that yearning for the advantages of confession, that feeling of utter intellectual helplessness, or that dependence upon the example and opinions of others, which in some cases, predispose the mind to seek for rest in the bosom of Catholicism. Long before I had the faintest idea of ever actually becoming a Catholic, I had reasoned myself into a belief, that all the doctrines of Rome were true, and that the Scripture, to those who will really examine it, and who believe in its inspiration, is an incomprehensible book, except on the supposition that the decrees of the Council of Trent are to be received as infallible. Absurd as it may seem,

and absurd as it certainly was, I was convinced that the Church of England was, in no sense of the word, a portion of the Church of Christ, long before I even thought of leaving her. I accounted my own an exceptional case, and rested on the belief, that I could be saved, though I was out of the visible Church, and though I knew, that I was out of it. Monstrous indeed was the belief, but still it was my belief; and it proves, that though at length the conviction of the hollowness of my theory came upon me with an irresistible force, which would brook no longer delay, yet I was, in fact, as well acquainted with everything that could be said on both sides of the question, as if I had been four or five years considering whether I should myself personally obey the call of the Catholic Church to enter her fold. In truth, I was far better acquainted with the real bearings of the controversy, than if I had weighed them under the influence of high-wrought excitement, and of that intense anxiety, which presses upon the mind the moment the idea of *becoming* a Catholic, takes a practical hold upon it. It was with all the coolness of a mere speculative reasoner, that I examined into the truth of every single separate doctrine of the Roman Church, and into the tenableness of every ecclesiastical position, which could possibly be taken up against her. Profoundly *interesting* as was the subject, I had become as clearly convinced, on undeniable grounds, that belief in any religious doctrine whatsoever is logically impossible, without the existence of a living infallible guide, and that a visible Church, without such a head as the Pope is, is a contradiction in terms, as that the earth is round, and that the moon shines by reflected light from the sun. I saw that, if Christianity is from God, Protestantism in every possible form is an intellectual absurdity, and a violation of the elementary laws of reasoning and common sense.

Lastly, since I have been a Catholic, I have repeatedly recurred both to the arguments, which, in my judgment, establish the truth of Catholicism, and also to the reasonings by which religious belief, in its very essence, is recommended to the mind. Again and again, sometimes on various practical occasions more immediately bearing upon my own conviction, sometimes in the way of controversy with Protestantism, or infidelity in their various modifications, sometimes in the way of calm meditation and reflection, I have gone over everything, that can be said on the general question involved, and on all the details of faith and practice which are found in the Catholic Church. I have endeavored honestly and courageously to look every difficulty in the face, to do justice to the facts of history, to avoid all undue palliation of the errors or sins of individual Catholics, and to separate my own

private notions and likings from those objective truths, which exist apart from my individual experience.

How far I may be *personally* fitted to bear trustworthy testimony on the subject, is a question on which I can offer no opinion. No man is a competent judge of his own merits or demerits, or a dispassionate observer of the features of his own character. Still, if I might venture upon any such statement, I should be disposed to say, that I am not naturally disposed to unreasoning credulity, to superstitious veneration, or to an undue dependence upon the authority of great names, or upon the views of those with whom I may associate. My errors would be rather on the side of a too great independence of judgment, of excessive dislike of assertions unsupported by clear proofs, and of general incredulity in everything that appears marvellous or supernatural. But however this may be, I may fairly lay claim to those average powers of observation and criticism, that *mens sana in corpore sano*, which would entitle any person to be received as a competent witness in a court of justice, and commend his evidence to the respect, if not to the acquiescence, of every fair and candid mind. As to sincerity of intention and truthfulness of statement in what I have to say, of course, like other men, I believe myself upright and honorable. No man, who invites the attention of the public on such a subject, professes himself otherwise than sincere and religious, and few think themselves not to be really so. I can only say, that I *trust* I have been, and still am, guided by a single-minded desire, both to learn what is strictly true and good in the sight of Almighty God, and to practice no imposition whatsoever, upon the belief of others. Without further preface, then, I proceed to lay before the world the results of four years' experience of the Catholic religion.

The first question that would be asked of persons who have become Catholics, by those who are unconnected with any religious party in the country, would probably be directed to ascertain the effects of Catholicism upon the practical freedom of the intelligence. Various as are the views which English Protestants take of the creed of Rome, they all agree in looking upon it as a despotic sovereign, which holds the intellect and judgment of those, who submit to its dictates, in an iron grasp, and rigorously forbids that unbiassed liberty of following after *truth* at all costs, which is the inalienable privilege and the bounden duty of every creature endowed with the great gift of reason. There can be little doubt, that a man who has entered the Catholic Church is popularly believed to have parted with all rights to think

for himself, or to escape from a benumbing, destroying thralldom of the faculties, except by bursting the bonds, in which he has unwittingly involved himself, and casting off the yoke of Rome in indignation. His friends pity him, his kindred weep for him, the man of shrewd sense laughs at him, and the vulgar crowd stares at him as a sort of wild beast. Whatever be the degree of *moral* enormity, which is attributed to a convert, all agree in thinking him more or less a *fool*. He is regarded with much the same mingled wonder and sorrow with which we listen to the ravings of insanity, and see a poor creature in a lunatic asylum disbelieving the evidence of his senses, and imagining his wretched cell to be a royal palace. We are supposed to have fallen into a sort of second childhood, in which we voluntarily surrender our powers of reasoning, observing, and reflecting, and acquiesce in statements as absurd to the free intelligence of men of sense, as the notion that two and two make five, or that the whole is not greater than a part of it. Have I, then, found Catholicism an intellectual bondage to myself, and have I remarked a similar slavery in the case of others?

If I may state the truth, without fear of being counted guilty of ridiculous exaggeration, I should reply, that no man knows what perfect intellectual freedom is, until he becomes a member of the Church of Rome. I have passed my whole life in as bold and unhesitating an exercise of the privileges of thought as is ventured upon by most persons; but most conscientiously can I allege, that my previous independence in reasoning was like a toiling in fetters, compared with the unbounded liberty of which I have been conscious, ever since I ceased to be a Protestant. I am unconscious of what intellectual fear is, except the fear of being *wrong*, and the fear that passion, pride, self-indulgence, prejudice or ignorance, should warp my judgment, delude me into miscalculating probabilities, tempt me into mistaking my own wishes for logical proofs, or blind me to the real laws of reasoning, which control all human knowledge whatsoever.

It is commonly supposed, indeed, that a man of sense and intellectual courage *cannot* believe the dogmas of Catholicism without violating the first principles of reasoning, and enslaving his judgment at the beck of a designing priesthood. So far from this being the case, I find myself compelled to act in the very opposite direction. I cannot *help* believing the truth of Catholicism in general, nor can I perceive the slightest violation of the laws of reasoning in any one of its separate doctrines. Granting the truth of Christianity as a divine revelation, my reason forces me to be convinced that no one form of Protestantism can *possibly* be true. So far as argument is concerned,

I can see and feel the difficulties, which exist in the way of the reception of the Christian religion as divine, and even of belief in any religion whatsoever, natural or revealed; but when once the question of the origin of Christianity is settled, though I can see and feel arguments against the Church of Rome, and admit that, so far as they go, they are difficulties which must be solved, yet I can see *nothing* in favor of any doctrinal Protestantism whatsoever; and I can no more avoid believing in the exclusive claims of the Church of Rome, than I can help believing in the deductions of physical astronomy or of electricity. The argument in favor of Rome is precisely similar to the reasonings, which establish the great facts of any purely human science, which is based upon probabilities, and not on mathematical certainties. On such morally proved sciences, whether physical, domestic, social, or political, the whole course of our daily existence is conducted. We neither eat, drink, move, talk, read, buy, sell, grieve, rejoice or, in a word, act for a moment as reasonable creatures, except on the supposition that certain general ideas are true, and must be acted upon, although not one of them can be *proved* with all the strictness of a mathematical proposition. Yet no man in his senses calls this an intellectual bondage, or wonders that people can devote their whole lives to a course of conduct against which *some* difficulties can be alleged, though the balance of probabilities is decidedly in its favor.

And just such is my experience of the effect of a belief in the infallibility of the Catholic Church on my daily, moral and spiritual existence. I grant that there are some difficulties to be urged against Christianity, and that the proof of the infallibility of Rome is not a mathematical proof; but nevertheless, I cannot help perceiving, that the balance of proof is undeniably in favor of Christianity and of the Catholic Church, and therefore I cannot help acting myself in accordance with that balance, and no more believe or feel that I am intellectually a slave, than when I believe that I am at this moment awake, though it is impossible to *prove* that I am not asleep and dreaming. Many people imagine that a Catholic lives and moves with a sort of sense of intellectual discomfort, with a half-admitted consciousness that he is the victim of a delusion; that he dreads the light of criticism and argument, and is afraid of having his opinions honestly and rigorously canvassed. For my own part, I can most solemnly assert, that, from the moment I entered the Catholic Church, I felt like a man, who has just shattered the fetters, which have impeded his movements from his childhood. I experienced a sensation of intellectual *relief*, to which I believe every conscientious Protestant to be an utter stranger. So far

from feeling as if I had renounced the great privileges of humanity, and subjugated myself to a debasing servitude, I was conscious that now, for the first time, my faculties had fair play, that I was no longer in bondage to shams, forms of speech, pious frauds, exploded fables, youthful prejudices or the impudent fabrications of baseless authority. Reason, like a young eagle for the first time floating forth from its mountain nest, and trusting itself with no faltering wing to the boundless expanse of ether around, above and below, rejoiced in her new-found powers, and looked abroad upon the mighty universe of material and immaterial being, with that unflinching gaze with which the soul dares to look, when conscious that the God, who made her, has, at length, set her free. To tell me, at such a time, that I was enslaving my reason by that very act which enabled her to assert her supremacy, or that I was violating truth and common sense, by embracing the most *probable* of two momentous alternatives, I should have counted a folly not worthy to be refuted. And such have I felt it to this day. I am conscious that I have embraced one vast, harmonious system, which alone, of all the religions of mankind, is precisely what it pretends to be, and nothing less and nothing more. I behold before me a mighty body of doctrine and practice, self-consistent in all its parts, cohering by rigid logical deductions, and held together by certain moral laws, which are as universally applied in every conceivable contingency, as is the physical law of gravity throughout the visible universe. Complicated and varied as it is, and diverse in nature as are the many elements which go to make up its far-stretching whole, I can detect no flaw in the structure, no incompatibility of one feature with another, no tendency to decay, no token of failure in accomplishing all that it really professes to accomplish. I find everything to charm and invigorate my intellect. If I am enthralled, it is in a bondage to truth; if I am fascinated, it is by the spell of faultless beauty.

It is the same, too, when I go on to view the separate doctrines, which the Church of Rome teaches, one by one. I hear and read of persons saying that these dogmas, or some of them, are absurd, or impossible, or self-contradictory, or immoral; but no where in the whole range of Roman doctrine, can I discern for myself any single statement which is opposed either to reason or morality. All, that I marvel at, is the dense ignorance which possesses those who bring the accusation, and the astonishing stupidity, which has enthralled mankind with respect to the very doctrines, which they profess to disprove, and which they vehemently denounce. Profound as is my conviction of the wickedness of man, still deeper is the conviction of his intense folly

which the sight of the course of theological controversy induces. I hear myself charged with holding doctrines, which were never heard of in the Catholic Church; I see her accused for not accomplishing results, which she never pretends to accomplish, and which were never attempted by any religious body upon earth; I behold her charged with crimes and absurdities which, by no possibility, can exist together within her; while, within her magic circle alone, reason acts reasonably, ascertains her own powers, makes use of them to the fullest possible extent to which they can reach, and then pauses in conformity with her own irrefragable decisions.

I cannot help being aware that those who formerly knew me, and others who, like myself, have entered the Catholic Church, are amazed that we should have been able to bring ourselves to accept what they regard as the most monstrous of absurdities, if not the most scandalous of enormities. Yet the only absurdity, that I can perceive, lies in the charge they bring, and in the enormity of that uncharitableness which condemns a man unheard. For instance, it is supposed that in the doctrine of transubstantiation, we run counter to the evidence of our senses, and believe that to be true which our sight, touch, and taste tell us is *not* true. Yet in the whole range of false accusations, which history records, nowhere is there to be found a more gratuitous and disgraceful slander, or an assertion which more strikingly displays the ignorance of those who make it. The doctrine of the Catholic Church with respect to the change in the Eucharistic Elements is, that nothing belonging to the bread and wine of which the senses take cognizance is changed; and that what *is* changed, is that with which the senses have no more to do than they have to do with the inhabitants of the antipodes. We are all agreed (except a few book-worms) that in every material object, besides its color, its form, its taste, its smell, and so forth, there exists a certain *something*, of which color, form, taste, and the like, are what is popularly called the qualities, or, in metaphysical language, the accidents. Now, it is manifest to every person, who knows the meaning of words, that our senses of smelling, tasting, touching, &c., inform us of the nature of these qualities or accidents, and that they do nothing more. We see that a thing is black, white, or blue; we feel it to be rough or smooth, cold or hot; and so with the rest; but as to that mysterious *something*, that "substance," as it is termed in metaphysics, which lies at the bottom of these qualities, and to which they are all attached, our senses tell us nothing whatever about it. For aught that our senses can judge, the *substance* of bread is the same as the substance of flesh, or the substance of lightning is

the same as the substance of a piece of wood. Whether the substance in all the elements of the universe is essentially alike, or whether there are as many myriads of variations in substance as there are in outward appearances, our senses of touch, taste, smell, hearing and seeing, leave us hopelessly in the dark.

When, then, I, who believe, that, in the Eucharistic Elements, this substance is changed—no matter on what grounds I believe it—am charged with asserting that, which contradicts the evidence of the senses, I simply smile at my accuser's foolishness. I see that he might as reasonably pretend that it contradicts the evidence of the senses to believe that there is a God, because the Divinity cannot be touched, tasted, smelt, heard, or seen. I ask him if he ever saw his own soul; and why, if I may not believe *more* than my senses tell me, respecting the presence of Jesus Christ in the consecrated species, he is justified in believing *more* than his senses tell him with respect to himself. So far from finding myself more in a state of bondage as a Catholic than I was as a Protestant, even in respect of this great doctrine, which is regarded as the crowning point of Catholic folly and imposture, I see that nearly all men and women, of every rank and grade, who attack the dogma of transubstantiation, are so extravagantly absurd as to conceive they overthrow its claims by assertions which have nothing on earth to do with the question really under discussion.

Such also have I found to be the result upon myself in all other separate Catholic doctrines. One and all commend themselves to the reasoning faculty, with a clearness and force, which I truly believe to exceed the clearness and force that are possessed by any branch of purely human knowledge, excepting always the deductions of pure mathematics. In almost every case I find them different from what they are popularly supposed to be; and the longer I continue to be a Catholic, the more extraordinary appears the contrast between that which the Church really believes and teaches, and that which the world imputes to her. The more I reflect upon it, the more mysterious is the phenomenon she presents, as the most misunderstood, the most misrepresented, the most maligned institution, which ever existed in the whole history of mankind. So far from feeling that my judgment is clouded, or that my faculties are prevented from having their full play, I perceive more and more clearly that the Catholic Church is the only body in which man's reason has tolerable liberty to follow out its conclusions with consistency, unbiassed by association, unwarped by prejudice, and unenslaved by passion. Admitting to the fullest extent the sins of many Catholics in all ages, their errors, their ignorance, their blind-

ness, and their superstition, still I cannot possibly help seeing that in comparison with the intellectual servitude which holds the world without in bonds, *we* are faultless, enlightened, acute, and profound to the utmost *limits* of which humanity is capable.

On the other hand, how far the course of modern civilization is impeded by the reception of Catholicism, is a question which is, by no means, easy of solution. From all that I can judge by experience of its effects on myself and on others, I should be disposed to say, that, while it tends to the culture of the intelligence, and to the development of all the faculties of the mind to the highest possible extent, it would lead its disciples to march, with a somewhat hesitating step, in what is commonly termed the civilization of the age. How far it would discourage purely intellectual cultivation *apart* from religion, is a question, with which I have nothing to do, as I am speaking only of what are the effects of a sincere belief of Catholic doctrines, and an earnest practice of Catholic duties, upon the thoughts and life of man. While, then, I see every token that there is not a faculty in the soul, whether it be the pure reasoning faculty, the imagination, the taste, the love of extensive and accurate knowledge, or that which we term common sense, which Catholicism does not tend directly to stimulate in the healthiest and most effective possible manner;—while I see that its sons may be impelled by a burning enthusiasm to triumph throughout the whole domain of human studies, and to bend every acquisition of mental power to the service of God and the salvation of souls;—while the Catholic will labor with unwearying energies, and with the highest abilities, in the fields of mathematics, history, philosophy, science, poetry, or fiction, just as in former days the whole course of European civilization was directed and impelled by the devoted sons of the Church; at the same time it is impossible to overlook the fact, that so far as our civilization depends upon the pursuit of gain, and the restless strivings of ambition, so far it would suffer in the hands of devout Catholics. There exists in the Catholic faith a power to detach the affections from *everything* on this side of the grave, which necessarily makes men take matters somewhat too easily to be in harmony with the notions of the present epoch. A pious Catholic, to a certain extent, sees no future, except that which commences after death. He lives for the present hour and for eternity. He has a greater tendency to take the affairs of life as they come, and to enjoy what he actually has in possession, without putting himself very much out of the way to add to his store, than is usually found among ardent and business-

like Protestants. Taken *on the whole*, I do not believe that Catholic merchants, Catholic tradesmen, Catholic travelers, or Catholic bankers, will ever so successfully compete with men of the world of similar occupations as to make as large fortunes as their Protestant competitors, or to exercise as powerful an influence upon the economic progress of the age. We never shall, taken as a body, be the first in the nation as men of business; and I question whether we could ever be *first* (though we might be *second*) in the study of those physical sciences with whose cultivation the characteristic movement of our time is so intimately bound up. It is undeniable, that Catholics do not *care* so much as others, for those objects which furrow the sober and laborious Englishman's brow, and bend him down with premature old age. Not only the general influence of their religion, as a spiritual system, but the nature of their belief in the excellence of poverty, and of the monastic and celibate life, and in the pernicious nature of excessive carefulness, and of a melancholy, anxious spirit, tends to make them sit down contented amid reverses, and comparatively careless about worldly success, where other men would strain every nerve to struggle against the assaults of fortune, and to provide against every possible future contingency.

That such a diminution in the energies of our day would cause a diminution in the amount of human happiness, I am, indeed, prepared totally to deny. I should regard a colder devotion to the *business* of life, as one of the greatest blessings which could be granted to our care-stricken country. Next to a reception of the true religion, I can conceive nothing so beneficial to the Anglo-Saxon race as an infusion of a spirit of light-hearted cheerfulness, and a less keen susceptibility to the peculiar charms of our modern civilization. Not only would such a change from our gloomy, toiling habits produce an instantaneous addition to the positive enjoyments of every hour in the day, but it would exert a controlling power over that awful movement towards universal pauperism, which is the great frightful fact of our times. Strange and paradoxical as it may seem, a comparative carelessness about wealth is the only practicable cure for the evils of excessive poverty. For some generations now past the whole course of the English social and economical system has been to multiply the *productions* of human labor with the least possible advantage to the producers. Though every human being brings into the world the same physical and mental powers of production as his forefathers of every past age, and though the marvellous instrumentality of machinery enables him to employ those powers with tenfold, twentyfold, or a hun-

dredfold more successful results, so that the entire population of the empire at this moment calls into existence far *more* in proportion of the necessities of life than did any past generation, yet such is the unhappy *distribution* of these increased products that every day fewer and fewer is the comparative number of those who are benefited by them, and harder and harder does it become for the great mass of the people to live.

Now, political economy recognizes no counteracting power in human nature to check this excessive operation of the principles on which civilized life is carried on. It has no safety-valve to prevent a frightful explosion in the machinery of society. The very law on which the riches, the luxuries, the comforts, and the refinements of civilization are created, is the law of selfishness. These things *could* not exist without a distinction between rich and poor, without that command over the labor of others which wealth confers upon its possessor. Were all men equal in property, according to the dreams of Socialism and Communism, the utmost that humanity could reach would be a step or two above the nakedness and houselessness of savage life. Art, refinement, literature, comforts, delicacies, of every conceivable description, would be, literally, impossibilities. Without the *command*, which the unequal distribution of wealth, enables the few to exercise over the many, we must sink at once into a state, resembling that of the settlers in a newly inhabited country, and be thankful if we could clothe our bodies and shelter them under a roof, and keep off actual starvation. Such a state of things is, of course, wholly hypothetical; for our inequalities in physical strength and in mental power would be sufficient to make some rich and powerful, and many poor and weak, in the course of four-and-twenty hours after the commencement of such a supposed universal equality. There are only three possible states in which man can exist: the paradisiacal state of innocence and bliss; the savage state, in which all things remain stationary; and the civilized state, in which all moves either in one uniform direction forwards, or backwards towards barbarism. Civilized society can never check at its will the operation of the principle which is the source of its very existence. The law of nature, which makes one man rich and another poor, tends to make the first richer and the second poorer every day that passes by. The inevitable necessity, which first transferred a portion of the natural property (so to call it) of the second to his more healthy, more powerful, or more skilful brother, goes on thus transferring fresh portions of the results of his labor to those, who are above him in command, until, as ages run on, gigantic wealth swells up

one extremity of the social scale, while the abyss of pauperism swallows all that are doomed to the other. The productions of civilized life are, in fact, the productions of a bargain between two parties, which is *always* more favorable to one party than to the other. Nothing but some violent change can stay the inevitable termination. Civilization cannot control itself, or hold back the motive power to which it owes its being. Hence the whole history of the human race is a record of the advances of civilization, and of its ultimate issue in a wretched state of enfeeblement, wealth, and pauperism, which has invited conquest, revolution, or total decay and death.

The fanatics of Socialism and Communism, alive to these terrible facts, would fain remedy them by the substitution of some other social system, based on a radical misconception of human nature, and of the essence of civil society; but they can no more cure the deadly disease than they can restore paradisiacal innocence and health to man, or paradisiacal fruitfulness to the earth. Their schemes are more fatal than the mischief they would counteract. The power of religion alone can stay the speed of this mighty engine, whose ever-increasing velocity threatens to overwhelm us all in destruction. Nothing upon earth can save society which cannot control man's selfishness, and make him content to forego those powers over his fellow-creatures which circumstances, or his own talents, have placed in his hands. What the French call *l'exploitation de l'homme par l'homme* defies the skill and energies of all merely human motives to stop its headlong course. Man will hire man to do his bidding, till the employer and the employed perish together, unless a voice come down from heaven and proclaim that this life is naught, in accents which shall command the attention of the most worldly, and accompanied with a spiritual power which shall soften the most selfish and stony heart. Nothing less than a voluntary and continually practiced renunciation of some portion of their legal rights over the poor on the part of the rich, can save the former from pauperism, and the latter from a simultaneous prostration into the abyss they have dug with their own hands.

Now, that Catholicism is the *only* religion which thus strikes at the heart of the excessive love of wealth, few candid observers will deny. It is indeed a common reproach against Catholic countries, that they do not foster that spirit of secular enterprise on which the existence of modern civilization depends. The shrewd, sensible, prosperous Englishman despises Catholicism, because he thinks that its votaries, when they have their religious services, their churches, their priests, and their amusements, are content to remain in happy inactivity, careless about

the future of this earthly life, and shrugging their shoulders in amazement at the untiring toils of the care-worn Briton. And exaggerated as is this popular notion of the effects of Catholicism, I am prepared not only to admit that there is some measure of truth in it, but to maintain that in this very feature of its influence is to be found the only safeguard of modern Europe. It is the only engine which the statesman and lawgiver can command, in order to control those suicidal tendencies of the social system, at which at present he stands aghast, hopeless, helpless, and trembling. It is the only moving power which can exercise an antagonistic influence upon that love of money, rank, and ease, which in its unrestrained operation is ultimately as great a curse to those who thrive upon its gifts, as to those who writhe under its torturing grasp. Politicians, political economists, and the skeptical worldly-minded Protestant member of Parliament, may smile in incredulous contempt, but the unprejudiced thinker may be assured that the Catholic religion alone can ensure to society that permanence in earthly peace and prosperity which of old was sought by the advocates of agrarian laws, confiscations of the property of the rich, and heavy taxation upon their incomes, and which in these days is the blessing at which the wild theories of Socialism and Communism aim with frantic passion. How it does this, I will now show in detail.

In the first place, from my personal experience of Catholicism, and from what I have seen of its influence upon others, I find that, practically, it does detach the affections of man from his earthly possessions far more effectually than any one form of Protestant Christianity. Of course I am comparing its results upon persons who are conscientious and zealous in acting upon their own principles. I am not contrasting the mental condition of a careless Catholic, who, though he lives a not immoral life, is yet cold or lukewarm in his religious ways, who just fulfils the letter of his obligation as a Catholic and nothing more, with a devoted, energetic Protestant, who is given to prayer, almsgiving, and works of mercy. I am taking two men or women, whether old or young, rich or poor, who are *apparently* (as men usually judge) equally sincere and zealous in acting fully up to the highest moral and devotional standard of their respective communions; and I have not a moment's hesitation in alleging, that what I may call the *unworldliness* of the Catholic is so different from the unworldliness of the Protestant, that the latter can scarcely comprehend what it is, both in its nature and in its effects. I do not say that Protestantism will not, sometimes, during periods of great temporary excitement, as, for instance, during the better season of the Puseyite movement, impel its followers to very remark-

able and almost heroic acts of pecuniary self-denial and munificence ; but I do say, that of that practical, habitual, and irresistible sense of the transitory nature of all worldly goods, which forbids the mind even to *care* much about possessing them, they have at the best a very faint conception ; while there is not an age, not a year, not a day, in which there are not thousands and tens of thousands of Catholics, both lay and clerical, both in the cloister and in the world, to whom the loss of worldly possessions, and the self-sacrificing renunciation of them for the good of others, is comparatively an easy and trifling task, for no other reason than that the realities of the spiritual world are present to their consciences with a vividness and closeness of contact, which is unknown to the conscientious Protestant mind.

So striking, indeed, is the influence of this keen perception of the realities of eternity, that the Catholic sometimes appears insensible and almost heartless to his Protestant friends and kindred. The tender-hearted, anxious-minded, or prudent Protestant is shocked at the seeming coolness and indifference with which the Catholic will often go through scenes, or carry out his principles into acts, which rend the souls of those, who are strangers to that mysterious perception of the invisible, which sustains him when other men sink prostrate or yield in helpless weakness to a cruel destiny. Two friends shall be knit together in the bonds of the closest Christian friendship, and pass their days together, laboring with apostolic zeal for the welfare of souls, and sharing all each other's hopes, fears, joys and sorrows, with the openness of a most brotherly affection : in a week or a day, sudden death shall carry one of them to his rest, and leave the other to toil alone for many a long year ; yet is the survivor's heart still calm and peaceful ; the tears, that nature sheds, are wiped away by the hand of faith ; he goes on with his solitary labors, and men see scarce an additional furrow upon his brow, and marvel at his strange composure ; and all because his eyes are opened to the invisible world,—because he has been ever accustomed to live with his dearest friend as men, who walk together on a brief journey ; and now that he, whom he still loves so warmly, is gone from his sight, he feels but as a traveler when his companion has parted with him just before the termination of his journey, only to hasten forward by a speedier road, and in a few days to welcome him with the embrace of love, when he too, at length, enters the portals of his true and only *home*.

Or a maiden in the first bloom of youth, when all seems bright and promising, and while she has every prospect of still gladdening the hearth of her parents for many a long year with her cheerful smile, and

tending them in sorrow or sickness with sweet filial affection, all at once announces to them, that she believes that God is calling her to the life of the cloister; that either for the sake of ministering to the sick and the poor, or of passing her days in mortifications and prayers, she desires to leave them now in the season of their most cherished enjoyments, and to become in some sense a stranger to them until death. Yet so deep is their sense of the reality of eternal things, and of the vanity of this life, that when the first shock is past, and all have sought strength to bear the parting from Him, whose will they trust they are performing, the father and the mother consign their child to her future life with scarcely more pain or anguish, than many parents commit their daughters to the care and love of a husband, and sometimes with a joy and gratitude to Him who is calling her to Himself *alone*, of which no conception can be formed by those who know the practices and feelings of Catholicism only from without.

And so it is in the point, to which I am more especially referring. Wheresoever the Catholic faith comes, with even an average amount of zeal and fervor, there will be found innumerable instances of a *facility* in renouncing wealth and station, which is unknown except within the pale of the Church. When men and women have no family ties, which make it a duty to them to preserve their property in their own hands, they will devote it all to the service of religion, whether for the poor, or for education, or for the maintenance of the clergy and ecclesiastical edifices, with a readiness, which can only be produced by that sense of the worthlessness of secular pleasures which their religion infuses into them. I claim no great merit for them in so doing; I am only saying that it is comparatively *easy* for them to do it. The power of their faith upon their minds is such, that the sacrifice actually *is* less to them, than it would be to the conscientious Protestant. During the hours of darkness we trim our candle or lamp with anxious gentleness, lest it be suddenly extinguished, and leave us in cold obscurity; but when the first rays of the morning sun shoot across the heavens, we care no more for our artificial light, and the sooner it disappears the better. Just so it is with the devout Catholic mind. It is not really insensible to the blessings of light and warmth. It *feels* as keenly as the most susceptible of mortal men; but in the midst of the blaze of noon it *cannot* be troubled at the loss of a flickering taper, or feel chilled when a few sticks upon the hearth cease to throw out their genial heat.

Still more powerfully do Catholic ideas on poverty and monasticism tend to counteract the selfishness, which, as it is one of the chief sources of civilization, so is it ultimately its relentless destroyer. As the special

influences I have been describing make it *easy* to a pious Catholic to part with his wealth, so his principles on these other points make him esteem it a glorious *privilege* to be able to distribute his possessions among a large number of persons, and to descend himself from the ranks of the wealthy to the ranks of the poor. A lukewarm, ill-instructed, or merely correct Catholic may in truth pay the same offensive homage to wealth and greatness which we see in the separatist world around us; and wherever this miserable subservience to the anti-Christian feelings of that world, which is the enemy of God, is thus found in the children of the Church of the poor, it is doubly detestable in the eyes of those who treat the world's maxims with the contempt they deserve: but a *good* Catholic aims at esteeming poverty and wealth in precisely the same light as his Lord and Master esteemed them; and as he counts it an honor to be despised for Christ's sake, and a joy to suffer for him, so he looks upon the renunciation of riches, when God calls him to it, as a gain, and not as a loss—as an increase of his real treasures—as a purchasing of gold and jewels in return for worthless stones, dust, and stubble.

Especially is this disregard of wealth fostered by the rules and spirit of the monastic life. Not only does the convent tend to the creation of a class of men and women in just that pecuniary condition, which the politics and economics of nature cannot produce, though they imperiously demand it, namely, the condition in which we have just enough, and are neither very rich nor very poor; but it is notorious that, even where the covetousness of human nature has made the utmost inroads it has ever accomplished in the cloister, the consequent accumulation of property has been far less rapid than in the hands of individuals in the world. Every man who is in the least acquainted with the history of monastic institutions, however violent may be his prejudices against them, will admit that the products of industry, when controlled by their hands, are divided between landlord and tenant—between the party who has the capital, and the party who toils with his head or his hands—far less unequally than in any other class in the whole world. Granting that the abuses of the system are all they are said to be (which is, of course, very far from what truth obliges us to grant), still it is a palpable fact, that, however selfish, or covetous, or luxurious monks may in some instances have become, they *never* have sought money with that intensity of purpose which impels the man of the world to make the largest possible profit out of every article that passes through his hands, and to drive the hardest possible bargains with the poor laborer in purchasing the fruits of his toil. A person,

like a monk, who has only a life-interest in the possessions his society may acquire, and who during his life only possesses property as a member of a corporation, with no individual right over a farthing, or over a foot of land, is, by the very laws of humanity, by the very nature of selfishness itself, less careful to store up boundless wealth, than those who, while they live, are absolute masters of every penny they possess, and who, when they die, can dispose of it to whomsoever they please. And thus it is that monks have ever been the best masters, the best employers, and the best landlords.

In connection with this subject, the practice of celibacy by the Catholic clergy, as well as by the monks, must not be overlooked. There can be no doubt, in any reasonable person's mind, that a man who has no family to provide for is less inclined *to hoard* than a man who has a numerous offspring to place out in life, and to enrich by his savings after death. The contrast is seen, perhaps, in its most striking forms in the cases of the prelates of the English and Irish Protestant Churches, and in the wealthy Catholic Bishops and Archbishops of the Middle Ages. Immense as was the treasure of the Church before the Reformation, and immense as it has been in some parts of Europe and America ever since that period, the Catholic prelates have rarely been found to leave much property of their own at their death. What they have received from the revenues of their sees they have spent as fast as they have obtained it. In innumerable instances they have employed their riches on every possible work which was most beneficial both to the spiritual and temporal prosperity of their fellow-creatures; and when this has not been the case, still they have not joined that most pernicious band of men, who heap gold upon gold and silver upon silver, in order that they may create for themselves and their descendants a high place among the great ones of the earth, and ennoble a family that has sprung from the multitude.

Compare, on the other hand, the conduct of the Bishops and Archbishops of the Established Church in England and Ireland. Even the ingrained Protestantism of this country is disgusted when it learns the enormous fortunes, which again and again are accumulated by these personages during the years they possess the revenues and patronage of their sees. A fortune of fifty thousand pounds is nothing for a Bishop to leave behind him. The episcopal savings must be reckoned by hundreds of thousands of pounds. Ministerial favor or chance raises the son of a shopkeeper or a country parson to the bench of Bishops, and straightway the whole energies of the new prelate are devoted to the storing up the fortune of a nobleman for his widow and children. Men

whose fathers stood behind a counter leave their sons incomes of many thousands a year, and see them marrying among lords, and associating with the highest in the land. And all this is accomplished by the cold, bitter practice of that parsimony, which is destructive of all social prosperity and of the well-being of the poor. Thousands and tens of thousands of pounds, the representatives of the labors of multitudes, are annually drawn out of circulation, instead of being honestly spent, even in luxuries, as fast as acquired, and all for the increase of the class of idle men of property. There is no more mischievous a being in the whole social scale, or one whose conduct tends more to the increase of pauperism and the widening the distance between rich and poor, than a Bishop, who hoards the revenues of his see, in order to leave a nobleman's fortune to his sons and daughters.

Now, I would ask, what is it that our present social system demands, but the introduction of some device, among all classes of the community, which shall ensure a more equal distribution of the profits of labor between the employers and the employed? Can we, without audacious folly, deny that the evil against which Socialism and Communism direct their frenzied attacks is a real, and not an imaginary evil? Is it not true that capital has *more* power over labor than it ought to have, and that the tendency of our social life is ever to increase that unhealthy influence, and to make the rich richer and the poor poorer in every succeeding generation? Can it be doubted for a moment, that any scheme, which, without violating the laws of property, or unduly checking the energies and enterprise of mankind, should increase the average income of the laboring poor to half as much again as it is now, while it diminished the number of those frightfully gigantic fortunes, which exist like mountains in the midst of the desert plains of our pauperism,—can it be doubted, I say, that such a scheme would be the most precious gift, which Providence could bestow upon this toiling and struggling nation, and would do much to save us from the wreck of revolution which is now desolating so many kingdoms of the continent of Europe, and from that more silent but more fatal bankruptcy and decay to which we are now most manifestly hastening?

I do not hesitate to say, then, that such a remedy *can* be found in the propagation of those principles respecting poverty, celibacy, and monasticism, which are bound up with the very life of the Catholic religion, and in the encouragement of that disregard of earthly wealth, which the Catholic religion tends to nourish in the bosom of its faithful children. Without any agrarian law, without one item of unjust taxation of a particular class, without the shadow of countenance to the schemes of the

Socialist and the Communist; here we have a system of faith and morals, which stimulates the rich voluntarily to descend from their elevation, not to join the ranks of *pauperism*, but of those who, though poor, are no burdens to the community, and who produce more than they consume; and which would erect in every city of the empire, and in every dozen or score of country parishes, an institution filled with men and women who would be the fairest of dealers, the most lenient of rulers, and the most liberal of landowners. Scattered thickly throughout the land, we should have one whole class of the population devoted to the counteraction of the ruinous tendencies of the general course of trade, commerce, agriculture and money-lending; one whole class whose business it would be, as fast as the eager excitement of an ambitious race overloaded with weight the upper stories of the social edifice, to replace the stones of the building in a lower position, and daily to strengthen that solid and humble foundation which is daily robbed of its strength by the passionate love of show and splendor of its ordinary inhabitants. Catholicism, including the celibacy of the clergy and monasticism, is the only possible safety-valve for the superfluous steam of the vast engine of modern society; and they who, as I have done, have come to learn by their own experience what Catholicism really is, in its children and in its general workings, are filled with a conviction, which no sophistry can shake, that in its propagation in this land is to be found the only permanent security for England's prosperity and greatness, for her freedom and for her peace. I do not mean that Catholicism must again become the established religion of the country. Far from it: so far as human foresight can tell, this will never be; and so far as human wisdom can judge, it would be well that this should never be. But seeing as I do the course of modern society, and the utter impotence of all political schemes and of all forms of Protestantism to cope with that awful evil which the popular eye, in its miserable, short-sighted folly, still fails to discern, but which is hurrying upon us with steps all the more fatally swift because they are noiseless; and knowing as I do by the most careful observation what Catholicism is, both in theory and in practice, I place my only hope for this still great, and, in many things, this noble nation, in the cordial reception of the Catholic religion by a very numerous portion of all ranks and classes in the community.

Having already stated what I have found to be the influence of a submission to the Catholic Church upon a man's freedom and independence of judgment on all matters not of faith, I now proceed to give an account of the effect it exercises upon the general faculties of the mind, not simply as *leaving them* to the unhindered development

of their native strength, but as exerting upon them a positive strengthening and elevating power; as serving, in a word, to confer a true intellectual discipline upon the mind. And in saying this, I must again beg the Protestant reader to observe, that in asserting that Catholicism leaves the judgment perfectly free *in all matters not of faith*, I am as far as possible from admitting that it enforces the shadow of intellectual servitude even in those things which *are* of faith; that is, which are defined and laid down for belief by the Church herself. I most strenuously deny that the faintest degree of irrational domination is exerted upon me by the Church, even though her command that I should believe *all* that she proposes to my faith is absolute, and brooks not a moment's hesitation. It is rigidly in conformity with the laws of pure reason that I should place an implicit reliance upon the declarations of an authority which I am convinced is a far more competent judge of religious truth than I can possibly be, and which, I am persuaded on sure grounds, is guided by a divine influence which supersedes the private deductions of my personal, unaided, reasoning powers. It is not slavery to believe the word of a competent witness; rather it is worse than folly to doubt it. It is not slavery for a laboring man who knows nothing of mathematics, to rest in undoubting certainty in the conviction that the earth goes round the sun, though to his personal judgment the sun seems to go round the earth, because philosophers tell him that he is misled by appearances. It was not slavery in the Jews and Gentiles when they believed the words our blessed Lord spoke to them, because they saw the miracles he wrought. And in like manner, I am not a slave because I entertain no doubts of the truth of Catholic doctrines, when I see that the common laws of reasoning compel me to regard the Catholic Church as infallible. I cannot *help* believing what she tells me, just as I cannot *help* believing that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles. Will any man who wishes to escape the imputation of craziness tell me that he should *like* to be allowed to believe that two and two do not make four, or that the earth is square, and not spherical? Does he feel uncomfortable when he studies the demonstrations in *Euclid's Elements*, and wishes to be *permitted* to deny their cogency? What would he say if some ignorant simpleton rose to express profound pity for his enslaved condition, and ask him why he did not exercise the inalienable *rights* of reason, and set up a new algebra or a new astronomy for his own private use and delectation?

And such, I can seriously assure the Protestant reader, is the feeling of intelligent and well-educated Catholics respecting the obligation

under which they lie to accept all that their Church teaches. They do *not* wish to believe otherwise than they are taught, any more than they wish to believe that New York is situated in China. If we were to meet any person who claimed such a liberty in his geographical faith, we should all agree in thinking that he verged upon the insane. And just such is our judgment of the well-informed separatist from our Church. We pity him quite as much (at the least) as he pities us. We do not wonder at a Heathen, or a Protestant who knows nothing of the question, remaining out of the Catholic Church; but that any man who cares for truth, honesty, and the laws of reason, should study the case between Rome and her opponents, and finally embrace the belief that any form of Protestantism is true, appears in our eyes a violation of the elementary rules of logic and common sense, very nearly as monstrous as a denial of the law of gravity, or of the commonest facts of universal history. I do most confidently assert, that could the philosophical heretic discern the indescribable pity with which we regard *his* state of mind, and the contempt with which we treat the quibbles of his sophistry, he would be more puzzled to reconcile it with his theories of the intellectual bondage of Catholicism, than he had ever been in investigating the subtleties of the cloudiest of metaphysicians, Hindoo or Greek, Scottish or German.

Let me also here call attention to the claim which the Catholic makes to the possession of a special faculty for the discernment of and belief in religious truth, in addition to those general preliminary proofs of the truth of the Catholic religion which address themselves to those who are without the Church, as well as to those who are within. Whether or no this claim be well-founded, I am not now discussing; still, in examining into the intellectual influences of Catholicism, it must not be forgotten that we *do* assert that we possess this power. Every Catholic divine will lay it down as an elementary truth of practical and doctrinal religion, and every convert from Protestantism will allege that the doctrine is confirmed by his own private experience, that the individual Catholic has a *personal* certainty of the truth and reality of the objects of his faith, which goes further than the mere external logical proof of the truth of Christianity as a religion from God, and of Catholicism as identical with Christianity. To the observer from without, this singular faculty will appear what is popularly called mysticism; he will say that it is simply a delusion; that we have no tangible proof that we are not the sport of the fantasies of our imagination, and that the pure intellect has no healthy work in producing the convictions I speak of. And that it will so appear to him so long as

he is himself deprived of this faculty, I do not deny. A blind man cannot conceive *color*, though he may *feel* by his touch the physical difference between one hue and another. We are all of us lost in amazement when we try to comprehend *what* is the faculty by which a dog, when shut up in a dark hamper, and carried two hundred miles away from his home inside a carriage, is no sooner set free than he returns direct to his former abode, though he has never before been at the place to which he was taken. In like manner the Protestant has not any conception of the nature of that mysterious gift which the Catholic Church terms the gift of faith, by means of which her children are brought into a certain contact (so to say) with the invisible world, and which makes them more sure of the truth of the doctrines of their religion than can be imagined possible for any cultivated mind, by those who are themselves not in possession of this supernatural power.

Still, whatever may be thought of us, it is a fact that we are unconscious of that bondage under which we are popularly imagined to groan and writhe. So far from yielding an unwilling homage to authority *against* the suggestions of our better judgment, we look upon ourselves as the only thoroughly sane persons in existence. We regard mankind in general, and our Protestant friends and fellow-countrymen in particular, as in some respects out of their senses. We have no more respect for their views than for the delusions of a madman who fancies himself a sovereign prince, and his cell in Bedlam a royal palace. We respect their motives, their intentions, their feelings, their goodness and amiableness; but as for their religious belief, and what they call their arguments and proofs, we only grieve that poor human nature can labor under such an infatuation as to count such perversions of common sense worthy of the name of reasoning.

To all that I have alleged in favor of the healthy and invigorating influence of Catholicism upon the mind, it will be objected, that were the case as I have stated it, the Catholic body in this country would hold a position among their fellow-countrymen far higher than they now possess, and would be distinguished for their literary attainments to an extent which it would be absurd to claim for them in their present state. I say nothing of the vulgar objection that in other countries and other ages Catholicism has crushed rather than aided the development of the faculties, because I am speaking only of what has fallen more immediately under my own observation. The objection itself will not, in truth, bear a moment's examination, and our posterity will come to class it with the rest of the herd of John Bull's self-com-

placental delusions, and admit that it is no more true that Catholicism depresses the intellect than that it teaches Frenchmen to eat frogs, while Protestantism teaches Englishmen to feast on beef. I confine myself to the state of English Catholicism alone, and have no hesitation in asserting that the exact state of English Catholic education and English Catholic literature furnishes no test whatsoever of the intelligence and abilities of the English Catholic mind. I have anxiously and carefully compared the average range and power of the Protestant intellect with the Catholic, and I have possessed very extensive means for instituting the comparison; and I do not hesitate to declare, not only that the young Catholic's mind is at least as able, as imaginative, as keen, as animated, and as courageous, as that of the young Protestant, but that the influence of our hitherto defective education has had far *less* depressing results upon our mental condition, than could have been possible under any form of Protestantism whatsoever. The faults of our education have not been *our* fault; they have been the inevitable result of circumstances over which we have had no control; they are rapidly passing away, and a progress towards a thoroughly satisfactory state of things is going forward with all possible speed.

There can be little doubt, indeed, that a person who had judged of the state of the English Catholic intellect by the actual books it has produced, and is now producing, or by the estimation in which it is held by the Protestant world, would be taken completely by surprise, if he was thrown for some length of time among any fair average specimen of Catholics themselves. Let him for instance contrast the cleverness, the quickness, and the energy of a number of boys from Eton and Winchester, with an equal number from one of the best of the Catholic schools, or of a number of young men from Oxford and Cambridge with their fellows in age in Catholic seminaries, and he would confess, without a moment's hesitation, that so far from seeing any sign of intellectual deterioration in the youthful Catholic intelligence, there was a vigor, an activity, a healthy life of imagination, and an openness to receive impressions of the purest and noblest character, which he had not been in the least prepared to find among them.

If it be asked, how it is that when the means of secular training were to so great an extent torn from the Catholic body by the persecution of the law, there yet remained to them any such powerful instrument for preventing the entire stagnation of the natural faculties; I reply, that taken as a mere means for cultivating the intellect, the Catholic religion stands pre-eminent among all branches of human knowledge. Bind and fetter the Catholic as you may; tread him under foot;

trample upon him; rob him of every earthly good; drive him from all intelligent society; burn his books; shut up his schools; denounce him as a slave, till you have done your utmost to make him one; still, so long as he retains his religion, he has that within him which feeds the intellectual flame, and suffers it never to be wholly extinguished, and preserves in every faculty of his soul a marvellous *elasticity*, which will make it spring forth into life and action the moment that the repressing power is withdrawn, and he enters the lists with his fellow-countrymen a free and unpersecuted man. It is very true that English Catholicism can as yet boast of but few names which are eminent in any path of intellectual culture; but then, how extremely small is that class of Catholics from which men of intellectual eminence generally proceed. Those who judge us by our *numbers*, judge us most falsely, because we are almost all poor, almost all approaching to paupers. That immense professional and middle class, which supplies almost the whole of the literary, philosophical, and scientific writers and thinkers of the age, not to mention its political celebrities, scarcely exists amongst us. Considering the paucity of our numbers, the wonder is that we have so many great names to show, and not that we have done no more. Most people, too, have little idea how many of those whom they extol with unbounded praise in the walks of science and art, are Catholics. I will not allude to individuals by name, but I cannot but repeat the assertion, that as historians, antiquarians, artists, and men of science, the English Catholics have done far *more* than could be expected of them considering their numbers, and the overwhelming difficulties under which they have labored. And I entertain a strong conviction that before another generation has passed away, it will be found that Catholicism in England has grappled with the awful difficulties of the time, and has succeeded in ruling and guiding the intelligence of this day of trial and trouble, to an extent which must seem visionary and impossible to those who know not the astonishing *strength* that is hidden in her faith and morality.

The source of this intellectual discipline is to be found in the nature of those subjects of thought to which the Catholic religion directs the minds of its followers. While every division of Protestantism is of so vague, inconsistent, varying, and depressing a character, that minds of a high order, and free energetic spirits, find pleasure and training for their powers only in criticising its statements, destroying its foundations, and detecting its absurdities, Catholicism calls forth the energies of the mind by a directly opposite process. It is by the contemplation of the perfections of Catholicism, by repeated examinations

into the strength of its basis, by the study of its wondrous scientific completeness, that the Catholic intelligence is disciplined. The Protestant exults in the destruction of the follies which he sees to have enthralled his Protestant brethren of less keen penetration than himself. The more he searches into his own belief, the more inconsistencies he discovers, the more is he startled at the intellectual imposture to which mankind have been giving credence. Protestant theological science consists in a systematizing of unbelief, in the gradual erection and completion of a system of philosophy which, while it assumes the name of Christianity, is virtually a denial of everything positive and distinctive in Christianity as a revelation, and is nothing more than Deism, Pantheism, or Atheism, under a new designation.

With us, the very reverse is the fact. Every fresh addition to the philosophy, the poetry, the moral or dogmatic science of the Church, is an addition to the strength and durability of her entire system. We destroy nothing. We develop, we add, we expound, we illustrate, we enforce, we adapt, but we never take away or deny what was once held. And thus it is that the employment of the faculties of the mind in the contemplation of the theology and practices of Catholicism, even when every other means of education is rent away, is sufficient to communicate a certain measure of intellectual vigor and keenness. The mind is perpetually directed to the examination of a vast, far-stretching body of truths, relating to the profoundest possible subjects of thought, arranged, defined, analyzed, and connected by the labors of centuries and centuries; expounded in books in every language, embodied in devotions of every kind, illustrated by innumerable ceremonies and customs, and accompanied with the practice of a system of morals, in comparison of whose scientific completeness it is not too much to say, that the ordinary moral and physical sciences of secular life are but as the guess-work of a speculator or the crotchets of an empiric. Under the influence of this extraordinary system, the pure reasoning powers, the imagination, the taste, with the whole of our moral being, romantic, self-sacrificing, shrewd, and practical, undergoes a degree of *drilling*, so to say, which I believe to be utterly incomprehensible to those who judge of the effect of theological science upon the intellect by the results which they see produced by the positive creeds of Protestantism, such as they are.

Such, then, are, on the whole, the results of my personal experience of the intellectual effect of a submission to the Church, and of the observations I have been able to make on the subject. I shall next request the reader's attention to its *moral* influence, leaving the

influence of its peculiar theological doctrines and its supernatural claims to another opportunity.

What is the popular English belief with regard to Catholic morality need not be described at any length. It is clear enough that we are thought to be—to use the word in its scientific sense—*monsters*. We are esteemed a sort of *lusus naturæ*, a combination of the great and the vile, of the rigid and the licentious, of the benevolent and the cruel, such as is nowhere else to be found in the entire range of humanity. Almost every body is more or less *afraid* of a Catholic. A kind of power of fascination is attributed to us, such as is possessed by some of the snake species. Men of shrewd sense, calm and not easily led away by their fears, seldom feel thoroughly safe in dealing with Catholics. They fancy that our movements cannot be calculated upon like those of other men; that we alternately bind ourselves as slaves, and take the most inconceivable of liberties; that at one moment we aim at living like angels, and at another are content to become as devils. The one thing above all others which is attributed to us is an unconquerable and impenetrable secrecy in all our dealings, which is supposed to be carried to the highest extent by the Catholic clergy in their dealings with the laity, and with Protestants of all descriptions. This is, on the whole, the popular belief among candid Englishmen; while there is a multitude of persons, who, for want of a better term, may be styled the fanatics of Protestantism, who simply regard us as incarnate demons, the victims of deadly delusion, the blinded instruments of an atrocious scheme of deception, devised and carried on by a profligate priesthood and hierarchy. As these last, however, will probably not read a word of what I have to say, or if they do read it, will suppose that I am writing under the dictation of some crafty priest, monk, or Jesuit, it is needless to show that their ideas of Catholicity are the mere ravings of folly, and that it is literally impossible that the Catholic religion could exist and spread as it does among respectable and intelligent men and women of all countries, ages, ranks, and inclinations, were it in the slightest degree such as they suppose it to be. I address myself solely to those persons of common sense and charitable intentions, who knowing Catholicism only from the representations of vehement anti-Catholic writers, are yet staggered in the belief in which they have been brought up by undeniable facts of a diametrically contradictory character, and who would fain know whether or not Catholics *are* that strange compound of good and evil which the candid philosophical observer accounts them. I shall perhaps best communicate that clear knowledge of the facts of the case which I desire to

furnish, by taking in detail some few of those points of Catholic practice which are believed to be most injurious to pure morality, and of those views which we are believed to hold in violation of the simplicity of Gospel strictness.

First, then, with respect to the personal character of our clergy, and of the members of religious orders. It is undeniable that Protestants, even the most charitable, are extremely suspicious of the moral character of a large body of men, like our clergy; and of cloistered institutions, like our monasteries and convents, where hundreds and hundreds of men and women are subjected to what is supposed a most unnatural restraint, at the same time that they are withdrawn from the sight of the world, and enabled to perpetrate all sorts of wickednesses unchecked by the voice of public opinion. I suppose that there is perhaps not a Protestant in England who does not in his heart believe that the clergy of the Established Church, if not the body of dissenting ministers, are a more moral, more pious, and more modestly retiring class of men than the eight hundred popish priests of Great Britain, to say nothing of the monks and Jesuits. They feel convinced that though many of our clergy may be men of irreproachable lives, and devoted to the welfare of their flocks, yet, that if they could see behind the scenes, they would discover many a shocking exception, even if it did not turn out that the immoral Catholic clergy were *more* numerous than the correct and self-denying.

What, then, has been the result of my personal knowledge of the moral condition of our clergy? I most solemnly assure my readers that I have only heard of one solitary instance of immorality among them, while that one was of a far less heinous character than would be at all supposed. The priest in question was given to drinking a little too much, and is now, I believe, thoroughly reformed. Persons may start at this statement, and think it a glaring falsehood, or an impossibility; but nevertheless, I assert that it is true. I have never even heard of, much less known, more than this one instance of clerical misconduct among the English priesthood. Of course, there *may* be others; perhaps there are; I can only speak as far as my experience goes; but unquestionably so far as it does go, and that is to a very considerable extent, the fact is as I have alleged. Nor, again, am I saying anything of other faults of a different species from those which are popularly described by the word *immorality*, when applied to an individual; I do not say that every one of the Catholic clergy is an immaculate saint, who never by word or deed transgresses the most minute precept of the moral law of God. All have their infirmities,

because all are still in the flesh, still encompassed with trials, and often harassed and proved beyond the ordinary lot of men. I am speaking at present of that general correctness and irreproachableness of life which we *have* a right to expect from every member of the priesthood, and in which the Protestant world supposes that they fall so grievously short of their duty.

Compare this fact, then, with the condition of the Anglican clergy, and mark to which class the palm of purity of life is to be assigned. Let any man who has had the means of knowing them, as I have known both them and the Catholic clergy, call to mind the results of his experience, and ask himself whether the contrast is not most favorable to the Catholic religion. There is not a person who is familiar with the discipline of the Established Church, and with the ecclesiastical and criminal courts of this country, who could not, with five minutes' reflection, count up a score or so of cases which have come under his own personal knowledge, in which, from deans down to curates, the moral law has been flagrantly violated by crimes, varying from such as it is forbidden for pen to describe, to that swindling and perjury which is barely esteemed immoral in the lax judgment of common men. Let any person recall the circumstances which have come under his cognizance during the last ten or fifteen years, and he will be constrained to admit, that if there is any class of ecclesiastics who practically answer to those pictures of scandalous vice which he has been brought up to believe to apply to the Catholic clergy, that class are the clergy of the Church of England. I am not asserting, be it remembered, that all the Established clergy are immoral, or that a majority of them are immoral; but I do say that the proportion of the scandalous to the decent livers in the Establishment is far, far greater than in any portion of the Catholic Church in which I have ever had an opportunity of ascertaining the true state of affairs. The case is also just the same in the religious orders. The monks are almost invariably men of irreproachable correctness of conduct; while as to the convents of women, I am morally convinced that there is no such a being as a nun of questionable character in the entire kingdom.

I will, however, go much farther than this, and profess my sincere conviction that an immense majority of the Catholic priesthood and members of monastic orders are not only persons of correct life, but thoroughly *religious* persons, whose hearts are sincerely given to the service of God, and who love Him with that true affection which He will recompense with eternal life in heaven. As I have already said, they vary considerably in degrees of sanctity, from that of the most

exalted piety downwards; but nevertheless it is impossible to know them personally and intimately, to see them in their hours of relaxation as well as to meet them in the confessional, to hear them in the pulpit, or to see them by the bedside of the sick;—it is impossible to learn their weaknesses and their trials, as well as their powers and their successes, without being impressed with a moral certainty that in the last great day there will be few of the English Catholic clergy to whom their Master will not say, “Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” I am the last person in the world to entertain a superstitious respect for any person, or to close my eyes to what I might see or ought to see; but I cannot help recording my experience, and saying, that as far as I can remember, I never yet met with a priest who did not appear to me to have a *conscience*, to be alive to the paramount claims of Almighty God to the undissembled homage of his heart, or who shamefully neglected the ordinary duties of his sacred calling. Nor do I wish to speak, with unnecessary harshness, of the Protestant clergy, with very many of whom I have lived on terms of affectionate intimacy, and for some of whom I still entertain a sincere respect and hearty regard; but when I come to compare their apparent *religiousness*, as a body, with that of the Catholic priesthood, I see that while the latter are (as far as I know) habitually influenced by the fear and love of God, the former are *generally* more decent men of the world, who make a compromise between its service and a devotion to its comforts, and the claims of religion to their whole hearts. When I have had to do with Protestant clergymen, or conversed with them on any practical or spiritual subject, it was only in exceptional cases that I found I could reckon upon their being influenced by a religious motive, worldly prudence and ecclesiastical party spirit being the ruling guides of the majority; while the Catholic priest is ever accessible to reasons or ideas founded upon the will of God, and the general happiness of his fellow-creatures.

As to the popular idea of Romish *priestcraft*, it is simply a fiction. That assumption of something like personal infallibility which is so intolerably offensive in very many of the Anglican clergy, is really scarcely known among Catholic priests. It is a rare thing to hear a priest claim any more deference to his personal views or expositions of doctrine than ought reasonably to be conceded to those who have made religious questions their especial study. Protestants may rest assured that the notion that the clergy have any right to domineer over the consciences of the laity, that a priest always claims to decide every question *ex cathedrâ*, that the laity as generally stand in slavish fear of

the opinions, the censures, or the denunciations of the clergy, is a pure creation of the imagination, contradicted by the facts of every mission in England, and radically opposed to the great Catholic doctrine that the *Church* is infallible, and not the individual members of the priesthood.

In like manner, what is termed the *Don* is a rarity in the Catholic Church; so much so, indeed, that I despair of making many of my Catholic readers understand the sort of creature whom Protestants designate by the term. I do not say that such beings never exist among us; but I do say that they are to be found in a far less proportion to the numbers of our clergy, than in the Established Church. Empty-headed assumption; an oracular manner of giving vent to common-places; a practicing upon the simplicity or ignorance of inferiors in rank or intelligence; a deliberate repetition of canting, high-sounding phrases, which serve only to deceive the unenlightened and to amuse the keensighted; a sham, pompous, artificially dignified manner;—these are not the ordinary faults of the Catholic clergy, as they are but too common among that body which is the loudest in its declamations against Romish tyranny and priestly craft, and which regards a Catholic priest as a sort of respectable monster, a compound of deceitfulness, cunning, cleverness, zeal, and despotism. In fact, our clergy sometimes carry the openness of their character and manner to an extreme. They are really at times too open, too honest in what they say, too little studious of appearances, too ready to give other people credit for good intentions, and to expect a charitable interpretation of their words and conduct from a censorious world. Nobody that knows them can possibly pretend that they are apt to put on an exterior which belies their real nature; that they hide themselves from the eyes of the world and of their flocks by the assumption of an unnatural, stiff, pompous manner, or by affecting to be better than they are in reality. If they err at all in the matter, it is with that most amiable and pardonable error which no Christian man can find it in his heart severely to condemn, the error of thinking too well of mankind in general, and of their friends and acquaintances in particular.

Here, too, I should introduce that one feature in the intercourse between the priesthood and the laity which is viewed with especial dread and suspicion by the Protestant, the discipline of the confessional. Amid the vast varieties of opinion which the separatist world entertains respecting this momentous subject, it is undeniable that *all* Protestants regard confession as a terrible engine in the hands of the clergy for exercising an undue power over men's souls. One, a zea-

lous Protestant, views the whole practice with undissembled horror; one, a timid old lady, or a country parson, devoutly believes that by means of confession the priests instill every species of abomination into the minds of their flocks, especially into the young; a third, a philosophical politician, or an intensely candid Anglican, admits that great good may often result from confession, but is confident that great spiritual tyranny also is its very frequent result; a fourth, an ultra-Romanizing Puseyite, or an anxious, trembling, devout person who longs for *some* practical guidance, is convinced that the system is full of benefit, to those who judiciously employ it, but is possessed with an undefinable dread of its mysterious powers, and cannot believe that it is not frequently most terribly abused. All agree in thinking that the abuse of the confessional is anything but rare.

To this I have again to reply, that if there is any fault to be found with the Catholic clergy, it is directly on the opposite side from that, in which they are supposed to sin. If they err in directing the consciences of their flocks, it is in exercising too little authority over them, rather than in exercising too much. Unquestionably there is a very considerable variety in their claims to be considered as good spiritual directors; but it is equally undeniable; that, if any are ever to be found fault with, it is in being too considerate, too forbearing, too cautious of interfering with our personal wishes and free judgment. I can most solemnly say, that I never heard of such a thing as a priest making mischief in a household, coming between its various members and setting them against each other, or practising upon the simplicity and obedient spirit of his penitents for his own benefit, or for the benefit of his order. I have often heard complaints made, both by born Catholics and converts, that confessors left them too much to themselves; and I have occasionally, though rarely, heard of a priest asking questions which showed that he wanted a power of discriminating character, or that his ideas of his office were narrow and unattractive; but never have I known or heard of an instance in which the confessional was employed as an instrument of tyranny; as a vehicle for instilling a knowledge of sins, hitherto unknown, to the innocent mind; or as a source of misery and discomfort to a household.

My Protestant readers may smile, but I must assure them that the laity are a far greater plague to the clergy in the confessional than the clergy to the laity. If at the time of confession one of the two parties concerned is a master and the other a slave, it is certainly the priest who is the slave and the penitent who is the master. Again and again have I been astonished at the patience, the forbearance, the endurance,

with which a Catholic priest will listen for hours after hours, in the hot, stifling, poisonous atmosphere of a crowded chapel, to recitals which try human calmness to the uttermost, so confused, so needless, so difficult to comprehend and elucidate, that one wonders how the priest's brains can stand the wear and tear, and he can come forth as unruffled in spirit as he is exhausted in body. The confessional, indeed, *is* in some cases an infliction; but it is an infliction of which by far the largest portion falls to the clergy and not to the laity. Its trials are perhaps as great as its blessings, and these latter are great and wonderful, but the trials and the blessings are not equally shared between priest and penitent. The former, abundant as are the consolations which he receives as well as bestows, has far more than his share of the pains with which the guidance of immortal souls is of necessity ever accompanied. However, of the general influence of the practice of confession, as a portion of Catholic discipline, I shall say more hereafter. Now I pass on to the observations I have been able to make on the results of the monastic system on those who are subjected to its restraints.

And here again I find it difficult to realize to myself the exact nature of the feelings which I know that the Protestant world entertains towards monks and nuns of every kind. So completely is the Catholic Church a new world to those who enter her pale, that, after a very short time, it becomes almost impossible to enter into the minds of those who are still without her fold, or to recall what we ourselves once thought and felt in common with the rest of our Protestant fellow-countrymen. So singularly unlike is it to *be* a Catholic to what it is imagined from without, and so marvellously does the whole system of Catholic faith and practice enter into one's whole life and absorb one's very nature itself, moulding one's every idea, sentiment, and liking after that very model which prevails throughout the whole of Catholic Christendom, that, before a few months have passed away, the convert has forgotten that he ever was different from what he has now become, and can hardly convince himself of the fact that he once entertained opinions respecting the Church and her children which now he laughs at as the most childish of absurdities. We seem as if the first part of our lives had been one long dream, and as if our eyes had been opened to realities for the first time on the day when we were reconciled to the Church. We wonder how we could ever be so deluded as to fancy those visions of brightness, truth, and love which formerly we worshiped to be any thing more than the phantasms of our own imagination. Having now the free exercise of our faculties, we can scarcely persuade ourselves that there was a time when we lived year after year in the same country

with the children of the true Church, with her temples open all around us, with her clergy ready to converse with any who came to them, with books in abundance to tell of her doctrines and system, with monasteries and convents scattered about the country, ready to show hospitality to the most vehement of opponents, and yet could pass our lives in an abject servility to the vulgarest of prejudices and the most irrational of theories, without troubling ourselves to ascertain, by the employment of our common sense, whether facts were such as we had been taught to believe.

Hence I find it difficult to meet the popular feelings about monks and nuns with any fully intelligible and satisfactory answer, because I now can scarcely realize those feelings, or suppose that my sensible and well-disposed fellow-countrymen can be so preposterously absurd in their prejudices as I nevertheless *know* them to be, because I was once as absurd myself. I am confident that they will not trust what I tell them, or believe that, whatever be the true character of the inmates of the cloister, it is such as I assert it to be. So deeply are they possessed with what they imagine *must* be the result of the peculiarities of the monastic life, that they will hardly fail to receive my statement as a romance, as a tale conjured up by my own excited imagination, and contradicted by what facts would appear to be, if *they* could only see into them.

Yet the truth must be told as it is, and, while the world thinks with alternate horror, indignation, contempt, and pity upon the inhabitants of the cloister, I must repeat my conviction that they are the *happiest* people upon earth. As a Catholic, I, of course consider that, taken as a body, the members of the religious orders are the most *holy* of all Christians; for great as are the miracles of sanctity which Almighty God accomplishes in the secular clergy of the Church, and even in the privacy of domestic life in every rank and grade of society, still it will scarcely be questioned by any Catholic that the highest degrees of holiness and love are so often accompanied with a vocation to the monastic life, that, as by a kind of natural law, a considerable proportion of the *saints* of Christianity will be found dwelling in the cloister as contemplatives, or occupied as members of some active order in ministering to the poor and sick, or teaching the ignorant. It is therefore a mere statement of common Catholic belief, to say that monasteries and convents, whatever may be the occasional exceptions to the rule, abound with men and women of fervent piety and devoted love to their fellow-creatures. That which the world will be least prepared to hear, is the testimony of an observer to the remarkable and uniform cheerfulness

and happiness which fills the breasts of persons cut off from all the ordinary sources of human pleasure and enjoyment, and subjected sometimes to the severest bodily austerities, and always to the discipline of a military obedience.

I can, indeed, scarcely conceive a greater contrast than exists between the interior of many a convent and the strange gloomy conceptions which Protestants in the world entertain respecting it. The rough black, white, or brown habit in which the monk's or nun's figure is generally wrapped; the uncouth substitution of these ungainly garments (as they are thought) for all that makes the female form and countenance so charming in the eyes of man, and of woman also; the unvarying monotony of a life, which, for twenty, thirty, forty, or fifty long years, is passed within the walls of one single house, and the enclosure of one small garden; the thought that every moment of every hour in every day in all those revolving years is subjected to the rigid regulations of a written rule, and the direction of a superior who is but an erring, fallible mortal; that father, mother, brother, sister, come to see the nun but as visitors—as half-friends, half-strangers—as her kindred, and yet as having no claims or rights over her; and that a most solemn vow has bound her irrevocably to this voluntary death, until the last hour of mortality arrives, and she passes into eternity, untended by one hand that owns the relationship of blood or marriage;—all this impresses the popular mind with a mournful and angry feeling, and makes it think of these victims of a superstitious creed as the most miserable and unfortunate of earth's inhabitants. Yet I can most conscientiously say, that convents and monasteries are, without a solitary exception, the happiest and most cheerful places in the world. As in everything else, there are differences between one religious house and another, not only in their strictness and spiritual fervor, but in the general *tone* of mind which pervades the community. Some are more grave and silent, others more lively and given to conversation. In some the labors of mercy for the poor are so exhausting, that they leave hardly spirit and strength for much vivacity or merriment. In others, severe austerities are borne with a redoubled energy of patience, through the perpetual buoyancy of spirit which a daily recurring recreation of the most animated species confers. Yet the rule will be found to hold good universally, that the cloister is a more cheerful place than the world without. Its inmates have a sunshine in their hearts, which, strange and inconceivable as it must appear to those who know Catholicism only by false report, is both the result of the peculiarities of the conventual life, and its never-failing support and consolation.

Nor let it be supposed that, because the monastic spirit severs in twain those ties of affection which hold society together, and are the sweetest charm which this world has retained since Paradise was lost, therefore the hearts of monks and nuns are cold and hard, unfeeling towards one another, and destitute of affectionate sympathy towards those who are still occupied in secular affairs. Nothing could be more false than such a supposition. Every Catholic who has had much intercourse with them, whether in England or abroad, unites in bearing testimony to the fact, that not only are they among the most agreeable, hospitable, intelligent, and often most polished persons to be met with, but that their kind-heartedness, practical benevolence, and readiness to love all, is one of their most striking features. An undeniable proof of the bright, happy, attractive spirit which pervades the cloister is to be found in the circumstance, that wherever they keep a school, of any description, they win the affections of the young with an irresistible power, and attach to themselves throughout after-life almost all who have ever been under their care.

Still further, it is a remarkable illustration of the gentle and cordially sincere character of the inmates of religious houses, that a large proportion of many of them is made up of persons who were originally brought up in their schools, and who have either chosen never to leave them, or, when circumstance have permitted it in their after-career, have returned at once, as a bird to its nest, to that home of peace and happiness which in their childhood they felt to be truly a refuge in the midst of the sorrows and sins of this time of trial. Incomprehensible as is the enigma which the monastic state presents to the speculative and liberal-minded Protestant, who judges of its nature by the feelings he perceives working in his own mind, and by the principles and habits of common secular life, those who know it by personal experience, at the season when the heart is least likely to be led away by theories, and is still unsaddened by the bitter experience of after-years, furnish the most signal attestation of its delights, by constantly flying to it and embracing it as their portion, at that very age when pleasure is most intoxicating and the future seems most brilliant, and care and anguish have not imprinted one single furrow upon the brow. We know how singularly different is the feeling produced in Protestant schools, and even in some Catholic seminaries, towards those who are the instructors and managers of the young. So far from finding that seven or eight years passed at a great school, whether of boys or girls, induce the pupils in after-days to long for a return to the society of those who taught and governed them, and for a share for life in all their daily oc-

cupations, the very reverse is the almost universal consequence. Men and women never become schoolmasters or ushers, schoolmistresses or governesses, by *choice*. One laughs at the very idea. Yet in the Catholic Church it is a fact, that if we want our boys to become Benedictines or Jesuits, and our girls to bury themselves in the cloister for ever, the best possible means we can take to ensure the fulfilment of our wishes is to send them to the schools of the religious order which we wish them to embrace, saying nothing at all to them about our wishes, but leaving things to work their natural way upon their youthful hearts. Nothing is, accordingly, more common than for parents to learn from their sons and daughters, just at the time that others are marrying and settling down amid the blandishments of the world, that they are strongly disposed to return to such and such a monastery or convent, and trust they have the permission and approbation of their father and mother. Doubtless the heart of many a freeborn Briton will swell with indignation at hearing that *natural* affections are thus scandalously interfered with, and they will hate the cloister all the more because it is the fatal foe to those worldly prospects which the fond and foolish parental heart cherishes for its children. It is true that people who would consign their daughter with gladness to the arms of a wealthy husband, who lived thousands of miles away in India, or rejoice to purchase a commission in the army for a son, who would thus be practically banished from his home for ever, will exclaim with vehement wrath against the tyrannical cruelty and unnatural wickedness of those who would counsel a youth or a maiden to take the vows of a religious, and so break up the unity and enjoyments of a smiling family; I only state this as a proof that monks and nuns are so happy a class of beings, that they attract, in great numbers, those who at any time come under their charge, and that to the merry, light-hearted boy and girl they approve themselves the most favored and agreeable class of beings upon earth. Oh, wonderful power of grace and goodness! At this very moment, while almost every individual in the Protestant world of England, who has any opinions at all on the subject, is viewing the life of the Catholic convent as either a life of dark, morose misery and gloom, or of unbridled worldliness and licentiousness,—at this moment there is many and many a young heart within the Church that is rejoicing to put aside the wedding-garb, to quit the scene of gaiety and amusement, to part from all it loves most on earth, and refusing to give its love to any fresh object of mere earthly tenderness, and preparing to pass through those doors which open only to those who enter, and are closed to any who would fain return; and all this not by restraint—not because it has tried

the world's pleasures to the utmost, and found them wanting—not because it had ceased to love its natural kindred—not because it is miserable—not because it is priest-ridden and superstitious—not because it has no means of support in the world,—but of its free, unbiassed will, after weeks, months, or years of reflection and prayer, simply because the “religious” life has attractions for it such as nothing earthly can offer, because it loves that life, and trusts to serve God more perfectly, and to do more good to its fellow-creatures, by thus withdrawing from the habits and customs of mankind, and devoting itself to Jesus Christ, *alone*. Wonderful also it is, and not less true, that at the same time there are many and many parents in this realm who, from the earliest infancy of their offspring, hope and desire for them no other destiny than they should thus flee from life at the very moment when it is most tempting and full of promise; that while the worldly father and mother look forward with joy to the fame, the wealth, the domestic bliss which is to be their child's portion when he grows up to manhood, or depend upon the affectionate care and solicitude of a daughter to soothe the sickness of their old age, these strange and incomprehensible parents should even pray, to God to take their child from them, to sever the tie that binds them to nature, and to bind them by an irrevocable vow to a state in which this world is to be to them as though it existed not. Yet such is the fact, and such the deep-seated belief which many a pious Catholic entertains of the blessedness of the conventual life, that the more purely and unselfishly they love their children, the more earnestly do they desire to see them thus safe from the storms which make shipwreck of so many souls.

But we must pass on to two or three of those other points in which Catholic morality is especially misunderstood by those who are not Catholics themselves. Perhaps in no one point is this misconception more complete than in regard to our belief and practice in respect to truth and falsehood. For generations this Protestant country was guilty of the glaring absurdity of imputing to Catholics a disregard of the sanctity of promises and oaths, at the same time that it refused to alter the oaths which kept Catholics out of Parliament. So monstrous are the delusions which men can practise upon themselves, that for centuries Catholics were popularly believed to keep no faith with heretics, and to be habitually guilty of perjury, while no single instance could be found of a Catholic whose conscience would permit him to take the oath which kept him a slave in the midst of a free people. And though the English nation is now beginning to think that all Catholics are not necessarily scoundrels, still we see many signs that people scarcely

trust us—that they think us slippery, deceitful, and crafty beyond other men, and are suspicious of the actual doctrines which our clergy teach respecting the duty of telling the truth.

I can declare, then, that so far as my experience and observation go, this idea is without a shadow of a foundation in fact. I never met with a Catholic priest or a Catholic layman who was not at the very least as rigid in his observance of the law of truth, both in word and in deed, as the most upright and honorable of Protestants. That a different rule is to be followed in keeping faith with heretics, from that which Catholics follow among one another, is a notion which I have never heard even broached among them, and never mentioned but as an instance of Protestant misunderstanding of Catholic opinions. I have said that, at the very least, Catholics are as honest and truth-telling as Protestants, but I might say a great deal more; I might with strict correctness add, not only that they are much better informed as to what constitutes falsehood than Protestants, from their ignorance of moral science, can possibly be, but that they exercise a rigid watchfulness over themselves in speaking which is unknown to those who do not practise confession as we do. There are a thousand little acts of trickery and deception all but universal in the world, which the Catholic knows to be absolutely forbidden by the moral law, and which he avoids as sins. From the exaggerations and embellishments of mere conversation, up to the innumerable rogueries which are thought nothing of by men of the world, we are taught to mark the line between honesty and deception with an unyielding severity of demarkation, to which the popular laxity of both rich and poor, men and women, is absolutely a stranger. I would counsel any candid inquirer who wishes to ascertain what our morals in this respect really are, to put the question to any respectable Catholic man in business, to a solicitor, a merchant, or a common tradesman, who at all bears the character of being a good Catholic, who attends to his religious duties, and to ask him whether he does not find his religion a positive *hindrance* to him in competing with Protestants, who think nothing of practices to which he entertains conscientious scruples, and who act upon lax ideas of truth and falsehood, from which he himself recoils. I am, indeed, most firmly convinced that the large majority of men who are called men of honor in the world, are habitually guilty of sayings and doings which, in the judgment of the Catholic clergy and all well-conducted Catholic laity, would be nothing better than swindling, lying, and perjury.

A similar difference from the Protestant practice, even more striking in its nature and extent, is to be observed in the private conversations

of Catholics respecting the faults and sins of their fellow-men. I have not a moment's hesitation in asserting, that the universally recognized principle on which every decent Catholic controls his tongue, is all but *unknown* even to the better sort of Protestants. I need hardly remind my readers, that in the familiar conversations of private life, it is the habit of all classes and denominations to mention the moral faults of other persons without the slightest scruple, when inclination or the turn of conversation prompts it. I am not alleging that it is thought allowable to say what is *untrue* of others, or to say what *is* true from a malicious and uncharitable spirit; but it will not be disputed that not one Protestant in a thousand considers it wrong to mention in a quiet way that such and such a person has been guilty of such and such a fault, or is influenced by such and such a sinful habit or feeling. A lady no more hesitates to tell her friend that she has just discharged her servant for theft, than to say that it is a fine morning. Gentlemen over their wine have no more scruple in repeating any stories they have heard of the immoralities of their acquaintances, than of discussing the previous night's debate in Parliament. Every Catholic child, on the contrary, is taught that not even to our nearest and dearest friends and kindred is it permitted ever to mention the moral faults of another person, unless they are matter of public notoriety, or unless the law of charity not only permits, but actually *requires* it. If I see my friend unwittingly putting himself in the power of a man whom I know to be a rogue, I am bound by my duty to my friend to warn him, in confidence, of what he is doing. If I have had proof that a certain professional man or shopkeeper is a swindler, there may be cases in which I am imperatively called upon to prevent others from dealing with him. But until I am so summoned by charity to destroy my fellow-man's fair reputation, I have no more right to make his sins a subject of private gossip than to publish them in the columns of a newspaper.

It will perhaps be said, that whether this be so or not, Catholics do not generally act on this rigid rule. I reply, however, that most unquestionably they do act upon it. I do not, of course, pretend that they never act otherwise. They are still sinners, even when most saintly, and the devil's temptations and their own bad inclinations, and evil example, at times throw them off their guard, and hurry them into the sin of detraction which they condemn. But as a rule, I assert, without fear of contradiction, that the difference between Catholic and Protestant gossip is of the most striking character. You may go to a Catholic dinner, or a Catholic evening party, where perhaps there is not one who is what may be called an eminently saintly person, and

come away without hearing a solitary syllable spoken against the fair fame of a single individual. You may hear a vast deal said of others, and much, perhaps too much, that may, at first sight, appear free and unrestrained handling of their lives and characters; but, when you calmly review what you have heard, you will find that all this discussion and merry laughter has been confined to trifling personal peculiarities, which were perfectly harmless, and that you had heard no more *evil* of your neighbors, than you hear, when you are told that a man's nose is ugly or his hair is turning gray. And the same forbearance is practised with reference to Protestants as to Catholics. The rule holds good to all alike. The reputation of every human being, from the child to the hoary sage, from the servant to the prince, we esteem a sacred possession belonging to him, of which we have no more right to rob him, than to help ourselves to a man's silver spoons, or to forge his name to a cheque. I am convinced, that no acute or watchful Protestant could mix familiarly with Catholic society, and have his attention directed to these points, without observing a difference from the state of things, which prevails even in the very best disposed and most religious Protestant society, which could be accounted for only by the admission, that the fear of God and the love of his neighbors habitually rule the Catholic's life to an extent unknown beyond the pale of Catholicism.

Here, also, I cannot forbear alluding to a subject, which, though it is very far from creditable to English Catholics as a body, is yet accompanied with mitigating circumstances, which bespeak the presence of deep-seated genuine religion amongst us in a very remarkable way. I allude to the excessive freedom and want of delicacy—to call it by no worse name—with which too many amongst us have occasionally been accustomed to handle each other's *public* acts and words, both in private conversation and in print. Compared to other classes and religious bodies, Catholics attack one another with a virulence, an uncharitableness, a reckless imputation of motives, and an ungentlemanly coarseness of language, which can be paralleled in no other society professing to be guided by religious principles, and to be restrained by the rules of common propriety. This, I say, is the way, in which we appear to the looker on, who judges us by what he publicly sees and hears, and is naturally ignorant of the existence of that numerous class of Catholics, who mourn over these lamentable exhibitions of our foolishness and bad taste, and strive to the utmost to discountenance and repress them. To our shame we have to confess, that there is scarcely a rank or order of men amongst us which, during the last ten

or fifteen years, has not furnished one or more examples of persons, who have forgotten the laws of decency and charitable feelings, and displayed themselves before their fellow-Catholics and fellow-countrymen in a character, of which every reflecting man must be deeply ashamed.

But here is the striking feature in all this violence of language and action, to which I would especially direct attention. These ebullitions of hasty temper and an uncharitable spirit of interpretation amongst us are *not* what they would be in any other class of men in the United Kingdom. They mean far less at the very time they are put forth, than they would mean in the mouths and from the pens of Protestants and men of the world; and, when the first heat, which produced them has subsided, they are not followed by those permanent feelings of ill-will and hostility which inevitably result from the quarrels of others. It is marvellous how soon this fire and fury subside, and the smoke passes away, and the astonished observer perceives the wrathful combatants locked in a fraternal embrace! Our quarrels are but a portion of the result of those penal laws, which have kept us behind the age in general civilization. Grown men among us Catholics are often like grown-up boys rather than like persons of mature years. We are rough, hearty, headlong, honest, open-minded, free of tongue, hasty of interpretation, and reckless of appearances; but then, if we have the faults of youth we most unquestionably have its virtues, and we forget and forgive with as much facility, as we take offence and abuse one another. So certain it is that if we are not always *gentlemen*, we are always *Christians*.

Again, as a further extenuation of our faults in this respect, it must be remembered, that we are extremely limited in numbers in our more respectable and educated class. The comparative proportion of our poor is enormous. Within that class, which comes forward before the public, almost every man is known to every other, so that not only can half-a-dozen wrong-headed people throw us all into confusion, but we cannot possibly separate ourselves into minor divisions, according to our personal tastes and notions, and act together without interfering with those who differ from us in subordinate and trifling details. But among Protestants it is not so. In the vast vortex of English society each phase of character, each combination of ideas, finds itself repeated again and again in numberless instances; and when a man does not like the views and feelings of his associates, he quits them, and unites in action with others more akin to himself. Thus every section in the Establishment, in the political and in the literary and

scientific world, forms its own separate republic, with its ruling spirits, its periodicals, its books, its reunions, and its very phrases of speech and of manners. And these sections rarely interfere with one another in any such way as to bring out their real animosity before the general public gaze. The country forgets the intensity of that bitterness, the irreconcilableness of that hatred, which separates the Puseyite, the Anglican, the old High Church, the Socinian, Methodist, Evangelical, and the Calvinistic dissenter, the protectionist, the free-trader, the Whig, and the man of the people, each from all the rest. Protestants seem to agree, while in reality they are the deadliest of foes. Catholics seem to revel in assaulting and smashing one another, while in reality they are practically friends, and like headlong boys, make up their quarrels while still smarting from the bruises they have inflicted on each other. I am not, of course, defending such a state of things as the highest conceivable, or the highest practicable, among Christians. On the contrary, it is deeply to be deplored, and assuredly it is speedily giving way to a more healthy and truly Catholic public opinion amongst us; but still I am bold to assert, that its very faults are the faults of genuine, sincere, and hearty, though imperfect, Christians, while their existence is alone a sufficient proof of the utter fallaciousness of the vulgar English ideas of the disciplined craft and clever cunning which are supposed to be the great weapons, with which Popery would fain subdue the world.

One more feature in the Catholic moral character must be briefly touched on before concluding this division of our subject. It is one, indeed, which demands peculiar delicacy in handling, and which a false sensitiveness might require me to omit altogether; but it is of such paramount importance towards the forming a just estimation of our religion, that I must, though briefly, allude to it. I refer to the purity of thought, word, and life which is found to exist among Catholics, as compared with their Protestant fellow-countrymen. There is no need that I should allude to the opinions that are rife in this country respecting the supposed licentiousness of foreign Catholic countries. I am testifying only to what I have heard and seen, and only so far mention the question of continental morality as to state my certainty that the *real* amount of morality or immorality which exists abroad is a subject on which the general English reader has no possible means of informing himself of the truth. I believe that there never was a Catholic country abroad, which was more sunk in sensual wickedness than England was a hundred years ago; and that whatever may have been the *temporary* criminality of the upper classes, and the inhabitants of

towns, in *some* Catholic kingdoms, their agricultural population has always been far higher in the scale of morality than Protestant England ever was; and that never was any Catholic country which retained the name of Catholic plunged into such an abyss of abominations as still are found in the *Protestant* countries of the continent.

As to the present comparative state of English Catholicism and Protestantism in this momentous element of Christian morality, I have been impressed in the profoundest degree, since I became a Catholic, with the immeasurable superiority of the former over the latter. It will be understood, of course, that I am speaking in both cases of the average class of persons in the two communions, who pay a general regard to the dictates of their respective creeds, and publicly identify themselves with the Church to which they belong. It would not be fair to compare the lives of the most devout of Catholics, with the most openly licentious of Protestant men of the world; I therefore take on each side the ordinary class of persons who go to church on Sundays, who conduct themselves with propriety and general uprightness in their private life, who conscientiously believe Christianity to be true, and are what is popularly termed thoroughly respectable persons. Comparing, then, the individuals of this class in the two communions, I perceive a difference between them in respect of purity of thought, word, and deed, which is truly astonishing, and which would probably be deemed incredible to those, who know human nature only as influenced by the Protestant creed. Undoubtedly, there are occasional exceptions to be found in the Catholic body, to what I have stated; now and then persons are to be detected among the laity—(for among the clergy I never perceived the faintest trace of any such evil)—who, under the mask of decency and religion, are more or less slaves to their vile appetites, and insensible to the rigid purity, which Christianity demands from all men; but notwithstanding these exceptions, I should be blind if I did not see, that in the point I am mentioning the Catholic Church is literally another world of beings, contrasted with the Protestant. However rude or rough, however boisterous and uncivilized, however wanting in that refinement, which has nothing to do with real morality, and is the mere result of a high state of intellectual cultivation, the society of English Catholics, whether of grown-up men or of youths, is untainted with that grossness of language and sentiment, which, with a few individual exceptions, undeniably exists in every other class throughout the kingdom, however polished and refined it may outwardly be.

I know, by long experience, what are the real habits of thought and

recognized principles of decent and respectable Protestants of every rank. I know what boys, and youths, and grown-up men, and persons of venerable age are, in the public schools, in the universities, at the bar, in the Protestant ministry, and in the higher ranks; I know what is the *tone* of thought and feeling, which is accepted by them all, as natural, inevitable, and allowable through the overpowering strength of human passions; and I cannot but perceive that the discipline of the Catholic Church is founded upon a depth of practical wisdom, and accompanied by a supernatural influence, which places *her* children, when tolerably obedient to her commands, so far above the level of the gross, sensual world, in which they live, that by most Protestants I should be treated as a deceiver for attempting to persuade them of what they account an impossibility.

No person can become familiar with a Catholic college, or with Catholic boys at home under the parental roof, without remarking this extraordinary contrast. However deficient may be the Catholic seminaries in many things which cultivate the intellect, however far they may occasionally fall short of that perfection of discipline which the Catholic Church desires of them, no man can compare their inmates with the inmates of Protestant schools, and with the general run of young men of respectable character, and fail to be astonished at what he sees. My readers may be assured that a Catholic boy, as such, is generally a different species of being from the Protestant boy. He frequently preserves his innocence, his simplicity, his openness and guilelessness of character, to an extent which I believe to be wholly without parallel among the best of Protestants. And at this very time, I am convinced that there are large numbers of grown-up Catholics in this country, especially among the priesthood, who have retained the freshness of their baptismal purity, and who know sin as a matter of *knowledge* only, and not of experience. The candid and well-meaning Protestant, whose credulity has been abused by horrible tales of Romish wickedness, and who contemplates with horror the prospect of the progress of Catholicism among the families of decent and moral England, may be assured that, could he know this dreaded religion as it is,—could he personally test the practical result of that system of self-examination, and of that auricular confession which he believes to be pregnant with frightfully defiling mischiefs, he would indignantly cast away his previous prejudice against the Catholic Church as one of the most accursed of delusions with which the enemy of men ever thwarted the Divine purposes of mercy to mankind.

I can, however, linger no more on this branch of our subject; and in

another paper shall endeavor to bring it altogether to a conclusion, by showing what are the real influences of the reception of the peculiarly Catholic religious dogmas upon the minds of those who embrace them, and how far our spiritual character is what it is supposed.

In recording my personal experience of the influence of the doctrines of Catholicism, and the remarks I have been able to make upon their influence on other Catholics, it may be as well to commence by stating the general character of that sense of relationship to the invisible world which the Catholic religion professes to work in the mind, with an efficacy peculiarly its own.

I must remind the Protestant reader, then, that the Catholic Church claims to possess a power of communicating to her children a certain definite spiritual gift, which she terms *faith*, by which a pious Catholic is not only morally certain of the truth of all Catholic doctrines, and contemplates the actual spiritual realities which those doctrines speak of, as realities, and not as mere opinions, figments of the human mind, or logical deductions, having no existence apart from the reasonings which prove them. This faith she professes to communicate originally at baptism, and to restore when lost after baptism, by a worthy participation in the sacrament of penance. It is the result of that indwelling of the Holy Ghost in the soul, which accompanies baptism in the case of all infants whatsoever, and of all adults who receive baptism with the proper dispositions. In infants it begins its work the moment the dormant intelligence awakes to life and thought; so that as fast as external teaching communicates to the growing mind the various dogmas of Christianity, so fast does the youthful Christian grasp them with the confidence of a living faith, and regard them not merely as the private opinions of its teachers, but as the word of God, and as positive, existing, and ever-present, though invisible, realities.

What, then, ought we naturally to expect to find to be the consequence of a reconciliation to the Catholic Church in the case of a person who, though rightly baptized (probably) in his infancy, and thus made a member of the Catholic Church,* has grown to manhood

* The Protestant reader will bear in mind, that the Roman Church teaches that every infant who is rightly baptized, whether by a Catholic, a member of the Church of England, by a dissenter of any denomination, including Socinians, or even by a Jew or Pagan, and whether by a man, a woman, or a child, is thereby regenerated and made a member of the *Roman Catholic Church*; and baptism is rightly conferred when the person baptizing pours water upon the person baptized, or immerses him in water, at the same moment that he utters the words, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," having himself the intention

in schism, perhaps in mortal sin, and certainly without partaking in those ordinary means of grace which Jesus Christ has appointed for keeping alive and maturing this great gift of faith which he received at his baptism? In such an individual, even if he has not forfeited his baptismal grace by mortal sin and wilful disobedience to the true Church, yet nevertheless the power of faith will be fearfully weakened, his hold upon religious truths will be feeble and trembling, and he will have become, if not like a blind man, at least like one whose eyes are dim, or who gropes his way along by the aid of the faint, flickering light of a half-extinguished lamp, instead of walking freely and courageously in the broad blaze of day. Consequently, if the pretensions of the Catholic Church be well-founded, and such a person be really re-admitted to the possession of this mysterious and wonder-working gift, he will necessarily perceive (if he be at all given to watch the phenomena of his own mind) that he has literally acquired a new faculty, that the unseen world has become to him what it was not before, and that the range of his intellectual vision is not only far wider, but far keener and more sure, than while he continued a member of any Protestant communion.

And such I have no scruple in declaring to be the case with myself, and with every person with whom I have conversed on the subject, and who was capable of instituting the necessary investigation into the processes of his own mind. And I am speaking, be it observed, not of those instances in which the convert has been undeniably a mere devotee of this world's vanities before his conversion, and in which it would be natural that invisible things should produce a totally new impression upon him, simply from the fact that now he is earnest, while formerly he was heedless of his soul, of eternity, and of God. I am examining the state of those who for years and years before their conversion, have been laboring to the very utmost of their powers, and with all apparent sincerity, to save their souls and to do the will of God; who, by constant prayer, meditation, mortification, and study, have striven to realize the mysteries of the Gospel, so far as they knew of them, and to preserve in their thoughts, an unceasing and vivid recollection of the tremendously momentous nature of that world which is unseen, but of whose existence they are convinced by irrefra-

of doing that which Jesus Christ commanded when He instituted the ordinance of baptism. The private opinions of the person who baptizes have nothing to do with the efficacy of the baptism, which depends simply upon his intending to do what our Lord commanded, whatever that was.

gable demonstrations of reasoning. Presuming, then, though most humbly, to hope that such was my own case while I was still a member of the Church of England, I cannot but be conscious, that, by submitting to the Church of Rome, and entering her pale, I *have* received a fresh and extraordinary accession to my powers of believing in the truths of Christianity and Catholicism, and of habitually regarding the objects of faith, as living, eternal, ever-present realities. To a certain extent I believe that this increase came upon me at once, the moment that I was reconciled to the Catholic Church; but as the feelings, at such a time, are naturally highly excited, it is almost impossible for a person to analyze correctly the processes of his own intelligence, either at the hour itself, when the change in his circumstances takes place, or for some lengthened period afterwards, during which the novelty of all, that is around and within, him produces effects upon the reason and the imagination which may be easily mistaken for purely spiritual results, which they have no real claim to be.

Judging, therefore, by what I have perceived to be the *permanent* result upon the mind, I venture to say, that I have found the promises of the Catholic Church to be strictly fulfilled, and that reception into her bosom does confer upon the intelligence a power both of resting with undoubting certainty upon the declarations of the Church, and of realizing the presence and various attributes of the invisible world, to an extent to which I was previously an utter stranger. That which before I found an unconquerable difficulty, I now find to vanish before a well-directed effort of the will. Those duties, which before presented a repulsive and awful aspect, commend themselves to my inclinations with a sweetness and attractiveness which enchain the better portion of my whole being, however violently the evil propensities of nature at times may rebel. Those Catholic doctrines such as transubstantiation, the invocation of saints, the efficacy of the intercession of Mary, the reality of purgatory, the value of vicarious suffering and of the indulgences granted by the Church,—these and other such dogmas, of the *truth* of which I was firmly convinced before I even thought of actually becoming a Catholic, but which I found it impossible to *realize*, with all the efforts I made, in accordance with the convictions of my reason,—all these have naturally become to me as truly a part of the eternal realities of the existing world, as the globe on which we dwell, the stars above our heads, or the bodies, with which we find ourselves clothed. I am not saying whether this is, or is not, enthusiasm, mysticism, self-deception, or any other product of the morbid action of an excited imagination; I only allege, that after instituting the calmest

inquiries into my internal consciousness, and contrasting what were my past with what are my present sensations, and again, comparing the operations of my mind towards the invisible world with its operations towards the visible, I have come to the experimental conviction, that the promise of the Catholic Church, that she will confer a new spiritual faculty upon the soul, is *not* a delusion, but that we actually *are* in possession of a mysterious power,—call it instinct, call it power of vision or contact, call it inward consciousness, or what you will,—which enables us to live on from hour to hour, under an habitual impression of the reality of the being and attributes of God, of eternity, of heaven, hell, and purgatory, and of all the varied objects of the Catholic's faith, and which I am equally convinced is *not* possessed by conscientious Protestants, as such, whatever may be their creed, or whatever their struggles to obtain it. Baptized children, who are nominally Protestants, but really Catholics, are of course in possession of this gift; and its results are so marvellous, that observant Protestants constantly contrast the facility with which their children realize the truths of religion with the difficulties they themselves experience in piercing through the veil which hides God and eternity from their gaze. Nor do I presume to allege, that Almighty God may not, in his overflowing mercy, in certain exceptional cases, bestow upon religious separatists, who are in invincible ignorance, such an extraordinary effusion of his grace, as may open their eyes, with all the clearness of Catholic faith, to the mysteries into which natural sight cannot pierce. The Catholic Church expresses no opinion as to individuals who are without her pale, and teaches nothing respecting subjects which are *not* revealed. But that the mental power of living in an habitual sense of the presence of God, and of realizing the truths of revelation, which is possessed by ordinary Protestants, even the most orthodox and the most devout, is at all to be compared to that which is the treasure of every sincere Catholic, I believe to be a purely gratuitous assumption, which will be denied by every person who, like myself, knows both Protestantism and Catholicism by his own experience and trial.

And the more observations I am enabled to make upon the mental condition of other Catholics, of all ages, ranks, and degrees of intelligence, the more numerous are the proofs I discover of the truth of what I have stated. Wherever I meet with a man or a woman, an ecclesiastic or a layman, who is even tolerably attentive to his duties as a Catholic, I perceive the same facility of believing all that the Church teaches, and of recognizing Christian doctrines, not merely as the statements of well-proved opinions, but as matters of fact. One

and all, they plainly show that to their minds the great mystery of existence is cleared up; the blindness which darkens the eyes of man by nature is in their case cured. The three Persons in the blessed Trinity, the divinity and humanity of Jesus Christ, the heaven in which the Mother of God and his other Saints are now interceding for them, the hell in which the reprobate are punished forever, the purgatory in which the imperfect souls of those who love God are purified before admittance into heaven, the real presence of Jesus Christ in his glorified body in the consecrated eucharistic species, the actual communication of pardon to the penitent in the sacrament of penance, the possession of miraculous powers by the existing Church of the present day, the benefit conferred on the departed faithful by the prayers of the living, the reality of that spiritual help which sincere prayer infallibly brings down from God into our souls;—all these things are clearly, to the Catholics with whom we daily associate, not mere doctrines or opinions, but *things*, which they no more practically forget in action, than they forget that there are twenty-four hours in the day, and that a man must eat and drink in order to live. This, I repeat, is to be observed, not only in our greatest Saints, in men and women whose whole lives are given up to prayer and meditation, or to serving Christ in the persons of his poor, but in every commonplace Catholic who has any pretensions to be sincere, and to practice heartily that religion which he professes to believe. They have manifestly received a revelation from God. The heavens have been opened to them, and they are as men who see in the midst of a blinded race.

At the same time, let it not be supposed that I mean that the Catholic is not as subject as any human being to that difficulty of fixing the *attention* upon invisible things, which forms one of the sore trials of our present state. Like the Protestant, at one time he finds it easy to withdraw his thoughts from secular objects, and, with an undivided thoughtfulness, to concentrate the powers of his mind upon the affairs of his soul; at another, with all the efforts he makes, with all the iron energy of an indomitable will, he experiences an almost absolute helplessness of thought, when he would meditate, pray, or calmly adore his Almighty Lord. His difference from the Protestant consists in this; that while the latter, when he *has* fixed his attention on the subject which he desires, finds his soul still chained down to earth, by the want of some faculty of believing without doubt, and of contemplating unseen *things*, as well as of believing certain doctrinal statements; the former, even when his attention is most obstinate in refusing to be fixed, yet experiences no difficulty in recognizing the in-

fallible truth of his creed, and in acting *towards* the objects of his faith with the same facility of energy with which he conducts himself towards what he sees with his bodily eyes. The devout Protestant will not dispute what I say, when I allege that so soon as he can disengage himself from the entanglement of his own inward thoughts, feelings, emotions, and convictions, and go directly out of himself, and fix his attention solely upon objective realities, apart from his own ideas, he is conscious of an awful, dreadful, distressing sensation of intellectual helplessness, which chills his fervor, daunts his energies, and throws him back, again and again, upon secular objects, as the only things which are really *sure*, the only things on which he knows he cannot be mistaken. If he is in any degree a thinking and candid person, and willing to subject the views in which he has been brought up to the test of rigid proof, the consciousness of the miserable deficiencies of *any* proofs which he can rely upon, repeatedly tortures and agitates him, and he feels as if he would give the world only to be convinced on irrefragable grounds that he is not trusting to a delusion of his own brain. And when he is least troubled with this consciousness of the sandy basis on which he is standing, and directs all his efforts to prayer, meditation, and contemplation of divine things, still he feels like one who is shooting arrows into the dark, and aims he knows not where. He stands, as it were, upon the edge of a beetling precipice; before him is the vast, immeasurable expanse of ether, but all overspread with a dense and impenetrable gloom; he would fain look and see *what* is the mighty landscape that he knows lies spread beneath his feet, who are its inhabitants, to whom he shall call for aid, and where he shall be received when he descends into that boundless region; but in vain he strains his eyes to see, and his ears to catch some clear response to the voice of his cry; here and there a light gleams for a few moments, and he thinks all will be manifest,—but it is gone, and the darkness seems blacker than before;—sounds—musical, wild, unearthly—float upwards upon the breeze, and then all is still; and he remains cold, trembling, hoping, fearing; and returns to his own thoughts, to his dry, unsatisfactory knowledge, to reason, to argument, to self-inspection, as the only means that remain for learning the mysteries that refuse to unfold themselves to his sight.

With us all is different. Our difficulty lies in fastening our attention, and in that alone. The cares and the pleasures, the sorrows and the joys, the excitements and the occupations, of secular life, distract and harass us; while physical weakness occasionally renders all purely mental exertion almost impossible to our enfeebled brain; so that it is

at times with considerable difficulty we can enchain our minds, and force our thoughts to be obedient to our will, and pray or meditate with a perfect recollectedness and composure of spirit. But whensoever we can do this, even in the slightest degree, and if it be only for a few occasional moments in which we force our thoughts away from the excitements which would enslave them, then do we find all clear and open to our intellectual gaze. We are not agitated by doubts; we *know* that we are right; the more we reflect, the more complete is the reasoning on which our religion is based; and the more we test it in practice, the more satisfactorily does it commend itself to our minds, and the more powerful do we find that faculty of faith which we have received. If the whole visible earth and heavens were in a moment to vanish from before our eyes, and God and his Saints and Angels were to appear before us, astounded, awe-struck, and humbled to the dust as we should be, our souls would instantly recognize the ineffable sight as the glorious manifestation of what we had ever been beholding by faith; it would be the very same world of beauty, majesty, and holiness, in whose presence we had been living, while it was still hidden from our carnal vision.*

As especially connected with this feature in the Catholic's practical condition, I may here advert to what I have found to be the real place which the forms and ceremonies of religious worship hold in the Catholic devotions. It is commonly believed that the externals of religion are accounted of far more importance by Catholics than by Protestants; and that we are practically dependent upon the accessories of public functions for the warmth of our religious feelings, in a very excessive degree. Music, painting, architecture, sculpture, incense, vestments, bodily postures, and symbolical ceremonies, are popularly conceived to be almost essential to a Catholic's prayers, or, at any rate, to be esteemed by us of a value wholly inconsistent with the spiritual character of all true worship. Now, that we think more of them than *many* Protestants do, I most readily admit and maintain. We consider

* It will be of course understood, that I am not here asserting that the Catholic does not experience those *temptations* against faith, whether in Catholicism, as the only true Christianity, in Christianity itself as a divine revelation, or in the being and goodness of God himself, which are the natural results of human infirmity, and of the snares which the devil places before our minds. These are, however, but temptations, and nothing more; and except when deliberately entertained or yielded to, affect only his lower nature, not touching his regenerate will, or preventing his offering to God the same homage of faith and obedience which he offers at those times when he is most free from such assaults and delusions.

that any *voluntary* neglect of external propriety and decency in the worship of God is a token of the absence of heartfelt love and devotion to his service. We say that it is the very law of our being, that where the heart is truly engaged, we should show, by our outward posture, gestures, and language, that it is so; just as no man who had a request to make of another, would commence it by turning his back upon him.

Further, we maintain that Christianity leads man to offer the best of all that he possesses to the visible service and honor of his God and Savior; that as by nature we offer gifts to those we love on earth, not so much for their personal advantage, as for a token and expression of our affection for them, so, by grace, man, redeemed, and regenerated, consecrates to the Almighty offerings of all that he himself holds most choice and beautiful, of all that costs him most labor and thought, of all that the loftiest genius can devise most perfect and most lovely. Thus, we say that a gorgeous public function, in which every art and science unite to complete a magnificence such as will captivate the most cold and satisfy the most severe, is but the natural *expression* of the love of the Christian's heart towards Him who gave him all that he enjoys.

Again, it is a Catholic maxim, that outward circumstances, whether ceremonies, music, forms of prayer, or postures of the body of the worshiper himself, act upon the mind within, assist it in its endeavors to realize the truths of religion, and form, in a subordinate sense, channels by which the Spirit of God excites, controls, and strengthens our purely spiritual devotions. All these principles I have found to be recognized by Catholics of every class, as elementary facts in human nature, and not to be rejected without a violation of the laws of common sense and philosophy, as well as of those of ecclesiastical regulation and devout feeling. So far, therefore, it is eminently true that Catholics think more of the externals of religion than most Protestants.

But at the same time, judging both from myself and from what I see in other Catholics of every class, I perceive that Catholic devotion stands far *less* in need of these aids than does Protestant devotion; and that when circumstances compel us, we can dispense with everything that is outward and visible in our worship of God, with a facility and even a joy, which, to those who know us not, will appear incredible. And not only so; but even when we are in possession of every delightful and appropriate accessory to our devotions, we at all times think of them, and rest upon them, and put ourselves out of the way

in order to enjoy them, so marvellously little, that at times the Catholic almost seems utterly regardless of the common propriety of outward appearances. As far as my experience teaches, persons who have been brought up Catholics can hardly understand the importance which some Protestants attach to the outward forms of devotion; they as naturally dispense with them, when called to do so, as they employ them when occasion offers. They do not refute the common charge of formalism which Protestants bring against them, for the best of all reasons, that they are hardly conscious that it *is* brought. That religion should *consist in* outward forms, in words, in postures, in rubrics, in ceremonies, or even in fasting and bodily mortification, seems to the Catholic such a palpable absurdity, that he cannot conceive how deeply the Protestant world is convinced that Catholicism is a religion of ceremonies and external acts.

Let the question be put to any average Catholic; let him be asked whether he cannot pray without an image or picture before him, without crossing himself or touching holy water, without being in a particular posture, without using one particular form of words, without being in one particular place; let him be asked whether he thinks prayer consists in saying words, and not in the direction of the thoughts and heart to God; and he will laugh at the person who supposes him capable of such childish and anti-Christian folly, and hardly believe that any man who has the slightest idea of what religion is, should suppose him guilty of such a perversion of the first elements of Christianity. I can most conscientiously declare, for my own part, that I have found the influence of the Catholic system to be such, that while it enables me to spiritualize, so to say, every outward religious form, and to infuse a living meaning alike into the most simple and the most elaborate ceremony; at the same time it has conferred on me a practical power of being independent of all external aids to devotion, when circumstances make them virtually impossible. So far from finding splendor, good taste, refinement, architecture, painting, music, more necessary than before to keep alive the spirit of devotion, and to act as wings on which the soul may mount up from earth to heaven, I have found them far less necessary, or rather, in honest truth not necessary in the slightest degree.

And what I personally experience, that I see in every one else around me. I see persons who, while they were members of the Anglican communion, were the loudest in insisting upon the immense importance of splendor and ceremonial in the public worship of God, and who were distracted and tormented in their prayers by every casual viola-

tion of strict propriety, rapidly passing from this slavish condition to a spiritual power and freedom of soul, and enabled to rule instead of being in bondage to outward circumstances. Observers, who are strange to the inward life of Catholic devotion, would be amazed at the extraordinary facility which Catholics possess in praying at all times and in all places, in the midst of noise, and bustle, and movement, which would be utterly fatal to all collected thought in themselves. I would that they who think we are formalists, and abject devotees to that splendor with which we delight to surround our great religious celebrations, would accustom themselves to visit Catholic churches and chapels at various hours in the day, or to associate with Catholics in familiar domestic life. I can assure them, that they would perceive that the soul of the devout Catholic repeatedly communes with her Lord in heaven, with a directness, an energy, and a warmth of feeling, which makes her independent of everything visible and audible around her, and enables her to pray amid scenes where the best of Protestants would find prayer a simple impossibility. In no one thing is the contrast between a Catholic and a Protestant church more striking than in this, that the former is a place, in which persons are seen to pray naturally, at all hours and in all circumstances; during the regular public service, before it begins, after it is over, in union with the officiating priest, or independently of him, in a crowd, in solitude, while the turmoil of workmen fills the air, while a choir or an organist is practicing music, while Catholic strangers are reverently walking about, while Protestant strangers are staring and lounging, on a Sunday or a week-day, for ten minutes in the midst of a walk, at a few hurried intervals while the necessities of business cause incessant interruptions, with a book or without a book, standing, sitting or kneeling, as bodily strength or accommodation may permit;—in every possible circumstance, and under every conceivable disadvantage, a Catholic church displays men, women, and children at prayer, absorbed in their own thoughts, insensible of all that passes around them, and filled with the consciousness that they are in the presence of their God.

Especially is this power of approaching Almighty God at all times in heartfelt prayer, to be noticed in churches where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved in the tabernacle upon the altar. The instantaneous and spontaneous homage which the soul of every Catholic pays to the Presence of his Lord in the consecrated species, must indeed be personally experienced in order to be adequately comprehended. It is a thing which cannot be explained in words. How it unites awe with love, fear with tenderness, reverence with joy, and obedience with

childlike freedom; how it naturally silences the voice to a whisper, bids the foot tread gently upon the floor, bends the knee in adoration, and fills the whole soul with a sense of the greatness of God, the blessedness of redemption, and the hatefulness of sin;—all this must be felt to be understood. No tongue can describe it, as nothing but the indwelling grace of the Holy Ghost can confer it. All that can be done is to remind the non-Catholic inquirer, that we have a doctrine which teaches us, that Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God, resides day and night upon our altars, imprisoned, as it were, through the excess of his love, and waiting every moment that passes to shed his boundless blessings upon every heart that comes to visit Him in penitence and affection; and to assure him that this is no empty, unpractical dogma, but a belief which is beyond expression dear to our souls, and which exerts an incessant practical influence in those places where He thus resides, to which every sincere Catholic mind delights to yield.

Here, too, I must add a word respecting that singular notion which Protestants entertain with regard to the supposed Catholic rule, that we should always pray in a set form of words, learnt by heart, or read from a book. That Catholics discountenance extempore public prayer in an *assemblage* of persons, except in peculiar circumstances, is most true; and the reasons why they do so will commend themselves to every person of common sense. But that the Catholic is taught to pray only in fixed forms of words in his closet, or even while he is joining in the public services of the Church, is as unmixed an untruth as ever proceeded from anti-Catholic prejudice. Everything I ever read in a Catholic book, everything I have ever heard since I became a Catholic, unites in teaching a doctrine the very reverse of this common accusation. I never met with a spiritual treatise which did not expressly declare, that in our secret devotions it is of the utmost importance never to check the free aspirations of the soul to God by any rigid conformity to the forms we ordinarily use; that the best prayers are those which, we may trust, are inspired by the Holy Ghost at the time we pray; and that we should have habitual recourse to set forms only because the human mind is weak and ignorant, and cannot at all times express itself fitly in its own phrases, or recollect all the details in which it is right that it should pray, and praise, and adore, and intercede. Written prayers are to the Catholic a kind of skeleton for his devotions. He is taught to clothe them, precisely as his own personal love and necessities require, with those petitions, those phrases, those prolonged meditations, or those arrowlike ejaculations, which are the

natural fruit of his own personal feelings and thoughts. The greatest masters in the spiritual life, while they advise an amount of prayer and meditation during the day, which few Protestants would not think outrageously excessive, at the same time furnish written prayers of the briefest possible character, rather subjects for prayer than actual devotions, and modeled upon the principle on which we may humbly conceive that our blessed Lord himself modeled the prayer He taught us, when He said, "*Thus*, therefore, shall you pray."

In immediate connection with the power of faith in the realities of the invisible universe, it will be natural to state the influence of Catholicism upon the general relationship of the heart towards its God and Savior. And if I have found that the popular ideas of this influence are deficient in the points to which I have already alluded, still more radically false have I found them in all that pertains to the *feelings* of man towards his Maker. The common opinion of Catholicism is, that its natural result is a sense of mingled slavery and presumptuousness; that it obscures the essentially *filial* relation of man redeemed, to his almighty Lord; that it makes religion consist in a sort of bargain between God and man, in which the former sells and the latter purchases heaven by his good works; that it substitutes superstitious dread for reverent fear, and self-trust for self-sacrifice and humility; that it almost obliterates the perfectly gratuitous character of the gift of redemption; and that the very last thing which would enter into a Catholic's mind is to teach and believe that *love* for God is all in all.

In replying to this idea, I first meet it simply with a direct negative in every one of its parts. I speak the opinion of myself and of every Catholic of whose opinions I have any knowledge, when I assert that the feeling of bondage, or slavery, does not enter for a moment into our habitual frame of mind. Strict and absolute as are our ideas of duty, of the necessity of penance, of the value of suffering, they do not in the slightest conceivable measure interfere with that sense of our filial relation to our almighty and all-holy God, which lies at the very foundation of our spiritual life, and which pervades our every thought, word, and deed. If there is any one result of reconciliation to the Church which the convert finds more striking than another, it is the sense of reconciliation to *God* through the merits of Jesus Christ, and of the transcending greatness of his love and mercy towards us. We know not what it is to be *afraid* of Almighty God; we see nothing in Him which is not sweet, attractive, touching, and inviting, even to the most abominable of sinners. We fear Him, as every creature must fear its Creator; but we are unconscious of any feeling of being driven from

Him, or of having duties imposed upon us which it is impossible to perform. Our confidence in Him is boundless; whatever our sins, whatever the enduring obstinacy of our own evil nature, we know that we only add to our guilt by keeping away from him and by doubting his mercy. We have but one cause of dread, the knowledge of the deceitfulness of our own minds, and of the possibility that, after all our prayers and our efforts, we may still be cheating ourselves, and imagining that we love God, while in reality our hearts are estranged from Him. Peace is so emphatically our possession, that, contrasted with what we perceive to be the general condition of conscientious Protestants, I do not hesitate to say that no man knows what peace with God really is until he enters the fold of the Catholic Church.

The doctrine of the absolute necessity of doing penance for our sins, though forgiven—of making satisfaction for them, after their eternal punishment has been done away with through the atonement of Jesus Christ, either by sufferings in this life or in purgatory, is supposed to be incompatible with that deep sense of joy and happiness which the Bible tells us that Christians reap from their sense of reconciliation to God. And so it will naturally seem to those whose minds are not impressed as ours are with a sense of the awful nature of sin, and of the strictness of the divine law; but nevertheless, theorize as people may, the knowledge that all sin, though forgiven, demands suffering as a satisfaction for its guilt, either here or hereafter, does *not* interfere with the fulness of the Catholic's gladness and peace, or for one moment cloud that sunshine which the hope of seeing God in heaven produces in his soul. For myself, the longer I experience, and the more calmly I examine into, the effects of the doctrine of satisfaction upon the peaceful serenity of the Christian heart, the more clearly do I perceive, the more thankfully do I acquiesce in, its perfect harmony with the boundlessness of that pardon which the death of Christ has procured for all men. And all Catholics say the same thing. Ask them, if you doubt my words, whether the knowledge that purgatory awaits them if they die with one stain of sin remaining on their souls, embitters a single hour of their lives, or calls forth a single murmur against the justice of God who demands such a satisfaction at their hands?

Again: this same doctrine of the value and necessity of suffering, as an expiation of sins which are yet at the same time forgiven, is supposed to foster a notion that man can atone for his own guilt towards God, and to be derogatory to the perfectness of that sacrifice which our blessed Lord offered up for us on the cross. As I am not engaged in an exposition of what Catholic doctrines really are, but in relating their

practical influences upon the mind, I shall not stay to show that they who bring this accusation are entirely ignorant of the true nature of the doctrines they condemn, but rather call the reader's attention to the matter of fact, which he may ascertain for himself by making the inquiry of any Catholic who attends to his religious duties. For myself, I can most truly allege, that whatever might have been my suspicions of the tendency of the doctrine of satisfaction while I was still a Protestant, no one thought has ever crossed my mind *since* I was a Catholic which tended to disparage the infinite value of the atonement of the eternal Son of God: nor has it ever entered my thoughts to esteem the sufferings of any creature whatsoever as of the slightest value, except that which they *received* from the sufferings and merits of Jesus Christ. Candid Protestants suppose that an intelligent and religious Catholic preserves himself from falling into all kinds of abominations by a perpetual balancing of one doctrine against another, by watching the effect of each separate dogma upon himself, and preventing it from producing that pernicious result which they suppose that it would naturally work if left to itself. Thus, they conceive that the doctrines of human satisfaction and of the perfectness of the atonement of our blessed Lord are naturally antagonistic to one another, and that Catholics are in perpetual peril of sliding into a state of mind which dishonors the mediation of Christ, and makes man his own redeemer. The practical result, on the contrary, shows that this fear is a mere illusion. Every Catholic who knows what the doctrines of his Church really are, is literally unconscious of any such antagonism in his own bosom. I can most solemnly protest, that so far from having found my sense of the *infinite* value of the atonement of Christ encroached upon by my belief in the doctrines of satisfaction and penance, I find that the very reverse is the case. Since I have become a Catholic, my conceptions of the boundlessness of the merits of our blessed Lord, and the utter nothingness of all man's merit, except as communicated from the merits of the sacrifice of the cross, have wonderfully enlarged and deepened, and become unceasingly habitual, and have entered into my every thought, work, and feeling, to such an extent, that the honor I formerly paid to the one atonement of the Eternal Son was comparatively a divided homage and an ignorant faith. And I am not speaking mere rhetorical words, or indulging in controversial exaggeration, when I add that, from all I have learnt and observed since I became a Catholic, I am convinced that the *only* persons in this country who truly realize the infinite value of the sacrifice of Calvary, and who depend upon that sacrifice alone for *everything* that they possess and every

thing they hope for, are the children of the Catholic Church. The incredulous Evangelical or Anglican may smile, and count this a mere effusion of angry declamation; but, on the word of an honest man, I assure them, that could they experience for one single day what are the habitual thoughts, feelings, prayers, and acts of a conscientious Catholic, they would admit the truth of what I say, when I repeat, that the ineffable perfections and meritoriousness of the death of Jesus Christ, and the complete and never-ceasing natural helplessness and worthlessness of man's works, are comprehended and accepted in the Roman Catholic Church alone.

Such also is unquestionably the practical influence upon the mind of the Catholic doctrines of free-will and the merit of good works. It is the doctrine of the Church that, though we can do nothing whatsoever that is good, not even think a good thought, without the aid of the Holy Spirit of God, yet that, in order to be saved, our will, when set free by grace, must co-operate with the Divine influence, or we shall continue lost in sin. And further, she teaches that it pleases Almighty God, in his infinite condescension, to treat our *good* deeds as meritorious, and to reward them with eternal life, although they are from first to last the work of his Spirit within us, and although, even if we were to become literally sinless, we should be for ever and ever unprofitable servants. And it is commonly supposed that, even granting these doctrines to be true, yet their *tendency* is to conceal the nothingness of man's deeds, to obscure the glory of the atonement offered for our sins, to make us forget the positive sinfulness and infirmities which cling to our holiest thoughts and actions, and to foster a spirit of audacious pride, which makes us think that we are purchasing salvation with a certain payment of our own, and that we do not from first to last owe *all* to the mercy and goodness of God. The most candid Protestants are suspicious of the urgency with which these things are inculcated by Catholic preachers and writers; they are conscious that in their own minds there *is* an incessant tendency to self-trust, to forgetfulness of their own nothingness and helplessness, and to a distrust of the unlimited promises of spiritual aid which God makes to those who believe. The purely gratuitous character of our salvation, from first to last, is a truth which, though they know to be true, they feel the greatest difficulty in realizing. They imagine that the only way by which a Christian can be preserved from this idolatry of self is by a perpetual *balancing* of one doctrine with another—by setting the doctrine of the atonement *against* the doctrine of human merit, and the omnipotence of God *against* the feebleness of man. When, then, they see Catholics never

dreaming of this perpetual qualification of truths, but insisting upon each separate doctrine as if it alone were the whole truth of the Gospel, they are staggered and confounded; they cannot conceive how such things can be done, without baneful mischief to the religious character, without fostering the most unchristian sentiments in those who are guided by such rash and careless teaching.

Again, a similar pernicious consequence is attributed to our belief in the efficacy of the intercession of the Saints. I am speaking, of course, of what is supposed by Protestants of ordinary sense and charity, who are aware that the Catholic does not positively worship the blessed Virgin Mary as God, and that we depend on her prayers, and on those of other saints, simply *as* prayers offered up for us by our fellow-creatures now in glory. As to those who regard Catholics as necessarily idolaters, polytheists, or such like, I have nothing now to say to them. Their fanatical blindness must be cured, if cured at all, by other means besides calm and rational argument. But it is notorious that, from the most ultra-Romanizing Anglican down to the mere shrewd observer in the non-religious world, it is received as an undoubted axiom, that the Roman doctrine and practice with respect to the blessed Virgin and the Saints is *naturally* antagonistic to the doctrine that there is but one essentially meritorious Mediator between God and man. Our very best friends are persuaded that, in order to avoid idolatry, we are forced to be ever explaining away some portion of our creed; that Catholic devotion sways, as it were, from side to side, now verging on a neglect of the Saints and doubts of the advantages to be derived by praying to them, now in imminent peril of dishonoring Almighty God and of depending upon creatures for salvation. It is supposed to be impossible that we should hold any one dogma of our Church in its perfect fulness, or carry it out uncompromisingly to its legitimate consequences, without violating some other article of our faith. In a word, Catholic practice, when good and religious, is believed to be a system of checks and counterbalancing, like the British constitution, in which king, lords, and commons have each a separate interest and separate tendencies, and act together (to use a mathematical phrase) by a composition of opposing forces, just as the earth is kept in its place in the solar system.

This, then, is that striking and universally true fact which I have learnt since I became a Catholic,—that while all other religions are kept from falling into the chaos of infidelity or the madness of fanaticism by such a balancing of their elements as I have described, the nature of Catholic truth is precisely and in every respect the reverse. The result of my personal experience, and of what I see all around me, is a con-

viction, which every day gains fresh strength, that the Catholic system of doctrine is the only self-consistent scheme of faith in existence. Day by day, and hour by hour, as we practice its rules and act upon its dogmas, the more amazing and divine does its wondrous harmony appear. Throughout its vast range we can detect no one solitary doctrine or custom which may not be carried out fearlessly, energetically, and incessantly to its utmost consequences, and leave no trace of injury to the perfection of the spiritual life. They have but to be correctly *understood*, and there is no shadow of danger of their leading us astray. So far from interfering with one another, or balancing one another, they are rather each a part of all the rest, a consequence of the rest, an eternally logical deduction from the rest. You cannot touch one of them with irreverent hand, without wounding the susceptibility of the remainder. You cannot doubt the truth of one of them without a measure of unbelief in every one that remains. They act together upon the soul, as friends, not as rivals; their interests, so to say, are one, not many; not only *do* they not serve to antagonize one another, but they *cannot* do so; the more vividly the soul realizes one of them, the more brilliant is the light which beams out upon her from all the rest; the more deeply and fervently she meditates upon each separate truth, the more profound is her perception of the truth and glory of the whole system, the more keen her appreciation of its descent from the eternal throne of God.

No man, I repeat, can *be* a consistent Catholic, and not learn to smile at the simplicity which accounts the honor we pay to the Saints to be a derogation from the incommunicable majesty of God. No man can love and honor Mary the mother of Jesus as we love and honor her, without feeling that the more he loves her the more he loves her Son and her Lord, and the more he honors her, the more overwhelming is his sense of the distance which separates her from Him whom she bore. The whole mass of objection, censure, pity, and fear, which the Protestant feels for the Catholic, vanishes like a morning mist when the soul once finds herself *within* that communion whose creed presents such an incomprehensible enigma to those who are without her pale. He perceives at once that he has come into a state in which the apostle's words are fulfilled in a sense of which before he little conceived, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." Such, with literal exactness, can I declare to be the influence of the Catholic system on those who are within it. I am now unconscious of the very existence of any of those chains which in former days hampered and bound down my intelligence and moral nature. I find myself in the midst

of a system which is eminently what I should expect from a revelation of the eternal nature of God; a system, not of servitude but of freedom, in which I am not called to set up one article of my creed against another, to be ever fretting myself with anxiety lest—oh, monstrous supposition!—*truth* lead me into *error*; or to exercise my private critical faculties upon the general spirit which, from its foundation, has animated and ruled the communion to which I belong, in order that I may be wiser than my fathers, and discover doctrines as scientific people discover facts in electricity or geology. I find that all I have to do is to throw myself, with all my powers, into the creed and practical system which is around me—without hesitation, without worldly caution, without nervous fear lest it fail me or lead me astray; and the more vigorously, deeply, and humbly I do this, the more does its surpassing beauty, its perfect unity amid boundless variety, its harmonious action, and its logical self-consistency, strike upon my mind, and satisfy every aspiration of which my soul is capable.

And the reader may assure himself that in saying this I am but putting into shape and words, the consciousness of tens of thousands of his fellow-countrymen. I challenge him to appeal to any tolerably intelligent person among those who have left Protestantism for Catholicism, who may be intellectually capable of explaining the phenomena of his own mind, and to ask him whether I have in the slightest degree overstated the fact when I say, that the various doctrines of Catholicism cohere by mutual relationship, and not by mutual antagonism—that they are one, as the demonstrations of geometry and algebra are one, because each depends for its very existence upon the rest; and not as a system of rules devised for a secular institution or society, by balancing one another, and by correcting one another, under the severe supervision of some external authority, which has power to enforce submission to every rule, and to see that no one regulation is stretched beyond the intentions of its framers. The inherent unity of Catholic doctrine is as complete as that visible ecclesiastical unity which it enjoins on all who obey it.

After touching on one or two more features in Catholic belief and opinion which demand a brief notice, I shall now bring my remarks to a conclusion. The first refers to that excessive credulity and superstitious delight in the marvelous which the unbelieving or philosophic observer imputes to members of the Roman Church. It is imagined that *generally* throughout the Catholic Church there exists an absurd disposition to believe that every little event which is in the slightest degree removed from the run of every-day occurrence is miraculous;

while among the more educated classes, however devout they may be, there is a practical disbelief in many things which authority countenances in the vulgar. The *popular* Catholic feeling is supposed to be groveling, debased, and superstitious to a frightful extent. What, then, is the fact, so far as I have been myself able to judge?

In the first place, it cannot be denied that, among Catholics, as among all mankind, there exists an immense variety of personal character, and that in such a matter as credulity or incredulity, this variety in natural penetration displays itself with especial force. Consequently, we meet with Catholics who, the moment any event is reported to be miraculous, instantly believe that it is so; and we meet with others who are morbidly sensitive to the peril of false belief, and refuse to be convinced that anything supernatural has taken place, even upon the most undeniable testimony. But that the former class are confined to the poor and uneducated, and the latter to the rich and cultivated, I absolutely deny, as I equally deny, that the general skepticism in the supernatural, which the world attributes to *educated* Catholics, has the slightest foundation in fact. Doubtless, men who are Catholics only in name—who were brought up Catholics, but by their lives plainly show that they have no religion at all—delight to display their superiority to what they call the vulgar follies of priests and pious fools. We have Catholics in every rank, from the highest to the very lowest, who are never so pleased as when they can mock at the silliness of a devout believer in the powers of relics, in the gift of healing, or the reality of demoniacal possession. In the peerage and the poorhouse alike, these miserable self-convicting scoffers are to be found; but they are invariably distinguished, not by the superior keenness of their intellects, for they never rise beyond second-rate or third-rate abilities, but by the laxity of their lives, the infrequency of their prayers, and the unwillingness, with which they yield to the rules of the Church even that *minimum* of obedience, which she exacts under penalty of virtual excommunication.

Among good Catholics, of whatever rank, I have found but one general belief prevailing respecting things professing to be supernatural. All hold the same principle; all believe that miracles are wrought in the present day, sometimes rarely, sometimes frequently; all believe that special graces are sometimes connected with material objects, such as pictures, images, relics, and various devotions. The only variations I have seen have arisen from the difference in different persons' ideas as to what constitutes a sufficient proof that supernatural interference has taken place in any one given instance. Those, who know how easily men are deceived in all things, and what great discrimination is

necessary to separate the miraculous from the merely marvelous, are naturally most cautious in giving credence to the reports of miraculous events which they hear from time to time; but then they are equally cautious in *denying*, without investigation, that anything supernatural has really occurred. Others, deeply impressed with the reality of that Divine presence in the Church, which can at any moment burst through the ordinary laws of nature, and little experienced in the follies, the ignorance, and the hastiness even of good men, are prone to give an instant assent to every extraordinary story they hear, and, through fear of doing wrong in denying a miracle where it really exists, rush headlong into the equally irrational extreme, of believing a miracle to have *certainly* occurred, whenever it is barely *possible* for such a thing to have taken place. Still, the principle is the same in all alike; all repudiate with horror the feeling which Protestants attribute to educated Catholics. The only distinction, that exists among them, is in the degree of evidence they require before giving their absolute assent.

That the clergy, and especially the highest authorities in the Church, are in the habit of encouraging an irrational and superstitious belief in the supernatural, so far as my experience goes, is utterly untrue. I have no hesitation in saying, that the whole spirit of Catholic Church *authority* is to throw the greatest doubt upon every professed miracle or marvel, and to refuse approval to any such reports, until searching inquiry has been made. Not that this is done with a feeling of unbelief, but from a sentiment of caution and prudence, from a knowledge that the *safe* side is to leave every private individual to entertain any opinions he chooses, and to lend the sanction of judicial authority only to extraordinary and undeniably proved cases.

I have also found that the *importance*, which is attributed to miracles among Catholics, is very different from what would popularly be supposed to be their feelings on the subject. They are as far as possible from feeling that nervous, excited interest in every miraculous story which is characteristic of a superstitious disposition. They take a miracle, when even proved beyond a doubt—to use a common phrase—wonderfully *coolly*. They see nothing extraordinary or startling in it. They think it quite natural, that such things should occasionally occur, and can see nothing astonishing in our blessed Lord's fulfilling his own promises. They feel a deep *interest* in them, just as astronomers are especially interested in the discovery or the return of a comet; they are edified, and their devotions are powerfully quickened. They are not morbidly anxious to talk about them, to boast of them, to relate them to Protestants, to see the persons who have been their subjects. They

view them as an integral portion of the vital phenomena of the Church ; as consolations to the faithful, rather than as arguments to unbelievers ; and to be received with thankfulness, rather than sought after with eagerness. I have never myself had the opportunity of witnessing a miracle, but I have received accounts of them from persons, with whom I am intimately acquainted, and who were themselves either eye-witnesses or actually the subjects of the supernatural influence. Three such instances I can at once call to mind, exclusive of those mysterious manifestations of divine power and love, the *Addolorata* and the *Estatica* of the Tyrol, whose circumstances have been more than once made public in accounts, for whose rigid accuracy I have had the testimony of several of my own friends. What these were the reader may be interested in learning.

One of these three was the instantaneous cure of the divided tendons of a woman's wrist, by the application of a relic, and that by a process which continued the miracle through the remainder of her life ; for the division between the tendons was not healed, while she regained the perfect use of her hand and arm, the cut to the bone remaining visible to the eye. This has been related to me by two gentlemen who had seen the person repeatedly, and examined her wrist. The medical man, who had attended her, though an infidel, had admitted that the cure was supernatural.

Another was related to me by the person, who was himself healed, and who is now an officer in the Queen's army, and of whose perfect truthfulness I do not entertain the shadow of a doubt. A wound in the foot, from injudicious treatment, had confined him to his bed for ten weeks, and brought him to the point of death, through exhaustion and spasms of the whole body. He was given up by his medical attendants ; and he told me, that the foot was so swelled, that he could not himself even *see* the toes. A certain relic, after the usual prayers, was applied to the wounded part ; the swelling *instantly* subsided, and in a quarter of an hour he was dressed and out of doors, and in the enjoyment of perfect health and strength. All this he detailed to me himself, relating it with the same natural simplicity as if he had been relating a cure by common medical means.

The third was the appearance of a woman after death to her husband, informing him, that she was in purgatory, and desiring him to do certain things, which I need not detail. Among others, he was to communicate what she told him to my friend, who informed me of the particulars ; and this communication comprised an account of what he (the friend of whom I am speaking) had done since her death, and

which by no possibility could have been known to any other living being upon earth.

These three cases I briefly mention, not with a view to prove them, though I could do this to any person, who wished to make the inquiry, but as facts connected with my experience of Catholicism, and as illustrations of the kind of belief in the supernatural, which still prevails among educated Catholics, both of the clergy and the laity.

Lastly, it will be expected, that I should relate the practical influence of the Catholic doctrine of the exclusive salvation of members of the Church of Rome. That doctrine, it is known to all tolerably well-informed persons, by no means implies, that none but Catholics actually are saved, but that none are saved, who have had the means of comprehending the claims of the Catholic Church upon their obedience. Well or ill understood, however, it is certain, that no one dogma of Catholicism is more hateful to Protestants than this. It galls them, wounds them, and at times stimulates them to an almost frantic hatred of the Catholic Church; as if our opinion made the slightest difference to them and their real state before God. And even the most reasonable are painfully anxious to know what we do feel respecting our Protestant fellow-creatures, and what change takes place in the mind of a convert towards those, whose views he formerly shared.

It cannot be concealed, then, that the instantaneous result of a submission to the Church, is an entire change of sentiment towards every possible denomination of Protestantism, and an alienation of *spiritual* feeling from those, with whom once we ardently sympathized. The moment I entered the Church, the Anglican Establishment became to me as nothing more than what a dream is to a waking man. A gulf—wide, deep, and impenetrable—separated my present from my past interests. What they most valued, I looked upon as a delusion; their principles I accounted to be logical absurdities; their hopes, baseless; their strength, weakness; their faith, mere fancy. Whatever might be my hope, that such and such persons among them were guiltless in the sight of God, because they really *could not* see the truth, I ceased to feel the slightest interest in their opinions, their system, their conduct,—except so far as it indicated a tendency to Catholicism, and created hopes, that they might do, as I had done.

In other respects, the Christianity (so-called) of Protestant Europe, merely occupies a place in my interests in conjunction with its political systems, and all other human institutions. It is a subject for study, for interest, for knowledge, for history, for controversy, for pity, for indignation; but my deep and real spiritual interests are as rigidly confined

within the limits of the Catholic Church, as the island of Great Britain is girt in by the waves of the seas that surround her.

But all this generates no feeling of hostility towards individual Protestants, and not the slightest disregard of their wishes or happiness. In all subjects in which religious principles, hopes, and fears do not enter, they are to me the same as before; while my interest in their everlasting welfare, and the depth of my sorrow for their condition, become greater every day. As to their state as individuals in the sight of God, I know nothing, nor do I venture to speculate, except so far as to hope for the best. And such I find to be the ordinary feelings of Catholics towards Protestants. As for regarding Protestantism with respect, or treating the theories of Romanizing Anglicans as anything but the phantoms of a diseased imagination, Catholics never dream of it. But when they come to think or speak upon the probability, that any one single person is in a state of invincible ignorance, and therefore, perhaps accepted by God as a true Christian, they invariably abstain from any conclusion. They know, that God alone sees men's hearts, knows their difficulties, or can judge them with strict justice. Such I have found to be the universal sentiment of Catholics, call it tolerance, or call it intolerance, as we may. Undoubtedly, there are wide differences amongst us as to the amount of real piety, which probably does exist among Protestants. Some Catholics, both clergy and laity, believe that very many Protestants, who have no means of learning the truth, are so sincerely devoted to God, and love Him with so pure a love, that they will be saved. Others think that almost all the tokens of piety we see in the Protestant world, are mere outward appearances, and that *the whole heart* of the Protestant is rarely, if ever, given up to the service of God. In such a subject, every man naturally has his own opinion, and every man judges very much by the kind of persons he has himself met with in the Protestant body.

For myself, I hardly know how either to hope or fear for any one, even of those of whom I know the most. I see so much, that is undeniably good, mixed up with symptoms, which seem to indicate radical mischief in the heart; and with all my fervent anxieties to believe, that great is the number of Protestants who will be accepted at the last, I can detect such rare signs of the love of God (without which none can be saved), that my thoughts respecting seemingly-religious Protestants, oscillate between hope and fear, between a conviction that they *cannot* know the truth, and a fearful perception, that they *will not* know it. A familiarity, too, with true Catholic piety renders the eye far more keen, than before in detecting real religion from its counterfeits. The

mind, that has come to know the genuine Christian character as it is manifested in the Church, perceives a falling short in the very elements of the spiritual life in those, whom it was once wont to look up to with reverence and admiration. Not that we come to look upon our Protestant friends as hypocrites and deceivers. Far from it. We give them as much credit as ever for being what they seem. But we see that they deceive themselves; that they are living in the midst of a spiritual atmosphere, which blinds their eyes to their shortcomings, and induces them to mistake morality, amiableness, and a sacrifice of *half* the heart to God, for that entire consecration of the whole man, without which all else is vain. We recognize a spirit of the most presumptuous private judgment, where formerly we saw only a deference to authority; we see a trust in self, in bodily austerities, in forms and words, and a forgetfulness, that all these are worthless without pure love, where before we thought, that this outward religion was the token of a genuine religion of the heart within; we see a disposition to make a compromise with the world, to adopt its maxims, to shrink from consequences, to close the eyes to truth, to oppose the true Church at all risks and by unscrupulous means, to overlook facts, to pervert reasonings, and to cling to the temporal advantages of Protestantism, in minds which in other days we accounted sincere, truth-seeking, and almost saintly in their devotion. And therefore, fervent as is our desire to believe all that is kind and charitable of those we have left behind, we cannot blind ourselves to the manifest tokens, that their ordinary spirit is not the spirit of Christ; and that, whatever be the unknown exceptions, he, who would find the true spiritual life of the follower of Jesus Christ, must seek it in the Catholic Church alone.

Such, then, is my experience of the effects of this mysterious and dreaded faith; and such the facts which lie open to the sight of every careful observer. I came, forced by my convictions, and almost against my will, into this mighty community, whose embrace I had all my life dreaded as something paralyzing, enslaving, and torturing. No sooner, however, could I look around me, and mark what presented itself to my eyes, than I saw, that I was in a world, where all was as satisfying as it was new. For the first time, I met with a body of men and women, who could talk and act as Christians, without cant, without restraint, without formality, without hypocrisy. After years and years of disappointment, in which, the more deeply I saw into the hearts and lives of Protestants of every class, the more clearly I perceived that the religion they professed had *not* become their second nature, but was

a thing put on, which did not fit them, which confined their movements, and gave them an outward look, while it was not wrought into the depths of their being,—after years and years of this disappointment, in which the contrast between the Bible, which they praised, and the spirit of their own lives, and the doctrines they preached, struck me more bitterly each succeeding day,—at length, I found myself in the midst of a race, with whom Christianity was not a rule, but a principle; not a restraint, but a second nature; not a bondage, but a freedom; in which it had precisely that effect, which it claims to produce upon man; in which, not a few hours, or an occasional day, was set apart for religion, but in which *life* was religious; in which men spoke at all hours, and in all occupations, of religious things, naturally, as men speak of secular things, in which they are deeply interested; in which religious thoughts and short prayers were found not incompatible with the necessary duties and pleasures which fill up the round of existence; and in which, the more deeply I was enabled to penetrate below the surface, the more genuine was the goodness I found, and the more inexhaustible I perceived to be those treasures of grace, which divine goodness places at the disposal (so to say) of every soul that seeks them within this favored communion.

And now, when so long a period has elapsed since my first submission to the Church, that everything like a sense of novelty has long passed away, and I have tested experimentally the value of all that she has to offer: now that I can employ her means of grace, and take a part in the working of her system, with all that ease and readiness of action, which long practice alone can bestow; the more profound is my sense of her divine origin, of the divine power, which resides in her, and of the boundless variety and perfection of the blessings she has to bestow. The more I know her, the more complete do I perceive to be her correspondence to what she professes to be. She is exactly what the one Church of Christ is proclaimed to be in Scripture, and nothing less, and nothing more. She makes her children what she promises, with a literal fulfilment of her words, but she has no indulgence for the dreams of fanaticism, or for the theories of those, who would have the Church of Christ to be fashioned after their model, and not Christ's model. For those, who would really ascertain what her doctrines are, nothing is easier of comprehension, and nothing can more abundantly repay the study of a whole life. Her moral system, elaborate as it is, and adapted to almost every emergency, which the boldest imagination can conceive, is found in practice to be as simple and direct in its operation as the elementary laws of the physical sys-

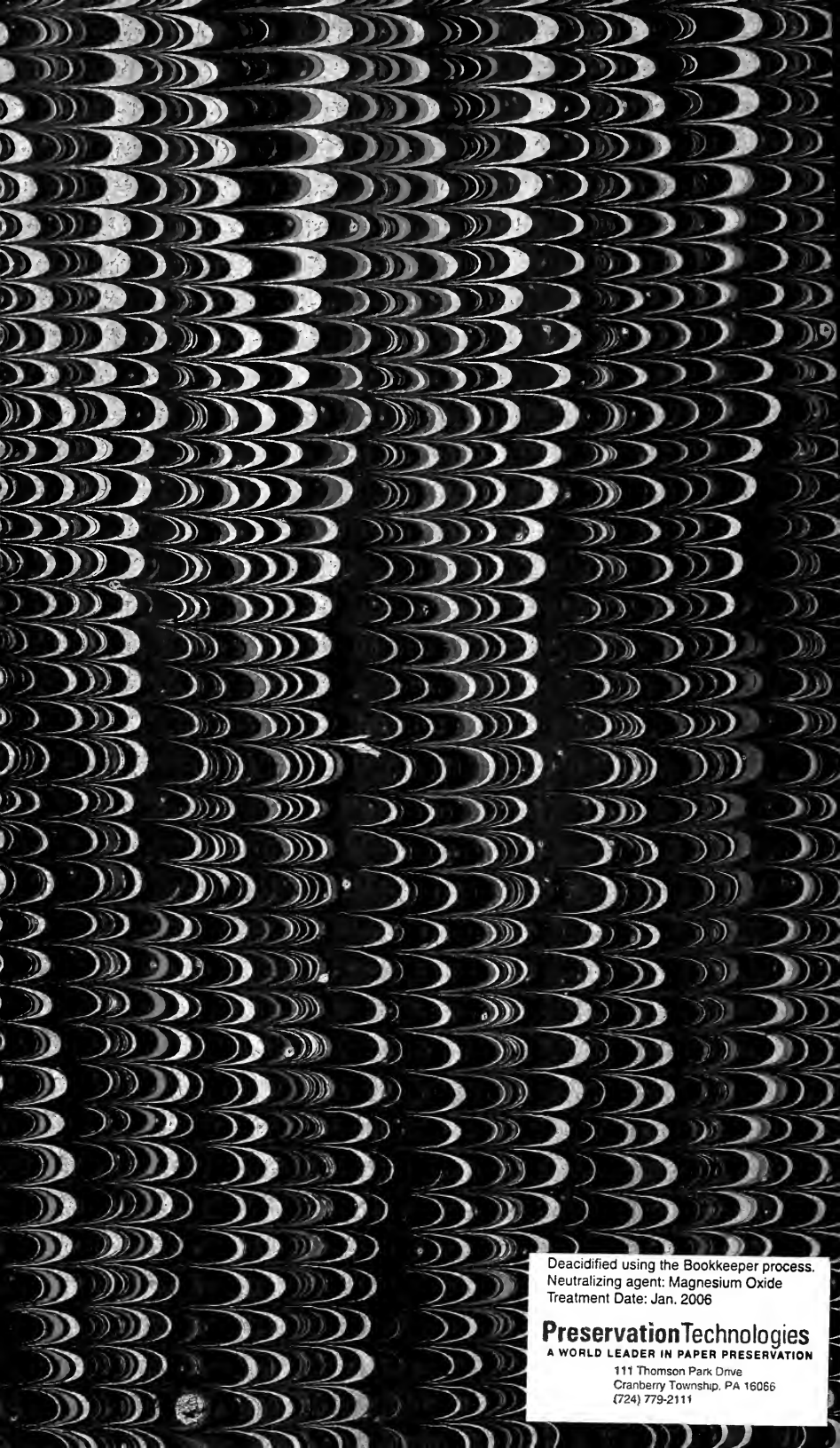
tem of the universe. Wherever she is touched, grace flows forth; wherever she is leant upon, she puts forth an arm to support those, who trust her; wherever she is tried in argument, she comes forth more gloriously unassailable, the more rigorously she is tested by proofs, and the more thoroughly she is known as to facts; and wherever she is tried by personal experience, she displays her adaptation to all the wants, the aspirations, the sins, the infirmities, and the powers of the soul of man.

Truly, can I say with the patriarch, "The Lord is in this place, and I knew it not. This is no other but the house of God, and the gate of heaven." The Catholic Church *can* be nothing less than the spiritual body of Jesus Christ. Nothing less, than that adorable Presence, before which the angels veil their faces, can make her what she is, to those, who are within her fold. Argument is needed no longer. The scoffings of the infidel, the objections of the Protestant, the sneers of the man of the world, pass over their heads, as clouds over a mountain-peak, and leave them calm and undisturbed, with their feet resting upon the Rock of Ages. They *know* in whom they have believed. They have passed from speculation to action, and found that all is real, genuine, life-giving, and enduring. Such, with all my sense of the awful mysteriousness of the world, which is still invisible, of the fallaciousness of human knowledge, and of the argumentative points, which controversy will ever urge against the claims of the Catholic Church,—such is the result of my experience of her aspect towards those, who repose upon her bosom, in order that they may gaze upon the lineaments of her countenance. As a child that rests upon its parent's breast, pressed to her heart with a tenderness that nothing less than a mother can bestow, and from that place of peace and security looks up into her eyes, and there reads the love which is its sweetest joy, so do I watch the aspect of her, who has clasped me in her arms, and sustains me, that I should not fall, and know, that she is indeed the *mother* of my soul. I know only one fear, the fear that my heart may be faithless to Him, who has bestowed on me this unspeakable blessing; I know only one mystery, which the more I think upon it, the more incomprehensible does it appear—the mystery of that calling, which brought *me* into this home of rest, while millions and millions are still driven to and fro in the turbulent ocean of the world, without rudder and without compass, without helmsman and without anchor, to drift before the gale upon the fatal shore.

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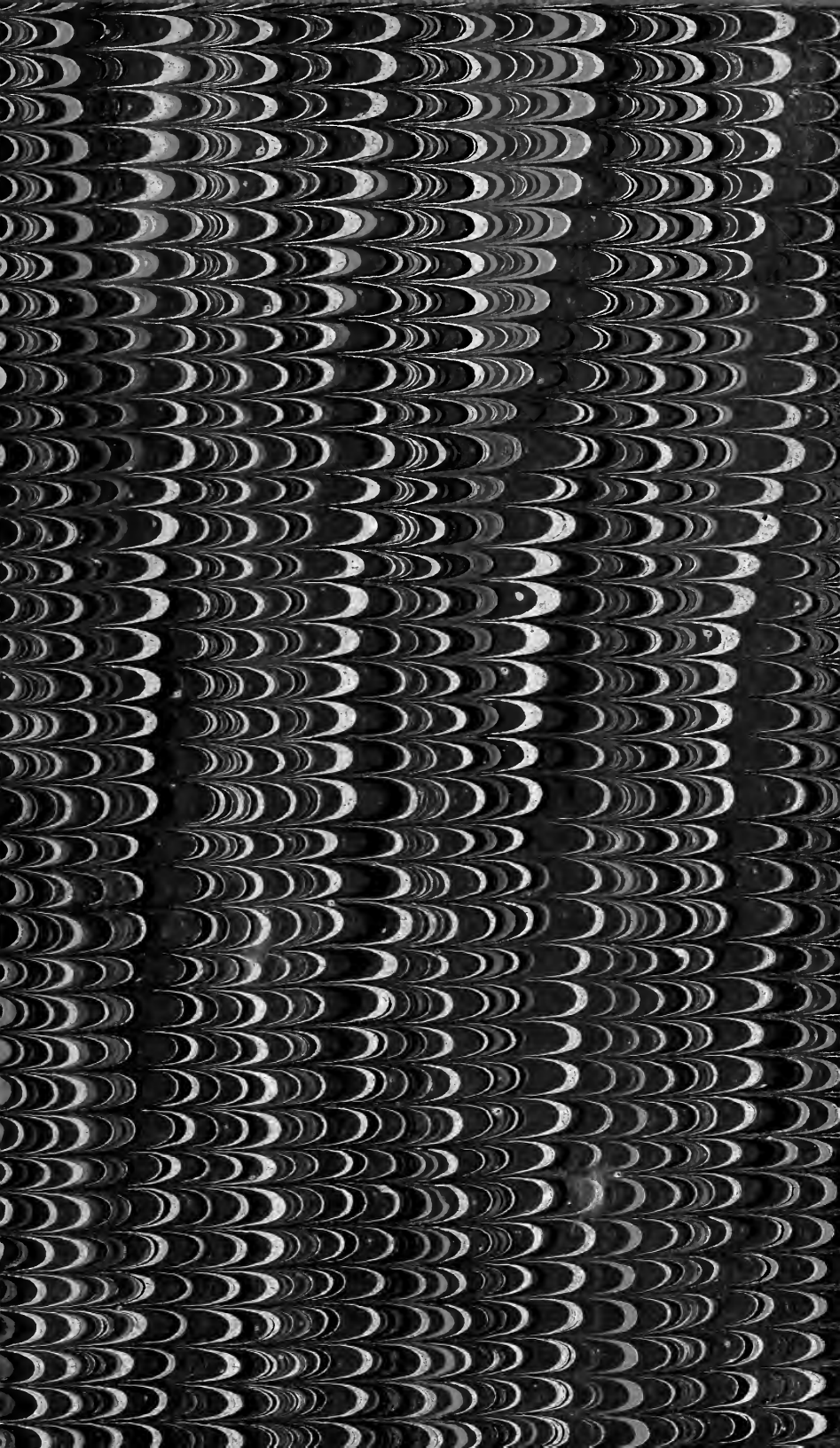




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