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THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST

FROM

PASCAL

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THE DIVINITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

FROM

PASCAL

A COMMENTARY

BY

WILLIAM BULLEN MORRIS

OF THE ORATORY

Seigneur, je sais que je ne sais qu'une chose;
c'est qu'il est bon de vous suivre,
et qu'il est mauvais de vous offenser.

—PASCAL

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CONTENTS.

SUMMARY.

CHAPTER I.

PASCAL'S WAY TO BELIEF.

CHAPTER II.

THE JEWS AND THEIR ABIDING TESTIMONY.

CHAPTER III.

THE PROPHECIES.

CHAPTER IV.

OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

CHAPTER V.

THE NEW UNBELIEF.

PREFACE.

If asked, why amongst defenders of Revealed Religion, I look to Pascal for my text, rather than to any of our professed theologians, I answer, because Pascal was a layman, and no theologian. In Protestant England, laymen have long been, and are still, the most popular, and perhaps the most authoritative, advocates and expounders of Christian truth. I doubt much whether in the long line of her bishops and divines, from Cranmer to his present successor, any of her ecclesiastical writers have had as much influence on the religion of the nation as Shakespeare, Milton, Johnson, Burke and Coleridge, and in our own times I may add Mr. Gladstone, and Mr. Balfour. In Scotland, where a more logical religion has prevailed, and principles as far as they went could be tested, exact learning, and special

training have been more esteemed; but if we are to believe Carlyle, no bad witness on this point, Biblical knowledge, as well as the spirit of the old Covenanter, are now well nigh things of the past in the land of the Scot.

If, then, I am right in thinking that all those who in England, "glory in the Christian name," to borrow the words of Leo XIII. in his recent "Letter to the English people,"[1] are disposed to take into account the opinions and arguments of a religious layman, I may hope that a short summary of those of Pascal will not be unacceptable. Pascal never studied theology in the strict sense of the word, and more than this, he plainly tells us that he shrank even from the idea of assuming the place of a teacher of this science; and his most fiery opponents have never questioned the candour and simplicity of Pascal's words when speaking of himself. In the *Pro-*

[1] *Ad Anglos . . . quotquot gloriantur Christiano nomine.*

cincial Letters indeed, he gave his own views on "Cases of Conscience"; but this is a subject on which all men have their opinions, at least so far as their own consciences are concerned: and when Pascal did more than this, he candidly tells us that he was merely the spokesman and agent of theologians, on whose wisdom and honesty he unfortunately placed too much reliance.

In dealing with the fundamental evidences of Christianity, Pascal is himself and nothing but himself, and takes his stand on that ground which is common to every believer, lay and clerical, learned and unlearned. That which is uncommon is the extent of ground which he covers in a single sentence, and the way in which he enters into the difficulties, and identifies himself with the minds of men in all stages of the world's conversion. He makes himself a Jew with those who listened to St. Peter, a Pagan with the hearers of St. Paul, and carries the scepticism of Montaigne beyond

the inventor, by proving that it runs away with itself (*S'emporte soi-même*), leaving the sceptic precisely where he was before; so that it is hardly too much to say that his mind is an epitome of the assent of human reason in all ages to the Revelation from on high; and so it may turn out that modern minds, which certainly seem more complex than those of former days, may find that Pascal's rare gift of impressing unity on variety will be a help in their religious entanglements.

The idea I had on starting was to bring Pascal face to face with some of the most popular expounders of that wild medley styled "The New Unbelief," but as I advanced into the heart of my subject, a feeling grew upon me that there was a sort of profanity in the process. There is something sacred in the earnestness of Pascal. Even when, in the *Pensées*, he is ironical, there is never any sign of that amusement which other men find in the contradictions and follies of their fellow-men. I have there-

fore separated the text of Pascal from the study of modern unbelief, which will come as a separate chapter at the end of the book, in the hope that the contrast will be an argument in itself, and that the mind of the reader may revert from the spectacle of modern chaos, to the vision of ancient truth in the soul of Pascal.

I have my fears that some parts of this book may displease certain minds, seeing that it is partly made up of evidences in favour of belief, taken from writers whose names will seem very much out of place in pages devoted to so august a subject as the present. But for this style of argument I have the example and the sanction of great authorities in other countries, and especially in France, where the battle for belief has been fought out so long and vigorously.

It will be no small point gained if it is made clear that intellectual eminence has no necessary connection either with the bold denials of the aggressive atheist, or the languid and impotent queries of the agnostic.

One practical way of meeting this very widespread prepossession is from the confessions of witnesses like Napoleon, Rousseau, and Lord Byron—men whose daring spirits, and ungoverned passions would naturally lead to universal lawlessness, the denial of God, and of the requisitions of His justice. A careful and what may be called a critical study of the characteristics of genius, brings out the fact that it has ever been on the side of belief, so long as it condescended to associate with common-sense; which comes to this, that reason in its highest manifestations, has always found its way to God, so long as it was reasonable. We find indeed in contrasting the style of men such as those above mentioned, with that of Newton, Johnson and Burke, how essential is earnestness and dignity of moral character for success in religious discussions. Common-sense after all is only man's servant, and in religion he must have a master, otherwise his recklessness and frivolity, and still more his passions are certain to stultify

the conclusions of reason. It is loss of time to attempt, either to meet or to make any use of the admissions in favour of religion on the part of the professional unbelieving *farceurs*, and jugglers of reason, of our own times; but it is otherwise with infidels of old like Bolingbroke and Rousseau, who wrote before the invention of words without meaning, and arguments without conclusions. The chivalrous De Maistre, and the equally chivalrous Montalembert are impatient with the Abbé Emery, and Père Lacordaire for the use they make of Lord Bacon, and Napoleon, as witnesses to religion. It seems as if they cannot believe that there may be faith without works, as well as works without faith. If we only take the evidence of the perfect, how are we to know the way in which the mind of man goes astray? Experience as well as reason were with Byron when he said, "The difference between a religious and irreligious man is that the one sacrifices the present to the future, and the other the future to the pres-

ent"; or again, "Blindness is the first-born of excess". Moreover, if with De Maistre we suppose that Lord Bacon, and others like him were hypocrites when they witnessed to the truths of Christianity, we are met by the difficulty that the best things these writers produced are those in favour of religion. This is proved by the fact that they still delight and satisfy the most critical Christian minds, whereas, their own distinctive views, and wild and extravagant philosophical speculations, are as little respected by those who make use of them, as those writings of Byron which, in bold defiance of reason, he confesses were written at midnight under the influence of alcoholic stimulants. Truths committed to ink and paper have a life and unity of their own as real as a picture, and no writer using intelligible words, has ever yet succeeded in winning the enduring assent of mankind unless he himself believed the things which he wrote. I am convinced that Lord Campbell's verdict on the religious opinions of his great

predecessor, when he says, "I know not what right we have to question his sincerity" (*Life*, p. 229, 1853), is more just than that of De Maistre. "Bacon," says Card. Newman, "was too intellectually great to hate, or condemn the Catholic faith; and he deserves by his writings to be called the greatest of Protestant philosophers" (*Idea of a University*, p. 319. See pp. 118, 444, 446, 448, 455, 469, for his estimate of Bacon's philosophy). Lord Bacon lives in history as a sad and terrible example of one of whom St. Bernard would have said that "his mind was in heaven, and his will in the mire".

Cardinal Newman, Lacordaire, Nicolas, and amongst Protestants, Canon Liddon, have made good use of Napoleon's clear and sublime profession of faith in the Divinity of Jesus Christ. If, therefore, with such mixed auxiliaries, we can put together a consistent argument in the form of a commentary on Pascal, it ought to go some way in proving that inherent life and unity

in our subject, which, like the vital force which subjugates matter in the living organism, masters evidence and makes it part of itself.

The Oratory, London,
May, 1898.

CHAPTER I.

PASCAL'S WAY TO BELIEF.

The agreement of several great minds on any point is an argument in itself more convincing than the testimony of innumerable minds of an inferior order, and it is all the more cogent when they are even violently opposed about conclusions which leave untouched the fundamental principles on which they agree: the following is an illustration. Bishop Ullathorne relates that in a controversy between the Catholic Bishop Gibson, and Edmund Burke, shortly before the death of the latter, the bishop observed that "If all sects separated from the Catholic Church were assembled in jury to judge any single Catholic, *on each point* there would be a majority to approve his

Faith. For where any Protestant sect raised a point, the majority derived from the Eastern sects, and from other Protestant sects, would be on the Catholic side; and where there is an error in an Eastern sect, the other Eastern, and the higher Protestant sects would be on the Catholic side. Burke sunk his head between his hands, and remained astounded. After a time he lifted up his face full of wonder, and exclaimed: 'An amazing truth! an astounding argument! I will go and tell it to Fox, and I hope to see you again.'" But soon, concludes Bishop Gibson, he died.[1]

If then we can carry on this style of argument, and assemble a jury of the greatest minds whose opinions are enshrined in our own mother tongue; and if we find that on

[1] *Memoirs of Lady Chatterton*, Dering, p. 218. We have here an interesting proof that time had healed the breach between Burke and Fox. Fox had learned wisdom, and is reported to have said to some one who observed that Burke was a "splendid madman," "mad or inspired," he replied, "fate seems to have determined that he should be an uncommon political prophet". Prior's *Life of Burke*, ii., p. 275.

the subject of the Divinity of Jesus Christ their ideas, and their way of expressing them, were identical with those of Pascal, it will serve to make us more at home with him. For many reasons Pascal is a writer who requires an introduction to what is called the "cultured" mind of the day. His clear and unquestioning convictions about things which modern philosophy has carried off far from the world of common-sense, and common language, into the interminable region of abstractions, adjectives and impersonals, arouse incredulity in minds which have been trained to suspect conclusions. Pascal is the very antithesis of the philosophy of the unknown: no one is so clear about what he knows, and he is equally clear as to what he does not, and cannot know.

I begin by confessing that this writer, whom I have undertaken to interpret, *Ce génie effrayant*, as he is styled by Chateaubriand, amazes me more now, than when some forty-five years ago I first attempted to master him; but after all, this is as it ought to be when we take a guide to go before into regions above us. I believe these

feelings are a common result of the study of Pascal, and that the will to do what I am now attempting, has arisen in many who have been held back by a feeling something akin to that of Shelley, who said that "reading Dante was unfavourable to writing, from its superiority to all possible compositions".[1]

It is time, however, that some one should make the attempt.[2] Here is a writer whose genius has for centuries been the wonder and admiration of men of every shade of opinion: whose *Pensées*, *obiter dicta*, jottings for his own use of thoughts that passed without effort through his mind, have become the solid basis of the deepest arguments of the Christian apologist, and the rock on which Voltaire, and Condorcet have been broken in their vain attempt to undermine his reasonings: reasonings which, taken where and when you will, alone, or in their context, like a leaf from a flower are always perfect. Moreover, in no

[1] *Conversations of Lord Byron*, Medwin, i., p. 232.

[2] I am not aware that even in France any writer has attempted to separate Pascal's *Christian Evidences* from the literary, and other *obiter dicta* of the *Pensées*.

sense is Pascal of the kindred of those meteoric philosophic inventors who for a time dazzle, puzzle, and disappoint their generation, leaving them in darkness deeper than that in which they found them.[1] The reasonings of Pascal on all matters which belong to the world of common-sense, are as clear and irresistible now as ever they were: and to this piercing and imperial intelligence, the Divinity of Jesus Christ was a truth as certain as any problem in that Mathematical Science of which he was so great a master.

Perhaps the inflexible character of Pascal's mind may also account for the fact that so little has been done to give a consecutive form to his evidences, and reflections on the greatest subject which can occupy the mind of man, so that our acquaintance with them is chiefly derived from gems shining here and there in the pages of Nicolas, Hettinger, Lacordaire and other Christian apologists.

[1] I think it is the poet Clough who says of Carlyle, "He led us into the wilderness, and he left us there," and the same despairing judgment on his master is found in Froude's *Nemesis of Faith*, p. 35.

It is hard to make his ideas run in the groove of any other style. This at least has been my own experience. Starting with the intention of doing something consecutive, at the end of two years I have had to modify my idea, and to content myself with a sort of broken commentary: in fact, thoughts suggested by "Pascal's Thoughts". If M. Havet is right, this is not to be wondered at. In his very profound *Etude sur les Pensées de Pascal*, he considers it doubtful whether even Pascal himself could ever have satisfied himself that he had reached his own immeasurable ideal of what his subject demanded.[1]

[1] Si Pascal a peu écrit, et jamais rien d'entendu, ce n'est pas seulement, je crois, parce que la santé lui a manqué, mais aussi parce qu'il exerçait sur sa pensée une rigueur de critique qui le rendait trop mal aisé de contenter, et par laquelle l'exécution d'un grand ouvrage devenait un travail au-dessus des forces humaines. On dit tous les jours que s'il eût achevé les *Pensées*, il eût fait un livre incomparable, mais on peut douter que ce livre, si difficile, et qu'il aurait recommencé sans cesse, eût été jamais fini. *Pensées*, p. 3. References are to M. Havet's edition in one vol., Paris, 1892, as being easiest of access.

It was Pascal's intention, interrupted by his death, to have put aside every other study and interest, that he might devote ten years to a work on Christian Evidences; forging and uniting the links of a chain which should bind the earth to the throne of God, and the fact that the writings which he has left on this great theme were never meant for the eyes of other men, being merely his own private reflections and conversations with God, gives them a special character and charm not unlike that which attaches to the contemplations of St. Teresa.

No one who values Christ, and the truths which He has taught, can refuse to pay homage to the genius of Pascal. The ages are strewn with the wrecks which mark the wild course of the ungoverned genius of man, and yet the world, ever young and heedless, follows the same tracks. Which of its sages or prophets has ever brought his own ship to a haven of rest, or taught any one else the way of peace? One by one the brightest minds, and the noblest hearts have either like Lucifer "lost their wisdom in their brightness," or have sunk victims to

those sensual pleasures which one, himself a despairing captive, likens to—

> *. . . Snow that falls upon a river,*
> *A moment white, then gone for ever.*

"Reason," says Pascal, "rules us far more imperiously than any master: for in revolting against the latter a man is miserable: in revolting against the first he is a fool."[1]

How many there are who, wearied and disappointed by adventurers and speculators in philosophy, as false to the head as to the heart, have renewed their youth in the pages of Pascal. He attracts those who are prepossessed against writers whose profession is to lead men to God; and although this is as much as to say that those who devote their lives to religion are the least trustworthy witnesses, still we cannot ignore a prejudice which is so very general. Neither is this prepossession always unpardonable, if it is granted that some people's minds are now as much a *tabula rasa* regarding Revelation as were those of Tacitus, or Pliny. This apparently was at one time the state of the

[1] *Pensées*, p. 175.

mind of Napoleon, until he fell back on the thought that the greatest philosophers have been believers, men who seemed, as he strangely remarked, to have no special concern with religion.[1]

If ever there was a man who appeared to have the intellectual and moral preparations for an intellectual rebel, it was Pascal: so much so that in the face of his devotion to the cause of religion, which resembles that of a saint, people are found who are staggered as to the reality of the subjugation of his mind to belief. Moreover, from youth up he never seemed to have had an

[1] *Mémorial de Sainte Hélène*, Las Cases, iii., 249. The fact that Napoleon singles out Bossuet, Newton, and Leibnitz as representing the highest gifts of the human mind, shows that he estimated military genius at its true value. It is plain from many passages in his conversations that he considered his Code Napoléon to be a greater work than Austerlitz. I cannot find that he ever came across Pascal. Probably in his time Pascal was buried under the rubbish of the Commentaries of Voltaire, and Condorcet. If he had known Pascal, this extraordinary genius would have recognised a kindred intelligence in a higher and nobler field.

intellectual master. He anticipated truth rather than learnt it, and therefore we fail to discover in him that enthusiasm for his teachers, which colours the early productions of most writers, which, while it is a key to their own minds, sometimes lays them open to the charge of being mere echoes of others who have gone before; and it may be remarked that this independence is one of Pascal's recommendations with those who are jealous of acknowledging that they owe anything to their intellectual ancestors. Here indeed they have one who is self-sufficient in the highest sense of the word; for his confidence in himself does not make him ridiculous. The subjugation of such a head and heart, a subjugation so absolute that he can only cry out, "Lord, I know that I know but one thing; that it is good to follow Thee, and evil to offend Thee," is an argument from head and heart together, more cogent than logic and eloquence; so that I think it is M. Havet who says, speaking I presume for France, that it is probable that not even Bossuet

has saved as many souls from infidelity as Pascal.[1]

It may also be safely affirmed that the new spirit which is appearing in literature, *Le Mouvement Neo-Chrétien*, as it is styled in France, is in great part to be attributed to the influence of Pascal. His brevity is very much in his favour with people who prefer the labour of thinking to that of study. A little of Pascal goes a great way; and no one whose mind has been at once exalted and purified by his influence can ever return with relish to the obscene blasphemies of Voltaire, or the critical frivolities of M. Renan. "Pascal," says the writer of his life in the *Biographie Universelle*, "is, perhaps, the greatest of philosophers, taking philosophy as the art of appreciating the true value of things; man's knowledge of himself, and the under-

[1] It is remarkable that Hettinger in his great work, *The Apology for Christianity*, gives twenty-six quotations from Pascal's little work, and only twenty-four from Bossuet's immense treasures of erudition and criticism.

standing of his destinies and duties."[1] and if this estimate reduces him to the simple dimensions of a man of supreme common-sense, faint praise in an age when philosophers profess to transcend this common, and therefore vulgar, attribute of reason; still it is certainly the character which Pascal himself would have most esteemed.

This then is the writer, so great in his simplicity, who, as it were, spontaneously and without help from any one, "marked out in his *Pensées* with mighty strokes" the chief lines of that all-embracing Revelation which recalls the religions of the ancient world to that of the Jew, and reveals Jesus Christ as the fulfilment of all.[2]

In these countries, side by side with the perplexity, confusion and indifference which followed the religious revolt of the sixteenth century, we have had some like Pascal: men who with Newton, Johnson and Burke, have set a high value on their own, and other

[1] Art. "Pascal". See also "Bayle," *ibid.*

[2] This is the substance of Lacordaire's judgment on Pascal. Nicolas, *Etudes Philosophiques sur le Christianisme*, I., xvi., 19th ed., 1868.

men's souls, and treated fraudulent, or even frivolous speculators in religion, with as little consideration as the world gives to the swindler, and to such as these we owe the best part that remains of our ancient civilisation. But outside the world of sanctity, so little valued, or noticed in literature, religion has had few so devoted servants as Pascal. Others have witnessed to it by the way, as occasions arose: with Pascal, as with Dante, religion was the centre around which everything worth loving in his own life, and in that of other men, revolved. But he goes further, and by pure logical, or mathematical reasonings, which in their essence are the same, he brings "into captivity every understanding unto the obedience of Christ".[1] It is true that this style of reasoning does not fit every subject. It will not work in the same way in the investigation of doubtful questions wherein truth is often only found in the balance of apparent contradictions, and therefore the fact that Pascal makes it work

[1] 2 Cor. x. 5.

successfully in dealing with Christian evidences is a proof that these evidences, reduced to their primary and essential elements, have all the certainty of mathematics. When therefore Pascal, dealing with the proofs of the Divinity of Jesus Christ, in language which disdains every attempt at artifice or decoration,[1] is absolute with reason, and forces it on to the conclusion, with all the inflexible rigour of the mathematician, the objector gets at any rate as far as this; either Pascal is right, or he is a better reasoner than Pascal. Every one who has asserted the same truths has believed as much as Pascal, but no writer since Tertullian has held the mind in such an irresistible grip, or carried it with such rapidity to its conclusions: he is the Napoleon of logic, and it is remarkable that a similarity has been observed in their handwritings.

Starting with the idea of a Creator, and

[1] Pascal's refusal on principle to make any concession to taste when seeking truth, is seen in his defiance of the rules against tautology: when a word expresses his meaning he always uses it again.

ever active Governor of the World, he comes to Christ as the centre, and end of prophecy fulfilled, and the possessor of gifts exceeding even the imagination of man; and then he leaves the mind with one of two alternatives: to deny all, or to confess all. It is true that he goes too fast for some people; as well for those who stop to remove obstacles, or want to take breath and cull flowers on the road, as for those who would wait and wonder and adore. Probably some, or all of these were the difficulties of Chateaubriand, whose admiration was mingled with fear as he followed the flight of the genius of Pascal, advancing from things that are capable of proof to those that are beyond proof, ascending and descending, as all religious reasoning must do, from the visible to the invisible, from creation and the mind of man to God, in the spirit of that wisdom which "Reacheth from end to end mightily and ordereth all things sweetly".[1]

Every one, on his way to belief, does not

[1] Wisdom viii. 1.

want the guidance of a mind like that of Pascal. Genius is no more an essential in a teacher than a talent for poetry or music. No one has taught this truth with such sublime scorn of intellectual pride as Pascal himself. But for all that it does seem as if for some it is a necessity, and that they will only submit to those whose intellect seems to them greater than their own. It was so with St. Augustine, who has been given to men as the type of the strong proud intellect struck down and subjugated by the stronger power of grace. He tells us all this himself, and who has ever laid bare the ways of the head and heart like Augustine? He tells how, in the prime of life and the plenitude of his powers and his fame, he listened to St. Ambrose "lifting the mystic veil, and laying bare the spirit, when the letter seemed to me an error, saying nothing which displeased me, although as yet I knew not whether what he said was true. I held my heart from all assent, fearing some pitfall; and more and more I was tormented unto death. I wished to be as

sure of things I saw not, as that seven and three made ten. . . . And all the while your merciful sweet hand, O Lord, was touching and fashioning my heart little by little, as I considered how innumerable were the things I believed, which I had neither seen, nor been present when they were done; so many in the histories of nations, so many in the records of places and towns which I had never seen; so many from friends, and physicians, which we must believe under pain of the utter stagnation of life."[1]

If, then, it is possible to make Pascal arbiter between religion, and modern philosophy, it may be a step towards their reconciliation in an age when, in all its contending forms, philosophic literature is the great antagonist of religion. Let us hope that this is not so gigantic an undertaking as it at first sight appears. After all is it not the experience of those who have read many books that truth is given to man in limited quantities, and that it is the same

[1] *Confessions of St. Augustine*, book vi., 4 and 5.

wherever we find it? The small number of writers who have perpetuated anything like intellectual dominion, and the fact that it is by agreement, not by difference that they reign, are an evidence of this, and it is as manifest in philosophy as in other intellectual provinces. If therefore we find that such men as Bacon and Newton, our acknowledged masters, worked their way to religious conviction on precisely the same lines as those of Pascal, it ought at any rate to convince us that it is possible to be at once a philosopher and a Christian. Unfortunately, with many people in our times, philosophy has got a bad name. It is supposed in some way to be hopelessly divorced from common-sense, and to be a mere arena for the mental tournaments of dreamers who are unfit for anything else. But when its antagonists fling at it the lines,

> *Physic from metaphysic begs defence,*
> *And metaphysic calls for aid on sense,*

they ought to go on to Pope's conclusion:—

> Philosophy, that lean'd on heaven before,
> Shrinks to her second cause and is no more.[1]

Although philosophy cannot take us to heaven, like wine, "it is a good servant if it is not abused". Neither physics, nor metaphysics are to blame when man avails himself of his power to make them the servants of his own intellectual frivolity. It is man, not philosophy, who has to pay the penalty when he sets matter against mind, and mind against the traditions, and tribunals of common-sense, and his degradation and misery bear witness to the height from which he has cast himself. "The very splendours of your degradation," said Rousseau to the materialist Helvetius, "to me are an evidence of your intelligence."[2] Rousseau often meets us in the pages of the Christian apologists of France and Germany. Like Lord Byron he is reasonable only when,

[1] *Dunciad*. Some of the deepest and most trenchant ideas of Pope are identical with those of Pascal. It may be that Pope borrowed them; but it also may be that two clear and Catholic minds ran in the same groove when fixed on the same truths.

[2] Lasserre, *L'Esprit et la Chair*, p. 19.

with sincerity, as eloquent as it is reckless, he bears witness against himself. We cannot afford to ignore writers of this stamp. They have met many of us on the threshold of life, at the period when taste and character and principles are formed, and when too often the imagination and the passions leave little room in the mind for reason or consideration; but when as time went on we found those whom we once took for messengers of life and strength expiring in intellectual and moral despair, the warning was like a message from the dead. It is true that irreligion and the passions have a new prophet for every generation, who

> *Tricks his beams, and with new-spangled ore*
> *Flames in the forehead of the morning sky,*

but it is only the manner that changes, the matter remains the same.

In availing ourselves, by the way, of the acknowledgment of writers who are wise only in lucid intervals, we are certainly departing from the line taken by Pascal. When things are evident, he affirms that they are certain, and he does not invoke assist-

ance from any one. "Bossuet," says M. Havet, "is like a general marshalling his army. . . . Pascal fights in single combat, swift and silent, but fierce and terrible . . . rising at times into sublimity which Bossuet himself has never reached. 'Pascal,' says M. Sainte-Beuve, 'wonderful in his writings which are finished, is perhaps more wonderful still when cut short:'"[1] which comes to this, that truth in his sentences, like a planet flung from the hand of God, goes on its way because it must go on. He does not tell us how he conquers; but there is a mysterious fascination and power in this manifestation of reason working by itself, which sets us to verify the problems, and when we have done so they become our own, and what is our own is more useful than anything borrowed from the learning of others. On all the fundamental evidences of Christianity Pascal's arguments are within the grasp of the simplest mind, and so we are saved from those long processes of reasoning in which both writer and reader so often lose their way:

[1] *Etude sur les Pensées*, pp. 4, 5.

"Give us your opinions and spare us explanations," is the safest as well as the easiest rule when nothing that can be said on the other side is worth attention; and of all the debts we owe to Pascal, one of the greatest is the clear way in which he teaches, that proving the obvious is always loss of time, and very often loss of the mental ground we stand on.[1]

With the exception of the author of the *Imitation of Christ*, no uninspired writer has become familiar to the thoughts of the multitude outside his own land. Every attempt to put the wit and irony of Pascal into English has been a failure. It need not be so with his simple statements of Christian Evidences. Here there is nothing

[1] "Nothing is so weak," says Pascal, "as the language of those who seek to define primitive terms . . . each and every one defining the same thing in his own manner, they confuse everything, and deprived of all order, and of all light, they wander in inextricable embarrassments." *De l'Esprit Géométrique*, pp. 605-9. Whether this principle is universal or not, does not concern us; anyhow it comes as an encouragement to those who have neither talents nor time for metaphysics.

singular or even new, no perfume that is lost in travelling, nothing of his own except his marvellous condensation of thought, and simplicity of expression, for it was his fixed principle that novelty and originality in the treatment of truths which were already the common property of the reason of mankind, was an "evidence of foolish vanity in the writer, and of error in his reasonings".

Our best introduction of Pascal to English readers, will be to examine how it was that his mind worked its way to religious conviction on the same lines as those great reasoners to whom I have already alluded, who are the stars in our intellectual firmament. If Pascal stood alone, or took a way of his own, it would be imprudent to follow him: it is his fellowship with the wise, and clear-headed in all ages that gives us security. If he has made mistakes, so has Newton; but because they were both reverent followers and servants of truth, who never tried to confine it in their own cisterns, they cast off their errors in their flight like superfluous feathers from the eagle's wing.

To begin with Sir Isaac Newton. Few men

have won so much admiration, even from antagonists, as this extraordinary man. Earnestness, simplicity, pure love of truth amounting to a passion, with intellectual humility, are stamped upon all his words and writings.[1] Sir David Brewster, a biographer, well prepared for the office, says of Newton, "He was never even suspected of vanity," and continues in the words of Dr. Pemberton, "But this I immediately discovered in him, which at once both surprised and charmed me. Neither his extreme age, nor his universal reputation had rendered him stiff in opinion or in any way elated. Of this I had occasion to have almost daily experience. The remarks I continually sent him by letters on the *Principia* were received with the utmost goodness. These were so far from being in any way displeasing to him, that on the contrary it occasioned him to speak many kind things of me to his

[1] Even De Maistre cannot find it in his heart to be angry with Newton for his anti-Catholic commentaries on Scripture, upon which he entered with imprudence as great as that of Pascal when he wrote on moral theology.

friends, and to honour me with a public testimony of his good opinion." No one, therefore, will doubt his sincerity when a short time before his death he said: "I do not know what I may appear to the world; but to myself I seem only like a boy playing by the sea-shore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me".[1]

The fact that Newton and Pascal dealt with the evidences of Revealed Religion in the same spirit, is the more remarkable when we reflect how different they were in all respects, save their use of reason. This resemblance in their style can be verified all the more easily, seeing that both their minds worked on the same strict mathematical lines. All the world knows how great was Newton's mastery of the exact sciences; but every one does not know that even when a child Pascal's mathematical knowledge amazed his masters, and a little

[1] *Life of Newton*, Brewster, p. 338. Murray, 1831.

later astonished Descartes himself. In Pascal's *Life*, by his sister Madame Perrier, a biography so perfect in every way that it seems as if no one else can venture on another, she tells us that Pascal's father, himself a learned mathematician, and conscious of the fascinations of the study, studiously kept it out of sight in the education of his son, which he himself conducted, as his one idea was that he should master the classics. One day, however, Pascal being in his twelfth year, his father entered the playroom and found the boy on his knees on the floor, so absorbed in working out mathematical problems, that like Archimedes at Syracuse he was unconscious of everything else. Then he questioned him, and found that the child, who had never even learned the names of circles and lines, calling them "rounds" and "bars," had worked out for himself definitions, axioms, and perfect demonstrations, and had travelled at a bound the road on which, probably, Euclid had to go slowly, and that as far as the thirty-second proposition of that author. The amazement of M. Pascal,

finding vent in tears, is told with wonderful simplicity and beauty by his daughter, and needless to say, henceforth M. Pascal made no further attempt to restrain the mathematical genius of his son.[1] It is impossible to conjecture what Pascal might have done if, like Newton, he had given himself up to the study of the laws that govern the visible universe; but from his earliest years we see that he thought more of man himself than of the world in which man lives; and some ten years before his death the universe itself and all that it contains became to him like the poet's "baseless fabric of a vision" in the presence of Jesus Christ, whom he so vividly recognised as at once the centre and interpretation of all things—the one "Light of the World," in the past, the present and the future.

But to return to Sir Isaac Newton. Sir David Brewster gives us the essence of Newton's belief, extracted from his works and his conversations, from which it is clear that he was as calmly convinced as

[1] *Vie de Pascal*, ap. Havet, p. 40.

Pascal himself, that Jesus Christ was that one and only God whom he adored, whom he had found in the light of the stars, and in the rising and the setting sun, and so says Brewster, "By thus uniting philosophy with religion, he dissolved the league which genius had formed with scepticism, and added to the cloud of witnesses the brightest name of ancient and of modern times".[1]

As we shall see, Newton was far from thinking that the discovery of God in the stars, and of the Messiah in Prophecy, was a sign of weakness of mind, indeed it is plain that he agreed with the Prophet David that it was

[1] *Life of Newton*, p. 284. This will probably be as great a surprise to some people as the religious convictions of M. Emery were to the French *philosophe*, who asked "if it was possible that so clever a man could believe in religion". Napoleon's relations with the Abbé Emery were very remarkable. As far as I know, the heroic Superior of St. Sulpice, and Cardinal Consalvi, were almost the only ecclesiastics, at once great and brave, who resisted Napoleon, and they were both too much for him. It is to the credit of Napoleon that he had a genuine admiration for M. Emery. "He is the only man," he said, "who can make me afraid."

quite the other way, and that it was the fool who "said in his heart there is no God".

As I have already observed neither Newton nor any one else, as far as I know, has carried the principles of the exact sciences so far into the heart of Revelation as Pascal. Newton dealt principally with atheists in the common and restricted acceptation of the word, while Pascal makes no distinction between the negation of God, and the negation of Jesus Christ, and thus he anticipated the truth, so manifest in our times, that faith in a personal God, and faith in God once visible on earth, must live or die together in Christian societies, and that darkness even greater than that of heathenism is the punishment of wilful and obstinate rejection of Christ.[1]

[1] We find this idea in Cardinal Newman. "Unlearn Catholicism, and you become Protestant, Unitarian, Deist, Pantheist, Sceptic, in a dreadful but infallible succession; only not infallible, by some accident of your position and of your cast of mind, only not infallible, if you dismiss the subject of religion, doing violence to your reason, devote yourself to moral duties, or dissipate them in engagements of the world." *Mixed Discourses*, p. 298.

When therefore, from the principles which are understood to have presided over the creation of the sidereal world, and the laws which now govern it, Newton proves the necessity of an abiding supernatural intelligent ruler, he brings us face to face with a God who has done as He willed, and can still do so, and whosoever is clear on these points is prepared for Revelation. In his letters to Dr. Bentley, he says that when he wrote his treatise about our system, *viz.*, the third book of the *Principia*, "he had an eye upon such principles as might work, with considering men, for the belief of a deity,"[1] and he expressed his happiness that it had been found useful for that purpose, and the magnificence of his illustrations, and the way in which his science makes the silent heavens speak, give an almost unparalleled sublimity to his style; while its simplicity is an illustration of Pascal's principle that the truly great writer is he who has the gift of saying great things in a way which inferior minds can understand.[2]

[1] *Life of Newton*, p. 286.

[2] *De l'Esprit Géométrique*, Havet, p. 640.

In the following extracts, wherein we contemplate the mind of Newton going as far into infinity as it is given to reason to go, we find none of those unmeaning adjectives, which are a disgrace to science, and the age which tolerates them, in the writings of Professor Huxley and his school. "His argument," says Sir David Brewster, "runs thus: 'Had a natural and blind cause, without contrivance and design, placed the earth in the centre of the moon's orbit, and Jupiter in the centre of his system of Satellites, and the sun in the centre of the planetary system, the sun would have been a body like Jupiter and the earth, that is, without light and heat, and consequently, he (Newton) knows no reason why there is only one body qualified to give light, to all the rest, but because the author of the system thought it convenient, and because one was sufficient to warm and enlighten all the rest,'" and he continues in the words of Newton: "To make such a system with all its motions, required a cause which understood, and compared together the quantities of matter in the several bodies of the sun

and planets, and the gravitating powers resulting from thence; the several distances of the primary planets from the sun, and of the secondary ones from Saturn, Jupiter and the earth, and the velocities with which those planets could revolve about those quantities of matter in the central bodies; and to compare and adjust all these things together in so great a variety of bodies, argues that cause to be, not blind and fortuitous, but very well skilled in mathematics and geometry;" and again, on the hypothesis of innate gravity, and the necessity of a supernatural agent to reconcile the independent powers of the various heavenly bodies, he observes, "For if there be innate gravity, it is impossible now for the matter of the earth, and all the planets and stars, to fly up from them, and become evenly spread through all the heavens without a supernatural power; and certainly that which can never be hereafter without a supernatural power, could never be heretofore without the same power".[1]

[1] *Life of Newton*, pp. 287, 87-90.

Perhaps man never made dumb matter witness to its Creator in more intelligible language, and this reasoner who worked out syllogisms with worlds as the members of his propositions, applied the same principles to Revelation. "Sir Isaac," says Brewster, "regards the prophecies of the Old and New Testament not as given to gratify men's curiosities, by enabling men to foreknow things, but that after they were fulfilled, they might be interpreted by the event, and afford convincing arguments that the world is governed by Providence. He considers that there is so much of this prophecy already fulfilled, as to afford to the diligent student sufficient instances of God's Providence."[1]

With regard to the other great names I have given of men whose belief in Jesus Christ was on the same level as their belief in the Creator and Ruler of the universe, Lord Bacon naturally comes first. In the following extract from his *Essay on Atheism* we see how tranquilly his mind runs in the

[1] *Life of Newton*, p. 280.

same lines as those of Pascal and Newton. "It is true," he writes, "that a little philosophy inclines man's mind to atheism; but depth in philosophy bringeth man's mind about to religion. For while the mind of man looketh upon second causes scattered, it may sometimes rest in them, and go no further; but when it beholdeth the chain of them, confederate and linked together, it must needs fly to Providence and Deity." Here we have philosophy like that of Newton which carried him from star to star, and from prophecies to their fulfilment, finding God everywhere; but it is in Bacon's incidental allusions[1] regarding the Divinity of Jesus Christ that the clear Christian convictions of this extraordinary, but very unbalanced genius shine out, as for instance in the last lines of his sublime *Essay on Goodness*: "The facts and signs of goodness are many. If a man be gracious and courteous to strangers, it shows he is a citizen

[1] Lord Campbell, in his judicial, and convincing defence of the Christianity of Bacon, regards these allusions as specially conclusive in favour of Bacon's sincerity. *Life of Lord Bacon*, p. 229.

of the world and that his heart is no island cut off from other lands but a continent that joins to them. If he be compassionate towards the affliction of others it shows that his heart is like the noble tree that is wounded itself when it gives the balm. If he easily pardons and remits offences, it shows that his mind is planted above injuries, so that he cannot be shot. If he be thankful for small benefits, it shows that he weighs men's minds and not their trash. But above all, if he have St. Paul's perfection, that he would wish to be an *anathema* from Christ for the salvation of his brethren, it shows much of a divine nature, and a kind of conformity with Christ Himself." [1]

The strong and unmeasured language of Dr. Johnson, and Edmund Burke when dealing with unbelief and unbelievers, is well known, and is counted very bad taste by those who attempt to erect it into a principle that expressions of indignation are only to be tolerated when political, pecuniary, or personal interests are at stake.

[1] *Essays*, Chandos ed., pp. 29, 23.

Imagine a writer now-a-days saying of a "Professor of the unknowable," as Johnson said of Gibbon, that he had just "light enough to take himself to hell," or with Burke, stigmatising atheism as "a foul unnatural vice, foe to all the dignity and consolation of mankind". Burke believed what he said, and it was his way to say the whole truth whenever the occasion required it, and his words are identical with those of Bacon in his terrible indictment of atheism.[1] Even Newton, the "lone watcher of the stars," was equally intolerant, and he severed his friendship with Mr. Whiston, when the latter questioned Newton's belief in the Divinity of Jesus Christ; and also, apparently on similar grounds, with his old college friend, the celebrated astronomer Dr. Halley, whose frivolous impiety was more than he could endure; "I have studied these questions," said Newton, "and you have not".[2]

This is what is now called "obscuranti-

[1] *Essays*, Chandos ed., p. 29.

[2] *Life*, by Brewster, pp. 284, 339.

cism," that terrible imputation, which of itself has submerged many a reasoner less strong than Sir Isaac Newton. This word would never have obtained the power which we know it to have, were it not that it has behind it the whole force of that wild wave of modern opinion which declares that one man has as good a right as another to speak and to write about religion, and that it is tyrannical, as well as offensive to tell him that he is incompetent. The announcement of an inherent omniscience in everybody, is very attractive to people who are as disinclined to study as they are to restraint, and have been fed by that flattering philosophy, Kantian and such like, which tells them that all that they want for time and eternity is to be found in themselves; but this was not the opinion of Newton, and his stern rebuke loses none of its force when addressed to men intellectually very inferior to Dr. Halley, who in our own times are emulators of his frivolity, impiety, and self-assurance.

Pascal's estimate of the free-thinkers of his day was similar to that of Newton. "From his youth he] looked on them as people

possessed by the false principle that human reason is supreme over all things," and "although persuaded of the clearness and cogency of his ideas about religion he did not believe that necessarily it should be so with others who were indifferent, and therefore his first step before entering on these questions, was to find out whether his questioners were really in earnest in their search for the truth".[1] "Let them learn at least," he says, "what the religion is which they assail before they attack it." This, he says, they do not do, adding, "and I hope to demonstrate here that no reasonable person makes such an assertion; nay, I dare to affirm that no reasonable person has ever done so. We know well enough what is the way of people in this temper of mind. They imagine they have made great efforts in the way of instruction, when they have spent a few hours in reading some book of Scripture, and have questioned some ecclesiastic on matters of faith. This done, they boast that they have

[1] *Vie de Pascal*, pp. 45, 53.

searched in vain in books and amongst men. But in truth I tell them, as I have often told them, that this negligence is insufferable. The question at issue is not the trifling interests of some stranger, that it should be dealt with in this fashion; it concerns ourselves and all that we possess. . . . I can have nothing but compassion for those who are mourning in the sincerity of their doubts, and who, regarding them as the final term of all evil, and sparing no efforts to escape from them, make this search the principal and most serious of their occupations. But as for those who go through life without thinking of this last end of life, etc., I look on them in a very different way. This negligence in a matter which concerns themselves, their eternity, and all that they possess, irritates me more than it stirs up pity; it amazes and fills me with fear, it is a monster to my mind. I do not say this under the impulse of the pious zeal of spiritual devotion. On the contrary I take it, that this my state of mind is a duty enforced by principles bound up with the interests of the human race, and by those of self-love itself. There are

only two classes of persons who can be called reasonable: those who serve God with their whole heart because they know Him: and those who seek Him with their whole heart because they know Him not."[1]

This ninth chapter of the *Pensées* tells how great was the value Pascal set on the other world, and the soul of man, and reveals the sources of that weariness with everything else in this world, which came over him in the prime of life, and in the plenitude of his intellectual triumphs. "All the material world," he writes, "the firmament, the stars, the earth and its kingdoms, are not equal to the least amongst spirits, for a spirit knows all these things, and itself; and the body knows nothing. All material things in one, and all spirits in one, and all their productions, are not worth as much as the least impulse of the love of God; this belongs to an order infinitely more exalted."[2]

Without real veneration for man in particular, veneration for truth in general is

[1] *Pensées*, pp. 242, 253. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 348.

little more than a vague and unmeaning speculation. In the spirit of St. Francis de Sales, Pascal held that by reason man is constituted *Le premier estre du monde risible.*[1] So far did he carry his reverence for that individual dignity of the soul, that derivation of the image of God, that in appeals to reason he refused to avail himself of any of those auxiliaries which other men use in pressing home their arguments. "Never," he says, "in definitions and discourses, use other words than those already explained and perfectly understood." And again, "Nothing is so commonplace as things that are good; all that is wanted is discrimination: and it

[1] In like manner St. Teresa, with whose spirit, as we shall see, Pascal had extraordinary sympathy, writes: "The more we are aware that He communicates Himself to creatures, the more shall we praise His greatness, and endeavour to have a high esteem of that soul in which our Lord takes such pleasure and delight; and such a soul each one of us has. But since we do not prize her as a creature, made after the image of God, deserves to be, neither do we understand the great secrets which are concealed within her." *The Interior Castle, 7th Mansion*, ch. i.

is certain that they are all natural to us and at our door, as well as known to the whole world, only people do not learn how to notice them. This is the universal law. It is not in things that are extraordinary and fantastic that excellence of any description is to be found. We rise to seize them, and we wander away from them: the common rule is to descend. The best books are those which people, as they read, think that they themselves might have written. Nature which alone is good, is altogether familiar and common. . . . We must not strain the spirit: compositions ever labouring and ever on the stretch, fill a man with silly presumption, the fruit of an elevation which is not natural to him, and with vain and ridiculous bombast in place of solid and vigorous nourishment. I detest this puffing, bombastic style." [1]

And so did St. Augustine, and so has every man before his time and since, who detected and detested falsehood under all its disguises. In his day philosophers "identified crimi-

[1] *De l'Esprit Géométrique*, p. 641.

nals with gods, that crime might cease to be counted crime, when its perpetrators were depicted as imitators of gods in heaven, rather than of men in hell".[1] What matters it how man is robbed of his birthright: that "character of the Deity without which man is a busy, mischievous, wretched thing, no better than a kind of vermin"?[2] The language of Edmund Burke is even stronger; for he was a passionate lover of his kind, and things were worse in his time. "They who do not love religion, hate it. The rebels to God perfectly abhor the Author of their being. They hate Him 'with all their heart, with all their mind, with all their soul, and with all their strength'. He never presents Himself to their thoughts but to menace and alarm them. They cannot strike the Sun out of Heaven, but they are able to raise a smouldering smoke that obscures Him from their own eyes. Not being able to revenge themselves on God, they have a delight in vicariously defacing, degrading, torturing and tearing

[1] *Confessions of St. Augustine*, bk. i., p. 16.

[2] Bacon's *Essays*, Chandos ed., p. 22.

in pieces His image in man."[1] In other writings he explains what he means by this "smoke" that rose from the "obscenities" of Voltaire, and the "adulterated metaphysics" of Rousseau and Helvetius, "smuggled" into England by the "mere jays and magpies of philosophy," and by writers of whom he says: "If the work be pompous and unmeaning, its success is sure, as its pomp dazzles, and its vacancy puzzles". In a similar style, Pascal writes that "God is hidden from those who fly from Him with all their hearts," and that "the understanding of the benedictions of the future depends on the heart which easily claims that which it loves".[2]

[1] *Regicide Peace*, ii., p. 119, Payne's ed.

[2] *Pensées*, pp. 376, 381. The same idea, that we only really take in, and learn that which we love, is very clearly and powerfully expressed by Carlyle. Of Dante he says: "The Christian Faith, which was the theme of Dante's song, had produced the Practical Life of which Shakespeare was to sing. For Religion then, as it now and always is, was the soul of Practice; the primary vital part in man's life. . . . Without hands a man might have feet, and could still walk; but, consider it,—without morality, intellect

Enough has been said to prove that believers have good reason to claim the best part of the lay-intellect of the world on their side, and also that its highest representatives were intolerant in the sense that they indignantly rejected the claim that ignorance makes to an equality with knowledge in religious discussions, and in religious discussions alone. Wherever there is certainty, intolerance is a moral duty, only restrained by prudence. Never were there more unfettered minds than those whose opinions we have been studying, and one and all they held that the assailants of the fundamental doctrines of Revealed, as well as Natural Religion, were put out of court by reason itself, and therefore that they

were impossible for him: a thoroughly immoral *man* could not know anything at all! To know a thing, sympathise with it: that is, be *virtuously* related to it. If he have not the justice to put down his own selfishness at every turn, the courage to stand by the dangerous—true at every turn—how shall he learn? His virtues, all of them, will be recorded in his knowledge." *Lectures on Heroes.* iii., pp. 261-3. Carlyle admired the religion of Dante and Shakespeare: what would they have thought of the religion of Carlyle?

had no claim to be heard. For our purpose it matters not that our allies differed on points in Revealed Religion, deduced and developed in the course of time, so long as they were convinced that the evidences that Jesus Christ was God were as conclusive as those which creation bears to its Creator. Great minds are fortresses wherein the populace find shelter, and their reasonable indignation like cannon thundering from the battlements gives a sense of security. Here we have philosophers whose ideas are intelligible at all times and to all men—to the Hottentot as well as to the European—writers whose every argument is an honest attempt to establish an agreement between their own minds and that of the reader, that concord may double the strength of conviction; and on the other side a new philosophy beginning and ending in the unknown, without common principles or common language, whose end seems to be merely to give its authors an exercising ground for their own conceits, and whose god is merely a thing "of such stuff as dreams are made of".

If it is said that now, as in the days of Voltaire, the majority in the republic of letters and sciences is on the side of free-thought and unbelief, it may be answered that whatever authority is attributed to majorities in politics and domestic affairs, no one has ever pretended that they are worth much in the realms of pure thought and exalted speculation. Entering these regions the most imperious and self-sufficient mind must select an individual guide and master. "Is, then, example nothing?" says Burke. "It is everything. Example is the school of mankind, and they will learn at no other;" [1] and they alone are safe who are ever submitting their own first thoughts to the judgments of the wise, as well as to those of time and experience, as it was with Burke himself and his early impressions about Bolingbroke. "When I was very young," he says, "a popular fashion told me to admire this writer; a little more maturity taught me as much to despise him." With such

[1] *Regicide Peace*, p. 90.

an example, none of us need be ashamed to reconsider. The present generation has been educated on certain lines, and been "told to admire" a new philosophy of infinite assumption. Has it anything in common with the spirit and the principles of the writers we have been considering? If not, then it is antagonistic and destructive. We cannot adhere to both: our minds cannot go up and down at the same time: we must take our part with Pascal, Newton, Burke; or with Voltaire, Kant and Hegel, and to many it will turn out that the consequences of their choice will be quite as grave as those of which the Prophet spoke when he said, "*How long do you halt between two sides? if the Lord be God follow him, but if Baal then follow him*".[1]

For my own and the reader's sake I wish I could continue this discussion in the company of writers in our own mother tongue; but, as I have said, none of them went so far as Pascal, who in his latter years saw Christ alone, and all things in

[1] 3 Kings xviii. 2.

Him. I cannot hope to transmit into another language the beauty and the fire of his style, and therefore my hopes of getting a hearing are founded on the inherent majesty and beauty of the subject, and on the earnestness of readers with minds and tastes similar to those "considering men" to whom Sir Isaac Newton addressed his religious observations in the third book of the *Principia*.

CHAPTER II.

THE JEWS AND THEIR ABIDING TESTIMONY.

THE study of the mysterious vocation of the Jewish people in their relations to Christ, has increased rather than diminished in importance in the centuries which have elapsed since the days of Pascal. They are a wonder even more inexplicable than the Church herself, for with them is life without development, or growth. From age to age the people who rejected Christ perpetuate the living death which was the punishment of their wilful blindness. Nothing in the world, nothing ever known in the world, bears any resemblance to the intellectual, and spiritual state of the Jews. Their history and literature, their examples, and ideals of truth and heroism, and beauty, which are ever expanding and taking new life in the soul of the Christian, lie cold and dead in their own hearts, and the Jew with all his marvellous

gifts of intelligence, goes on his way from age to age, incapable of drinking at the fountains which God Himself opened in the souls of his forefathers.

As may be expected, Pascal, who ever measures the world, its revolutions, philosophies, sciences and literatures by a supernatural standard, forms a very different estimate of the Jews from that of writers who in history find nothing more wonderful than themselves. Pascal's clear perception of the supremacy of Christ in the intellectual, as well as the moral order, and the poverty and shortcomings of human nature in its highest manifestations, ever in his mind invests the Jews with that dignity which once was theirs by right divine as the heralds of Christ. If they have fallen so low, it is because they were once so exalted; for we must always remember that the abominations for which the Jews are rebuked by the Prophets, were not only tolerated, but even made integral parts of the religions of the Pagan: "You worship as gods," said the Christian, "the things you are ashamed to name". The chastisements of the Jews were

evidence that they were God's own children, and His chosen people, from whom great things were demanded. On this subject we have the advantages of some consecutive pages of Pascal, which tell us how much we should have had, if time had been given him to expand other ideas in a similar manner. He starts thus :—

"I see how the Christian religion has been built upon a preceding religion, and this is what I find to be conclusive. . . . Then I behold religions in unstinted profusion in many parts of the world, and in all times. But they have neither morality to please me, nor proofs which are worthy of my attention. And so without distinction I would have put away the religion of Mahomet, and that of China, of the ancient Romans, and of the Egyptians, for this simple reason, that no one of them having more signs of truth than another, and nothing which necessarily led me to a conclusion, reason could not incline to one more than to another."

"But, pondering on this changeful and whimsical variety of manners and beliefs in successive ages, I find in a corner of the

earth a people distinct, and separated from all other nations of the earth; the most ancient of all, whose histories go back many centuries beyond all others, however ancient, which we possess. I find this people, the descendants of one man, great and numerous, adoring one only God, and following a law which they declare they have received from His hands. They affirm that it is to them alone in all the world that God has revealed His mysteries; that all men are corrupt, and in disgrace with God; and all given over to their senses and their own humours, and that from thence have come their strange errors, and interminable changes in religions, and customs; whereas, they themselves remain fixed and unshaken in their course; but that God will not for ever leave these other nations in this darkness; that a Redeemer will come for all; that they themselves are in the world that they may announce Him to other men; that they are established expressly as the forerunners and heralds of this great event; to call on all nations to unite with them in expectation of this deliverer."

"This meeting with this people fills me with wonder, and seems to me worthy of attention. I examine this law which they boast to have received from God, and I find that it is admirable. In order of time it is the first of all laws in such sort, that before even the word *law* was used amongst the Greeks, for a thousand years, they (the Jews) had received and observed it without interruption. Thus I am struck by the singularity of the fact that the first law to be met with in the world is also the most perfect, so that the greatest legislators have borrowed from it, as appears from the law of the Twelve Tables at Athens, which was subsequently used by the Romans, as might easily be proved if it were not that Josephus, and others have said enough on the subject. . . . But this law is of all others the most severe and rigorous in all that relates to the observance of their religion, binding this people, so as to keep them to their obligations, and that in a multitude of special and irritating observances, and these under pain of death. So that truly it is astounding that it has been ever preserved with such

constancy, and for so many ages, by a people so rebellious and impatient; while all other states, from time to time, have changed their laws, although in many ways more easy. The book in which this law, the first of all laws, is contained, is itself the most ancient book in the world; Homer, Hesiod and others being some six or seven hundred years more modern."

"With love and fidelity they carry with them this book in which Moses declares that in the whole course of their career they have been ungrateful to God, and that he foresaw that they would be still more so after his death; but that he called on heaven and earth to bear witness against them that he had taught them all they wanted: he declares that, finally, God growing indignant with them, would disperse them amongst the nations of the earth: . . . and yet this book, which in so many ways dishonours them, they preserve at the cost of their lives. This is sincerity without parallel in the world, and without root in nature. There is a very great difference between a book written by some one, which

he casts amongst a people, and a book which itself has made the people. No one can doubt that such a book is itself as old as the people."[1]

In many other ways, and from many other points of view, Pascal turns his gaze on the Jewish people, and always to find something which is an evidence of their supernatural place in the world: evidence so obvious, that as we read, we wonder we did not think of it before. "Visibly," he says, "they are a people expressly formed to serve as witnesses to the Messias.[2] They carry the books with them, and love them, and do not know their meaning. And all this was foretold: that the judgments of God should be confided to them, but as a book sealed up"; and again, "The more I examine them, the more truths I find; in that which went before, and in that which has followed. . . . I find this chain, this religion altogether divine, in its authority, in its duration, in its perpetuity, in its

[1] *Pensées*, pp. 307-13.

[2] He refers us to Isaias xliii. 10 and xliv. 8: "*You are my witnesses*," etc.

morality, in its doctrine, in its results: the appalling and predicted darkness of the Jews, *Eris palpans in meridie.*[1] *Dabitur liber scienti litteras, et dicet, non possum legere.*"[2]

These extracts will prepare us for the place in the prophetic dispensation which Pascal gives to the Jews as a nation, and that in the present, as well as the past. As he remarks, it was a people who prophesied in the past by their national, and domestic laws, life and traditions, as well as by their religious observances, and they are with us still that their testimony may never be forgotten.

While spiritually the Jews are the most sterile and unprogressive of nations, they are a portent and a terror to the world in that struggle for its visible treasures in which

[1] "Mayest thou grope at mid-day as the blind is wont to grope in the dark" (Deuteronomy xxviii. 29).

[2] "The vision of all shall be unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which when they shall deliver to one that is learned, they shall say, Read this; and he shall answer, I cannot, for it is sealed" (Isaias xxix. 11). *Pensées*, p. 325.

their success has been so prodigious, that in the minds of most men, it obscures every other national characteristic.

Not so with Pascal. "Amongst the Jews," he observes, "truth was only typified. In heaven the veil is taken away. In the Church it is veiled, and recognised by its relations with the type. The type has been fashioned on the truth, and the truth is seen in the type." Again, "The synagogue remains because it was the type, but because it was merely a type it has sunk into captivity. The type lasted until the truth came, so the Church was ever visible, either in the picture by which she was foretold, or in the event."[1]

We see how far Pascal was raised above that ferocious and unchristian hatred of the Jews which for many centuries has been so general. His desire was to give them a share in the light which was in his own soul. To those who are in admiration at their ever-increasing financial domination he would doubtless say that "*The heaven of heavens*

[1] *Pensées*, pp. 323, 332.

is the Lord's, and the earth he hath given to the children of men,"[1] and that this kind of success, under the Christian dispensation, was often a sign of spiritual sterility, and in such cases, a malediction; and also that no one need fear the Jews who lived like a Christian, by putting a muzzle on "appetite, the universal wolf". The more we study Pascal the clearer it grows that his estimate of all things past and present was drawn from the inspired writers. He looked on the Jews in the spirit of St. Paul, of whom Cardinal Newman says that he was "at once a Jeremias, and a David: David in his patriotic care for them, and Jeremias in his plaintive and resigned denunciations,"[2] as when he says, "*I speak the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost; and I have great sadness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I wished myself to be an anathema from Christ, for my brethren, who are my kinsmen according to the flesh. Who are*

[1] Ps. cxiii.

[2] "St. Paul," *Occasional Sermons*, p. 100.

Israelites, to whom belongeth the adoption of children, and the glory, and the testament, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises"; and again, "*For I bear them witness that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge*"; "*I say then: Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.*" [1]

The Jews have been, and are still, amongst the most implacable foes of Christianity, and in the conflict, which so often has been deadly, both sides have suffered: Christians in their goods, and Jews in their characters. Our business here is to defend the Jews against a false estimate of their religious and national character which may very easily weaken our interest in their past history, or even pervert our judgments. The anger of the Christian, and the scorn of the pagan ancient and modern, in this way work together against the truth, and the majesty of divine revelation in the Old Testament

[1] Ep. to Romans ix. 1-4, x. 2, xi. 1.

is obscured by the blind bigotry of the intemperate Christian, and the supercilious scorn of the unbeliever. It is bad logic, or rather no logic at all, as Pascal shows us, to identify the Jew of to-day with the Jew before Christ came. But fallen as is the Jew from his high estate, it is clear that Pascal would not allow that his avarice is more degrading than sensuality, or that Shylock was as bad as the foul and remorseless tempter in "Measure for Measure".[1] Nay, I question whether he had so great scorn for the miser, as for slaves of what are called lawful pleasures, "those who think that man's treasure is in the flesh, and evil that which turns him from the pleasures of the senses, let such a man stuff himself and die".[2]

The Jews inherit the glory of having been once great as a nation; but it does

[1] "*Angelo.* . . . Then must your brother die?
"*Isabella.* And 'twere the cheaper way:
Better it were a brother died at once,
Than that a sister, by redeeming him,
Should die for ever."—Act ii. 4.

[2] *Pensées*, p. 343.

not appear that Pascal will allow that this can be said of any pagan nation. He measures all men by their relations to God, and nations by their religions. The great men whose characters shine out in the darkness of paganism were great by nature and their own inherent strength, which saved them from religions which debased the multitude; whereas, it was their religion which made the saints and heroes of the Old Testament. Now, the Jew with "eyes that see not" has got these types of sanctity and heroism in that Book which, as Pascal says, has "made the people," and still preserves them: and following his argument, the fact that for nigh two thousand years the teaching and example of characters like Moses, David, and Elias, Ruth, and Esther, has never produced fruit bearing any resemblance to the original, is an evidence of that mysterious "servitude of the synagogue" which was foretold. But the fact that they possess these ideals, preserving them with preternatural tenacity, keeps them ever in their place as witnesses to Christ. It is the Church that gives reality, and a

meaning to her antagonists. Were she to disappear, the Jew as well as the heretic would become equally unmeaning, and soon have no spiritual place in the world. But, while heresy changes like all the inventions of our fretful and rebellious nature, the Jew has a predestined place marked out in the future, and a vocation, which, however long delayed, must yet be fulfilled, according to the prophecy of St. Paul—"*For I would not have you ignorant, brethren, of this mystery (lest you should be wise in your own conceits), that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles should come in. And so all Israel should be saved.*" [1]

"If the Jews," says Pascal, "had all been converted by Jesus Christ, we should have no witnesses except those who were open to suspicion; and if exterminated, we should have no witnesses at all. It is a subject astonishing and worthy of singular consideration to see this Jewish people subsisting so long, and always miserable, as it was

[1] ED. to Romans xi. 25, 26.

necessary that as an evidence to Jesus Christ they should subsist as witnesses, and that having crucified Him they should be miserable. When Nabuchodonosor carried off the people, lest it should be thought that the sceptre had been taken from Juda, they were told beforehand that they should be only for a short time in captivity, and that they should be re-established. They were always consoled by the prophets; their kings were continued. But the second destruction is without promise of re-establishment, without prophets, without kings, without consolation, without hope, because the sceptre has been for ever taken away."

"The Jews rejected Him, but not all; those who were holy received Him, and not those who were carnal. And this is so far from being an obstacle to His glory, that it is the final stamp of its perfection. As the reason which influenced them, the only one which is found in their writings, in the Talmud, and the Rabbis, was merely that Jesus Christ has not subdued the nations with an armed hand, *gladium tuum*

potentissime.[1] Is this all they have to say? Jesus Christ, they object, has been slain; He has perished; He has not conquered the pagans by force; He has not given us their spoils; He has not given us riches. Have they no more than this to say? It is because of this that He is the object of my love. I would not have Him whom they picture. It is plain that it is His life alone which prevents them from receiving Him, and this refusal renders them irreproachable witnesses, and what is more, they accomplish the prophecies." [2]

These bold reflections, in which the facts of history, the teaching of revealed religion, and the testimony of a soul "naturally Christian," run together and end in the same conclusion, are something more than mere philosophy of history. No doubt critics, who are critics and nothing more, will find matter in them for disputation; but as it was in his lifetime, so now in his book, Pascal does not wait for them. While they are groping, and tumbling into pits

[1] Ps. xliv. 4. [2] *Pensées*, p. 369.

made by themselves, he has carried us with him to heights from which he looks over the wide expanse :—

> *Like stout Cortez when, with eagle eyes,*
> *He stared at the Pacific,*
> *And all his men*
> *Gazed at each other with a wild surmise,*
> *Silent upon a peak in Darien.*

It is this style of writings which exercises such an extraordinary fascination over the minds of free-thinkers like M. Sainte-Beuve : men who seem to worship truth simply for the sake of its own brightness and beauty, without any reflection on the obligations it imposes. "When Pascal," says this writer, "interprets the Prophecies, and lifts the seals of the Old Testament, when he explains the work of the Apostles amongst the Gentiles, and the wonderful plan of the designs of God, he clearly anticipates Bossuet, the Bossuet of 'Universal History'; he opens out many fields to be surveyed, and filled up by the other."[1]

In conclusion it may be remarked that

[1] *Port-Royal*, 2nd ed., t. iii., p. 364.

Pascal's style of controversy is that which is most likely to obtain a patient hearing from the Jews themselves, and it is of no slight importance that we should be on terms of chivalrous antagonism with this mighty race. This was the spirit, and the way of those saints who had most success in dealing with them. It is related of St. Philip Neri that "whenever he saw a Jew, he felt so strong a desire for his conversion that at the mere sight he often broke forth into tears and sighs, and left no means untried for his conversion". In his work for Christ he never divorced logic from charity, like those "who deem they love Thee when they only wound Thy foes," and his success in the conversion of the Jews was not the least remarkable of those works which in the sixteenth century won for him the extraordinary title of "Apostle of Rome".[1]

No one knows when that promised day will come in which, as St. Paul tells us, "*All Israel shall be saved*"; and in the meantime the disinherited of the great

[1] Bacci, *Life of St. Philip* (2nd ed.), pp. 42-50.

family of God go on their way in what has been well defined as "the utter sadness of the unredeemed". They are promised to the Church in language which has no parallel in the case of other nations; and as Pascal reminds us, their stern, silent, unreasoning resistance, without growth, and as religious agents, without vitality of head or heart, is part of their predestined mission. They are silent about their ways, as if they disdained to justify themselves, and therefore it is hard to understand their social relations and customs. One thing, however, seems certain, and that is, that amongst the Jews, woman retains much of that dignity which God gave her at the dawn of creation. If she has none of that new grace and light which has come from the

> Woman! above all women glorified,
> Our tainted nature's solitary boast,[1]

at any rate it is clear that as the daughters of the old covenant have never withered under the legal slavery of paganism, so now they are proof against that modern licence

[1] Wordsworth, "The Virgin".

wherein extremes meet with results equally destructive. Under either of these social conditions, the Jews as a nation would long ago have ceased to exist; and thus even the dead letter of the law remains as an evidence of its first life, and a prophecy of what is promised in the future.

CHAPTER III.

THE PROPHECIES.

No evidence of the Divinity of Jesus Christ so impressed the mind of Pascal as the Prophecies, and it is in his reflections on the nature of these proofs that his genius comes out with all its irresistible force. He calls them "the greatest of the evidences for Jesus Christ". Père Félix in his Conferences on our Lord's Divinity, seems to hold a different opinion, when he says, "The Divinity of Jesus Christ is the foundation of Christianity; and His Divinity beyond everything else rests upon His miracles".[1] Pascal argues that the miracles of Christ were of primary importance only in His lifetime, and in the first stage of the life of the Church, before the Prophecies were

[1] *Jésus Christ*, p. 174. *Conférences de Notre Dame*, 1864.

fulfilled by the Resurrection, the destruction of the Jewish kingdom, and the victories of Christianity; and certainly Pascal's opinion is supported by the language of the first Apostolic preachers and writers. No doubt St. Peter, St. Stephen, and St. Paul do not take trouble to meet what Bossuet styles the "chicaneries of chronology," and such like difficulties. They had no need to do so. They spoke to people who were masters of the subject in a way which no critical excursionist into the distant past can now hope even to approach. From the history of the early Church in the Acts of the Apostles, we learn that the minds of the Jews were prepared for the doctrine of the Apostles, and this preparation was a Divine work, like the doctrine itself. As it is with everything in Holy Scripture, this was a wonder which has no resemblance to anything known before or since. We find, indeed, enlightened nations, taught and guided by the writings or the eloquence of their leaders; but how much of their arguments did they really understand? Popular orators like Demosthenes and Cicero carried

the people with them when they spoke of things such as the advance of the invader, or questions of taxation: matters which were obvious without knowledge of the past, or views about the future. But in the case of the Jews we have a people who understood that their past history was the interpreter of the present, and as clearly as Pascal himself they saw the mystery. They understood arguments which started with creation, and were carried on in the history of Abraham, Moses, and their kings and prophets, and they arrived at the conclusion that all was fulfilled in Christ. Never did intellectual conviction give such evidence of light, as well as of sincerity, as in the case of that multitude of about three thousand souls,[1] who on the day of Pentecost, in the teeth of Pharisaical frenzy, backed by Roman tortures, were baptised, and made open profession of the Christian faith. The words of Pascal when he says of the Apostles, that he willingly believed men who were ready to be strangled for their testimony, have a

[1] Acts ii. 41.

still wider and deeper significance when applied to people, chiefly strangers in Jerusalem, the majority of whom had probably never seen the face of Christ.

Pascal's appreciation of the way in which the Jews as a nation were, and are still, witnesses to Christ, is one of those subjects in which his genius discovers evidences which have escaped other writers, and nowhere in his writings is the vigour of his mathematical reasoning more manifest than in his treatment of this evidence in its connection with the Prophecies. Like our own Johnson he does not seem to have had much respect for secular history. To Pascal it was the record of man, with man as the witness: that creature of whom he writes, "What a chimera then is man! Judge of all things, imbecile worm of the earth, trustee of the truth, sink of uncertainty and error, the glory and the outcast of the universe,"[1] and therefore, on the principle that the river cannot rise higher than its source, there was little in secular history to

[1] *Pensées*, p. 230.

satisfy Pascal's passion for certainty. In Jewish literature alone he found matter suited to his taste. As far as I know, Pascal exceeds all writers ancient and modern in his power of fusing and combining what may be called disparate evidences. Probably if we knew St. Augustine as well as M. Saci, we should say with him that "all that was sublime in the language of M. Pascal he had already seen in St. Augustine": [1] but who has read all St. Augustine since the days when Jansenius and his pupils tried to make a new religion out of his writings?

Pascal sees things in one, which we have vaguely contemplated separately, and then as we read, suddenly, we know not how, he carries our minds with him, and apparently without an effort we are landed at the conclusion. But to return to his argument: "Amongst all the proofs of Jesus Christ," says Pascal, "the prophecies are the greatest.

[1] *Entretien avec M. Saci*, Havet, p. 81. The astonishment of M. Saci arose from the fact that, as he tells us, he knew that Pascal had not studied St. Augustine.

Moreover this is the point concerning which God has done most; for the event in which they were fulfilled, is a miracle ever subsisting from the birth of the Church until the end of all things. Thus God raised up prophets for the space of six hundred years; and subsequently for a period of four hundred years, He dispersed their prophecies, as well as the Jews themselves, who carried them to every part of the world. Behold what has been the preparation for the birth of Jesus Christ, whose Gospel was to be believed by the whole world. It was necessary not only that there should be prophecies to lead it to belief, but also that these prophecies should be everywhere throughout the world, so that all the world might receive Him."

"Were it one man only who had composed a book of predictions concerning Jesus Christ, regarding both time and manner; and if Jesus Christ had come according to these prophecies, it would be of infinite force. But there is much more here. It is a chain of men, for the space of four thousand years, who with constancy,

and without variation come one after the other to predict this same advent. It is an entire people who announce it, and who subsist for four thousand years to give corporate witness of the promises they have received, from which neither menaces nor persecutions can turn them: this is something remarkable in quite another order of things."—

"The time predicted, according to the state of the Jewish people, the state of the pagans, the state of the temple, the number of years. It certainly needed a daring spirit to predict the same event in so many ways."[1]

"It was necessary that the four idolatrous, or pagan monarchies, the end of the reign of Juda, and the seventy weeks should come together at the same time, and all before the second temple was destroyed . . . that during the period of the fourth monarchy,[2] before the destruction of the second temple, before the kingdom of the Jews was taken

[1] The quiet irony of this sentence resembles that of Newton at p. 32.

[2] The Roman Empire.

away, in the seventieth week of Daniel, while the second temple was still standing, the pagans should be instructed, and led on to the knowledge of that God whom the Jews adored, and that those who loved Him should be delivered from their enemies, and filled with His fear and His love."

"And it has come to pass that during the fourth monarchy, before the destruction of the second temple, etc., the pagans in multitudes adored God, and led an angelic life; maidens consecrated to God their virginity, and their lives; men gave up every pleasure. That to which Plato could not lead a few chosen men so well instructed, a secret and persuasive force impelled a hundred millions of ignorant men, in the strength of a few words."

"The rich abandoned their possessions, and children their luxurious parental homes for the austerity of the desert, etc. (see Philo, the Jew). What does all this come to? It is what was predicted so long before. For two thousand years no pagan had adored the God of the Jews, and in the

time predicted pagans in multitudes adore this one only God. The temples are destroyed, and kings themselves become subjects of the Cross. What does all this come to? It is the spirit of God which is diffused over the earth."

"It is predicted that in the time of the Messias, He would come to establish a new covenant which would bring oblivion on the going forth from Egypt (Jerem. xxiii. 5; Is. xliii. 16): which should place His law not in externals, but in the heart; that Jesus Christ would place His fear, which had only been without, in the centre of the heart. Who does not see the Christian law in all this?"

"(It is predicted) that the Jews would cast off Jesus Christ, and that they should be cast off by God because the chosen vine gave nothing but wild grapes.[1] That the chosen people should be faithless, ungrateful and unbelieving, *populum non credentem et contradicentem.*[2] That God would strike them with blindness, and that they should

[1] Isaias v. 2. [2] Romans x. 21. Isaias lxv. 2.

grope like blind men at midday; that a precursor should come before Him."

"(It is predicted) that Christ should be little in His beginnings and then increase. The little stone of Daniel (ii. 35)."

"(It is predicted) that their idolatry should be overthrown; that this Messias should overturn all idols (Ezech. xxx. 13) and lead men to the worship of the true God. . . . And never before or since has man appeared who has taught anything divine approaching to this."

"(It is predicted) that He should be king of the Jews and the Gentiles (Ps. lxxi.). And behold this king of Jews and Gentiles crushed by both, who plot together to put Him to death, ruler of both, and destroying the religion of Moses in Jerusalem, its centre, where He founded His first Church, and the religion of idols in its centre at Rome, where He founded His chief Church."

"Then Jesus Christ came to tell men that they had no other enemies than themselves; that these were their passions which separated them from God; that He came to destroy them, and to give men His grace,

and to make of them a holy Church; that He came to gather into this Church the pagans and the Jews; that He came to destroy the idols of the one, and the superstitions of the other."

"Against this, all men set themselves, not merely from the natural opposition of their lusts, but above all, the kings of the earth banded together to destroy this newborn religion, as had been predicted: *Quare fremuerunt gentes? Reges adversus Christum.*[1] All that was mighty on earth combined, the learned, the wise, the kings. Some wrote, others condemned, others slew.[2] And in spite of all this resistance, without violence on their side, these simple men made head against all these powers, and subjugated these kings themselves, and the learned and the wise, and took away idolatry from the earth. And all this was brought about by that power which had been foretold."

[1] Ps. ii. 2.

[2] This sentence probably inspired De Maistre when he said of the Church that she "alone has withstood the scaffold, the syllogism, and the epigram"?

"(It is predicted) that a deliverer should come who would crush the head of the demon, who would liberate His people from their sins, *ex omnibus iniquitatibus* (Ps. cxxix. 8); that there should be a new Testament, which would be eternal; that there should be a new priesthood, according to the order of Melchisedech (Ps. cix. 4); that it should be eternal; that CHRIST should be glorious, powerful, strong, and yet so miserable that He should not be recognised; that they would not take Him for that which He is; that they would cast Him off and put Him to death; that His people who should deny Him, should no longer be His people; that the idolaters would receive Him, and have recourse to Him, and that He would leave Sion to set up His reign at the centre of idolatry; that nevertheless the Jews should last to the end; that He should be of the race of Juda, and at the time when they should no longer have a king."

"Let us reflect that from the beginning of the world, the expectation, or adoration of the Messias had subsisted without interruption; that men were found who said

that God had revealed to them that a Saviour should be born who would redeem His people; then that Abraham came to declare that he had had a revelation that He should proceed from him by a son, who should be born to him; that Jacob declared that amongst his twelve children He should be born of Juda: that Moses and the prophets then came to declare the time and the manner of His coming; that they asserted that the law which they had was only in expectation of that of the Messias; that until then it should last, but that the other would last for ever; that thus their law, or that of the Messias, of which it was the promise, should continue for evermore on the earth; that in effect it has continued; that in fine Jesus Christ has come in accordance with all these predicted circumstances. This is wonderful."[1]

Enough, I think, has been quoted for our present purpose. Some other diver into the depths of Pascal, will no doubt see his way still further to develop his argument; but

[1] *Pensées*, p. 352 *et seq.*

whatever line he takes he will find that in the end Pascal will force him to go his way. The objections that Pascal does not argue like other men, that he goes too fast, is sometimes "emotional," and does not always finish his sentences, and that he quotes Scripture roughly from memory, remind us of the indignant complaints of those Austrian generals, who declared that Napoleon did not fight fair, because he would not wait until they had arranged the battlefield like a chessboard. Pascal writes as one who knew that the truth he expounded could live by its own inherent strength, and did not depend on his style, or on the arrangement of his arguments, and the result is that reason ascends her throne in his pages, so that never perhaps was there a more fascinating style, or logic more conquering.

CHAPTER IV.

OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

WHATEVER people who assume the office of prophets may say about the future, it is certain that, at present, there are no signs that interest in the life and doctrine of Christ is in any way diminished: for their resurrection or their ruin He abides as the centre of men's thoughts. In Him there is no change, of Him there is nothing new to be said: the only change is in the way in which men look at Him, and one mystery which grows as the ages go on, is the fact that out of their interminable speculations, lawless. as well as reverent, knowledge of Christ increases, and every increase is an addition to His glory, and to that of mankind.

The more we learn the more cautious we grow in saying that anything either true or

false in religious ideas is new. The field is infinite, but the mind of man is the same in all ages. The clear head and the pure heart go to God now on the same lines and in the same way as of old. As M. Saci found that Pascal's thoughts ran in the same line as those of St. Augustine, so in another sphere it does not need much study to discover that the so-called philosophy, and criticism of German and French infidels, are in great part, a re-appearance of some of the innumerable forms of the phantasmagoria of ancient Gnosticism, borrowed or indigenous, in minds similarly constituted. There is, however, one form of religious speculation, which is peculiarly new, as it is in great part a growth of time and the experience of ages: I mean what may be called the Philosophy of the Sacred Humanity of Jesus Christ; which, starting from the Person of Christ as its centre, draws all Revelation, dogmatic, moral, and historical, past and present, to itself as the end of all religion.

Like so much that is most sublime in the writings of the first Fathers of the Church,

the expansion and development of Christian evidences has been the growth of conflict. In the first ages, false brethren within the Church, "dividing Christ," inspired the genius of Athanasius, Ambrose, and Augustine. In the last century the enemy was without, and made open profession of absolute separation, and war to its last extremity. That war in which Voltaire was the leader was terrible while it lasted beyond anything the world had ever witnessed; but even in the lifetime of their master, his disciples saw that his rage had betrayed him, and that open blasphemy of Christ ever stultifies itself. Never did angry and impotent assailant make so great a blunder as Voltaire when he wrote the words *écrasez l'infâme:* they are as ridiculous as they are blasphemous.

Moreover, when Voltaire was vomiting forth what even Renan styles his "exegesis of obscenity" for disciples in Parisian, and Prussian stews, he was confronted in his own camp by a rival immeasurably his superior. Granting with Victor Hugo that the reign of Voltaire was an approach to

hell upon earth,[1] it is hard to overrate the antagonistic influence of Rousseau. It was antagonistic because it divided infidelity in its attack on the Christian ideal, as represented by its Founder. The effect of Rousseau's writings on his contemporaries must have been very great, if, as seems reasonable, we measure it by the use made of them by some of the greatest Christian writers of this century. It may not suit the taste of every one to allow an unbeliever to bear witness to Christ; but it would be a bold thing to call it a mistake on the part of such men as Lacordaire, Auguste Nicolas, and Hettinger; and after all it agrees with what the inspired writer has done in the case of Balaam the false prophet.

If it is said that it is from Rousseau that Renan and his school have learned the art

[1] "Voltaire alors régnait, ce singe de génie,
Chez l'homme en mission par le diable envoyé."
—*Les Rayons et les Ombres.*

Napoleon had a like contempt for the "apes of genius" of the eighteenth century; and explained their influence by the fact that they addressed a race of pigmies (*un génération des nains*).

of poisoning the wells by jumbling together praise and blasphemy, it may be answered, that granting this it does not follow that it was the way of Rousseau. Were it so, I do not believe that the mask would have held on to his face for so long a period; or that he would have taken in such keen critics as those I have enumerated, seeing that a child can see through the insincerity of Renan. Rousseau, like Byron, was one who saw the truth clearly at intervals, and then from a corrupt heart the clouds arose and all was dark again.

Very like the wild candour of Byron is the following estimate from Rousseau of his fellow-workers and associates: "I know not wherefore they try to attribute the beautiful morality of our literature to the progress of philosophy. This morality, borrowed from the Gospel, was Christian before it was philosophic;" and again, "I have questioned philosophers, gone over their works, examined their various opinions; I find them haughty, positive, dogmatic even in their affected scepticism, ignorant of nothing, and good for nothing, laughing at each other—

and this common ground seems to me the only one on which they are all reasonable—triumphant in attack, they are lifeless in defence. If you weigh their reasons, they are only those that destroy; if you sum up their ways, each one is reduced to his own: each one knows well that his system has no more foundation than that of another, but he upholds it because it is his own."[1] In the same style he deals with those philosophers whose real merits he recognises when an attempt is made to bring them forward as rivals to Christ. "Socrates, they say, invented morals—others before him had put them in practice; he did no more than say what others had done: he only turned their example into lessons. Aristides had been just before Socrates defined justice; Leonidas had died for his country before Socrates

[1] *Emile, ou de l'Education*, iv., nouv. ed., pp. 297, 349. "The best thing the metaphysicians have done is to refute themselves . . . this may be a service of the highest kind, because the detection and exposure of an error may be, and generally is, the discovery and vindication of a truth." *The Philosophy of Belief*, by the Duke of Argyll, p. 539.

made love of fatherland a duty; Sparta was sober before Socrates praised sobriety; before he had defined virtue Greece was rich in virtuous men. But from whence amongst his own had Jesus drawn that exalted and pure morality of which he alone gave the lesson and the example? From the midst of the most furious fanaticism came the voice of the highest wisdom. . . . I confess the majesty of the Scriptures astounds me, the sanctity of the Gospel speaks to my heart. Consider the writings of philosophers with all their pomp; how insignificant they are in its presence. Is it possible that a book at once so sublime and so simple could be the work of men? Is it possible that he whose history it tells could have been himself merely a man? . . . Shall we say that the Gospel history has been an invention of fancy? My friend, it is not thus that inventions are fabricated, and the facts of the life of Socrates, which no one doubts, are less clearly attested than those of Jesus Christ. In reality this is merely pushing back the difficulty without removing it; it is more inconceivable that

several men together should have fabricated this book, than that one man should have furnished its matter. Never could Jewish authors have discovered either this style, or this morality, and the Gospel has marks of truth so sublime, so striking, so absolutely inimitable, that the inventor would have been more astounding than the hero;"[1] and lastly, we have his declaration that "If the life and the death of Socrates were those of a sage, the life and the death of Jesus Christ were those of a God": a sentence which Lacordaire believes will be remembered by Christians as long as this world endures.[2]

Even if our enthusiasm does not go so far as that of Lacordaire, it certainly does appear that this strange unbeliever has been one of the chief agents in starting this new Philosophy of Comparison. It is not the highest form of Christian evidence—indeed, it is not of a nature to satisfy those to whom Christ is His own evidence. Comparison, as an argument, requires equal-

[1] *Emile, ou de l'Education,* ii., p. 157.

[2] *Conferences, Jesus Christ,* ii., p. 442.

ity under certain aspects and superiority under others in the things compared, and therefore nothing that has the stain of our tainted nature upon it can hold its own in the presence of Christ. Comparisons with the inanimate universe, on which rests the untroubled image of God, are alone worthy of Him who

> . . . did not scorn
> To make himself his own creation ;
> . . . It may not be,
> That one, who looks upon that light, can turn
> To other objects willingly his view.
> For all the good, that will may covet, there
> Is summ'd ; and all, elsewhere defective, found
> Complete.[1]

The discovery of affinity in great minds is one of the greatest rewards of long and

[1] Dante, *Paradiso*, i. (8), xxiii. (29). Quoting Dante I follow Mr. Cary, "to whom," says Macaulay, "Dante owes more than poet ever owed to translator". A very moderate knowledge of Catholic philosophy and theology makes this plain. When we compare Cary with Longfellow, Wright, or Dayman, we find that it is Cary alone who makes a Catholic of Dante. A very distinguished literary friend told me that he was in great measure led on to the Church by the study of Cary's *Dante*.

patient study of their works, and not the least of these rewards is the knowledge they give us of the limits of our intellectual powers. When we find that Pascal, who beyond almost all men is unembarrassed in his treatment of evidence that leads up to Christ, veils his face "like the rapt angel who adores and burns" when he reaches His presence, and that Dante did the same, we are justified in arguing that they stopped because they saw that they had arrived at the frontiers of the Infinite where

> Our intellect is to such depth absorb'd
> That memory cannot follow.

And again, applying the same idea to Christ,

> In bright pre-eminence, so saw I there
> O'er million lamps a sun, from whom all drew
> Their radiance, as from ours the starry train:
> And, through the living light, so lustrous glow'd
> The substance, that my ken endured it not.

In another way Dante reveals his sense of the divinity in Christ, "*In whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead corporally*".[1]

[1] Colossians ii. 9.

The Godhead so subjugates his intellect in a sort of ecstasy of adoration, that he is forced to seek for a created interpreter in the person of the human mother of Christ,

> . . . the rose
> Wherein the Word Divine was made incarnate.[1]

It is here that Dante excels Pascal, who had not the same clear vision of the place and office of that blessed one whom Cardinal Newman styles, "The grace and smiling light of every devotion". The two concluding cantos of the *Paradiso* are better than volumes of controversy in vindicating the Catholic doctrine that the human mother is the mirror in whom we can best behold the Son. Thus St. Bernard instructs Dante :—

> . . . "Now raise thy view
> Unto the visage most resembling Christ :
> For, in her splendour only, shalt thou win
> The power to look on him." Forthwith I saw
> Such floods of gladness on her visage shower'd,
> From holy spirits, winging that profound ;
> That, whatsoever I had yet beheld,
> Had not so much suspended me with wonder,
> Or shown me such similitude of God.[2]

[1] *Paradiso*, xxiii. (71). [2] *Ibid.*, xxxii. (75).

Pascal in his youth "fell amongst robbers," for not even Calvin and his withering creed, did as much as the Jansenists to strip religion of its consolations, and this because its agents were more gifted, and its sphere of destruction wider; and to my mind the way in which Pascal was in it, and yet not really of it, gives quite a special importance to the study of the workings of his soul on its way to Christ. Any one who carefully reads his sister's account of his last illness and death, will there clearly see the awful struggle between love and despair in his soul, and the final victory of love, when the priest approached the bed of death with the Blessed Sacrament, and aroused Pascal from his stupor with the words, "Behold Him whom you have so long desired".[1]

As we shall see later on, I make great use of those unstudied devotional colloquies with his Lord, and the prayers which Pascal mingled with his deepest religious reflections, although I must expect that some will deem this an unsatisfactory style of reasoning.

[1] *Vie de Pascal*, p. 72.

However short, abrupt, and disconnected are his arguments on questions which appeal to the intellect alone, they stand by their own strength; but strange to say, this man of iron is one of the most "emotional" of writers, to use a favourite expression of the day, when he treats of the personal relations of the soul with Christ. It is on this characteristic that Voltaire has based his ingenious theory that as soon as Pascal gave himself up entirely to religion, from that hour he was a monomaniac, a view which presents little difficulty to believers in Voltaire.[1]

But even in the passionate aspirations of Pascal we find those very ideas which subsequent writers have developed into what I have called the Philosophy of Christian Comparison. Auguste Nicolas,

[1] Dr. Johnson remarks that were a man to pray all day long he would certainly be accounted insane; whereas, were he to make up his mind never to pray at all, he might go down to his grave with the reputation of being a very sensible man. Voltaire styled Johnson "a superstitious dog," and Shakespeare a "drunken savage": no doubt because they manifested evident religious emotions.

perhaps the deepest and most logical of recent writers in this line, is so impregnated with the spirit of Pascal that he seems unconsciously to use his ideas and forms of expression—those sentences of Pascal which in the page absorb the whole argument. The study of the utter and unresisting subjugation of such an intellect as that of Pascal, in love and adoration before the image of Jesus Christ, is worthy of our consideration. Even though we may not always see how his mind worked, the study is, at any rate, important, as well as interesting, as an evidence of that faith, which in Pascal, beyond most men, was "the substance of things hoped for," the "evidence of things which appear not," while it was ever a "reasonable service".[1]

No one who has looked into Pascal's writings will expect to find in them a complete body of Christian evidences. It is because his genius renders this unnecessary that his arguments are so useful to those whose minds are unaccustomed to bear the

[1] Hebrews xi. 1. Romans xi. 1.

strain of deep and continued study. As I have said, it was to the Prophecies that he specially turned his mind. They led him to Christ, and when in meditation, by his extraordinary power of abstract reasoning he had found Christ, he seems to have put away every other assistance and consideration, having found the bond which united earth to heaven; and therefore, with Pascal, we now pass from the Prophecies to Jesus Christ Himself.

There are many fragments on miracles in the *Pensées*, but I do not see my way to fit them in with the simple line of argument we are following. If Jesus Christ is once proved to be God, then miracles in Him cease to be wonderful. Moses before Christ, and Apostles and disciples after Christ, worked miracles more astounding than His own, and this He had Himself foretold.[1] Nothing in Pascal is more wonderful than the way in which his judgment on everything in Revelation is in the spirit, and

[1] "*He that believeth in me, the works that I do, he shall do, and greater than these shall he do.*" St. John xiv. 12.

according to the measures of Revelation itself. Even in purely secular historical studies we find writers with an extent of vision and a power of combination which, as it were, enables them to live in the past, and hold intercourse with its occupants, and this gift Pascal carried with him to the very frontiers of eternity. Pascal gives us the impression that he is as unembarrassed in the company of the inspired writers, as Cardinal Newman when in his *Arians of the Fourth Century*, he introduces us, apparently without effort, to the minds of the doctors, sophists, heretics, and populace of that period, so chaotic in the pages of other writers.

To Pascal it seems a matter of as little surprise that men believed in Christ as that they saw the sun: his surprise is always at their blindness in not believing. He has a few reflections on the Apostles, and makes short work of the view that they invented Jesus Christ. "The Apostles," he writes, "were either deceived or deceivers. Both suppositions are unmanageable. For it is not possible to assume that a man has been raised from the dead. . . . While Jesus

Christ was with them He could hold them up; but after that, if He did not appear to them, who set them to work?

"The hypothesis that the Apostles were knaves, is very absurd. Let us follow this all the way: let us imagine these twelve men, gathered together after the death of Jesus Christ, and plotting to teach that He has risen from the dead: in doing so they attacked every established power. The heart of man leans strangely to levity, and to change, and promises, and the good things of this world. If only one of them had belied himself, under the influence of all these attractions, or still more under the pressure of prisons, tortures and death, they were lost. Let any one follow this." (*Qu'on suive cela.*)

"The style of the Gospel is wonderful in so many ways, and amongst others in the fact that it never introduces anything like invective against the executioners and enemies of Jesus Christ. For in none of the narrators is there anything of the sort against Judas, Pilate or any of the Jews.

"If this modesty of the evangelical his-

torians, as well as so many other beautiful traits of character had been affected: if they had put it on that it might be remarked: if they had not ventured to direct attention to it themselves, they would not have failed to find friends to make these remarks to their advantage. But as they acted thus without affectation, and from a disinterested motive, they did not draw the attention of any one to it. And I believe that many of these things were not remarked; and this is evidenced by that absence of all passion with which the work has been done. The rich man speaks correctly about riches, the king speaks quietly about a great gift he has imparted, and God speaks well of God. . . . Jesus Christ has spoken of great things so simply that it seemed as if He made no account of them, and nevertheless so distinctly that we see clearly what He thought; this clearness and this absence of all art are wonderful."

There are few things in Pascal more original than these sentences, and they are a key to all that he has written about our Lord, and in a secondary sense to the

Apostles to whom Christ committed the office of transmitting His words to men. When Pascal says, "In Jesus Christ all contradictions find their solution," he is speaking of the letter of Scripture: in another fragment he carries on the idea, "Not only," he says, "is it by Jesus Christ alone that we know God, we do not know ourselves except through Jesus Christ. Through Jesus Christ alone can we know life and death. Away from Jesus Christ, we neither know what our life is, nor our death, nor what God is, nor what we are ourselves."

"Thus without the Bible, which has Jesus Christ for its sole object, we know nothing, and see nothing but obscurity and confusion in the nature of God, and in our own nature.[1] . . . Without Jesus Christ, man must lie in vice and misery; with Jesus Christ, man is free from vice and misery. In Him is all our strength and all our joy. Away from Him there is nothing but vice, misery, error, darkness, death, despair. . . . Without Jesus Christ the world could not last, for

[1] *Pensées*, pp. 368, 349, 339, 392.

inevitably it would either be destroyed, or become a hell. . . . All those who seek God outside of Jesus Christ, either stop short at nature, where they find no light to satisfy them, or they go on to make a way of knowing and serving God without a mediator; and hence they fall either into atheism, or into deism, two things almost equally abhorrent to the Christian religion. . . . All those who pretend to know God, and prove Him without Jesus Christ, have only got impotent proofs.[1] But in proving Jesus Christ we have the prophecies, which are proofs solid and palpable. And these prophecies having been accomplished, and proved to be true by the event, denote the certainty of these truths, and therefore prove the divinity

[1] We need not stop here to defend Pascal against the charge of *fideism*, that is the denial of the metaphysical proofs of the existence of God. He explains himself (p. 271). All he asserts is that the proofs are so much above human reason that they make little impression, and are soon forgotten. See also M. Havet's note in the page from Bossuet, in the same line, supported by the words of St. Augustine, "Insomuch as they come near by reason, they depart by pride". *De Concupiscentia.*

of Jesus Christ. In Him, and by Him, then we know God . . . by Jesus Christ, and in Jesus Christ, God is proved, and morals and dogmas taught. Jesus Christ is therefore the true God of men." [1]

Pascal's principle that Jesus Christ is to us the centre of all truth in heaven and on the earth runs like a thread of gold through his speculations on everything in which the soul of man is concerned. "I behold," he says, "Jesus Christ in all characters and in ourselves. Jesus Christ as father in one's father, Jesus Christ as brother in our brothers, Jesus Christ as poor in the poor, Jesus Christ as rich in the rich, Jesus Christ as doctor and priest in priests, Jesus Christ as sovereign in princes, etc. For by His glory He is all that which is great, being God, and by His mortal life all that is pitiful and abject; for this end He has assumed this miserable condition that He might have power to exist in every one, and be the model in all ranks of society." [2]

Enough I think has been said about the

[1] *Pensées*, p. 391. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 511.

lines on which the mind of Pascal travelled in its swift and unfaltering course from creation to Jesus Christ. Were I still more to multiply examples from his writings of the way in which the "Light of the World" in his soul lit up all mysteries, I should fear to tax the patience of readers perhaps not as enthusiastic about Pascal as myself. I shall therefore now confine myself to the study of Pascal's own relations with the Incarnate Word as revealed in *The Mystery of Jesus*, and his *Prayer in Sickness*.[1]

As a rule the study of any particular mind is more hazardous than the study of minds in general. Mind in general is common property, but the personality of individuals, dead as well as living, seems to rise up against the interpreter of their secrets. But there are exceptions, and Pascal is one, as St. Teresa is another. It is certainly very remarkable that as far as I can discover, St. Athanasius, St. Augustine, St. Thomas and St. Teresa, are the only un-

[1] *Le Mystère de Jésus*, and *Prière pour demander à Dieu le bon usage des Maladies*, will be found at p. 542 to p. 565 of M. Havet's one vol. ed. of the *Pensées*.

inspired writers, to whom in the *Pensées* Pascal alludes either as authorities, or as objects of admiration, although from none of them does he borrow much. This confirms the statement of M. Saci, already quoted, that Pascal by his native genius, and without the labour of study, worked his way in divine philosophy by inspiration similar to that by which in his childhood he had discovered the propositions of Euclid.

The fragments in which he alludes to St. Teresa are remarkable in more ways than one. They run thus: "Exterior works. There is nothing so perilous as that which pleases both God and men. For states which please both God and men have one part which is pleasing to God, and another which is pleasing to men. Like the greatness of St. Teresa: that which pleases God is her deep humility amidst her revelations; that which pleases men is her spiritual illumination. And thus people strain to imitate her style, aspiring to imitate her state; and take no trouble to imitate that which God loves, and to place themselves in the condition that God loves." In the first

place we learn from this fragment that the eagle amongst critics who saw at a glance the false principles of Epictetus, Montaigne, and Descartes—that this inexorable critic believed in the revelations of St. Teresa. This is confirmed by what he says in another fragment, "That which confuses us in comparing what happened formerly in the Church with what goes on now, is that commonly we look on St. Athanasius, St. Teresa and others as crowned with glory, and working amongst us as gods. At present, when time has lit things up, it seems so. But at the time when he was persecuted, this great saint was a man called Athanasius, and St. Teresa a young maiden."[1]

I am not aware that amongst the innumerable commentaries, and speculations suggested by Pascal's personal and private devotions, any one has, as yet, made much use of them as an evidence of the divinity of Jesus Christ. At first sight the attempt will probably seem idealistic, and out of keeping with the other arguments of a

[1] *Pensées*, p. 442.

mind so inexorably logical as that of Pascal. Again, it may be said, that Pascal's faith in Jesus Christ goes no further than himself, and cannot be turned into an argument addressed to other minds. To these objections I answer, that in itself it may be an argument to other minds to find that after years of wrestling in the solitude of his own soul with every anti-Christian argument invented by the fertile ingenuity of man, the end in Pascal's case was absolute and adoring submission. But the truth is, Pascal's conversations with Christ reveal much more than his own feelings, and this is the impression they have made on M. Havet. "In this fragment" (the *Prayer in Sickness*), he remarks, "otherwise so strange to our sentiments and ideas, one is bound to admire that same character which is everywhere present in the eloquence of Pascal: the union of passionate imagination with precision and mathematical severity"; and he continues in the words of M. Nisard: "It seems that in a prayer we ought to find some evidence of self-

abandonment, some enthusiasm and that confidence which no longer weighs its own motives. That of Pascal has nothing of this. It is a passionate process of reasoning, in which a mortal man argues with God. It is neither by the enthusiasm of the psalmist, nor the inflamed imagination of the ascetic, that this prayer lifts itself up; it is by reasonings which follow one from the other, and rise like the steps of a mystical ladder. We feel that no step is wanting beneath the feet of Pascal."[1]

Apart from the vein of naturalism in M. Havet's and M. Nisard's tone, we may agree with their estimate of the logical character of Pascal's conversations with Jesus Christ. I use the word *conversation* advisedly, in the spirit of St. Teresa, who says: "Mental prayer is nothing else, in my opinion, but being on terms of friendship with God, frequently *conversing* in secret with Him who, we know, loves us".[2]

[1] *Histoire de la Littérature Française*, tom. ii., ap. Havet, p. 565, n.

[2] *Life of St. Teresa*, written by herself, p. 54. Lewis's trans., Burns & Oates, 1870. Probably unconsciously,

The sustained and unfaltering flight of Pascal's mind in its ascent to Christ, until with Dante his "ken endured not," is unlike that of St. Augustine, in whose soul love seems to anticipate and outstrip reason; and if any one wishes to say with MM. Havet and Nisard, that this is an evidence that Pascal's prayer was purely intellectual and speculative, I can only answer that even so it does not affect our argument. Pascal does not belong to that small number upon whose sanctity the Church has set her seal; but as we are incompetent to canonize him, so are we incompetent to pass judgment upon the *multifariam multisque modis* (Hebrews i. 1), in which God holds communication with His creatures.[1]

The Mystery of Jesus begins thus:

St. Teresa repeats the words of St. John Climacus, who says, "Prayer is in its nature confidential intercourse with God, and the union of man with Him". *Fathers of the Desert*, Hahn Hahn, p. 605.

[1] St. Teresa answered one who asked "What a soul felt when perfectly united to its Creator?" that in order to answer "it was necessary to know what the difference was between a Creator and a creature".

"In His Passion Jesus suffers torments inflicted by men; but in the agony He suffers torments which He brings upon Himself (*turbavit seipsum*).[1] It is a punishment inflicted by a hand that is not human, but all-powerful, since it needed Almighty strength to endure it.

"Jesus seeks some consolation, at least in His three dearest friends, and they sleep. He prays them to suffer a little with Him, and they abandon Him with absolute indifference, having so little compassion that they could not keep off sleep for a moment. And thus Jesus is left alone under the anger of God. Jesus is left alone on the earth, not only without one to feel and share His agony, but without one who knows it: heaven, and Himself alone understand it.

"Jesus is in a garden, not of delights, as the first Adam, where he brought ruin on himself and all the human race, but in one of tortures, where He saves Himself and the whole human race.

[1] "*Jesus, therefore, when he saw her weeping, and the Jews that were come with her, weeping, groaned in the spirit, and troubled himself.*" St. John xi. 33.

"He suffers this agony and desolation amid the horrors of the night. I believe that Jesus never complained save on this one occasion; but then He complains as if He could no longer restrain the excess of His sorrow: '*My soul is sorrowful even unto death*'. Jesus seeks the company and the sympathy of men. This, it seems to me, is unique in the whole course of His life. But He does not obtain it, for His disciples sleep."

In another place Pascal remarks: "Who has taught the evangelists the characteristics of a perfectly heroic soul, that they might paint it so perfectly in Jesus Christ? Wherefore do they make Him weak in His agony? Did they not know how to depict an untroubled death? Yes, for the same St. Luke pictures that of St. Stephen as stronger than that of Jesus Christ. They make Him then subject to fear before the time came when it was necessary to die, and then altogether strong. But when they make Him so troubled, it is when He troubles Himself, and when men trouble Him He is altogether strong."

"The Church has had as hard a task to

prove that Jesus Christ was man against those who denied it, as to prove that He was God: appearances were as strong one way as the other.

"Jesus Christ is a God whom we approach without pride, and under whom we abase ourselves without despair." [1]

The Mystery of Jesus continues: "Jesus will be in agony until the end of the world: it is not right to sleep during this time. Jesus in the midst of this universal abandonment, and of that of His friends, chosen to watch with Him, finding them asleep, is disturbed not at the peril to which they expose Himself, but at that which threatens them, and He reminds them of their own salvation, and of that which is for their good with heartfelt tenderness in the hour of their ingratitude, and warns them that the spirit is willing and the flesh weak."

After some other similar considerations, Pascal changes his style, and, as it were, speaks to his own soul in the person of Jesus Christ.

[1] *Pensées*, p. 350.

"Be comforted; thou wouldst not seek, if thou hadst not already found me.[1]

"I thought of thee in my agony; I have shed many drops of blood for thee. It is tempting me rather than proving thyself to reflect whether thou wilt do well that which is to come; I will do it in thee if it comes.

"Surrender thyself to be led by my rules; see how I have faithfully led the Virgin, and the Saints, who have allowed me to act in them.

"The Father loves all my works.

"Do you wish that I should ever pay the blood of my humanity without the gift of thy tears?

"Your conversion is my affair; fear not, and pray with confidence, as if it were for me.

"I am present by my word in the Scriptures, by my spirit in the Church, and by

[1] "Reason, with the aid of grace, teaches him (the creature) that there is nothing more worthy of love than God, and that He can only be taken away from those who reject Him; since to desire Him is to possess Him, and to refuse Him is to lose Him." *Pensées*, p. 646.

my inspirations and by my power in priests, and by my prayer in the faithful.

"The physicians will not cure thee; for in the end thou must die. But it is I who cure and make thy body immortal. Be patient under thy chains and the servitude of the body: at present I only deliver thee from those that are spiritual. I am more thy friend than such and such an one; for I have done more for thee than they have, and they do not suffer what I have suffered for thee, nor die for thee in the hour of thy infidelities and cruelty, as I have done, and am ready to do, and do in my elect, and in the Blessed Sacrament.

"If you knew your sins, you would lose heart (I lose it then, Lord, for I believe in their malice, on Thy word). No, for I, by whom you learn them, can cure you, and that which I tell you is a sign that I wish to cure you."[1]

With two extracts from the *Prayer in Sickness* we will conclude our study of Pascal's mystical reasonings. He continues

[1] *Pensées*, p. 542 *et seq.*

in the same style of conversation with Jesus Christ.

"I find nothing in myself which can please Thee. I see nothing but my sufferings which have any resemblance with Thine. Remember then the evils which I suffer, and those which menace me. Look with an eye of mercy on the wounds which Thy hand hast inflicted on me, O my Saviour, who hast loved your own sufferings in death! O God who hast made Thyself man only to suffer more than any man for the salvation of men! O God who hast only become incarnate after the fall of man, and who hast taken a body only to suffer in it all the evils which our sins have merited! O God who so loves the body that suffers, and who hast chosen for Thyself a body the most weighed down with suffering that has ever existed in this world! let my body be acceptable to Thee, not for itself, nor for all that it encompasses, for all therein deserves your anger, but because of the evils it endures, which alone can make it worthy of Thy love. Love my sufferings, Lord, and let my calamities invite Thee to visit me.

But, to finish the preparation of Thy dwelling, grant, O my Saviour, that if my body has that in common with Thine, that it suffers for my offences, my soul also may have that in common with Thine, that it be in sorrow for the same offences, and that thus I may suffer with Thee, and like Thee, both in my body, and in my soul, for the sins I have committed.

"Give me grace, Lord, to unite your consolations to my sufferings, so that I may suffer as a Christian. I do not ask to be exempt from sufferings, for that is the reward of the Saints; but I ask not to be abandoned to the sorrows of nature without the consolations of your spirit, for that is the malediction on the Jews, and the Pagans. I do not ask to have the plenitude of consolations without any suffering, for that is the life of glory. . . . But I ask, Lord, to feel at one and the same time the sorrows of nature for my sins, and the consolations of Thy spirit by Thy grace; for such is the true Christian state. . . . Grant, my God, that in the same uniformity of spirit I may receive all things as they come, since

we know not what we should ask, and I cannot desire one thing rather than another without presumption, making myself judge, and responsible for consequences, which Thy wisdom justly wills to hide from me. Lord, I know that I know but one thing: that it is good to follow Thee, and that it is evil to offend Thee. After that, I know not what is best or worst in anything; I know not what profits me, whether, amongst all the things in the world, it be health or sickness, riches or poverty. This is discernment which surpasses the vision of men and angels, and is hidden in the secrets of Thy providence, which I adore, and into which I care not to search."

I think the reader will acknowledge that Pascal's conversations with Christ, the elevations of his soul to God, are something more than specimens of a man's private devotions. I do not mean that before God they were worth more than the prayer of the peasant, or of the child at his mother's knee, but that to men who are searchers into the relations of the soul with God, they have another and a special meaning. It is a bold

thing to use the superlative about any man's gifts, for it comes to passing judgment on the human race. But we often challenge the past and the present, and their interpreters, and this I think we may do in the case of Pascal, and inquire whether man ever gazed so steadfastly as he did into the nature of the mysterious relations of the Creator with His creature. I repeat that this is no evidence of his sanctity: this does not concern the argument. It may be that it was because his light was only the light of nature that he was so bold, and able so clearly to express his ideas. Granting for argument's sake that it was so, it only makes the proof all the more cogent, that although reason cannot open the gate of heaven, it can lead man infallibly to its threshold. "Can you," writes Cardinal Newman, "deliberately sit down amid the bewildering mysteries of creation, when a refuge is held out to you in which reason is rewarded for its faith by the fulfilment of its hopes? Nature does not exempt you from the trial of believing, but it gives you nothing in return; it does

but disappoint you. . . . The very fact, I say, that there is a Creator, and a hidden one, powerfully bears you on, and sets you down at the very threshold of revelation, and leaves you there looking up earnestly for Divine tokens that a revelation has been made."[1]

No two writers were more different in their course, and more similar in their essential religious conclusions than Cardinal Newman, and Pascal. The former went on from childhood, for some eighty years, looking for, and finding God everywhere, like one who—

> *Finds, tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,*
> *Sermons in stones, and good in everything,*[2]

while the other saw the light in its source. In both there is that same sense of the imprisonment of the spirit in the flesh, which made the former write thus to his mother in answer to her remark that "his fault was a want of self-confidence, and a dis-

[1] "Mysteries of Nature and Grace." *Discourses*, pp. 292, 294.

[2] *As You Like It*, ii. 1.

satisfaction with himself". "Take me," he replied, "when I am most foolish at home, and extend mirth into childishness; stop me short and ask me then what I think of myself, whether my opinions are less gloomy; no, I think I should seriously return the same answer, that 'I shuddered at myself'." [1]

Again and again Pascal expresses the

[1] *Letters of J. H. Newman*, vol. i., p. 58. Longmans, 1891. Thirty-five years later and his ideas had not changed. Addressing his students of the *Catholic University of Ireland*, he says, "The religion of the natural man is based on self-sufficiency, and results in self-satisfaction . . . all such persons walk by their own light, not by the True Light of men, because self is their supreme teacher, and because they pace round and round in the small circle of their own thoughts and of their own judgments, careless to know what God says of them; and fearless of being condemned by Him, if only they stand approved in their own sight. . . . The Catholic saints alone confess sin, because the Catholic saints alone see God . . . ;" and he adds that it is because of this that "there is so much of emotion, so much of conflicting and alternating feeling, so much that is high, so much that is abased, in the devotion of Christianity". *Occasional Sermons*, pp. 25-27.

same idea: "Man knows that he is worthless; he is worthless then because it is so: but he is great because he knows it. . . . What then is to be the end of man? Shall he be the equal of God, or of the beasts? How appalling is the gulf! What then shall we be? Who does not see from all this that man has strayed away, that he is fallen from his place, that he searches for it restlessly, that he can no longer find it?"[1]

It is well for us that the manifestations of genius are as varied as flowers in the material world, and it is enough if, swiftly or slowly, they arrive at the same conclusion. Take another mind greater, and more immeasurable than that of either Pascal, or Cardinal Newman. In his *Confessions* St. Augustine travels over again the long road by which he arrived at faith in Christ. Who has ever taken in all that is contained even in this one book? to say nothing of those ten folio volumes from which, as from a storehouse, the defenders

[1] *Pensées*, pp. 241, 279.

of Divine truth have drawn their arguments, and this for nigh fifteen hundred years. In the course of these long ages his writings have been a part of the minds of myriads with whom Christ has been the beginning and the end of life: the inspiration and guide of the nun in her contemplations, as well as of the theologian in the schools, and like the ocean seen under different skies, his wisdom is ever new and yet ever the same.

But it is plain that the variety, and immensity of St. Augustine's mind may easily be a snare to beginners, and to all those who, in religious investigations, in spite of St. Paul, assume that they have already "apprehended". A glance at a Summary or Table of Contents of *The Confessions of St. Augustine*, from Book I., beginning with his prayer, "Thou art mighty, O Lord, who opposes the proud," to the beginning of Book X., "The Mediator of God and man, the man Christ Jesus appearing between mortal sinners, and the immortal Just; mortal with sinners, just with God," reveals how many were the mysteries which, blending into

unity in the mind of St. Augustine, found their solution and their end in Him, "who as Man alone is Mediator: as the Word not an instrument, because He is equal to God, God in God, and with the Holy Spirit one only God".

So different is the laconic way of Pascal, that, as has been said, he has laid himself open to the charge of being the enemy of that "bright darkness" of Christian philosophy which pervades the writings of St. Augustine. It is certain that he did not want it himself, and clearly held that there was a better way to truth in the minds of the lowly and simple, to whom God speaks by faith, and the inspirations of grace.[2] If Pascal despised philosophy, he could not have been an admirer of St. Augustine and St. Thomas, as he certainly was, and Pascal was never one who could admire, much less follow any religious teacher whose principles and ways were not true to reason. No one was more intellectually exclusive than Pascal; but at the same time no writer has stated

[2] And neither St. Augustine, nor St. Thomas would have disputed this doctrine.

more clearly the truth that it is one thing to be above, and another to be contrary to reason. "Everything," he writes, "turns to blessing for the elect,[1] even the very obscurities of the Scriptures, for they worship them for the sake of the Divine light; and everything turns to evil for the others, even these lights themselves; for they blaspheme them because of the obscurities, which they do not understand."[2] If, therefore, in his despotic way, and with the fixed purpose of bringing his proofs of Revelation home to every mind, Pascal seems at times to be impatient with philosophy, his words are at any rate a consolation to those who are also impatient with it because they are convinced that it is beyond them. Nothing is more touching as well as sublime in Pascal than the way in which, with all the vigour of conviction, he forces home the

[1] "*All things work together for the good of those who love God.*" Romans viii. 28.

[2] *Pensées*, p. 378. So in St. Augustine. "He who seeks religiously, honours the Holy Scriptures, and does not find fault because as yet he understands not; and therefore he does not resist."

truth that by grace every soul, the simplest as well as the wisest, is in direct communication with God, and that the extent and the clearness of the revelation are altogether independent of human science, and human formulas. He does not argue the point in those meditations in which, in a way all his own, he makes his own reason prosecutor and defendant in the trial of faith, and in so doing has made his mind the tribunal of the reason of mankind. He asserts as a thing to be taken for granted, that Revelation is the work of God, and in the court of his own understanding there was no dispute. It may be said that were he in the arena of human disputation, instead of that of prayer, he would have taken trouble to prove the point. I doubt it. I believe he would have answered that people who held that revelation, like the statue in the Book of Daniel, was a compound partly divine and partly human, were out of his religious court, and that it would be waste of time to dispute with them. Not so, however, with those who were in darkness concerning the divinity

of Jesus Christ. For such people, if they were sincere, Pascal had that tender compassion which is ever akin to respect : compassion which reminds us of that of St. Paul. Work for others under the load of physical tortures, and until the last spark of life expires, is certainly a proof of love ; and thus it was that Pascal worked that his fellow-men might have that knowledge which to him was light in the darkness of life.

When he says that to know Jesus Christ is to know all that man wants to know in the past, the present and future, he offends the pride of those who aspire here on earth to a knowledge of the Divinity similar to that of the liberated spirits in heaven. It is remarkable that this was one of St. Teresa's difficulties, under the guidance of teachers whom further experience taught her to condemn. "They advise us much," she writes, "to withdraw from all bodily imagination, and draw near to the contemplation of the Divinity ; for they say that they who have advanced so far, would be embarrassed or hindered in their way to the highest contemplation if they regarded even

the Sacred Humanity itself. They defend their opinion by bringing forward the words of our Lord to the Apostles,[1] concerning the coming of the Holy Ghost; I mean that coming which was after the Ascension. If the Apostles had believed, as they believed after the coming of the Holy Ghost, that He is both God and Man, His bodily presence would, in my opinion, have been no hindrance: for these words were not said to the Mother of God, though she loved Him more than all. They think that, as this work of contemplation is wholly spiritual, any bodily object can disturb or hinder it. They say that the contemplative should regard himself as being within a definite space, God everywhere around, and himself absorbed in Him. This is what he should aim at. This seems to me right enough now and then; but to withdraw altogether from Christ, and to compare His Divine Body with our miseries, or with any created thing whatever, is

[1] "*It is expedient to you that I go: for if I go not the Paraclete will not come to you: but if I go, I will send him to you.*" St. John xvi. 7.

what I cannot endure. . . . O Lord of my soul, and my God! Jesus Christ crucified! I never think of this opinion which I then held without pain; I believe it was an act of high treason, though done in ignorance. . . . I did not continue long of this opinion, and so I returned to my habit of delighting in our Lord, particularly at Communion. I wish I could have His picture and image always before my eyes, since I cannot have Him graven on my soul as deeply as I wish. . . . Let us consider the glorious St. Paul, who seems as if Jesus was never absent from his lips, as if he had Him deep down in his heart. After I had heard this of some great saints given to contemplation, I considered the matter carefully, and I see that they walked in no other way. St. Francis with the stigmata proves it, St. Antony of Padua with the Infant Jesus, St. Bernard rejoiced in the Sacred Humanity; so did St. Catherine of Siena, and many others, as your reverence knows better than I do. . . . That we should carefully and laboriously accustom ourselves not to strive with all our might to

have always—and please God it be always!—the most Sacred Humanity before our eyes; this, I say, is what seems to me not to be right: it is making the soul, as they say, to walk in the air, for it has nothing to rest on, how full soever of God it may think itself to be."[1]

We see that St. Teresa alludes to St. Catherine, her sister star in the mystical constellation of the Church. In the work entitled her *Dialogues*, the Eternal Father speaks thus to St. Catherine: "It is as if the sweet and loving Word, my Son, should say: 'Behold how I have made the way, and opened the door with my blood'; be not slothful therefore to follow it, content to sit still in love of yourself, in ignorance of the way, and in presumptuous desire of

[1] *Life*, written by herself. Lewis's trans., pp. 165-70. Thus, a century before Molinos, and Madame Guyon, this extraordinary woman brought her celestial irony to bear upon Quietism. See also *Interior Castle*, Dalton, p. 172. Well might her Confessor say, "Blessed be God! but I would rather dispute with all the theologians in the world than with this woman". *Foundations*, Lewis, p. 270 (n.).

choosing to serve me in your own way rather than mine, who have made the straight road saturated with blood, by means of my Truth, the Incarnate Word. Arise then upon it, and follow it ; for no one can come to me the Father except through Him. He is the way and the gate through which lies the entrance into me the peaceful sea." [1]

There is surely something more than a mere coincidence in the harmony of these three minds, so different in antecedents, and character. Neither can it be attributed to identity of instruction and training, save in so far as they believed in, and loved the same Lord. The daughter of the Sienese tradesman, the noble Spanish lady, and the French philosopher had little else in common. If ever spirits rose and fell upon the breath of inspiration, it was those of St. Catherine, and St. Teresa : if ever mind went by the common ways of reason, it was that

[1] *Il Dialogo della serafica Santa Caterina da Siena*, Gigli, p. 158. Looking on the sea, and seeing in it an image of God, she was heard murmuring, *O mare pacifico, O mare piacevole.*

of Pascal; and yet all three arrived at the same conclusion. Do we know of any minds endowed as these were with that vision, and gift of origination, which we call genius, and left to themselves, which have thus been run into the same mould? I am dealing now with those who demand evidence which is open to all, and appeals to reason; for to those who understand the operations of grace, this harmony we are studying is only a specially clear manifestation of that universal unity of faith which holds the children of the Church together. Anyhow, it is something if it is made plain that Pascal was orthodox in narrowing, or rather concentrating, the evidences of revealed religion in the person of Jesus Christ: it was thus he argues that the Apostles converted both Jew and pagan. It is one of the most significant and hopeful signs of our times, in so many ways like those in which the Apostles laboured, that over the dark and troubled sea of modern unbelief, the Sun of Justice, the "Light of the World," is rising. Swelled by the paganism of the past, and the brutal lust of its own day,

the tide of revolt rose, until in Voltaire it broke and spent itself in its rage, and with his failure began its sullen retreat to the abyss from whence it came. These will not seem mere words of rhetoric to those who have thoughtfully studied the genesis, and course of modern unbelief, especially in the literature of France: that country whose mission amongst nations seems to be to bring ideas to a head, and push the world to its conclusions. The change is great indeed from Voltaire and Condorcet, to M. Sainte-Beuve and M. Cousin, and that *catena* of gentle, dreamy, pathetic free-thinkers enumerated by Auguste Nicolas:[1] men who seem to have taken St. Augustine, as he described himself in his young Manichean days,[2] as their guide. "And I sought," he writes, "for the way of gaining that strength which would fit me to enjoy Thee, and I found it not until I had embraced 'the Mediator of God and Man, the Man Christ Jesus, who is over all, God blessed for ever,' in-

[1] *La Divinité de Jésus Christ*, 2nd ed., 1864.

[2] St. Augustine was converted at the age of thirty-three.

viting and saying, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life,' food which I was not strong enough to take, as it mingles with the flesh, since the Word was made flesh that Thy wisdom, by which Thou hast made all things, should become the milk of our infancy.

"For I was not humble to take hold of my humble Lord Jesus Christ, nor could I understand the lesson of His infirmity. For Thy Word, the eternal Truth, rising above all that is highest in the creature, lifts His subjects to Himself. For in the depths He had built for Himself a lowly mansion in our clay, by which those He would rule, should fall from themselves, and pass to Him, healing pride and nourishing love. . . . But my thoughts were other than these, and I only thought of the Lord my Christ as a man of transcendent wisdom, and beyond all comparison with other men. . . . And I babbled as one scientific, and were it not that I sought my way in Christ our Saviour, instead of being learned I should have been on the way to destruction." [1]

[1] *Confessions*, bk. vii., 18 *et seq.*

Here then we have one whose subjugation of the soul was as complete, and his language as lowly as that of Pascal, and so they both reached the same goal, and abide as witnesses at once to the greatness and the limits of the mind of man, and to the way in which belief in Jesus Christ begins in the reason, and then passes onward into light that transcends it.

CHAPTER V.

THE NEW UNBELIEF.

In the preface I made a pledge to the reader that as a conclusion I would bring Pascal face to face with the chief leaders of modern unbelief, and this promise must now be fulfilled. But whom are we to select as chief leaders where all are supreme? and how are we to meet intellectual antagonists who are ever shifting their ground, and who make no account of differences and contradictions even in their own writings, agreeing only on the one point that the old religion, and the old philosophy must at all costs be put out of the way? It is clear that whether long or short, a discussion with such antagonists cannot be either systematic or consecutive, and that the utmost we can arrive at are reflections, which at any rate may give some idea of the character of the new unbelief, if

not of its meaning; and the fact that in my youth I was myself an admirer, and almost a disciple, of that new philosophy which is the way to the new unbelief, encourages the hope that on the lines whereon I was myself convinced, I may succeed in convincing others that this philosophy is hostile to reason, as well as to religion.

In the preceding pages we have seen how minds, second to none in their own provinces, have been subjugated by Revelation, and have acknowledged Christ to be the central sun of the spiritual universe. Also, that while differing as to consequences and conclusions, the intellectual processes by which these men arrived at belief in the Divinity of Jesus Christ were the same: Lord Bacon and Newton went back to Christ on the same road as Pascal and Cardinal Newman; it was on the return journey, and when they had found Him, that they separated. Such separations amongst Christians, however, leave untouched the fact that up to a certain point they are one, using reason in the same way, and therefore upholding each other.

Over against this host of believers, in which, as in a disciplined army, the strength of all is in each member, we have now that multitude of "Free-Thinkers," who, as their name implies, make it their chief glory that in religion and philosophy they will neither submit reason to any restraints, nor acknowledge any masters in the past or the present. That these pretensions, unheard of in what is called real life, from the cradle to the grave, should have such attractions in all that relates to the unseen, is merely a consequence of man's passionate worship of liberty at all costs: Luther won his way by promising the soul liberty within the boundaries of the Bible, the New Philosophy offers it universal emancipation.

When these ideas were first presented to the minds of men educated on the ancient lines, they felt scorn and impatience similar to that which heresy arouses on its first appearance; but as it is with heresy, so with false philosophy, the time comes when we have to deal with those who have been brought up under its influence, to whom its principles are like a second nature. On

such people indignation and irony are thrown away; and, moreover, we must remember that it is not always a moral fault, or even a great intellectual disgrace, to be deceived: *humanum est errare*, and those who have once been under the influence of illusions which faded away when confronted by their maturer judgments, are bound to be patient and considerate, when they find others in dangers from which they themselves have escaped.

But unfortunately this is not the way of controversy. Few people are capable of remembering, and fewer still of confessing their past errors and follies. For this two things are necessary, a good memory, and candour like that of Edmund Burke, who in the words already quoted, refers to the way in which in his youth "a popular fashion" told him "to admire Bolingbroke". How many of us, in our day, have been "told" by fashion to admire, and have obeyed, because we were told, and how few, save those whose office imposes the duty, have gravely given their mind to the work of reconsideration!

Taught by experience, we must now patiently meet the fact that, outside the Church, in all questions which extend beyond the boundaries of sense and time, the processes by which men's minds go in search of conviction, have very generally undergone a radical revolution: the contest now between belief and unbelief is not so much about the nature of truth, but rather as to the way to get at it.

If it seems a contradiction in terms to speak of a distinct way of "Free-Thought" when its essence consists in independence, we must remember that it still leaves the mind free to follow the way of another: liberty of choice in the matter of a guide leaves all its aspirations free. Thus Nature asserts herself, and men bolder and more inventive than their fellows have in modern times, and up to a certain point, practically obtained an intellectual domination more absolute than anything of the sort ever known before. If these leaders of thought, from Spinoza to Voltaire, Kant, Hegel, Häckel and Huxley, had nothing in common, it would be useless to attempt

to answer them. But the fact is that they are one in their primary and fundamental principle of free-thought, or absolute emancipation from all authority; and if this is proved to be unreasonable, with it fall all the structures they have raised upon it.

"Free-Thought," like authority, liberty, and other generic ideas, takes its colour and special meaning from the mind of the writer or speaker. It has a rational, and an irrational sense. Under the restraint of reason, it is the way of genius as well as necessary for mental development: unrestrained, it stultifies genius, and bids farewell to reason. If it is no easy matter to fix the limits, laws, and boundaries of thought, still in fact they do exist as clearly distinct as those of freedom and licence in action, for action after all in every reasonable being is only thought carried on to a conclusion. If so much is granted, then, it is plain that the life, character, and words of the professional free-thinker, will turn out to be the simplest and plainest exposition of his opinions; and if I take Kant as the chief representative

of free-thought in our times, as Voltaire was in the last century, I believe I shall be safe. It is true that Kant's leadership has been disputed even in Germany; but for all that it seems that Kant retains his empire, and that beyond him free-thinkers cannot easily go. This is the opinion of Father Pesch in his recent work *Kant et la Science Moderne*, which in the French translation is well known amongst us. It will, however, be more to our purpose to go direct to Kant himself, and see what is the secret of the power which he exercises over multitudes who confess that they cannot give an intelligible explanation of this faith which is in them.

It is well known that many of our own most distinguished philosophers, of all denominations, have refused seriously to discuss the claims of that philosophy of which Kant is the parent. They have met it with contempt as undisguised and unmitigated as that of Johnson, Burke, and Napoleon for the French *philosophes* of the last century. But as I have said, when any system has lived long enough to become hereditary, and

when its doctrines have become first principles in the education of the young, we must meet them patiently, and discuss them on their own merits if we want to obtain a hearing from their adherents. The principle that "ridicule is the test of truth," only works successfully when people are good-humoured and dispassionate: when passion and party feeling are in the field, it only intensifies the fierceness of discussion, and when did conviction ever attend on angry polemics? The best controversy is that which gives both sides fairly, in the words of their most approved advocates, and leads the mind of the reader to take the place of an unbiassed judge.

In the preceding pages we have seen how the greatest minds in the past made use of reason, and how their ruling principle was the conviction of its limits and restraints: we will now turn to the ideas of Kant on the same subject.

I should premise that I cannot study Kant in the original German; but this defect, so fatal in dealing with works of imagination and taste, need be no obstacle

to the understanding of scientific and philosophical works, which are intended for all nations. Indeed, unless a critic's knowledge of a language is both accurate and profound, it is much safer to use the work of an approved and competent translator, and such I presume is Mr. Meiklejohn, to whom the task of translating Kant was committed in 1866 by the editor of so learned a collection as *Bohn's Philosophical Library*. From his preface it is plain that the translator is a serious and candid writer, and that he approaches his subject with something like religious solemnity. From his preface, therefore, and from the two prefaces of Kant himself to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, we may expect to obtain that knowledge of Kant and his system, which few can hope to attain from Kant's own writings. In the case of writers whose characteristics are strongly marked, extracts need not be either many or long: we shall therefore deal with Kant, as with Pascal and Newton, and if it turns out that Kant's utterances are incomprehensible, and contradictory, he himself must answer for it.

We begin with the translator's estimate of Kant's method and of his style, for the latter being, as Cicero says, "the countenance of the soul," it is a very clear index of the mind. "The difficulties," says Mr. Meiklejohn, "which meet the reader, and the translator of this celebrated work (the *Critique of Pure Reason*)[1] arise from various causes. Kant was a man of clear, vigorous, trenchant thought, and after nearly twelve years' meditation could not be in doubt as to his own system"; and in the same page Mr. Meiklejohn attributes these difficulties to the obscurity of Kant's style, for he tells us: "There are some passages which have no main verb; others in which the author loses sight of the subject with which he set out, and concludes with a predicate regarding something else mentioned in the course of his argument". Then he goes on to tell us of the effect produced by the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, which appeared in 1787, after an interval of six

[1] What the *Summa* of St. Thomas is to the Scholastic, the *Critique of Pure Reason* is to the Kantian: it is the *Summa* of Kant.

years, which Rosenkrantz declared to be far inferior to the first, while Schopenhauer condemned it as changed from "unworthy motives in the weakness of old age," and turned into "a self-contradictory and mutilated work," and this Mr. Meiklejohn adds was also the opinion of "the elder Jacobi, Michelet and others," but to those severe criticisms on the part of Kant's admirers, Mr. Meiklejohn calmly replies: "Kant's own testimony must be held to be of greater weight than that of any number of other philosophers, however learned and profound".[1]

We then turn to Kant's own testimony in his prefaces to the first edition (1781), and to the second (1787). They contain his own opinion as to what he intended to do, and supposed that he had done. It is clear, therefore, that in this way we are likely to arrive at a better understanding of his mind than can be hoped for from the study of the numerous disquisitions, for and against his philosophy, with which literature

[1] *Critique of Pure Reason*, translator's preface, pp. xi., xiv.

is deluged. As we shall see, Mr. Meiklejohn goes too far when he says that Kant "could not be in doubt as to his own system"; but we are safe in supposing that as far as it was "knowable," he understood it better than any one else.

In 1781 Kant writes: "Human reason, in one sphere of its cognition, is called upon to consider questions which it cannot decline, as they are presented by its own nature, but which it cannot answer, as they transcend every faculty of the mind": three pages on he writes: "I make bold to say that there is not a single metaphysical problem that does not find its solution, or at least the key to its solution here. Pure reason is a perfect unity; and therefore if the principle presented by it prove to be insufficient for the solution of even a single one of these questions to which the very nature of reason gives birth, we must reject it, as we could not be perfectly certain of its sufficiency in the case of others."[1]

From his second preface (1787), however,

[1] *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant's 1st preface, pp. xvii., xx.

we learn that he had found more difficulties in metaphysics than he anticipated. In this preface he says: "We come to the conclusion that our faculty of cognition is unable to transcend the limits of possible experience, and yet this is precisely the most essential object of this science".[1]

Here we have a specimen of those contradictions in Kant's speculations, which so bewildered Schopenhauer, and other disciples of Kant. In Kant's first preface, reason is, at once, limited, and unlimited: in his second preface, knowledge, the evidence of reason, is declared to be merely co-extensive with experience. If any one can explain and reconcile these statements, let him do so in intelligible language, but I do not think I am bound to make the attempt; or that by multiplying extracts from Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, I should make matters any clearer. Take, for instance, book ii., ch. iii., entitled "Transcendental Analytic," and try to understand his explanation of *noumena*. At p. 189 he tells

[1] *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant's 2nd preface, pp. xxx., xxxix.

us "noumena do not relate to possible experience, but to things in themselves"; then (p. 205) he says, things are *noumena* "inasmuch as these have no positive signification," and (p. 207), "the object of a conception to which no intuition can be found to correspond, is = nothing. That is, it is a conception without an object (*ens rationis*), like noumena".

The inquirer must himself go to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, if not satisfied that these characteristic extracts explain how it is, as Mr. Meiklejohn remarks, that Kant "loses sight of the subject with which he set out"; and support Schopenhauer's verdict that Kant is "self-contradictory".

I now return to the question with which I set out, that is, the origin of the fascination he exercises. The reader will remember that in the preceding pages I have made no pretence of measuring the philosophic methods of the writers I have brought forward in defence of revelation: my only contention was, that they all went the same way to the frontiers of the invisible world, and that in translations, as well as in

the original, they are intelligible to human reason, in all nations, and at all times. Now, that this is not the case with Kant, we have the testimony of his greatest admirers and disciples, and from the specimens I have given of his philosophy, we cannot be surprised at their confession. It would not be fair to the reader, or to Kant, to multiply quotations from what is called his "Scientific Work". It is his boast that it is made up of ideas, language, names and definitions which were never heard of before. To understand him we must be educated. But by whom? This is the question which has been asked for the last hundred years, and never answered, seeing that his disciples themselves cannot agree. And surely this is not wonderful? If Kant loses sight of his subject, how is the learner to learn? Truly this is a case of "the blind leading the blind". And how can such a philosopher escape the reproach of Schopenhauer that he "mutilates," and thus dismembers himself, and is "self-contradictory"?

This, as we have seen, was also the opinion of the elder Jacobi, and of Miche-

let; but Schopenhauer's imputation of senile imbecility, at the period of the publication of the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, seems to be unfounded. Kant attained the age of eighty, and had only reached his sixty-fourth year when this edition was published, and it seems clear that it was later in life that he began to exhibit those eccentricities in matters of real life, which are so vividly depicted by De Quincey.[1] Moreover, Mr. Meiklejohn tells us that it is this "second edition of the *Kritik*, from which all subsequent ones have been reprinted without alteration,"[2] and it is therefore with Kant's philosophy, sane or insane, as it stands in this edition that believers in Christianity have to deal. I repeat that prefaces written by the author himself ought to be the best explanation of his work. In the case of Kant they reveal an absolute and undoubting confidence in himself almost unequalled, and this is precisely what, on the threshold of

[1] *The Last Days of Kant.* De Quincey's Works, vol. iii., 1862.

[2] Pref., xiv.

the inquiry, arouses doubt in the minds of all who hold on to the principle that "Security is mortal's chiefest enemy". Considering the subjects with which he deals, it would be hard to find amongst ancient or modern philosophers such calm assurance as breathes in any page of the prefaces of Kant. "At present," he tells us, "as all methods, according to the general persuasion, have been tried in vain, there reigns nought but weariness and complete *indifferentism*—the mother of chaos and night in the scientific world." A "tribunal," he says, must be established, and "this tribunal is nothing less than the *Critical Investigation of Pure Reason*," and he concludes: "This path—the only one remaining—has been entered upon by me; and I flatter myself that I have, in this way, discovered the cause of—and consequently the mode of removing—all the errors which have hitherto set reason at variance with itself in the sphere of non-empirical thought;"[1] but in his second

[1] *Critique of Pure Reason*, preface, p. xviii. "Non-empirical thought," I suppose, means all that is super-sensuous. The italics are Kant's own.

preface, as we have seen, he tells us that "cognition is unable to transcend the limits of possible experience".

Surely, without going deeper than these prefaces, we can arrive at the conclusion that Kant's philosophy is as obscure and uncertain as it is pretentious. Is it possible that this is the secret of its influence? It has ever been the way that the mysterious and the incomprehensible seem greater than truth which is comprehended, and thus, as it were, reduced to the dimensions of the mind which makes it its own.[1] Moreover, besides the sense of liberty and expansion, which the mysterious and unaccountable carry with them, the study involves no real labour: it is easier to affirm, or dream all day long, than to solve one problem in Euclid.

Only those who have once been under the influence of this philosophy of dreams can realise its power; but not all even of these, for some continue in their dream, and others, and fortunately they are the great

[1] St. Thomas styles the soul in some sense all things (*omnia quodammodo*) by the senses and intelligence. *Summa*, i., q. 80.

majority, have forgotten all about it amidst the struggles, and realities of life. But those who remain under the spell are its agents, and continue its work in the rising generation, and at present their influence is very widespread. It is to those who have come to an age in which reflection is more attractive than invention that I appeal. Can any one, who, like the present writer, was in youth under the influence of this form of German philosophy, give a clear and rational account of his intellectual processes at that time? I call it German, although in reality the New Philosophy, as we have it now, is a river swollen by contributions from the most heterogeneous sources. I believe that forty or fifty years ago it was less diffuse and easier to study. We took it from Carlyle, and Emerson, and those French writers who, sick of Voltaire, looked beyond the Rhine for something more respectable. But no one then regarded it as a serious study: a system with fixed laws and principles. Every one went his own way, and found his own intellectual associates in books, for masters they could not

be called, seeing that they were taken up, and abandoned from day to day.

To serious people who are of one mind with Pascal, the accusation that the New Philosophy is merely an amusement of the mind is one of the worst that can be brought against it. It is bad enough to "peep and botanize upon a mother's grave"; but it is worse to "juggle"[1] with religion and morals. Kant knew that not only believers, but his own associates as well, took that view of his philosophy which is put forth with daring effrontery by Mr. Stirling in that voluminous work *The Secret of Hegel*. Of German philosophy, which he himself worships, and of which he makes Kant and Hegel the princes, he writes: "There is the direct testimony of the intelligent foes of the philosophy, and philosophers in question; we possess writers of the highest ability in themselves, and of the most consummate accomplishment as to all learning requisite — Sir William Hamilton, Coleridge, De Quincey, for example—who have instituted each of them his own special inquest into the matter, and who all agree

[1] *Le grimoire de Kant.* De Maistre.

in assuring us of the Atheistic, Pantheistic, and for the rest, self-contradictory, and indeed nugatory, nature of the entire industry, from Kant who began it, to Hegel, and Schelling who finished it".[1]

It is not the Catholic Church then alone, which condemns this philosophy as destructive of religion, morals, and reason itself, and if the list of its antagonists amongst our own writers is not longer, it is because very few capable of answering it cared to take the trouble to analyse that which is "self-contradictory" and "nugatory".

As I have said, as students, our philosophic freedom was absolute as regards both the matter and the manner of our studies, so we learned our lessons in the way that pleased us. Hence, essays, with poetry and fiction, were our primers and class-books: indeed, I never knew any one who faced Kant's own *Kritik*, or the *Logic*, as it is called, of Hegel.[2] Those who remember

[1] *Secret of Hegel*, i., pref., p. xx.

[2] We also read Pascal, but no one stopped to inquire how he differed from Kant, Comte, Cousin, and Carlyle.

the rising of "German Culture" in the early years of the present Queen, under the patronage of the German Prince Consort, will agree with me that on the whole we were spared one complication. "Cosmic Evolution," as the beginning of all things, was only incubating, and when we studied biology in Bichat, Carpenter, and Todd and Bowman, our minds were undisturbed by Häckel's *Perigenesis of the Plastidule*, or visions of that creative "Cosmic Substance," with its "nebulous potentiality," and "indefinable latency," to which in the end of his days Professor Huxley transferred the sceptre of creation, rudely snatched from the hand of his water-god "Bathybius".[1] Daring "thinkers" as we were, our sense of the comic would have been fatal to the mixed physics, and imagination of Professor Huxley, were he to tell

[1] "Bathybius," pronounced by Huxley to be the parent and progenitor of all earthly life; by Hackel, its stem; by Strauss, the extermination of the supernatural, was restored to its place by the scientific crew of H.M.S. *Challenger*, and now remains what it was, sulphate of lime, which crystallizes into gypsum. *Biology*, Cook, pp. 2, 57.

us that our "forefathers," Pascal, Newton, Cuvier, etc., were "the puppets of the Cosmic System," and that now "natural knowledge tends more and more to the conclusion that 'all the choir of heaven and furniture of earth,' are the transitory forms of parcels of Cosmic Substance, wending along the road of evolution from nebulous potentiality, etc., etc., back to the indefinable latency from which they arose".[1] I believe, fierce as was our passion for progress, we should have held on to our ideas of "Cosmos," taken from Alexander von Humboldt; when quoting Aristotle, this great and sober philosopher finds in creation the "ordainer," the "ultimate cause of all sensuous changes, who must be regarded as something non-sensuous, and distinct from all matter"; and again: "The unity of nature was to the Stagyrite, the great problem of the Cosmos: 'in this unity,' he (Aristotle) observes, with singular animation of expression, 'there is nothing unconnected, or out of place, as in a bad tragedy'".[2]

[1] *Evolution and Ethics*, pp. viii., 50. London, 1894.
[2] *Cosmos*, p. 12. Bohn, 1851.

The ways of the Creator must always be a difficulty to the creature, leading, as Pascal has told us (p. 125), the wise to worship, and the proud to blaspheme; but neither are made any the wiser by the views of Häckel in his *History of Creation*, or Huxley's various "Cosmic" schemes. Never was there a wilder dream than to expect that the material world, with its stern and inexorable certainties, is a safe theatre for the exercise of a sportive imagination, to be turned, not into a "bad tragedy," but rather into a very contemptible comedy.

When "consideration like an angel comes," converts from delusion as well as from sin, instinctively shelter themselves under the *ægis* of illustrious precursors in penance; and to the victims of falsehood no greater consolation is anywhere to be found than in the pages of the *Confessions of St. Augustine*, with its vivid revelations of his long and turbulent intellectual orgies, and final conversion. I know no book so well calculated to dissipate that very "young" impression that modern unbelief, as compared with old unbelief, is something

at once different in kind, and more exalted in its nature. In old and new we find the same proud assumption, everywhere dominant, that unbelievers are sapient, and believers simpletons; and great are the fascinations of assumption for the young, the inexperienced, and the indolent. St. Augustine tells Honoratus that he "fell amongst men" who said that "by pure and simple reason they would lead to God, and deliver from all error those who had the will to listen to them. What else impelled me, about the age of nine years, to reject the religion planted in me by my parents, and to follow and diligently listen to these men, but the fact that they declared that we were terrified by superstition, and ruled by faith, before the use of reason; whereas, they pressed no one to believe until the truth had been discussed and disentangled? Who could be proof against these promises, least of all a boy with his mind thirsting for the truth, as well as proud and talkative, in matters disputed amongst the learned? In such guise they then found me, despising, as it were, old women's

tales, and longing to hold, and exhaust the manifest and open truth which they promised." [1]

Augustine, asserting the rights of private judgment in religion, and setting up for himself at the age of nine, in itself, is not so singular as Pascal's discovery of Euclid at twelve: intellectual insolence is the appanage of youth. It was the use Augustine made of his private judgment which astounds us. Everything true and false was ground up in the logical mill of his stupendous brain. Never had falsehood such a champion as Augustine, and we are not surprised to learn that when the young philosopher set up his chair at Milan, St. Ambrose added to the public Litanies the words, *A logica Augustini, libera nos Domine.*[2]

The fact that Augustine tried to understand the philosophic doubt of his day, and that if it was cognisable, he was certainly capable of understanding it, makes him an

[1] *De Utilitate Credendi.* Ad Honoratum, i., 2.

[2] Giry, *Vie des Saints*, 28th August.

inestimable witness; for it is only those who have been in the depths and come up again, who can tell us what is to be found there. In the case of Augustine both head and heart had gone astray, and in language as awful as that of Dante, he reveals how "reason by lust is swayed".[1] In every way, therefore, St. Augustine is the voice, and the interpreter of the liberated mind and heart. It is plainly the remembrance of his long and shameful slavery which gives such fierceness to his zeal, reminding us of the words of Edmund Burke that: "They never will love where they ought to love, who do not hate where they ought to hate". However, it is only those who have absolute possession of their principles, who in argument, can safely allow head and heart to run together with a slack rein, like Burke himself, who as Coleridge says, "rarely shows all his powers unless when he is in a passion"; and in a still higher sense this is true of St. Augustine. At the same time it was only when he fell back upon those eternal

[1] *Inferno*, canto v., 39.

principles of truth, held "always, everywhere, and by all," that he began to say and write those words which will last for ever. Who cared, any more than Augustine himself, for anything that he had said or written up to the age of thirty-three, the period of his conversion? They had gone the way of the dreams and fantasies of Faustus, his Manichean bishop, and others. "proudly delirious, carnal and talkative . . . who in their unholy pride fall away and are blinded by Thy Light: infallible prophets of eclipses of the sun, they had no suspicion of the eclipse going on in their own souls".[1]

St. Augustine does not deny any more than the Blessed Sir Thomas More,[2] or Pascal, that the pagan sages were great and learned in their own way: indeed, there are few more important testimonies to the greatness of natural wisdom than that which St. Augustine gives to Cicero's exhortation to

[1] *Confessions of St. Augustine*, iii., 6, v. 3.

[2] "Paynim philosophers . . . unable to cure . . . some good drugs have they yet in their shops." *Dialogue*, p. 9.

the study of philosophy in the *Hortensius*. When working at rhetoric, in what he calls the "imbecile" period of his life, Augustine came upon this work. "This study," he says, "altered my aspirations, and the prayers which I offered to Thyself, O Lord, and turned my longings and desires into altogether another direction. All at once I saw nothing but degradation in the hopes of the world, and I coveted the wisdom which is immortal with an incredible flight of the heart; already I began to lift myself up in my return to Thee."[1]

We see that St. Augustine came to have little respect for the unbelief of his day. He found it as baseless and unmeaning as the *grimoire*, and "the objective nonmenal reality" of Kant, were to De Maistre, and Sydney Smith, and the "phantasmal algebraic ghost of Comtism," to Carlyle, and for similar reasons, and he did not measure his language in assailing philosophers *superbe delirantes*. There are excesses of intellectual pride which nature itself tells us are

[1] *Confessions*, iii., 4.

incompatible with the immunities and privileges of our common reason. Amongst these is the assumption that everybody was wrong until somebody made his appearance in the world, and the philosopher who like Kant makes a *tabula rasa* of the wisdom of the past that he may have a free start, must mean this if he means anything. It is a claim exceeding even that made by our Lord Himself, who said: "Do not think that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."[1]

It is hard to keep to the compact made with the reader, when at starting I promised to deal gravely with such usurpations of reason, for the sake of minds in which they have become like a second nature. It may be that the Catholic mind is not patient enough with them, and that the difficulty is doubled in the case of one who has himself been a victim. I will, therefore, fall back on a Protestant author, who of all the writers I know, has approached the subject in the most

[1] St. Matthew v. 17.

serious and earnest manner: one who instead of using German philosophy merely as a background to his own pictures, evidently does his best to understand it. Mr. Gostwick's *German Culture and Christianity*[1] has two great merits: he writes in plain English, and is not content to give us merely his own views. He is not intoxicated or bewildered even by Carlyle, whom he selects as our chief interpreter of "German Thought"; and he is right. Carlyle is not so clear a writer as Emerson, and therefore his mind is more in the line of German thought. Emerson's style broke down at abysses over which Carlyle leaped. He could not adapt it to the intellectual processes of Kant, and to sentences, wherein Mr. Meiklejohn tells us "main verbs drop out," and the predicate wanders vainly in search of its subject. "Here I sit," writes Emerson to Carlyle, "and read and write with very little system, and as far as regards composition, with the most fragmentary

[1] Northgate, 1882. The term "Culture" is both correct and expressive. System it cannot be called: it is only a new way of thinking.

result: sentences unintelligible, each paragraph an infinitely repellent particle".[1]

I think I am safe in saying that all Kant's doctrines may be said to spring from his Ethical Philosophy, by which he practically made himself his own god, and supreme judge of everything, and that if here he is found to be uncertain and mutable, the same must be said of all his special doctrines; that is, of all that he has not borrowed from the common treasury of the human mind. The study of the results of German culture on a strong mind like that of Carlyle, has this recommendation: it illustrates the principle, "By their fruits you shall know them": what it has done in his case it will probably do in others who are like him, and after all it is only its effects on strong minds, which are logical when they get fair play, that it is worth our while to consider. Of Carlyle Mr. Gostwick writes: "His positive ethical teaching — setting aside some discursive passages that have been called 'pantheistic'—is substantially

[1] *The Month*, March, 1883, p. 429.

identical with the moral doctrine of Kant, and Fichte; in other words, it asserts the autonomy, or independence of man's conscience. This is the doctrine maintained by Kant in 1787, of which the practical inefficiency was confessed by that writer in 1793. Again, and still more boldly, it was asserted by Fichte in 1796-8, and as early as 1806, and more explicitly in 1813, he retracted his assertion of man's moral autonomy—at least, he then ceased to regard morality as a sufficient substitute for religion." As Mr. Gostwick remarks, and as is well known to readers of Carlyle, while his teachers tacked, or fell back, Carlyle sailed on, holding on to the principle that conscience is "God's own mandate": a very sound axiom in the case of those to whom God is a reality, and a ruler distinct from themselves: one to be consulted and obeyed; but for those, who like Coleridge, thus took God as the guide of conscience, Carlyle had supreme contempt. "He had 'skirted the howling deserts of infidelity' (says Carlyle), this was evident enough; but he had not the courage, in defiance of pain and terror,

to press resolutely across said deserts to the new firm land of faith beyond:"[1] the fact was that the only thing "firm" in these "new lands of faith," was Carlyle's own appalling pride, and faith in himself, and not even Shelley in his youth, came to a more pitiable conclusion than did Carlyle in his old age.

Mr. Gostwick's careful and learned work is a remarkable illustration of the way in which Catholic writers are still out of court in English philosophic, and religious literature. In his index of the authors from whom he draws his very powerful arguments against unbelief, we look in vain for the names of Pascal, Bossuet, or Cardinal Newman, or indeed of any Catholic defender of Revealed Religion of the last three centuries. And yet educated as he plainly was by masters of free-thought, infidel, and Protestant, it is touching as it is instructive to observe how this clear-headed and candid writer, clear because he is candid, found conviction and rest for

[1] *German Culture and Christianity*, pp. 209, 217.

head and heart, on the same road that Pascal travelled, and at the same centre, as will be seen from a few extracts from his concluding pages.

"The New Covenant," he writes, "was foreshadowed in the Old, which now has passed away. The temple of the Jews is destroyed, and we in whose hearts He dwells, are now the temple of the Lord. . . . He is the Lord to whom in the beginning God said, 'Let us make man in our likeness'. From Him the prophets derived their inspiration. If He had not appeared incarnate, how could we unconsumed have looked upon Him, since we cannot view even the sun, which is His creature, in its full splendour?" Of the concord of testimony in Holy Scripture he says: "Those already named relate to one central tenet — Christ's supremacy". Others "are concordant traits in our portraiture of our Lord. In the three gospels called Synoptic, and in the fourth . . . in the four epistles of St. Paul, dated not after A.D. 60, and in the other epistles, in the Apocalypse, written about A.D. 70, in St. Clement's

'Epistle to the Corinthians,' and in other patristic writings earlier than A.D. 150, in all these are found the self-same traits of one commanding, self-evidential portraiture, that still retains its brightness, beauty and majesty, after the lapse of more than eighteen hundred years." Mr. Gostwick then quotes from the rationalistic Mr. Lecky[1] that vivid passage in which he speaks of Christ and that "ideal character, which through all the changes of eighteen centuries has filled the hearts of men with an impassioned love," and then Mr. Gostwick continues on the same lines as those of Pascal: "By whom was the portraiture here called 'ideal' produced? By any one man? Then, where and when lived the mighty poet (and far more than a poet) who could create such an ideal? Or was it produced by several contemporaneous authors? How miraculous their concord! Or by several living in various times and places? This concord must be still more marvellous. But whence came the influence that led

[1] *Hist. of European Morals*, ii., p. 8.

multitudes to accept the doctrine as historically true? The word portraiture has been used as familiar, and to some degree useful; but it is a feeble word, and hardly serves to indicate the truth. There was recognised in the Christian churches of St. Paul's time, and afterwards, the virtual presence of one living Lord, by whose spirit every doctrine might be judged, to whose life every precept had reference. For proof, were it required, the whole series of the epistles included in the Canon of the New Testament might be cited. Those addressed to the Ephesians and Colossians might be especially named, but only because the truth, expressed everywhere, is often repeated here with a remarkable energy. It is taken for granted that one presence pervades every congregation of Christians, and there need be mentioned only one name to remind them all of their common faith and their practical duties. A word is enough to call to mind all the traits of a portraiture that is engraved on every heart. Thus in one place that name serves instead of a summary of doctrine:

'Remember them who have the rule over you, who have spoken to you the Word of God; whose faith follow, considering the end of them: Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever'. . . . Of all conceivable errors the greatest is our modern error—especially German—which ascribes to philosophy the origin of our Christian faith."[1]

To my mind Mr. Gostwick succeeds better than any writer I know in the difficult operation of grappling with those exhalations as many-coloured as the minds of men, which are called "ideals". I am not aware that his work attracted much notice. It is wanting in "original views," and he has neither the power nor the inclination to emulate the popular essayist of the day, who month after month careers through the lower empyrean with half a dozen German or French philosophers harnessed to his car. I am persuaded, however, that serious people who seriously want to know the *whence?* the *why?* and the

[1] *German Culture and Christianity,* pp. 493 to 496.

whither? of the New Philosophy, will get as much light from his book as the subject allows. It is a great point gained when we realise that German Biblical Criticism, as well as its fantastic and frivolous French daughter, is after all nothing more than the application of the ideas, for we cannot call them principles, of Kant and Hegel, to a subject in which fact and reasoning must ever be inextricably bound together, and when the reasoning is fundamentally lawless and false, facts become the mere ornaments of the so-called critic's theme. Granting, for the sake of argument, that the intellectual gifts of the founders of the New Philosophy are remarkable and peculiar, it cannot be expected that mankind will give over reason itself, with all its accumulations in the past, to be refashioned, and that not merely by one, but by a succession of speculative philosophers.

It is only children and barbarians who take people at their own valuation: a privilege freely granted to Kant, and his many imitators. When a philosopher has obtained this semi-religious position, his

disciples expect him to be treated with a kind of veneration, and any failure in this arouses indignation, and that retaliation which puts an end to discussion. In this country at present this is one of our greatest difficulties. Indeed, enthusiasts for the New Philosophy go farther, and are indignantly contemptuous, when we timidly say we do not understand masters, who boldly assert that they are new in every sense of the word, and that their mission is to lead the reason of mankind by paths which were never before imagined. Surely there is nothing offensive in saying that we are nervous when asked to give up our veteran pilots for others who have only made voyages on the map.

Kant wrote his *Critique of Pure Reason* in five months.[1] There is not a province, material or moral, into which reason enters, which he has not attempted to reorganise, and as we have seen, he tells us that he is satisfied that he has brought reason to "perfect contentment": a conclusion which is

[1] Translator's pref., xii.

not universally acknowledged. Moreover, as we have seen, if we follow Kant and the new guides, it must be with loss of Socrates, Aristotle, Plato, Cicero, Bacon, Pascal, Newton, Leibnitz, Burke, Cuvier and Pasteur: we must all go to school, or rather to the nursery again.

There is one argument against the New Philosophy in all its forms, which its devoted adherents treat with indifference. It is that of Bossuet to the Sects, which made a Catholic of Gibbon in his Oxford days. "You change," he writes in his *History of the Variations of the Protestant Sects*, "and that which changes is not the truth."[1] Kant as we have seen changed, and so did Fichte, and Hegel, Kant's most famous pupil, who, if we are to believe Schopenhauer, finished that adulteration and confusion of Kant's philosophy, which the philosopher himself began in his second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. "The lowest stage of degradation," says

[1] Gibbon also read Bossuet's "Exposition," and says, "My conqueror oppressed me". *Life*, Youngman, p. iv. 1840.

Schopenhauer, "was reached by Hegel, who to stifle the freedom of thought won by Kant, turned Philosophy, the daughter of Reason and future mother of Truth, into an instrument of obscurantism, and Protestant Jesuitism, but in order to hide the disgrace, and at the same time stupefy men's brains to the utmost, drew over her a veil of the emptiest verbiage and the most senseless hodge-podge ever heard out of Bedlam."

This is taken from a notice in the *Dublin Review*[1] of Professor Wallace's *Logic of Hegel*, and proves that Schopenhauer agreed with Professor Ferrier when he said: "Who has ever yet uttered one intelligible word about Hegel? Not one of his countrymen—not any foreigner—seldom even himself;"[2] and certainly I think, that any one who reads a few pages of the philosopher, or his commentators will share in the perplexity of Professor Ferrier. So it was ninety years ago with Sydney Smith

[1] July, 1894, p. 224.

[2] *Secret of Hegel*, Stirling, vol. i., p. xxiv.

in the presence of "Professor Kant and his twelve categories; his distinctions between empirical, rational and transcendental philosophy; his absolute unity, absolute totality, and absolute causation; his four reflective conceptions, his objective noumenal reality, his subjective elements, and his pure cognition".[1] Sydney Smith had singular powers of perception, but he was unable to penetrate Kant's "realm of shadows"; the title which Hegel, with amusing candour, gives to his own system.[2]

Enough, I hope, has been done to illustrate the contrast between the intellectual processes of Pascal, Bacon, and Newton, and those of Kant, Hegel, and Schopenhauer, and this is all that I venture to attempt. The most superficial student cannot fail to observe that the former are as pointed and clear in their style, as the latter are vague and obscure. To all, therefore, to whom conclusions are of any value in philosophy, this want of point and limitation in the

[1] *Moral Philosophy*, sect. iii., p. 54. Longmans, 1850.

[2] *Dub. Rev.*, *loc. cit.*

New Philosophy must be a fatal objection. Schopenhauer's view that "Philosophy, the daughter of Reason," is merely the "future mother of Truth," will only satisfy those who hold that the pursuit, not the possession of Truth, is the end of life; an idea which is the animating principle of modern unbelief, and is boldly affirmed by some of its leaders. Herein lies one secret of its influence and its fascinations. It is important, however, to reflect that this characteristic of our times is only a new fashion of an old folly. St. Bernard tells of those whose glory it was to "doubt everything, and know nothing,"[1] and Lord Bacon, "Certainly there be that delight in giddiness, and count it a bondage to fix a belief, affecting free-will in thinking as well as in acting".[2] Again it is one of the strange perversities of the mind that it prides itself on asking questions to which it does not expect an answer. It was said of old that "one fool can ask more questions than ten wise men

[1] *De Erroribus Abelardi*, cap. iv.

[2] *Essay on Truth.*

can answer"; for he does not know that his questionings are an evidence of his ignorance of the boundaries of knowledge, and of those of reason itself: "The fool doth think he is wise, but the wise man knows himself to be a fool".[1]

If this estimate of modern philosophic ways is offensive to its votaries, they have no right to complain, for certainly their language is not more measured when they come into collision with the philosophy of their forefathers: Professor Huxley's "puppets of the Cosmic system". They ought to understand that we who hold on to authority as well as to reason, and identify all that is most precious and sacred with the past, are, perhaps, as jealous of the honour of our masters as they are of their own reputations. There are limits to literary and philosophic courtesy. If the enemies of Christianity have persuaded themselves that it is opposed to the best interests of mankind, then they are in their right in assailing it, but they must allow the same

[1] *As You Like It*, v. 1.

freedom of speech to its defenders. If we believe that philosophers, in every shape and form, who directly or indirectly assail, either religion itself, or its aboriginal foundations in the mind of man, are man's most deadly enemies: "foes," as Edmund Burke says, "to all the dignity and consolation of mankind": believing this, we must be allowed to say so. Lord Bacon was no religious enthusiast, and it is he who has said: "They that deny a God, destroy man's nobility, for certainly man is of kin to the beasts by his body; and if he be not of kin to God by his spirit, he is a base and ignoble creature. It destroys likewise magnanimity and the raising of human nature." [1]

Believing as we do that the *Noumena* of Kant and "the self-cognition of the process of the Absolute" [2] of Hegel, with the "Christologies" of their pupils Strauss, and Renan, are as hostile to the supernatural

[1] *Essays*, "Atheism," p. 31.

[2] *Critique of Pure Reason*, pp. 178-185. *Secret of Hegel*, i., p. 9.

interests of man as the "giddiness" of the Greek atheists, or the "adulterated metaphysics" of the French, to whom Bacon and Burke respectively refer, we are not so simple as to be propitiated by the faint praise and patronage which the New Philosophy sometimes gives to a god of its own making, and a Christ who in their pages is neither God nor man.

Before we leave them we may look back to those great masters of reason under whose guidance we began our investigation, and ask whether there is any agreement possible between their minds, as seen in their writings, and the philosophy, historical methods, and criticism of Free-Thought? Granted that it is important to preserve the continuity, and inheritance of human thought, this is a practical question. If the specimens I have given from masters old and new, are fair representations, they are enough to prove that the gulf between the Old and New Philosophies is impassable. When Hegel styled his own system "a realm of shadows," he was in strict agreement with Kant, whose primary doctrine

was that "there is no such thing as an objective reality corresponding to human knowledge, and that knowledge is merely a product, or so to speak, a work of art elaborated by the thinker"; [1] and in such a system there is no place for that ascending and descending scale of proof, those rigid deductions, that harmony of ideas which give life and unity to the philosophic speculations of Bacon, Newton and Pascal: with authority, proof has disappeared from the categories of Free-Thought.

There are some who think that this New Philosophy, or "Culture," as it is more correctly styled, is now so dominant that all the world must come to terms with it, as with an established power, and even Catholics have been found who have dreamt of a concordat between St. Thomas, and

[1] *Kant et la Science Moderne*, F. Tilman Pesch, p. 6. "The rationalists," says Lord Bacon, "are like the spiders; they spin all out of their own bowels. But give me a philosopher, who like the bee hath a middle faculty, gathering from abroad, but digesting that which is gathered by his own virtue." *Essays*, Chandos ed., p. 386.

Kant. The truth is that it is with reason itself that the new "Culture" has to make peace: it is reason which is assailed directly, and religion indirectly in its rational minister.

The worship of "mistiness as mother of wisdom" is no novelty; Edmund Burke speaks of "certain compositions, admired by credulous ignorance, for no other reason than because they were not understood . . . the generality being content to admire because it is the fashion to admire. If the work under these circumstances be pompous and unmeaning, its success is sure, as its pomp dazzles, and its vacancy puzzles, both which are admirable ingredients to procure respect." [1]

Perhaps something like what is called an "object lesson," or argument, may be roughly constructed by parallel lists of the chief masters of the old, and the new way of thinking and arguing. This plan brings out the great preponderance of master minds on the side of belief in its wide

[1] *Letter to Barry.* Prior's *Life of Burke*, i., 430.

sense, which, although its extent was different, did not differ in kind, as is the case with the unbelief of those Free-Thinkers with whom I have confronted them. Again, if the following *Catena* of believers begins so much earlier, it is because the New Unbelief, being a development of Protestantism, has no other positive ancestry. I think, therefore, I am near enough to the mark in starting modern philosophic doubt with Spinoza (1623-77) although this metaphysical Jew appears to be nothing more than Descartes driven on to his conclusions. Descartes, as is well known, was the *bête noir* of Pascal, who, layman as he was, saw clearly what Bossuet only foreboded, to wit, that the philosopher who built his system on his own cogitations[1] was building his house without plan or foundations, and encouraging all men to do the same.

[1] *Cogito, ergo sum*—"I think, therefore I am"—which is to make reason begin with its own operations—putting the work before the worker, "the cart before the horse". "What can be more opposed to reason," says St. Bernard, "than to endeavour by reason to ascend above reason?"

In support of the view that Spinoza was the immediate father of the New Unbelief, perhaps I may be allowed to quote from a conversation with a rationalist of the school of Carlyle, and a distinguished member of the once famous English "Metaphysical Society," which seems to me as instructive as anything I can find in books. "I never," he said, "could give my mind to metaphysics. I see no meaning in anything except so far as it bears on human life. Once when suffering from sleeplessness, I began the study of Kant on the nature of existence, as, for instance, whether it makes any difference to us, whether Hamlet was a real being or not, and the study secured me a month of sound sleep, to the great disgust of my metaphysical friends— I have worked at Spinoza in my day, and I think he has said all that can be said on the subject."

And now for our Parliament of the dead and gone.

Believers.	*Born.*	*Died.*	*Unbelievers.*	*Born.*	*Died.*
Dante	1265	1321			
Petrarch	1304	1374			
Chaucer	1328	1400			
Erasmus	1467	1536			
Ariosto	1474	1533			
Sir Thomas More.	1478	1535			
Copernicus	1473	1543			
Tasso	1544	1595			
Tycho Brahé	1546	1601			
Spenser	1553	1599			
Cervantes	1547	1616			
Shakespeare	1564	1616			
Bacon	1561	1626			
Galileo	1564	1642			
Kepler	1571	1630			
Harvey	1569	1658			
Descartes	1596	1650			
Milton	1608	1674			
Pascal	1623	1662	Spinoza	1623	1677
Locke	1632	1704	Voltaire	1694	1778
Newton	1642	1727	Rousseau	1711	1777
Leibnitz	1646	1716	Hume	1732	1776
Swift	1667	1745	Kant	1724	1804
Johnson	1709	1784	Gibbon	1737	1794
Burke	1728	1797	Goethe	1749	1832
Napoleon	1769	1822	Hegel	1770	1831
Cuvier	1769	1832	Tyndall	1820	1893
Pasteur	1822	1895	Huxley	1825	1895
			Häckel	1834	

The reader will observe that this list of believers amongst our intellectual sovereigns is confined to laymen, and the two chief reflections it suggests are these—the literary men, good, bad and indifferent, who escaped infidelity were always those who looked things straight in the face, and

honestly tried to find out what they knew, and what they did not know, and could not know; while the august names of physical philosophers which are found in our list, prove that clear ideas about the visible world, and the sciences which deal with it, generate a similar clearness in all that relates to that which is invisible.[1] Here

[1] Even as regards Biology, I believe that those who have studied it deeply, and been intimate with learned members of the medical profession will agree as to the falsehood of the popular impression that biological studies are in any special way a trial to faith: the non-appearance of the soul in the brain of a dead man disturbs the anatomist less than the non-appearance of sense in the writings of materialists. A year before his death, Sir Andrew Clark, M.D., told me that his materialistic adversaries were then much perplexed. They had been driven to the conclusion that they could not get on without some sort of god, which they called "A force behind the universe". When he retorted that this was the personal God of the Christian, they called him an "anthropomorphite," saying that it was impossible to conceive a person who was not a man: to which he replied that it was this assumption which was anthropomorphitic. He seemed surprised at the list of believing "scientists"; I fancy it had never occurred to him to count them up.

then is something which asks for an answer on the part of those who tell us that religion, if not mere hysteria, and a product of the emotions, is at any rate something altogether transcendental, ever soaring or diving, in regions far away from the sober world of common-sense.

It is not necessary to inquire how far each "believer" was in harmony with all the decrees of the Council of Trent; it is enough if we are convinced that one and all they gave the same meaning to words, so that we can tell when they agreed and when they differed. Moreover, although we cannot affirm positively that they were never so intoxicated with their own "concepts" or conceits, as to set them above the common-sense of mankind, we are at least safe in saying that they kept these conceits to themselves, for never until our times have men had the face to offer their own imaginations to the public as constituent parts of historical, critical, biological, and other scientific works. This is the logical and inexorable conclusion of Kant's principle that truth having no objective reality

separate from the mind, facts begin in each man's brain, and so being personal property, he can use them as freely as fancy itself.

To those then who tell us that we must devote a share of our short span of life to the New Philosophy, we may reply that we must first be convinced that there is some new truth to be found in it. "What I mainly dislike in the New Philosophy," says Longfellow, "is the cool impertinence with which an old idea, folded in a new garment, looks you in the face and pretends not to know you, though you have been familiar friends from childhood. . . . 'Often a proposition of inscrutable and dread aspect, when resolutely grappled with and torn from its shady den and its bristling intrenchments of uncouth terminology, and dragged forth into the open light of day, to be seen by the natural eye and tried by merely human understanding, proves to be a very harmless truth, familiar to us from old, sometimes so familiar as to be a truism.' . . . Can you believe that those words ever came from the pen of Thomas Carlyle?"[1]

[1] Longfellow, *Hyperion*, p. 86.

Certainly the influence of the New Philosophy is widely spread, but we can understand the nature of this influence without the aid of the *Critique* of Kant, or the *Encyclopædia* of Hegel. We find it in historians, poets, and materialistic preachers, and still more clearly in philosophic novels, into which all the rivers of modern speculation have begun to empty themselves. The pretension on the part of the New Philosophy of changing the course of the current of the human mind, or rather of opening new fountains hitherto unknown, is so extravagant that it must rapidly work its own destruction, and when the fickle and transitory patronage of fashion has deserted this new form of revolt against God, there is every reason to hope that its consequences will be less serious than those of its French precursor in the last century. Voltaire, in intelligible language, carried on the old war of the pride and passions of man against God, and so he has bequeathed a legacy of death to the world. Voltaire needs no interpreter save a kindred spirit. He differs as much from Kant as fire from smoke.

Those who have been familiar with disciples of Voltaire in the early years of this century, and later on with those of Carlyle during his maddening but transitory reign, can realise this difference between the Voltairian, and the Kantian spirit. The fierce fires of the French volcano are burning out, ere long the smoke will clear away, and like Dante coming up from Hell, we shall "again behold the stars".

INDEX OF NAMES.

D.

E.

F.

G.

H.

TERCENTENARY OF PASCAL

Paris.—The tercentenary of the birth of Blaise Pascal occurred a few days ago, and Paris celebrated the anniversary at the Church of St. Etienne-du-Mont, where Pascal attended during his lifetime and where he was buried.

The Cardinal Archbishop of Paris presided at the solemn Mass, and with him in the sanctuary were five of the French Bishops. As a literary man, honor was done to the memory of Pascal by a representative Delegation from the French Academy, among the body being prominent Catholics such as René Bazin and Henry Bordeaux. The University of Paris was represented by its Rector, and most, if not all, the learned societies were represented in one way or another.

The eulogium of Pascal was delivered by Cardinal Charost, Archbishop of Rennes, who emphasized the necessity of Pascal as a churchman, a theologist and a Confessor.