

WHY I BECAME A CATHOLIC

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Why I became a Catholic:
or, Religio Viatoris



WHY I BECAME A CATHOLIC :

Or, RELIGIO VIATORIS

BY

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NOTICE.

Some years ago, being for many days on a journey without work or books, I thought that it might be a fair time to write down, in fewest words, the reasons for what I believe. The thoughts were written as the crow flies, over wide lands and a long flight, without deviation from the straight line. Much was, therefore, omitted that might be said, but the continuity and coherence of the reasoning were my only aim.

They who will do more solidly what I have done so slightly will deserve and receive my thanks. The text remains as it was written. The references have been since added.

The Argument.

THE four following Truths are the four corners of my Faith :—

I. A necessity of my reason constrains me to believe the existence of God.

II. My moral sense, or moral reason, or conscience, constrains me to believe that God has revealed Himself to me.

III. My reason and moral sense constrain me to believe that this revelation is Christianity.

IV. My reason is convinced that historical Christianity is the Catholic Faith.

I.

A NECESSITY of my reason constrains me to believe the existence of God.

A NECESSITY of my reason constrains me to believe the existence of God, because I can in no other way account for my own existence.

1. If to bar this argument any man refuses to believe in the certainty of his own existence, so be it. I cannot reason with a non-existence or with a dubious entity. It needs two to make a battle. And if any man ask of me to prove to him his own existence, I am sure either that reason, which is the better part of man, is not in him or that he is trifling with it and with me.

2. The necessity that lies upon my reason is this: I know that I am. I am either uncaused or self-caused, or caused by a cause—whether it be a

power or a person like myself or a cause unlike myself, as yet I do not know.

There is no fourth member to this disjunctive argument. My reason can conceive none.

That I am uncaused is to say that I am without beginning, always as I am, or eternal. But I can remember when I began to walk, when I began to talk, when I began to know : when my whole bodily frame in bulk and strength, and my countenance and voice were unlike what they are now. All these have been continually changing ; and every change has had its beginning ; and I have noted the beginning and the ending of each change. I can remember no moment when I have not been changing. I feel myself changing daily ; decaying, falling away from the powers and type of my boyhood, youth, manhood, and declining into a loss and diminution of all that I was : that is to say, whether or no I was without a beginning, I am sure that I am tending to an end. I have seen my father and mother die ; home, once so full, is clean swept out, and I must go at last. To tell me that I am an uncaused existence, that I am an eternal *a parte ante*, is to try to talk me blind.

The necessity of my reason, the remembrance of my past, the slow unfolding of my being, all convince me at least that I am not eternal or uncaused. To tell me that my fleeting life, with

all its changes, is an eternal existence *a parte ante* of which I have no knowledge, or consciousness, or reviving memory, is not to reason with me, but to trifle. *Non ita se habent æternitates.* I see all things about me, trees, flowers, fruits, the cattle and the sheep, beginning and ending. I see the same law in other men: I feel it in myself. I am shut up between a beginning to which I can trace upward till it is lost to memory and consciousness, and an ending which I see in others day by day, and feel in myself approaching hour by hour. I know nothing around me that is in itself *a parte ante* eternal: nothing immutable, nothing uncaused. But the eternal is both uncaused and immutable.

I am, however, conscious that there is in me a somewhat that will live on. When my end comes I shall still exist: *Non omnis moriar.*

My reason then rejects the first member of the disjunctive argument. It is impossible by every test, physical and moral; it is contrary to all known law and to all analogy; it involves an intrinsic contradiction; and therefore my reason is constrained by a necessity to reject it.

3. That I am self-caused is still more absurd, being self-contradictory. My first consciousness before any act of thought or will told me of my existence. It said, "I am." Then it said, "I think, I feel." It is impossible to treat this self-causation

gravely ; and until it be written down by some serious objector it may be left in its intrinsic absurdity.

But theories akin to it have been seriously put forward: as, for instance, the spontaneous generation of life ; the spontaneous development of intelligence ; the deposit of life from a planet *in transitu*, or from "germs of sentience," or the germ of all life—Bathybios. These things have been written, printed, read, and—for the reputation of their authors—I hope, forgotten. The plain English of such theories is this : "Anything you will, only no Creator." But if there be no Creator all these theories involve self-causation. No germs, or planets, or Bathybios can save them from absurdity. Bathybios is either created, self-created, or increate, that is Eternal. Is it easier to believe an Eternal Bathybios than an Eternal Creator? An Eternal slime than an Eternal Intelligence?

But some writers, evading the question of origin or causation, affirm that man is the perfect development of a lower animal ; and this affirmation is made upon the comparison of the material and osseous structure of man with the material and osseous structure of the ape.

Such writers are commonly supposed to affirm that man is lineally descended from an anthropoid ape. But, in reply, they deny this, and say that

they affirm only that both man and ape descend from a common parent. But was this common parent human or apish? Or was he both, or neither, or neutral—that is, anthropoid? If anthropoid, then the legitimate posterity would be not human but apish; and man would be a deviation from the type of his ancestor.

It is not my purpose here to state the reasons why I do not believe the theory of Evolution to be a scientific truth. I will confine what I say to one link in the argument, namely, the supposed evolution of man. They who believe in the creation of man from the slime or the dust of the earth can have no difficulty in believing the simplicity of protoplasm, and they who believe in the descent of man from a single pair can have no difficulty in believing the largest development of differences of man and races, *inter eandem speciem*. It is the exclusive and primeval identity of the species for which we contend. There are indeed many daring hypotheses, but there are no facts of science rendering the evolution of man from a lower animal credible or probable. I will here confine myself to this one point.

The argument may be stated thus. Comparing the structure of man with the structure of the ape, we find a group of similitudes in the form and organisation of the bones. From this it is inferred

that the anthropoid ape is germinal man : and that man is the anthropoid ape made perfect. But where are the gradations of transition ? Where is the approximate ape or the incipient man ? Why is every known ape an ape and every known man a man ? " Man's place in creation " thus far is not among the apes, nor the place of the ape among men. The missing link is still wanting ; the gulf has never been bridged across.

Over and above all the violent absurdities of planetary, spontaneous, and Bathybiotic cosmogonies, the true indictment against the theory of man's descent from the ape is, that it is unscientific, unphilosophical, and based upon an inadequate and therefore an illusory induction.

Let it be said that a group of similitudes between the corporeal or bony structure of the ape and of the man may be found : multiply and raise its details as high as you will. It there stands alone, one only group of similitudes : and those similitudes are found in the lowest region of man's nature.

On the other hand, there are five groups of dissimilitudes between the ape and the man ; and these in the highest regions of man's nature, to which no counterpart can be found in the ape.

If, then, one group of similitudes refers man to the ape, five groups of dissimilitudes sever man from the ape.

First, is the group of articulate language. If any one say that ape's chatter is man's speech I answer, the language of man has a philosophy of personality, of action, passion, time, relations, and conditions which we call grammar. Show me an indication, as slight as the closed eye of the Proteus, of the grammar of apes.

The second group is the power of abstract thought which has elaborated grammar, Newton's Principia, and the Electric Telegraph.

The third group is the creative mind which produced the Odyssey, the Divina Commedia, Hamlet, Guy Mannering, the Moses of Michael Angelo, and Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony.

The fourth group is the moral reason, discernment, and wisdom which have formed the high human life of man, and the jurisprudence and legislation of the world.

The fifth group is the inward world of moral self-government and of conscious responsibility towards a supreme Legislator and Judge, and the forecast of the account that we must give to Him hereafter.

These five groups of dissimilitudes are indeed no less patent than the one group of similitudes in our bodies and bones. Disputants may shut their eyes to them ; but the human race still sees them. They were dropped from no planet ; they were not

self-caused by spontaneous generation. An induction that takes in only one group of the lowest phenomena and excludes five groups of the highest is neither scientific nor philosophical, but an outrage on philosophy, science, and common sense. Some men, however, would rather commit intellectual suicide than acknowledge their Maker.

I need hardly add that the second member of the disjunctive argument is, if possible, more preposterous than the first.

4. We come now to the third member of the disjunctive argument. If I am neither uncaused nor self-caused I must have had a cause, be it whom, be it what it may. On whom or what it may be as yet I will not enter.

The two first members of this argument are strictly incredible, inasmuch as they are intrinsically absurd and self-contradictory. But who will say that it is incredible that I have had a cause of my existence? What intrinsic absurdity or self-contradiction is there in saying that I am neither eternal nor did I make myself, but that I had a Maker? There is here no outrage on common sense: it is in perfect conformity with all that I know. It is not impossible or even improbable. It becomes actually probable by reason of the impossibility of any other hypothesis. And as the necessity of the human reason excludes both of the

other members of this disjunctive argument, and as it exhausts all possible suppositions, the conclusion remains master of the field: that is, the only probable, and therefore morally certain.

A Positivist objector may here say that the investigation of causes or origins transcends the human reason, and is therefore illegitimate and unscientific or superstitious. I answer that the whole intellectual system of mankind has ever reposed upon a belief of causation, and that my reason by a necessity of its nature compels me to speculate on the origin of all things, the agent of all actions, and the cause of all events.

I have never met with anything either in myself or in the world around me that is uncaused: everything in myself and in the world around me has a cause which is either known to me, or if the cause be unknown to me it is not for that reason the less certain that a cause exists; and that, because I know nothing, and have never known anything, that has no cause.

I am conscious all the day long of causing a multitude of actions or events. The primary cause of all that makes up the issue of my daily life is my own will. If I will a thing I do it: that is, I cause it. If I do not will it there is no result. The defeat of my will by external opposition in no way affects this truth. The causative power of my

will may be overborne by the will-power of another stronger than mine, or by the resistance of the material world. The whole stream of human history is made up of the concurrent or conflicting wills of men. Be it ever borne in mind, that I am neither including nor excluding the Divine Uncaused, Who is the cause of all things, because I am arguing to prove His existence : therefore I may not assume it. But an intellectual sense or instinct tells me that as all my actions are related to me as the origin or cause of them all, so I also am related to a cause and origin from which I spring.

I need not here touch on the gratuitous assumption of the Comtist that the notion of cause is a metaphysical superstition, and that cause and effect are only antecedence and consequence in a series which has no causative relation. If this were true of the inanimate world it is certainly false of the animate. The deliberate voluntary intentions that I put into effect by action every hour of the day are the exercise of a causative power of which I am as conscious as of my personal identity. I see also all around me, and all my life through, the same causative power exerted by other men. The political and social worlds that men build up by force of will are caused by their collective action. The visible structure of the world itself demands a like cause.

To tell me that I am an automaton and not a spontaneous cause of my actions all day long would contradict my perpetual consciousness: to tell me that the history of the world has not sprung from the causative power of the human will, but from an irrational mechanism, would violate not only my consciousness, but my reason.

In like manner to tell me that there is no cause of my existence, that I am what I am without any antecedent and adequate power from which I spring, involves a violation of my reason, and covertly asserts that I am either uncaused or self-caused, which are both absurd, self-contradictory, and self-destructive.

5. The third and last member of the disjunctive argument, beyond which no other or further supposition can be made, remains therefore in possession as possible and probable, and by the necessity of my reason morally certain: confirmed by the experience of my daily life and by the witness of the world around me.

Such is my meaning when I say that a necessity of my reason constrains me to believe in the existence of God. I speak of God simply as the cause of my existence. I do not say what He is—whether personal, or intelligent, or good; but only that He is; and that He is the true and adequate cause why I am what I am.

I do not say that this conclusion gives me any idea ; for the term idea is precise, definite, and univocal. It is in its origin Platonic ; and when used in any other sense it becomes a cause of confusion and ambiguity. According to Plato, an idea is a mental image or archetype of a thing or being, existing or to exist, or that may exist, residing in the Divine Mind. Nothing confused, indefinite, and incomprehensible is an idea. I can have knowledge without an idea. I know the existence of power, but I have no idea of power. I know that a cause is a power on the action of which something else depends, but I have no idea of a cause. I may have knowledge true, certain, and proper of that which I cannot surround with any intellectual outline. Such knowledge is notional or by way of notion ; and yet it may be of perfect certitude. Has any created intelligence an idea of Eternity or of Infinity ? And yet what sound mind denies the Eternal and the Infinite ? We may have a notion of both as of the tangent of a line and a circle : a notion certain and true by which we apprehend as the hand can touch what it cannot comprehend by its grasp.

Such is my meaning in saying that the necessity of my reason constrains me to believe the existence of God. It gives me a Cause to which I owe my existence ; but this runs up

into a first cause, which, itself being uncaused, is eternal.

6. Does my reason give me anything more? It gives me much more: not by the constraint of an immediate intellectual necessity; but by an implicit, rational, and moral certitude. To this we will go on.

And here, unless they be read with the context and in the sense of S. Thomas, I must begin by questioning two dicta that have been propounded as axioms: the one, *Cogito ergo sum*; the other, *Nihil in intellectu quod non prius in sensu*. As to the first: no man ever inferred his existence from his thought: no man ever need do so; for all men know that they are, before they know that they think; and they are more certain of their existence than of their cogitation. The act of thinking is functional and intermittent: existence is the permanent base or root and condition of all functions. This proving of the sum was never yet needed or seriously taken in hand. It is one of the tricks that obscure a direct light by interposing a reflector.

As to the second dictum, the whole disjunctive argument with which we began disproves it. The intimate sense or consciousness of life, of thought, of will, of desire, of fear, of need, all these are vital actions of the rational nature in which we are born.

If we do not say "I am" as a conclusion from the premise "I think," much less do we know the internal world of our being through the external world of sense.

Such sensuous Philosophy breaks itself upon the threshold. It is the Philosophy of the animal world: it reduces man from the elevation of the rational creation to the lower level of a life that lives by sense without reflection on itself, and without speculative intellect, that is, without the powers of reason.

Leibnitz saw this, and enlarged the narrowness of the dictum by adding the words *nisi ipse intellectus*; which opens in the human reason a whole world of its own, anterior to the contacts of sense and independent of them.

The intellect of man knows itself by its own vital, self-reflecting action. It was not sense that taught it to say, I am, I think, I will. The intellect is a power with intuitive and reflective faculties; and its consciousness, except when sleep suspends it, is continuous. Even in sleep the intellectual activity never seems to rest, though we cease to be conscious of our thoughts. It seems to be an *ἐντελέχεια*—a perpetual motion. When the eyes are shut, and the ears are closed, and all the blinds are down, and the whole world of sense is shut out, this internal world seems never to cease in its activity.

As sleep becomes imperfect we become partially conscious of our thoughts ; then, we say, we dream. Our unconsciousness is no proof that in sleep our thinking is suspended.

I have used the word consciousness as the nearest approach that language, always less exact than thought, can make to express the first immediate and intuitive knowledge that we have of our own existence. A child feels and knows that he exists as surely as a man feels and knows that he exists. Such knowledge is no report of sense, or conclusion of the intellect, or discursive or reflex action of the intellect upon itself. It is life conscious of itself, the living *Ego*, the "I am," which is antecedent to all its acts, the source of all its volitions, the judge of its own actions, and the disposer of its own destinies. Now this *I* is indeed dependent on sense for all that sense can teach it ; but it is dependent solely on itself for all that falls within the absolute jurisdiction of its own intellectual realm. Let us try to find what this is.

7. First, what "I am," or what "being" signifies, I cannot say. I know that what is is, and what is not is not. But if I am asked what "is" may be, I cannot tell : I only know that my own existence is being, neither uncaused nor self-caused, but caused by a being independent, antecedent, and able to cause a being dependent and subsequent to itself,

like to itself, but no part of itself: that is, the cause of being is uncaused, the only independent being existing before all other being, and the cause of all that exists. The oldest Book in the world—which I quote here only as history or philosophy—tells us that this first Cause gave Himself no other name than “I am Who am.” “I” and “am” are both beyond us. They are as two abysses which we cannot fathom, or two rays of light, before the intensity of which we go blind.

First of all, then, I know that I am.

Secondly, I know that my intellect can see many things intuitively, and can reason out many more by reflection and discourse.

Thirdly, I know certain necessary truths: for instance, that five and five are neither nine nor eleven, but ten; that two straight lines cannot enclose a space; that the whole is greater than a part; that right can never be wrong, nor wrong right: nor truth falsehood, nor falsehood truth.

Fourthly, I know that I have a power to will what I will do, and what I will not do.

Fifthly, I know that I am bound by an inward instinct to will right and truth, and not wrong or falsehood; and that according to my obedience to this moral knowledge, or dictate of my reason, I shall have to give account.

Sixthly, I know that justice, mercy, purity, recti-

tude, and truth are right ; and injustice, cruelty, impurity, and falsehood are wrong.

These things are certainly contained in the *Intellectus ipse* of Leibnitz. They are anterior to the reports of sense, and independent of them. If any one say that they are learned through sense by the teaching of parents, or of the social tradition of the world, I answer that the teaching of parents and of the social tradition of the world are precarious, unequal, divergent, often contradictory, and for the multitude of men ineffectual ; that the untaught are beyond number ; but that these primary outlines of self-knowledge are universal, unerring, and identical in all normal intelligences ; they descend from a higher fountain than sense or reflection ; and are found universally wheresoever reason or intellect is found.

And whereas I have found in myself a rational discernment of necessary truths, both intellectual and moral, I believe that what is in me by consequence or derivation should be in my cause by original possession, that is, that between it and me there is a likeness.

8. Let us now sum up what has been said. The cause from which I spring is uncaused, like in kind, in intellectual and moral discernment, and therefore a person.

I need then no longer say It, but He. And

that He is like me because He caused me to be like Himself.

When it is declared, as by the definition of the Vatican Council, which I quote here as a fact, not as an argument, that God may be certainly known *per ea quæ facta sunt*, it is not said that God may not also be known by other ways, nor is it said that the rational nature of man is not the most eminent of the things that were made, and one at least of the most luminous proofs of the existence of God.

St. Paul—I quote him not as an apostle, but as a reasoner—says that they who resist this proof of the existence of God are “*inexcusable*.”* He affirms that the works of creation prove the power and the divinity of God. But this external proof does not forbid the fullest use of the proof that lies in the inward being, that is in the intelligence and conscience of every man. This proof, however, is subjective, and cannot be proposed to other men without risk of rejection. The proof *per ea quæ facta sunt* is objective, and may be universally proposed to all rational intelligences. To reject it does not lessen its force: it only proves that they who reject it are out of square with the common reason and common sense of mankind.

The primary notion of cause is voluntary action. But voluntary action implies a will; and a will is a

* Romans i. 20.

vital and exclusive property of a person. This I feel in myself, and see all around me in persons like myself. Long before I came to know a mechanical cause, or a chemical cause, or any cause that does not traceably spring from the voluntary action of a will, I fully knew my own power of causation.

My first notion of a cause, then, is personal.

Next, when I see that one generation of men is the cause of another, and that the offspring has the same *I am*, and *will*, and power of reproduction in all things like to its cause or parent, I have proof that this personal cause communicates its likeness.

9. It has been the fashion of certain writers to deny the argument from design, and to call Paley's argument the "Watchmaker's argument." We are told that it is mere assumption to say that if A is proportioned to B, and C results from their joint action, there was any design in these relations of proportion and production. Such objectors do not deny that the whole material world holds together as a mechanism in perpetual and uniform activity, and that the growths and productiveness of nature in all its forms from a man downward to a blade of grass, exhibit always and everywhere a steadfast and unfailling course. They dare not ascribe it to chance ; but they will

not let us ascribe it to design. To invoke chance as the cause of unerring uniformity would expose them to ridicule. To allow us to affirm that the universal fitness, proportion, adaptation, and ceaseless activity of all things, and of each in its kind and of all to their several ever-recurring ends, or consequents if you will — to allow us to affirm that this is by design would affirm the provident intelligence and the presiding will of a designer: that is, of God, by Whom all things were made.

This seems to me shallowness or want of logic. We affirm the existence of a designing mind by a strict and world-wide induction founded on the observation of nature.

Let me suppose that I find on a heath not a watch with all its refined structure, but four cannon-balls piled in a pyramid, three for the base and one for the apex. To ask me to believe that this artificial juxtaposition, which is one of the most complex and delicate relations out of many in which four balls may lie together, was accidental or the result of haphazard, taxes my credulity too far. But let me suppose further that such pyramids were to be found all along the Watling Street from London to Chester, then the Haphazard Philosophers would begin to talk of the uniformity of chance. Take into account the conditions of these balls, their weight, form, mobility, the denial that

any designing hand had piled them as they were found would not be received by any jury as credible even upon oath.

If it be said that such balls have a special bias, or aggregative tendency, why do not all such cannon-balls in all the arsenals of the world pile themselves without hands? Moreover, what is bias, or tendency, or aggregation? This is not to reason, but to ramble.

10. But to pass from an illustration so trivial and obvious. Let us take two other examples. The whole world of flowers and of fruits, so manifold and various in its results, springs from five conditions, of which four are universal: the earth, the air, the rain, and the sun. There is only one condition that is specific, namely, the seed, or germ, or graft, or grain, from which every flower and fruit exclusively springs. In form, colour, texture, symmetry, every fruit has its own bulk, tint, flavour, odour, with a minute identity of likeness, each to each, according to its kind. All this lies in the seed or germ. No lens could discern the several properties or potentialities of each. To tell me that all these agencies and results are not by design is to tell me that they all invariably come by chance: but to tell me that chance is the mother of uniformity is to tell me that crooked is straight, and straight crooked.

The other illustration is from S. Paul ; but I still quote him, not as an Apostle, but as a Philosopher. S. Paul says : " Every house is built by some man, but He that made all things is God."* Aristotle would say : " As the Shoemaker is to the Shoe." Nowadays this argument by analogy is called the " argument of the Carpenter." It has never been safe to make merry with the Carpenter. Julian, when going on his last expedition, asked a Christian, " What is the Carpenter's Son about ?" The Christian answered : " Making your Coffin." Julian never came back.

11. But I am not going to the Carpenter's shop. Those who deny a divine design in the universe do not venture to deny the designs of men in human history, human science, human invention, and in the intellectual world of human creation. I know *a priori* my own designs, and though I cannot know *a priori* the designs of the Creator, I can say, as my designs are to me, so I believe all that I see is to Him. All that is written in history, and all that envelops us in all our life, is the result of intelligence and will designing and effecting, wisely or unwisely, the ends that we have in view. If the firmament, the earth, the sea, and all animate and inanimate life bear certain witness for a Creator, assuredly *inter ea quæ facta sunt* the first and

* Hebrews iii. 4.

chief of all works, the witness of which is most luminous and peremptory, is man. To act and live by design is the law of his highest perfection : to act without design is to degrade his rational nature : to act with perverse design is to destroy himself. But if the whole history of human action is the history of design accomplished or frustrated by man, with what semblance of reason can any disputant say that by man alone the power and works of design are revealed, but that in the whole universe no proof of design can be discovered? I fully accept Lord Bacon's declaration : " I had rather believe all the fables in the Legend, and the Talmud, and the Alcoran, than that this universal frame is without a mind."*

12. My purpose thus far has been to give very briefly the reasons for affirming that I find a necessity constraining my reason to believe in the existence of God ; and for adding that it would violate my reason not to believe in the existence of a first cause—a source of all being and of all motion by which all things were made : that is to say, a personal intelligence and a personal will, the reflection of which I find in myself ; the Cause and Creator of all, uncaused and uncreated Himself, and because He is uncaused therefore

* Essay on Atheism.

Self-existent and eternal ; the Ruler of all truth ; the Fountain of all law ; the Exemplar of all moral perfection ; the Designer and Final Cause of the harmony of the Universe, that is, of all His works.

II.

MY moral sense or moral reason or conscience constrains me to believe that God has revealed Himself to me.

1. Conscience is defined to be *dictamen rationis*. It is the reason judging of right and wrong by an intellectual act together with a concurrent sentiment or feeling of the moral sense which affirms the duty of doing right and forbids the perversity of doing wrong. That such is a judgment of the reason and sentiment of the heart, or as a weighty writer has interchanged the words, "a sentiment of the reason and a judgment of the heart," and that it exists in all men needs no proof. The nature of man bears witness to it. It is a *communis sensus*; and any man who has it not, or says he has it not, is either a *lusus naturæ* or a prevaricator: that is, either untruthful or not human, for man is a rational and moral being.

2. But this moral sense or moral reason bears

witness also, that when we do right we are conscious of an interior peace and joy which I will call happiness ; that when we do wrong we are conscious of the reverse : that is of unhappiness. In the measure in which we do right we are the happier : in the measure in which we do wrong we are the more unhappy. If in all things and always we were to obey this dictate of our moral reason, we should have an inward peace, which no outward pain could take away.

3. We have already affirmed that between us and the cause of our being there is a likeness. Our consciousness, therefore, of this moral nature in ourselves implies that the cause from which we spring is also a moral agent.

4. And this likeness lays upon us the law of imitation. We are bound to be more like, that is to grow in likeness to him. As a Moral Agent and a Person he is our example. The more we do right the more like to him we grow : and in the measure in which we are like him in that measure we have an inward peace : a happiness and a consciousness that by conformity to our First Cause, we are being elevated in the scale of our own perfection as man.

5. This appears to me to say plainly that we were made to know, to imitate and to conform ourselves to our Cause or Maker ; and that in such

knowledge and conformity consists the perfection of our nature and of our happiness. And here I take leave to call my Cause or Maker God.

6. If then our perfection and our happiness consist in our knowledge of God and in our conformity to Him, such knowledge and conformity are the direct and necessary means to our perfection and our happiness.

7. Therefore without such knowledge, conformity would be impossible, and without such conformity, our perfection and our happiness would be impossible.

8. How then, without violating my moral sense and reason, can I believe that He who made me has so hid Himself from me that I cannot know Him, and, therefore, cannot attain the perfection and happiness that my nature demands?

9. My moral nature therefore, both by its reason and by its moral sense, constrains me to believe that God has made Himself known to me in order that by such knowledge I may be conformed to Him, and by conformity attain the perfection and happiness proper to the nature in which He has made me.

10. But this knowledge can come only from Himself; and until He makes Himself known—that is, reveals Himself to me—I cannot know Him. I am constrained, therefore, by a necessity of my

moral reason, to believe that God has revealed Himself to me.

II. Where, then, is this knowledge to be found ?

First, in the order of nature. The whole of nature is a revelation. The opposition implied in the words and ideas of "natural" and "revealed" is illogical and erroneous. Revelation is twofold, natural and supernatural. Natural revelation and supernatural revelation are two orders or two ways in which God has revealed Himself to us.

"This is the true light that enlighteneth every man coming into the world." It matters not whether we read ἐρχόμενον with light or with man : the sense is all one. It is either that the light at its coming into this world enlighteneth every man, or that this light enlighteneth every man at his coming into this world.

In the latter sense it affirms that every man at his birth shares this light : in the former it affirms that every man is born into the light which already pervades all things and envelopes him as soon as he is born into it.

But this light is the reason or intelligence by which man is the image of God. Men are λογικοί because they are like the eternal λόγος. The light of reason and conscience are a revelation written upon man as man. Man is a revelation in and to himself. All that I have hitherto said is within the

order of nature. God, by the light of reason, makes Himself known to me. The light and sense of conscience make known to me His law. There is a Natural religion, a Natural theology, a Natural legislation, founded on Natural morality. All this is the same in all men, at all times, and in all lands, and is from God. It is a revelation of Himself by the things that He has made, and supremely by man, His chief work in the likeness of His own nature. Therefore in knowing ourselves we know Him.

12. Now it follows that in the measure in which any man uses this light and turns to its origin he is the more enlightened. In the measure in which he fails to use this light and turns from its origin he deprives himself of light and is darkened.

This is evident in the Oriental, the Greek, and the Roman worlds. And it is also evident that in proportion to their higher intellectual and moral culture, their theology, and their ethics, though deeply stained, were theoretically higher and purer. In fact, it was the force of these truths that elevated them in any degree; and in the measure of their elevation they saw more clearly their own nature and its witness for God and for His law.

On the other hand, if man has ever been found without the knowledge of God—as some would tell us of Fijians and Boshmen—he has been found in

the lowest state of moral and physical degradation. As in the natural world, light is the condition of life, growth, fertility, perfection, and the loss of light is the cause of sickliness, withering, sterility, and death, so in the intellectual and moral worlds, man without the knowledge of God is degraded: *Homo sine cognitione Dei pecus*. If the knowledge of God were lost, the whole rational creation would be lowered to mere animal life.

13. The same reason that constrains me to perceive that God has made Himself known to me by the lights of nature, constrains me also to believe that He has added to those lights by supernatural revelation. And, inasmuch as the knowledge of God is necessary for my happiness, and inasmuch as ignorance darkens even the natural light, and the passions of men obscure the knowledge of God, therefore He has by supernatural revelation added both light and certainty to truths necessary for our moral perfection, and therein for our welfare and happiness.

What my inward witness testifies, the history of the world confirms. Human history tells us that there is a revelation superadded to the light of nature, and therefore in itself supernatural. It exceeds or transcends the light of nature, and brings within our knowledge truths beyond the horizon of natural revelation. There is no trace-

able time when men have not believed that they were encompassed and enlightened by such a revelation.

The lights of natural and supernatural revelation together penetrate the whole nature of man—both his intellect and his will. His intellect in the form of truth, his will in the form of law: that is, of dogma and of morals which are inseparable and cannot be either opposed or parted.

Supernatural revelation has come to man in manifold ways.

First, to those who use aright the light of nature it cannot be doubted that light is added both by use and by gift.

Next, we have the historical record of the words of men to whom were given supernatural lights for the instruction or reproof of men and of nations. Such is the revelation to Abraham and the Patriarchs, to Moses and the twelve tribes of Israel. I take this for a time as mere human history. They declared themselves to be Prophets, and they were accepted as such.

By this supernatural revelation, I am still speaking historically, I am told that God made Himself known, that is, His self-existence—"I am Who am"; and His unity; and Spirituality; and His moral perfections which are a law to Himself and also to all who bear His likeness. By this know-

ledge of God men had the means of advancing towards their own perfection, and of attaining to their proper happiness.

Finally, we come to Christianity of which in the words of its records we read that "God Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ."*

All previous revelation was, as S. Augustine says, *crepuscular*, or as the twilight before the morning. In the Incarnation of the Eternal Son the knowledge of God was given to man in meridian fulness.

I am not as yet arguing that Christianity is true : I quote it only to show that from the beginning of the history of the world there has been a steady unfolding of the light of the knowledge of God. The light has expanded itself gradually until it is said to have reached its noontide in the manifestation of God in our manhood. If this be so, then we cannot fail of the knowledge of God necessary for our perfection and happiness except through our own fault.

What my reason and conscience dictate, namely that God would make Himself known to me, I find according to human history to be fulfilled. If God

* II. Cor. iv. 6.

had made me capable of knowing Him and of needing to know Him for my happiness, and had hid Himself from me, on God's part it would have been merciless ; and on my part it would have been a plea for all disorder or despair. It would be an argument against the goodness of God.

14. If any man say : " Neither my inward consciousness nor the outward world convince me of the goodness of what you call the First Cause or Creator of all things. I see so much disorder, violence, misery, and suffering in the world: and that evil prevails over what you call good, and preponderates in the phenomena of the lower and of the human world that I come to a conclusion contrary to yours. Either the Author of all things did not will the ascendancy of good, or He had not power to give it the ascendant." When such reasoners are reminded that man is a free agent, and that the world is what it is because man has marred what God has made, some will deny the freedom of the will altogether. They will say that the will is determined by the end at which it aims—forgetting the aimer, or that it is controlled by feelings or mental states which precede its determination : that is to say in other words, that the will is not free, or that the will is not a will ; that it is *titulus sine re*; that to believe in our freedom of will is a life-long, hourly illusion which we pass upon ourselves. We think

we are free, but we are necessitated ; we think we have a will, but it has no power of election or of self-determination. It is a cumulus of feelings elicited by an end which fixes our moral action. The evil in the world then, such reasoners conclude, is not from the abuse of the free will of man. Evil and suffering do not spring from human action but inflict themselves upon men. And the Author of nature either will not or cannot help it.

15. If this reasoning be sincere, it means that man is a machine : that it is an illusion to think that we are moral agents. If any man should say, "I am not a moral agent but a machine : my acts are necessitated, I do not choose them or will them, I am beyond my own control," he would not only be difficult to argue with, but dangerous to live with. Metaphysicians of such a kind ought to be treated by the Mosaic law of Leprosy. Happily they are few : the human race bears witness to the power of the will and to its freedom.

We deliberately select the ends for which we act, and often for reasons which determine us to choose the least attractive or even the most repulsive.

We often act deliberately against the whole cumulus of our antecedent feeling and affections on the sole dictate of reason and of conscience.

16. Given then the freedom of the human will

and the dominion that God has permitted to man over the course of this world, the preponderance of evil and of suffering—if it were so, which is not granted—is at once removed from the Divine will, and traceable to the human. The whole course of human history is the record of the freedom of the human will. The evil and suffering which deface the world are the tares of man's sowing, the supersemination of a free will turned from good to evil. The face of the world has a look of anguish because man has marred what God has made.

Thus far I have argued as if it were to be granted that the witness of the world as to the goodness of its Author is obscure or ambiguous.

17. But I believe the truth to be peremptorily on the other side.

First, we will take the inanimate world, its beauty, its fruitfulness, its beneficence to all living things, above all to man who is sustained by its abundance of good—this realm of the world retains to this hour its primeval order and its inexhaustible fertility of good. So men believed of old, and said "God has not left Himself without a witness doing good from heaven, giving rains and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."*

Certainly in this region of the natural world goodness reigns supreme.

* Acts xiv. 16.

Next, in the lower realms of the animal world every creature after its kind obeys the laws of its nature. Instincts are to them, as prudence is to man, a reigning principle of action. They have a signal temperance in all the actions and needs of their animal sustenance and life. They have fortitude and an uncomplaining endurance. For justice it may be said that they never sin against God: their nature being irrational they are irresponsible. The dumb creatures never offend in tongue. It has been said: "If any man offend not in word, the same is also a perfect man and able to govern his whole body;" but in this the speechless are sinless. In this whole realm of the world evil has no place. And its witness for the goodness of its Author is complete.

But perhaps some one will say: If there is not evil in the lower animals there is suffering. One half of them preys upon the other half. The ferocity of lions and panthers bears no witness to mercy or to goodness. The teeth of the carnivorous races show that they are by nature ferocious, man is carnivorous, and men have been—as in Australia, and still are in Oceania—cannibals. But will anybody say that this proves the natural ferocity of man, and the absence of goodness in the Creator? That the Author of nature should have willed that fish should be the food of fish, and a

kid or an antelope the food of lions, no more disproves the goodness of the Creator than that oxen and sheep should be the food of man. I never heard the goodness of God denied because it is lawful to eat meat.

I must affirm then that the whole animate world bears witness to the goodness of its Maker.

Lastly, we come to the world of human life. And here it is not to be denied that the only creature who sins against God is he whom God has made most like to Himself. It is by this very nature, made to the Divine image with intelligence and heart and will, that man offends him. The weapon of offence is His own likeness. If we were unlike Him, we could not offend Him. Man turns the image of God against himself. He offends Him by the intellect in falsehood and unbelief; he offends Him by the heart in loving what he ought to hate, and hating what he ought to love; he offends Him by the will, by inobedience, disobedience, and malice.

18. It is man then that has marred the world and the witness of goodness which God has made. Nevertheless, under all its defacement, the rays of the goodness of God shine through. The Divine Goodness gazes upon us through all our sorrows, disfigurement, and dishonour, as the Son of God gazed upon Peter. Peter went out and wept bitterly.

But men now meet the radiance of the Divine beauty as Caiaphas met the Sacred Countenance looking on Him, through the stains of the divine blood and the coursing of the tears and the contraction of the brow, with the steady gaze of heartless unbelief. They say : " There is no beauty that we should desire Him : " there can be no goodness where there are wounds and sorrow.

If the world of human life shows but a faint witness for the goodness of God it is because we have disfigured it by our own sins.

19. The sum of what has hitherto been said is this : My reason and my moral sense tell me that the Cause and Author of my being is good, benevolent, beneficent, and just. He has made me like Himself in this, that goodness, benevolence, beneficence, and justice, are the laws of my being, and the only source of my happiness. If I be evil, malevolent, malignant, unjust, I must be miserable, and make all others within my reach share my misery. God wills me to be happy : the knowledge alone of Himself is the condition of my happiness. I would then as soon believe that He has made me capable of hunger and thirst, and has put both food and water out of my reach, as that He has not given me the means of knowing Him. But He has neither parched me with thirst, nor starved me with hunger : the whole world in all its streams

and in all its fruits ministers to me like a servant in my house. Much more than I believe that He has put within my reach the means of slaking my intellectual and moral thirst and to satisfy my spiritual hunger. And this is by a twofold revelation, natural and supernatural, of Himself.

Even *a priori* this argument would raise a high probability, but it here rests upon an induction founded upon the observed facts of history, and the moral nature of man,

III.

MY reason and my moral sense alike constrain me to believe that this revelation is Christianity.

1. It may be taken, I believe, as undeniable that so far as the history of the world reaches, mankind has always believed in both natural and supernatural revelation, and therefore in a religion. By religion I mean a belief in the existence of God the Creator, Law-giver, and Judge of men ; of the soul as distinct from the body, of the moral reason or moral sense which we call conscience, of the immutable distinction of right and wrong, of justice and of injustice, of truth and falsehood, of our responsibility, of our personal survival after the death of the body, that is in the immortality of the soul, and in reward or punishment after death.

2. That this belief is abundantly manifest in the records of the Greek world needs no proof. Every Greek scholar knows it. For those who do not

read Greek, Döllinger's *Gentile and Jew* will be enough.

3. That it is to be found pervading the Roman world is equally certain, as the Latin literature abundantly shows.

4. That a religion was universal in the great Oriental world, has in the last thirty years been unfolded to us by the study of its sacred books and traditions. This also is beyond all doubt.

5. That such was the belief of the Hebrew world with an amplitude and explicitness exceeding that of every other race or nation is proved at this day by a twofold witness: first, by the Hebrew books called the Old Testament; secondly, by the living presence of the Jewish people, which in its world-wide dispersion, always surviving through the vicissitudes of the ancient and modern world, preserves to this hour its witness and testimony by its own isolated and yet imperishable existence among the nations.

6. The historical books and records of these four worlds contain all that we know of the history of mankind. To reject them is not to reason, but to shut our eyes to facts.

7. They all four conspire in bearing witness to (1) the existence of God, (2) the moral nature of man, (3) the law of morality both in this life and after death.

8. And these three points contain the sum of religion or revelation natural and supernatural : that is to say, 1. of Theology, or the knowledge of God ; 2. of anthropology, or the knowledge of man ; 3. of ethics, or morality arising from the relations of man with God and of man with man.

9. It is often said by certain well-meaning people that there is truth in all religions. This appears to me to be an inversion of the truth.

There is only one religion, natural and supernatural, which has come down from the beginning ; and this if neither innate nor connate is at least inseparable from the intellectual and moral tradition of the human race. "This is the light that enlighteneth every man coming into the world."

10. And this one tradition, descending from a single source, has run in four streams, and has been tinged and tainted by the soil of its several channels. In the Oriental and Greek and Roman worlds it was almost buried in human accretions — polytheistic, idolatrous, pantheistic : "The light shone in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not."

It is confusion then to say that in all religions there is truth : religion is one, not many ; and the one only religion imperishably pervaded the darkest aberrations of the human intellect ; it has been,

and is universal in all times, and amongst all the races of mankind.

The grossest idolatries bear witness to the belief in God. If there had been no belief in God there would have been nothing to corrupt. The altar to the unknown God proved a belief in His existence. And the corruptions of Polytheism proved beyond contradiction that the belief in God was inextinguishable. Lactantius says that so overwhelming to the intellect of men was the infinity of God, that they could only apprehend it by dividing His immensity and by multiplying divine but subordinate beings.

11. With this tradition of the whole human race recorded in the historical books of the Oriental, the Greek, the Roman, the Hebrew worlds it appears to me to be trifling, not reasoning, to talk of Boshmen and Australians. Even Fetish worship proves the belief in a supernatural and Divine Being as surely as base coin proves the existence of a true currency. Is mankind sightless because some men are blind? Or irrational because some are idiots?

Comte tells us that theology is the infantine state of the human intellect. Therefore, according to Comte, a belief in God is at least primitive,

12. A primeval religion then has descended universally and imperishably, though it has been obscured and overlaid with superstition : that is by

the accretions of human thought. But the belief came first, the superstition came after. It was a decline of light. And the intellectual and moral decline of men and of nations followed. If any races be found—I do not believe that any can—without belief in God, they are also degraded races: their state is neither primeval nor normal, it is exceptional, unnatural, and abnormal.

13. But though decline is manifest in the Oriental, Greek, Roman, and even in the Hebrew world, nevertheless the tradition of the knowledge of God has been always steadily rising towards a culminating point.

14. And the culminating point of all lights, natural and supernatural, that is of the twofold revelation of God is to be found in Christianity.

15. Christianity consists of two elements, the one essential and eternal, the other positive and transient. For the present I lay aside the latter.

The essence of Christianity is given in the following words, which I do not quote yet as proof, much less as divine, but simply as an authoritative summary of Christianity by its author: "This is eternal life, that they may know Thee the only true God and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent."*

(1) The first essential element of Christianity

* S. John xvii. 3.

is the knowledge of the true God, and the true knowledge of the true God. These are not equivalent propositions, for we may know the true God and yet not know Him truly. Revelation notwithstanding, our knowledge may be narrow, inadequate, or tinged with erroneous thought, for instance, *Deus inexorabilis Deus Calvinii*.

The light of nature teaches the eternal power and the Divinity of God :* that is, His Unity, Infinity, Eternity, and Uncreated Being.

The Greek world obscured this natural light by sensuous anthropomorphism; the Roman world obscured it by still grosser superstition.

The Hebrew world taught the Spirituality of God and His perfections of wisdom, goodness, justice, compassion, benevolence, and charity.

Christianity received all these primeval and supernatural lights as in a focus, and gave them back again with an accession of light direct from God Himself. I still quote as from a human hand only the following words: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us; and we saw His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth"†

16. Revelations of God have pervaded all times.

* Romans i. 20.

† S. John i. 1, 14.

Enoch walked with God : not in silence—God spoke to him before He took him. He revealed Himself to Noe ; and to Job, who was not of the race of Abraham ; and to his friends also who were Madianites ; and to Pharaoh, king of Egypt ; and to the king of Babylon ; and to Nineve. But none of these came within the Hebrew world. *Spiritus Domini replevit orbem terrarum : et hoc quod continet omnia scientiam habet vocis.* The whole world was and is full of the revelation of Himself : not only in His visible works, but in the intelligence of mankind with which He has held converse enveloping men in His presence, and making them to know His voice.

17. Again, eighteen hundred years ago it was believed that “God, Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”* That is in a person of absolute perfection.

Christianity further taught that “God is charity,” “God is a Spirit,” “God is Light.” Mankind had never otherwise known God so truly and so luminously as it did by these words. The knowledge of God as revealed by Christ is the purest, the most perfect knowledge that the world has ever had of its Divine Author. I am still speaking of

* II. Cor. iv. 6.

Christianity only as history and as the most perfect Philosophy.

18. The second essential element of Christianity is the knowledge of man or anthropology. The most perfect humanity the world ever saw was the manhood of the Founder of Christianity.

And here the argument so elaborately wrought out in the book *Ecce Homo* seems to me beyond all contradiction.

The traditional conception of the character of Jesus Christ, considered strictly and only in a human and historical sense, seems also to me to place the nature of man before us in its highest perfection. The mythical argument of Strauss, also, is an affirmation of this fact. Though the two witnesses do not agree together they prove my point.

I need not quote any Christian witness: first, because he would be suspected; and, secondly, because from the cloud of witnesses it would be difficult to choose.

19. The third essential element of Christianity is its morality or ethical system. Christianity contains and sums up the whole moral law as known by the lights of nature; and as promulgated with increased light and interpretation in the law of the Hebrew world. We are still treating the Old Testament only as history.

The Decalogue was not a new enactment. It

was a declaratory statute republishing the ancient legislation from the beginning of the world. It had never been lawful to have more Gods than one, or to kill, or to steal, or to bear false witness, or to covet what belongs to others. Even the seventh day was sacred from the beginning. The Decalogue only brought the primeval law to remembrance, and reënacted it under penalties. So far Judaism was as old as creation.

The penal code of the Hebrew world was indeed severe. But its domestic legislation was merciful beyond any other ancient example: for instance, the prohibition of usury; the forbidding to take of a poor man in pledge the stone with which he ground his corn, or his cloak, except under obligations to restore it at sunset that he might sleep in it; the prohibition to glean the harvest-field, or to go twice over the vines, or the olive-trees, in order that the remainder might be left for the poor and the stranger and the widow. It was forbidden moreover to seethe a kid in its mother's milk, or to muzzle the ox that trod the corn. The laws of the Hebrew world are pervaded by this spirit of refined care, for the weak and for the poor. They are instinct with a human sympathy that, so far as I know, has no precedent or parallel in any other moral code.

20. We need not speak of the moral codes of

the Greek and of the Roman worlds. They bear no comparison even with the morality of the Hebrew law, much less with the Christian.

21. The moral code of Christianity contains all the laws of justice, mercy and charity known from the beginning of the world.

The two tables of the Old Law lay down the relation of man to God and of man to man. The first table defines the duties which spring from our relation to God, the second the duties which spring from our relation to man.

But these duties are again summed up in two precepts: the love of God with our whole heart, and the love of our neighbour as ourselves.

And these once more are abbreviated in one commandment: "A new commandment I give unto you: that you love one another as I have loved you."* "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends."†

In this there is only one reserve: we cannot lay down the life of the soul for any one, not even for the whole world. We cannot for the sake of another violate our moral reason or the immutable law of right and truth: for this would be self-murder. Short of this, the law of Christian love, which is the law of liberty, prompts and urges us to give ourselves in behalf of others.

* S. John xiii. 34.

† S. John xv. 13.

22. It is a venturesome thing to say that such a moral code has never been found before the Christian law was given, but I may say that I do not know where to find it, and till it is found I may deny its existence: *De non apparentibus et de non existentibus eadem est ratio*, and this I may say without fear, that if anything like or equal to the morality of the Christian law can be found, nothing higher can be found. All that is high, pure, just, merciful, ennobling and for the glory of God is to be found in the Christian law: all that was true and right in the religious traditions of the world culminates in Christianity.

In the last century this was so fully admitted even by the adversaries of Christianity that a book was published against it under the title "Christianity as old as the Creation."

But though all the lights of the old world culminate in Christianity, they are only the prelude and the promise of the revelation and order of divine facts of which the Incarnation is the fulness. For the present, however, I am only treating Christianity as the highest fact in human history, and in the progress of mankind.

23. But it may be said that this does not prove Christianity to be a divine revelation. Most true. We have not yet come to that question.

They who deny the existence of a Creator by necessity deny all revelation.

But they who believe that we are neither increate nor self-created—and with such only my business is now—must admit a Creator.

I affirm then that all the works of the Creator are a revelation of Himself; and chiefly and above all man whom He made to His own image. He has revealed Himself by man and in man. We read Him in ourselves. In knowing ourselves we come to know him. And this knowledge is not a creation or a discovery of ours; but an illumination from Him. And this illumination pours in upon us from the works which He has made: *per ea quæ facta sunt*. The whole intellectual system of the world bears witness to Him: but that witness is the light which, coming from Himself, reveals Him to the whole rational creation. “When Gentiles who have not the law do by nature those things that are of the law, these having not the law are a law to themselves. Who show the work of the law written in their hearts, and their conscience, bearing witness to them and their thoughts between themselves, accusing or also defending one another.”*

The order of nature, then, is full of revelation. It is the first Chapter in the great Book of Theology.

* Romans ii. 14, 15.

24. The difference between the Revelation recorded in the old Hebrew Scriptures, and the knowledge of God that has existed always from the beginning and everywhere outside of the Hebrew world is not that the Hebrew world had a revelation and the rest of the world had none ; but that the Hebrew world had direct, explicit, accredited, and continual communications of divine knowledge in a degree and measure which were not given to the rest of mankind. As the Apostle says, they had the law, and the priesthood, and the promises. They were the type and the forerunner and the earnest of what was to come. They were the transient shadows of an abiding substance. The knowledge of God, of man, and of morals in the Hebrew world was in purity, in truth, and in nobleness, beyond all that the world had ever heard of or imagined. It was the culminating point of all the lights of natural religion and morality. Nothing true existed out of it which was not also within it ; and whereas the truths which existed out of it were scattered and obscured, and, as it were, wanderers and strangers upon earth, in the Hebrew world they were restored to their own home and sanctuary and liberated from bondage and human error.

25. I am not aware that any one as yet has been hardy enough to prefer the Theology or the morals

of the Greek, or Roman, or Oriental worlds to the faith and morality of the Old Testament.

It is next to be noted that the Hebrew world referred its whole law and commonwealth and its very existence to a Theocracy with a minute, constant recognition of the divine presence and will.

26. If it be said in answer that Orientals, Greeks, and Romans, claim a divine origin, I accept the fact in proof that the belief of revelation is common to man; and that which is common to man is in possession as the intellectual system and tradition of mankind. This answer I gladly welcome and add it to my argument.

It comes then to this, that the whole world has believed in divine revelation. Socrates would add—therefore the whole world has believed in God; for, as he said, who would believe in saddles and bridles and deny the existence of horses?

My affirmation, then, is founded on this answer. The world has been full of revelation and the Hebrew commonwealth was the culminating point till a higher came. The Oriental Theism, the mythology of the Iliad, of the Antigone, of the Æneid, had its true interpretation in the law and Prophets of Israel. We may well believe that their Scriptures were among the *ἱερά καὶ παλαιά γράμματα* of which Plato speaks.

A belief, then, of the presence and power of

God, of His law and government, of the descent of men from the divine, sometimes by creative power, sometimes by monstrous fiction, a consciousness of responsibility, and a sense of retribution, all this and much more filled the minds of men with a faith that God had spoken and was speaking continually to them: that He was revealing Himself both in word and act. And this faith is witnessed in all its fulness by the Hebrew people, no longer to be called a Hebrew world, but the cloud of witnesses now scattered among all nations and imperishable in their testimony to the revelation of God to man.

28. I take leave, therefore, to affirm that from the beginning of the world down to the advent of Christianity, the whole race of mankind believed not only in the existence of God, but in His revealing Himself to man.

And further I take leave to affirm that as this belief and all that it truly testified is to be found culminating in the faith of the Hebrew people, so also the faith of Patriarchs, Prophets, and Seers, and the whole revelation of the Old Law is to be found culminating in the New Law, which is Christianity.

To this antecedent revelation Christianity has superadded two divine facts with all their consequences: first, the Mission and Advent of the

Son ; second, the Mission and Advent of the Holy Ghost.

29. If the essential and universal witness of the whole Christian world at this day does not suffice to prove the coming of Jesus Christ, His teaching, His death, His resurrection, the commission given to the Apostles, their belief of the divine Personality of their Master, and of the guidance of the Spirit of truth, by Whose authority they acted—that is to say, that both their mission and their message came to them by divine revelation—if, I say, this witness of Christendom as a human and historical proof be not sufficient, then I will add that history is of less worth than an old almanack. Then nothing would be credible beyond the reach of my arm or the sight of my eyes. If nothing can be received on trust, why should I believe in the existence of Byzantium or in the invasion of Britain by Julius Cæsar? Human society and the most vital truths in the life of man come to us on hearsay. But the hearsay of the Christian world is a tradition universal and identical in every place ; affirmed and believed to be divine, and traceable upwards in unbroken succession to the hour in which the testimony of twelve men laid the foundation of the testimony not of twelve nations only, but of the whole Christian world.

Schlegel said well that the witness of the Chris-

tian world is the maximum of evidence in history. If this be not a motive of credibility sufficient to make a prudent man responsible, what can be so, short of a separate revelation to each man who is pleased to doubt ?

30. If the Statutes at large presuppose and prove the existence of the British Empire, and if the history of our kings from Alfred downward proves the succession of our monarchy, who can reject the witness of the universal Church, testified by its world-wide legislation, its nineteen Councils, the unbroken succession of its visible head ? The light of the world needs no further evidence than its own splendour. Daylight needs no tapers of ours. It is evident because it looks out upon us. We see it because it casts its light upon us. It is self-evident because it is luminous : and light is its own witness.

The universal Church is, as the Vatican Council declares, "The Witness of its own Legation." It needs no accrediting to the powers of darkness ; nor any credentials beyond its own four notes. All other evidence would be proving the certain by the less certain, the manifest by the obscure. It bears witness of its own divine origin : and it affirms that its message is the voice of God, revealing Himself to man. "This is the declaration which we have heard from Him and declare unto you,

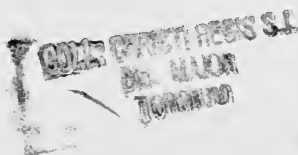
that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness.”*

Lastly, then I affirm that whatsoever in the primeval and imperishable revelations of God from the beginning is certain, pure, and necessary for the perfection and happiness of man is to be found with manifold certainty, greater purity, and perfect fulness in Christianity.

Some philosophers have invited our admiration by telling us that it is possible to conceive a sphere in which two and two may make five ; and bodies may have a fourth dimension. No sphere or state, however, is conceivable in which the knowledge of the Creator, of the creature, and of the relations which unite them, shall not be the condition of all good. And this is summed up by our Divine Master in these few words : “ This is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God : and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent.”

Christianity, then, is the morning light of the eternal Noon.

* J S. John i. 5.



IV.

MY fourth assertion is that historical Christianity is the Catholic faith.

No one who has followed with assent the propositions hitherto affirmed—and I speak to no others at this late stage of the argument than to Christians—no one, I say, will deny that the Author of Christianity gave to His Apostles authority to found a Church, and a commission to spread it throughout the world: “All power in heaven and on earth is given unto Me. Go ye therefore and teach all nations.” They waited for the advent of the Holy Ghost, Who should create the Church and abide with it for ever.

The Book of Acts opens with the day of Pentecost and the Advent of the Spirit of Truth.

History bears witness that the Apostles executed the commission they had received. The Book of Acts and their Epistles show that the Church as it was called was spread throughout the Greek world, and throughout the Roman world even to the far

west in Spain: it penetrated into Egypt and Ethiopia: the earliest histories tell us that it also extended into the far East—that is, into the Oriental world.

2. The Apostolic Mission, therefore, founded a Society or Church of all nations, in which there were men of all the languages spoken in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost.* To these were afterwards added the tongues and dialects of races which were not of the Jewish dispersion.

The Church thus founded interpenetrated all nations and held them in a unity which is not only natural but supernatural: a unity in which there is neither Jew nor Greek, barbarian or Scythian, bond or free.

If any man deny this historical fact, or hesitate to believe it, I would say: Leave then the outset of the Church, look into the world at this hour. There is a Church and one only which fulfils these conditions. It interpenetrates all nations and speaks with all tongues. It is of no nationality, and, so far as touches the way of salvation, it ignores all national distinctions. This fact is visible, palpable, undeniable in all the world at this day. This Church is not one of two Churches both claiming universality, much less one of many; but sole, exclusive, self-evident. There was never any world-wide

* S. Aug., Serm. in Die Pent., tom. v. 1094.

Christian Church before it, or beside it. I am speaking simply to historians with the map of the world before them.

No other origin can be found for this world-wide organisation than that which it claims : no date for its beginning but that which it assigns. Its own documents, statutes, acts run up to the date and origin which it claims and assigns for itself. The annals of the world even in its hostility recognise the existence of this Society or Church, and bear witness to its rise. If history be not sufficient to prove this, history can prove nothing.

3. This world-wide organisation has a structure as precise and articulate as the body of a man, from which the analogy is taken in the Christian writings.* It has a head and members. It ministers to itself, it grows in stature and in maturity, it is described as follows : "The head even Christ, from Whom the whole body being compacted and fitly joined together by what every joint supplieth, according to the operation in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in charity."†

And in these words is described not the skeleton of a dead body, but the structure of a living being. It is spoken of as a person. It is called "Christ."‡

* S. Greg. in Ps., tom. iii. 511.

† Eph. iv. 15, 16.

‡ I. Cor. xii. 12.

Again, in another place we read : " The Church which is His Body,"* and that the life of the Body is the Holy Ghost : " One Body, one Spirit."†

And here we may make one step onward. The same evidence that proves the Advent and the Divinity of Jesus Christ proves also the Advent and the perpetual office of the Holy Ghost.

4. Thus far I have treated the Church as a subject of merely human history. But the witness of Christian history affirms that the Church is also a divine creation. I may, therefore, henceforward speak of the Church in its Divine office, and invested with the properties which its own history claims for it.

The Church described in Christian history has life in itself, though not of itself. The influx of life, into all its members, comes from its Head. The Lord and Life-giver, that is the Holy Ghost, abides in it. Its organisation is human because knit together of men, joined by a supernatural union to our Manhood in the Person of the Incarnate Son ; but it is also Divine, because its Head is the Son of God : its life is imperishable and its unity indissoluble, because both are derived from a Divine Person Who is inseparably joined to it as to His mystical body.

5. There are thus two elements in this universal

* Eph. i. 23.

† Eph. iv. 4.

organisation : the one human, the other Divine. The human element is by nature subject to sin and death ; but by union with the Divine it is regenerate and imperishable. Every member of the mystical body is liable to fall back under the power of sin and death ; but though it is certain that all members, taken singly, may so fall, it is also certain that all—that is the body as a whole—can never fall from its Head.

History shows that there ever has been a remnant according to the election of grace ; the seven thousand who never bow the knee to the God of this world, the innocent, the penitent, the saints, who can never be separated from their Divine Head, or from the Lord and Life-giver, to whom they are united by a substantial though not a hypostatic union, *οὐσιωδῶς* as S. Gregory Nazianzen says.* In them the two great unions—the one to the Head, the other to the Holy Ghost—are always sustained, and the life of the Church, therefore, can never fail. Such is the Divine and essential unity of the Church.

But its external organisation consists in a visible head, in the Episcopate diffused throughout the world, in the Priesthood springing from the Episcopate, and in the faithful united to their Pastors.

If any one desires historic proof of this, let him

* Orat. XII. in Pentecost., tom. i. 740.

read the Epistle of S. Clement to the Corinthians; the letters of S. Ignatius of Antioch in the apostolic days; S. Irenæus against heresies in the second century; Tertullian in the third; S. Optatus and S. Augustine in the fourth; S. Leo in the fifth. Let him then take the history of the Councils and the succession in the See of Peter.

6. Running through these histories there are to be found two offences declared by the Christian law to be capital, or deadly: namely, heresy and schism; or, in other words, the false liberty of opinion in matters of religious belief, and the wilful liberty of separation from the public worship and Sacraments, that is, from the unity of the Church.

Both these offences were punished with excommunication, or cutting off from the Catholic unity.

But why should this twofold use of human liberty be treated as a capital offence, and held to be deadly? No dissent from human teachers can be deadly: no separation from a human organisation can be worthy of anathema. By no means. Heresy and schism are deadly precisely for this reason: the Teacher from whom Heresy dissents is Divine; and the unity that schism breaks is Divine also. Heresy resists the Divine Witness of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of truth; and schism

resists the Holy Ghost, the Charity of God incorporated in the body of Christ; and the Author of its unity.

The unity of the Faith and of the Church springs from the Holy Ghost. They both are one because He is one. Truth and Charity may be multiplied as light and flame, but they cannot be divided by antagonism. They are always the same, and always one; for the Holy Ghost is Truth and Charity.

But if it be said: "Heresy and schism are deadly, yes, if such opposition or separation be without a cause; no, if the cause be sufficient," I answer: no cause can be sufficient to break the unity of charity, because the unity of charity reposes on the unity of truth; and no cause can be sufficient to break the unity of truth, because the unity of truth cannot fail, the Teacher of Truth being Divine.

7. We here make another step forward. From this point it follows that there is for ever in the world a Divine Teacher, who always preserves the truth which He revealed in the beginning.

The Advent of the Son by incarnation, passion, resurrection, redeemed the world. The Advent of the Holy Ghost has revealed and interpreted the Divine actions and passions accomplished by the Advent of the Son. The second Person of the Holy Trinity finished His work and ascended into

heaven. The third Person came to abide for ever and to carry on the work of the redemption as the Illuminator and Sanctifier of men.

While the Son taught in Jerusalem, there was a Divine Teacher visible in the midst of His disciples. When the Holy Ghost came according to prophecy and to promise, it was expressly declared that there should be for ever a Divine Teacher in the world.*

Either there is or there is not a Divine Teacher in the world. There is here no *via media*. The choice is inevitable. The necessity to choose is peremptory. The Divine certainty of faith depends upon the presence of a Divine Teacher. The salvation of man depends on divine faith. Deny the presence of a Divine Teacher, and show me the divine certainty of your faith? Confess the presence of a Divine Teacher, and two conclusions follow: first, that heresy is a sin against the Holy Ghost; secondly, that no sufficient cause can ever be found for breaking the unity of charity which rests upon the unity of truth; for the Divine Teacher can never fail, and the truth that He teaches can likewise never fail.

8. Such is the testimony of Christian history from the beginning until now.

S. Irenæus says: *ubi Ecclesia ibi Spiritus.*†

* S. John xiv. 16, 17, 26. † Contra Hæret., lib. iii. c. 24.

The Church is His visible manifestation. S. Cyprian calls the Church *Sacramentum Veritatis* :* an outward and visible sign of the truth. It is by the visible Church that He manifests His invisible presence.

When S. Paul said *one body, one Spirit*, there was one visible Church rising in the world from Jerusalem to Rome, from Syria to Spain. This visible body was the perpetual witness of its invisible Head.

S. Augustine† says that the Apostles saw the Head, and believed in the body that was to come. We see the body and believe in the Head Who is at the right hand of the Father. He says also that the voice of the Head is the voice of the body, and that the voice of the body is the voice of the Head. He asks *If they are in one flesh, how are they not also in one voice ?‡* But if they be not of one voice how shall His words be true : “ He that heareth you, heareth Me ” ? And how is this identity of voice secured ? How can we make an act of faith that the voice of the body and the voice of the Head are always one and the same ? Because of the perpetual presence, guidance, and assistance of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Truth, by Whom the

* Ep. lxiii. p. 132, Opp. ed. Baluz.

† Serm. ccxxxviii. in diebus Pasch., tom. v. 997.

‡ In Psalm xxx. and xl., tom. iv. 147, 344.

Church was created, abiding for ever in it as the Sanctuary of His presence, and teaching by it as the organ of His voice.

9. Heresy is, then, a mortal sin, because it is a sin against the Holy Ghost. What sin is there in contradicting a human teacher? It may be rash, it may be foolish, it may be presumption; but heresy or mortal sin it cannot be, for the human teacher may err, and the gainsayer may be in the right.

Any system or communion, or self-called Church which disclaims infallibility, forfeits thereby its authority over the conscience of its people. They may err in contradicting their human or fallible teacher, but heretics they cannot be. The Catholic and Roman Church has from the beginning believed and taught that, by Divine assistance, it never has erred, and never can err, in witnessing, guarding, and teaching the whole revelation of God as given to the Apostles.

10. Little thought is necessary to show that if the body cannot err its visible head cannot err.

The visible head of the Church stands in two relations: the one to the Divine Head, Whose Vicar he is; the other to the whole flock on earth, of which he is the supreme teacher and guide.

If the head on earth could err, how could he be the Vicar of the Divine Head, Who is the Truth?

If he could not discern between truth and falsehood, between food and poison; between the revelation of God and human error; how could he be the supreme teacher of the universal Church?

It needs much credulity to believe that the Head can err, and that the body cannot; or that the head and the body can contradict each other—like the witnesses who accused our Lord.

If they can, how shall the world know which to believe?

Moreover, if the head of the Church have divine authority and yet may err, he may bind men by divine authority to believe what is erroneous, or what is false. But how shall the faithful know when he has erred and when he has not? Who shall countersign his teaching? And is the countersigner infallible? If he can err, of what worth is countersignature? If he cannot err, then he is an infallible teacher upon earth.

And here two things must be noted. The one, that in Holy Scripture many individuals, for instance, the Prophets, have spoken by divine assistance, which preserved them from error. The other, that in the uninspired writers or Fathers of the Church it is the Successor of Peter who is believed to be exempt from error by divine assistance, that is guarded for ever in the truth.

And in this we see why the Visible Head also is the fountain of unity. From the unity of the head flows the unity of the body. The unity of the Church is not only a moral unity—that is, by the unanimity of its members—but it is also a numerical unity. It has one Divine Head in heaven, and one visible head on earth.

And this unity of the Church is in the first place internal, necessary, indissoluble. Its external unity is the visible manifestation of the unity of Faith, Hope, Charity, of intellect, heart, and will, wrought by the Holy Ghost, Who alone can make men *unius moris in domo*, and therefore *unius labii*. Without this internal unity of truth and charity, all external unity is impossible, and if it were possible it would be a mask and a falsehood if the internal unity of truth were wanting.

This twofold unity, therefore, is numerical, exclusive, indivisible.

And this unity of truth and of the visible Church is the witness to the world of the unity of God, and of the divine monarchy which reigns over all His works. The Church bears its witness not only by its unity of voice, but by the visible monarchy of its universal government.

II. What has hitherto been said amounts to this: The Church, founded by Jesus Christ, is the visible and universal witness for God ; it is numerically

and exclusively one, its unity is indivisible, its life indefectible, its voice infallible, its authority Divine. We have here its four Notes and its three properties.

No other body or Church can show these notes and properties, or bear this test. But separation from this numerical and exclusive unity began under the eyes of the Apostles. S. John writes : " They went out from us because they were not of us."* And S. Jude : " These be they that separate themselves—not having the Spirit." He fixes on the cause of schism : *non habentes Spiritum*. They had not the Holy Ghost the Spirit of Truth, and therefore fell away into heresy and schism.

S. Augustine says that before his time the Church had condemned eighty heresies, and that the multitude uncondemned was innumerable.† Where are now the heresies of the East—the Docetæ, the Arians, the Monophysites, the Monothelites, the Eutychians? They have either ceased to be or the world has forgotten them. Where are the heresies of the West—the Montanists, the Novatians, the Pelagians, the Sacramentarians? In a little while where will be Lutherans, Zwinglians, Calvinists? " Every plant that My Heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up." But the mystical Vine abides for ever. This one Church

* I. S. John ii. 19.

† De Hæresibus in init.

founded by our Divine Redeemer spread into all nations by the Apostles, interpenetrating and uniting all, refusing all nationality, but lifting all nations into a supernatural unity which is indissoluble even when all other bonds of this world are broken, and even when the nations are in mutual warfare—this one universal empire, self-evident as the light, speaking to the eye by its visible presence, and to the ear by its living and articulate voice, this is a fact not to be denied, for a City seated on a hill cannot be hid. It is a phenomenon like the Sun, the Light of the world, an Epiphany, a *θεοφάνεια* the witness of God manifest in the Flesh.

12. The witness that the Church bears for God is threefold : first, it affirms all that God has revealed of Himself by the light of nature, His power and divinity, His goodness and providence ; secondly, all that Patriarchs and Prophets, in the revelation to Israel, declared of His spirituality, His moral perfections of wisdom, power, justice, mercy, pity, equity, goodness, benevolence, beneficence ; and thirdly, all that has been revealed to us by the mission and advent of the Son from the Father, and by the mission and advent of the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son.

The Church has always been conscious that it is the prolongation and perpetuity of the Incarnation. It is visible as Christ was visible ; and He in it is

always visible to faith as the Church itself is visible to sense. The whole history of the Christian world attests the Incarnation, which is the chief cornerstone of its existence.

Of this, the *Dogmata Theologica* of Petavius, and Cardinal Franzelin's work on the Incarnation give the historical evidence in abundant quotation. I name them because they are positive—that is, historical—abounding in the words of the Fathers, who, thus far, may be regarded as historical witnesses.

The historical evidence for the Faith of the Holy Trinity and of the Incarnation may be classed under four heads :

(1) The administration of Baptism throughout the Church.

(2) The Baptismal Creeds, which in East and West are completely one.

(3) The uninspired Christian writers.

(4) The Œcumenical Councils against the heresies that assailed the Trinity and the Incarnation from Arius to Macedonius.

13. In truth, in what remains of the Christian world there is now little or no controversy over the two first divisions of the Baptismal Creed. The battlefield now lies in the third and last division of the Creed, in which we confess our faith in the Holy Ghost and His perpetual office.

I have long thought that the secret but real cause of the so-called Reformation was that the presence and office of the Holy Ghost had been much obscured in popular belief.

If the so-called Reformers had truly believed in the perpetual assistance of the Holy Ghost in the Church, how could they have denied its infallibility? How could they have persisted *scientes et volentes* in heresy and schism?

If they had believed in the personal advent and perpetual presence of the Holy Ghost, dwelling in the mystical body that is in the Church, how could they have turned back to the partial and indistinct belief of the Jewish Church as to the Spirit of God?

The Jews believed in the Spirit of God, as the Creator and Renewer of the soul of man, and as the Giver of all light and sanctity to the soul: they believed in His universal presence, and in His striving with the will and the heart of all mankind, and that He works by His grace in every several soul. But the Jews under the old Law did not believe His advent, presence, and office in the mystical body, because the mystical body did not as yet exist. It could not exist before its Head was incarnate; and it did not exist until its Head was glorified.* The advent of the Son and the

* I. S. John vii. 39.

advent of the Holy Ghost were both foretold, but neither as yet fulfilled.

The Jews therefore knew the Spirit of God only in His universal office, in individuals one by one. They did not, because they could not know Him in the revelation of His personality, and His perpetual presence, dwelling in the Body of Christ: which faith comes through the Incarnation alone.

Now this is precisely what the so-called Reformers either ignored or rejected. They Judaised. They returned to the twilight of the Jewish Church, professing to believe in the personality of the Holy Ghost, and His manifestation by tongues of fire at Pentecost; but they still disbelieved and denied this perpetual office by which the Church is forever guarded in the truth.

The Puritan writers, such as Owen, believed and wrote fully of the Spirit as the Illuminator and Sanctifier of individuals—that is, of the members of Christ, one by one; but of the Pentecostal coming, presence, and office in and through the Body of Christ, they seem either to have no consciousness or to reject it altogether. In rejecting the infallibility of the Church, therefore, they, in fact, rejected the Pentecostal mission and Evangelical Office of the Holy Ghost, which specially distinguishes the faith of Catholics from the faith of Judaism.

14. As the Baptismal Creed is the expansion of the Baptismal form, so the Theology of the Church is the expansion of the Baptismal Creed. The Creed is as a focus in which all the lights of revelation are concentrated, and from which they flow as a radiance filling a circle always widening into greater light.

The Theology of the Church, though not a science *proprie dicta*, because it is resolved not into principles that are self-evident, but into eternal truths known by revelation, is nevertheless scientific in its treatment and method. It has a unity, a procession and symmetry of truths—truth proceeding from truth—in perfect harmony and coherence.

This theology has had three periods: the Patristic, in which the early Christian teachers commented on Holy Scripture, according to the tradition of the Creed and the decrees of Councils; the Scholastic, in which the vast materials laid up by the Fathers were analysed and reduced to order; the Conciliar, in which the Church has defined and closed the few remaining questions of theological speculation.

15. The world-wide tradition of the Catholic faith contains in itself and rests upon the intellectual tradition of mankind.

On the Feast of the Holy Innocents in 1869 seven hundred bishops, gathered from the Universal

Church, representing some thirty nations, made profession of their faith before Pius IX. in the words of, the Councils of Nicæa, Constantinople, and Florence summed up in the Council of Trent. Those who were absent were morally present and united in this great act of united testimony. It was true that day of the Church, *vox ejus sicut vox multitudinis*. The whole Christian world spoke by the Episcopate. Take this Episcopate—that is, take the Catholic Church out of the world, and what remains of Christendom? Will the Greek or the Anglican separations represent the day of Pentecost? The time when they went out from the unity of Christendom is written in history. They could witness with us while they were with us. When they ceased to be with us, because they were not of us, their witness changed its voice, and their testimonies do not agree together.

Take out of the world the Catholic and Roman Church, and the void cannot be filled up. The rush of all schisms, heresies, unbeliefs, would not fill the void. It would bring back chaos where order reigned before; and uncertainty bred of mutual contradiction. There would be no lineal descent of truth from the Apostles, no steadfast light of the day of Pentecost, no perpetual witness of the Incarnation. How, then, could we know that Jesus Christ ever came into the world?

Put back the Catholic and Roman Church into the Christian world, and at once the Church of all nations is its own history. Its living tradition is unbroken. It has its own annals, and knows their significance. It has its own documents, and it knows their meaning. It has its own immemorial usages, customs, interpretations, and it knows their origin and import. It has no need of scientific historians, or of pretentious critics to tell it what was the divine deposit committed to its custody. "What man knoweth the things of a man but the spirit of a man that is in him? So the things also that are of God no man knoweth, but the Spirit of God."*

To those who do not believe the Church to be a "moral person" endowed with a divine life and light, with a continuous intelligence and an un failing memory these words of S. Paul may have no meaning. To those who believe that the mystical Body of Christ has a living and perpetual consciousness of its own divine endowments, of the deposit of the Faith committed to its custody, of its conflicts with error, of its definitions of truth, of the history of its own doctrines—to such the meaning of these words is that the Church knows itself by an internal and supernatural light. Each man has a consciousness of his personal identity

* I. Cor. ii. 11.

against which no other man can argue. But this personal identity contains in itself the memory and knowledge on his part in all the fulness of his manifold experience, both of internal habits and acts, and of external events and history. And each man alone for himself holds the key of interpretation, and is the sole interpreter. In like manner no critic or interpreter external to the living consciousness of the Church can prescribe its teaching or revise its judgments: "The spiritual man judgeth all things, and he himself is judged of no man."*

16. The Church knows its own history, both by natural light and by supernatural illumination. It rejects and condemns those who appeal from its definitions to human history and human interpretations, precisely because it knows them to be false. It declares all such appeals to be both treason and heresy: treason because, to appeal from its teaching to any other teacher is an act of contumacy against its authority, which is supreme; and heresy, because its authority is divine. To appeal from Queen Victoria to Alfred the Great or Albert the First, would be soon settled by the law of England. To appeal from S. Paul to Gaius or Aquila would be to deny the divine authority of the Apostle.

* I. Cor. ii. 15.

Men, too hot-headed to be candid or too light-headed to be accurate, have called this the triumph of dogma over history. Some have even said, with less honour, that to appeal to history is here denounced as heresy. Not so fast. To appeal from a human teacher to human history is no heresy; but to appeal from a Divine Teacher to any other tribunal is *ipso facto* heresy. This clause, however, is always carefully suppressed. The objectors conceal the fact that they do not believe in any divine authority. They therefore, in contradicting their Church and all its teachers, commit neither treason nor heresy. Where there is no supreme authority, there is no treason; and where there is no divine teacher, there is no heresy.

The triumph of dogma over history, therefore, really means this: the Church defines its doctrines in spite of you, because it knows its history better than you. Its dogmas include its history, and its history is part of its consciousness, sustained by divine assistance. If you would deny the conclusion, you must deny the premises; that is, the Divine assistance which perpetuates the faith.

17. History does not mean only books, manuscripts, documents, and scientific historians. It means also the moral personality of empires and kingdoms: the living and ever accumulating tradition of human action and human knowledge

embodied in usages, customs, laws, institutions. All these are witnesses, and testify with articulate voice. The history of the Church is the Church itself; its world-wide circumference guarded by the universal Episcopate, and its centre the fountain of supreme authority; its unbroken succession of Bishops in all nations; its lineal inheritance of the Primacy of the chief of the Apostles; its nineteen Œcumenical Councils: all these things are history, historical documents, testimonies, records, and living witnesses. To quote human and uninspired texts against the voice and witness of the universal Church is no sign of common sense. The scientific historian reads the history of the Catholic Church in one sense, the Catholic Church reads its own history in another. Choose which you will believe. For me it is enough to say in matter of its history what S. Augustine said in matters of faith: *Securus judicat orbis terrarum.*

18. When our Lord said to Peter, "Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and thou being once converted, confirm thy brethren;"* He foretold that there should be for ever a warfare against the faith. When He said "the gates of Hell shall not prevail," He implied that they should be in perpetual assault.

* S. Luke xxii. 31, 32.

Nevertheless there has been an unbroken tradition of immutable faith, resting on the promise of divine assistance.

In this doctrine also there have been three periods of discussion and analysis and definition as to the mode of conceiving and expressing the truth about which in itself there was no doubt.

(1) The first was a period of a simple unquestioning belief that the successor of Peter had by divine promise a special stability in faith.

(2) The second, a period of analysis and of controversy provoked by the great Western schism out of which came Gallicanism within the Church and Anglicanism out of it.

(3) The third, a period of definition in which the simple faith of the first period was defined with the precision of thought, and of words that the analysis of controversy had attained.

19. At the time of the Vatican Council the world achieved a great victory. It prejudiced the minds even of good men, it blinded their eyes and it made their ears deaf. They would not listen, therefore they could not believe. And they would not listen because they had no will to be convinced and rather a wish not to be convinced; but this will not be so for ever. At and after the Council of Nicæa many died in the belief that the world had been divided without need, and tormented for

an iota. But we now can see that the iota has saved the faith of the world. We see also that the whole *Ecclesia Docens*, the universal Episcopate represented by 700 of its members united to their head, less only perhaps three, bore witness to the infallibility of the Roman Pontiff. About forty thought it inopportune to define the doctrine: but they all alike submitted when it was defined, and the bishops who were not present sent their prompt adhesion.

This world-wide unanimity is the past living in the present, the history of the faith written on the living and lineal intelligence of the Church: a living scripture of the Spirit of Truth.

20. The Vatican Council defined the two primary truths of the natural and supernatural order: the one that the existence of God can be certainly known by the things that are made;* the other that the Roman Pontiff in defining the faith and law of God by divine assistance is guarded from all error. †

These two truths are the two principles of divine certitude.

The one is the infallibility of the light of reason in the natural order. The other is the infallibility of the Church in its Head by a perpetual divine assistance.

* Constit. Dogm. de Fide. † Constit. Dogm. de Ecclesia.

The so-called Reformation or intellectual revolt against the divine authority of the Church has borne its fruit ; and its fruit is twofold : uncertainty as to the truths of revelation among those who still believe, and scepticism as to the lights and laws of the natural order.

Men now doubt as to the reports of sense and the judgments of reason founded on these reports. This uncertainty is fatal to faith, for where doubt begins faith ends. But worse than this. Scepticism is a palsy of the reason, it denies to men the means of knowledge. We have returned to the scepticism of the ancients, of whom S. Augustine said that they refuted themselves, for they were certain that we cannot be certain of anything.

The Christian world began by contending with Gnostics, who believed all science, or *gnosis*, to be evolved from the human reason ; and it is ending by conflict with Agnostics, who affirm that there is nothing to be known beyond the horizon of reason bounded by sense. And yet, though they cannot know God to exist, they talk and write as if they know that He does not exist.

21. The nineteenth century, by reason of its special intellectual aberrations, stood in need of these two definitions of the Vatican Council. They meet the two great wounds of the world, namely, an

irrational scepticism and a mutilated Christianity. *Sapientia ædificavit sibi domum.** For nearly nineteen hundred years the sanctuary of the faith has been rising and expanding. The lineal identity of faith is perfect in all time and in all the world. But the perpetual contradictions of the world have compelled deeper mental conceptions, and more precise verbal enunciation of the one immutable truth. And as the truth has been elaborated, the sacred terminology of faith has been defined and fixed. Therefore they who are within the fold are *unius labii*: those that are without cannot understand each other's speech, and have ceased to build. The city of confusion is in ruins. Heresies there must be, that the truth may be manifest. There is no choice but this: either to believe in the voice of the living Church, or to appeal from it and go back to documents of uninspired men, local, occasional, and obscure; often of doubtful authenticity, of uncertain text, and of equivocal meaning. If such be the raw material of the work, who and what are the workmen? Has any one of them, or have they altogether, the promise of Divine assistance to interpret history against the living witness of the Church of God? They appeal to the past, which is dead and speechless, save as it echoes their own voice; we listen to the

* Prov., x., i.

voice of a Divine Teacher who lives for ever. They choose to be critics : we are content to be disciples.

22. And now to make an end. The sum of these thoughts and arguments is this : I know that I am ; I know that I have the light of reason, the dictate of conscience, the power of will ; I know that I did not make all things, nor even myself. A necessity of my reason compels me to believe in One higher and greater than I, from Whom I come, and to Whose image I am made. My perfection and welfare consist in knowing Him, in being conformed to Him. I am sure that He is good, and that He desires my happiness ; and that, therefore, He has not hid Himself from me, but has made Himself known, to the end that I may love Him and be like Him. I find that the light of the knowledge of God has filled the world, and has been ever growing by fresh accessions of light, waxing brighter and clearer until it culminated "in the face of Jesus Christ." In Him God and man were perfectly revealed. In Himself, in His words, and in His commandments, I find the most perfect knowledge of God that the world has ever known ; the most perfect knowledge of himself that man has ever reached ; the most perfect law of morals towards God and towards man that men have ever received. All this is to be found in

Christianity alone. Christianity is, therefore, the fulness of the revelation of God. Moreover, I find that the maximum of human and historical evidence proves this true and perfect Christianity to be coincident and identical with the world-wide and immutable faith of the Catholic and Roman Church. On these foundations—four square and imperishable—rests the faith to which God in mercy has called me, in which I hope to live and to die; for which I also hope that, by God's grace, I should be willing to give my life.

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