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ROME OR REASON?

A REPLY TO

CARDINAL MANNING.

BY

COL. R. G. INGERSOLL.

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ROME OR REASON?

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PART I.

Superstition "has ears more deaf than adds to the voice of any true decision."

CARDINAL MANNING has stated the claims of the Roman Catholic Church with great clearness, and apparently without reserve. The age, position, and learning of this man give a certain weight to his words, apart from their worth. He represents the oldest of the Christian Churches. The questions involved are among the most important that can engage the human mind. No one having the slightest regard for that superb thing known as intellectual honesty will avoid the issues tendered, or seek in any way to gain a victory over truth.

Without candor, discussion, in the highest sense, is impossible. All have the same interest, whether they know it or not, in the establishment of facts. All have the same to gain, the same to lose. He loads the dice against himself who scores a point against the right.

Absolute honesty is to the intellectual perception what light is to the eyes. Prejudice and passion cloud the mind. In each disputant should be blended the advocate and judge.

In this spirit, having in view only the ascertainment of the truth, let us examine the arguments, or rather the statements and conclusions, of Cardinal Manning.

The proposition is that "The Church itself, by its marvellous propagation, its eminent sanctity, its inexhaustible fruitfulness in all good things, its catholic

unity and invincible stability, is a vast and perpetual motive of credibility, and an irrefragable witness of its own divine legation."

The reasons given as supporting this proposition are:—

That the Catholic Church interpenetrates all the nations of the civilised world; that it is extra-national and independent in a supernational unity; that it is the same in every place; that it speaks all the languages in the civilised world; that it is obedient to one head; that as many as seven hundred bishops have knelt before the Pope; that pilgrims from all nations have brought gifts to Rome, and that all these things set forth in the most self-evident way the unity and universality of the Roman Church.

It is also asserted that "men see the Head of the Church year by year speaking to the nations of the world, treating with empires, republics, and governments" that "there is no other man on earth that can so bear himself," and that "neither from Canterbury nor from Constantinople can such a voice go forth to which rulers and people listen."

It is also claimed that the Catholic Church has enlightened and purified the world; that it has given us the peace and purity of domestic life; that it has destroyed idolatry and demonology; that it gave us a body of law from a higher source than man; that it has produced the civilisation of Christendom; that the popes were the greatest of statesmen and rulers; that celibacy is better than marriage, and that the revolutions and reformations of the last three hundred years have been destructive and calamitous.

We will examine these assertions as well as some others.

No one will dispute that the Catholic Church is the best witness of its own existence. The same is true of everything that exists; of every Church, great and small; of every man, and of every insect.

But it is contended that the marvellous growth or propagation of the Church is evidence of its divine origin. Can it be said that success is supernatural? All success in this world is relative. Majorities are not

necessarily right. If anything is known—if anything can be known—we are sure that very large bodies of men have frequently been wrong. We believe in what is called the progress of mankind. Progress, for the most part, consists in finding new truths and getting rid of old errors—that is to say, getting nearer and nearer in harmony with the facts of nature, seeing with greater clearness the conditions of well-being.

There is no nation in which a majority leads the way. In the progress of mankind, the few have been the nearest right. There have been centuries in which the light seemed to emanate only from a handful of men, while the rest of the world was enveloped in darkness. Some great man leads the way—he becomes the morning star, the prophet of a coming day. Afterwards, many millions accept his views. But there are still heights above and beyond; there are other pioneers, and the old day, in comparison with the new, becomes a night. So, we cannot say that success demonstrates either divine origin or supernatural aid.

We know, if we know anything, that wisdom has often been trampled beneath the feet of the multitude. We know that the torch of science has been blown out by the breath of the hydra-headed. We know that the whole intellectual heaven has been darkened again. The truth or falsity of a proposition cannot be determined by ascertaining the number of those who assert, or of those who deny.

If the marvellous propagation of the Catholic Church proves its divine origin, what shall we say of the marvellous propagation of Mohammedanism ?

Nothing can be clearer than that Christianity arose out of the ruins of the Roman Empire—that is to say, the ruins of Paganism. And it is equally clear that Mohammedanism arose out of the wreck and ruin of Catholicism.

After Mohammed came upon the stage, "Christianity was for ever expelled from its most glorious seat—from Palestine, the scene of its most sacred recollections; from Asia Minor, that of its first churches; from Egypt, whence issued the great doctrine of Trinitarian Orthodoxy, and from Carthage, who imposed her belief on

Europe." Before that time "the ecclesiastical chiefs of Rome, of Constantinople, and of Alexandria were engaged in a desperate struggle for supremacy, carrying out their purposes by weapons and in ways revolting to the conscience of man. Bishops were concerned in assassinations, poisonings, adulteries, blindings, riots, treasons, civil war. Patriarchs and primates were excommunicating and anathematising one another in their rivalries for earthly power ; bribing eunuchs with gold and courtesans and royal females with concessions of episcopal love. Among legions of monks who carried terror into the imperial armies and riot into the great cities arose hideous clamors for theological dogmas, but never a voice for intellectual liberty or the outraged rights of man.

"Under these circumstances, amid these atrocities and crimes, Mohammed arose, and raised his own nation from Fetichism, the adoration of the meteoric stone, and from the basest idol worship, and irrevocably wrenched from Christianity more than half—and that by far the best half—of her possessions, since it included the Holy Land, the birth-place of the Christian faith, and Africa, which had imparted to it its Latin form ; and now, after a lapse of more than a thousand years, that continent, and a very large part of Asia, remain permanently attached to the Arabian doctrine."

It may be interesting in this connection to say that the Mohammedan now proves the divine mission of his Apostle by appealing to the marvellous propagation of the faith. If the argument is good in the mouth of a Catholic, is it not good in the mouth of a Moslem ? Let us see if it is not better.

According to Cardinal Manning, the Catholic Church triumphed only over the institutions of men, triumphed only over religions that had been established by men, by wicked and ignorant men. But Mohammed triumphed not only over the religions of men, but over the religion of God. This ignorant driver of camels, this poor, unknown, unlettered boy, unassisted by God, unenlightened by supernatural means, drove the armies of the true cross before him as the winter's storm drives

withered leaves. At his name, priests, bishops, and cardinals fled with white faces, popes trembled, and the armies of God, fighting for the true faith, were conquered on a thousand fields.

If the success of a church proves its divinity, and after that another church arises and defeats the first, what does that prove ?

Let us put this question in a milder form : Suppose the second church lives and flourishes in spite of the first, what does that prove ?

As a matter of fact, however, no Church rises with everything against it. Something is favorable to it, or it could not exist. If it succeeds and grows, it is absolutely certain that the conditions are favorable. If it spreads rapidly, it simply shows that the conditions are exceedingly favorable, and that the forces in opposition are weak and easily overcome.

Here, in my own country, within a few years, has arisen a new religion. Its foundations were laid in an intelligent community, having had the advantages of what is known as modern civilisation. Yet this new faith—founded on the grossest absurdities, as gross as we find in the Scriptures—in spite of all opposition began to grow, and kept growing. It was subjected to persecution, and the persecution increased its strength. It was driven from State to State by the believers in universal love, until it left what was called civilisation, crossed the wide plains, and took up its abode on the shores of the Great Salt Lake. It continued to grow. Its founder, as he declared, had frequent conversations with God, and received directions from that source. Hundreds of miracles were performed, multitudes upon the desert were miraculously fed, the sick were cured, the dead were raised, and the Mormon Church continued to grow, until now, less than half a century after the death of its founder, there are several hundred thousand believers in the new faith.

Do you think that men enough could join this Church to prove the truth of its creed ?

Joseph Smith said that he found certain golden plates that had been buried for many generations, and upon

these plates, in some unknown language, had been engraved this new revelation, and I think he insisted that by the use of miraculous mirrors this language was translated. If there should be Mormon bishops in the countries of the world eighteen hundred years from now, do you think a cardinal of that faith could prove the truth of the golden plates simply by the fact that the faith had spread and that seven hundred bishops had knelt before the head of that Church ?

It seems to me that a "supernatural" religion—that is to say, a religion that is claimed to have been divinely founded and to be authenticated by miracle—is much easier to establish among an ignorant people than any other, and the more ignorant the people, the easier such a religion could be established. The reason for this is plain. All ignorant tribes, all savage men, believe in the miraculous, in the supernatural. The conception of uniformity, of what may be called the eternal consistency of nature, is an idea far above their comprehension. They are forced to think in accordance with their minds, and as a consequence they account for all phenomena by the acts of superior beings—that is to say, by the supernatural. In other words, that religion having most in common with the savage, having most that was satisfactory to his mind, or to his lack of mind, would stand the best chance of success.

It is probably safe to say that at one time, or during one phase of the development of man, everything was miraculous. After a time, the mind slowly developing, certain phenomena, always happening under like conditions, were called "natural," and none suspected any special interference. The domain of the miraculous grew less and less—the domain of the natural larger; that is to say, the common became the natural, but the uncommon was still regarded as the miraculous. The rising and setting of the sun ceased to excite the wonder of mankind—there was no miracle about that; but an eclipse of the sun was miraculous. Men did not then know that eclipses are periodical, that they happen with the same certainty as the sun rises. It took many observations through many generations to arrive at this

conclusion. Ordinary rains became "natural," floods remained "miraculous."

But it can all be summed up in this: The average man regards the common as natural, the uncommon as supernatural. The educated man—and by that I mean the developed man—is satisfied that all phenomena are natural, and that the supernatural does not and cannot exist.

As a rule, an individual is egotistic in the proportion that he lacks intelligence. The same is true of nations and races. The barbarian is egotistic enough to suppose that an Infinite Being is constantly doing something, or failing to do something, on his account. But as man rises in the scale of civilisation, as he becomes really great, he comes to the conclusion that nothing in Nature happens on his account—that he is hardly great enough to disturb the motions of the planets.

Let us make an application of this: To me, the success of Mormonism is no evidence of its truth, because it has succeeded only with the superstitious. It has been recruited from communities brutalised by other forms of superstition. To me, the success of Mohammed does not tend to show that he was right—for the reason that he triumphed only over the ignorant, over the superstitious. The same is true of the Catholic Church. Its seeds were planted in darkness. It was accepted by the credulous, by men incapable of reasoning upon such questions. It did not, it has not, it cannot, triumph over the intellectual world. To count its many millions does not tend to prove the truth of its creed. On the contrary, a creed that delights the credulous gives evidence against itself.

Questions of fact or philosophy cannot be settled simply by numbers. There was a time when the Copernican system of astronomy had but few supporters—the multitude being on the other side. There was a time when the rotation of the earth was not believed by the majority.

Let us press this idea further. There was a time when Christianity was not in the majority, anywhere. Let us suppose that the first Christian missionary had met a prelate of the Pagan faith, and suppose this prelate had

used against the Christian missionary the Cardinal's argument—how could the missionary have answered if the Cardinal's argument is good?

But, after all, is the success of the Catholic Church a marvel? If this Church is of divine origin, if it has been under the special care, protection, and guidance of an Infinite Being, is not its failure far more wonderful than its success? For eighteen centuries it has persecuted and preached, and the salvation of the world is still remote. This is the result, and it may be asked whether it is worth while to try to convert the world to Catholicism.

Are Catholics better than Protestants? Are they nearer honest, nearer just, more charitable? Are Catholic nations better than Protestant? Do the Catholic nations move in the van of progress? Within their jurisdiction are life, liberty, and property safer than anywhere else? Is Spain the first nation of the world?

Let me ask another question: Are Catholics or Protestants better than Freethinkers? Has the Catholic Church produced a greater man than Humboldt? Has the Protestant produced a greater than Darwin? Was not Emerson, so far as purity of life is concerned, the equal to any true believer? Was Pius IX., or any other Vicar of Christ, superior to Abraham Lincoln?

But it is claimed that the Catholic Church is universal, and that its universality demonstrates its divine origin.

According to the Bible, the Apostles were ordered to go into all the world to preach the gospel—yet not one of them, nor one of their converts at any time, nor one of the Vicars of God, for fifteen hundred years afterward, knew of the existence of the Western Hemisphere. During all that time, can it be said that the Catholic Church was universal? At the close of the fifteenth century, there was one half of the world in which the Catholic faith had never been preached, and in the other half not one person in ten had ever heard of it, and of those who had heard of it, not one in ten believed it. Certainly the Catholic Church was not then universal.

Is it universal now? What impression has Catholicism made upon the many millions of China, of Japan, of

India, of Africa ? Can it truthfully be said that the Catholic Church is now universal ? When any church becomes universal, it will be the only church. There cannot be two universal churches, neither can there be one universal church and any other.

The Cardinal next tries to prove that the Catholic Church is divine, "by its eminent sanctity and its inexhaustible fruitfulness in all good things."

And here let me admit that there are many millions of good Catholics—that is, of good men and women who are Catholics. It is unnecessary to charge universal dishonesty or hypocrisy, for the reason that this would be only a kind of personality. Many thousands of heroes have died in defence of the faith, and millions of Catholics have killed, and been killed, for the sake of their religion.

And here it may be well enough to say that martyrdom does not even tend to prove the truth of a religion. The man who dies in flames, standing by what he believes to be true, establishes, not the truth of what he believes, but his sincerity.

Without calling in question the intentions of the Catholic Church, we can ascertain whether it has been "inexhaustibly fruitful in all good things," and whether it has been "eminent for its sanctity."

In the first place, nothing can be better than goodness. Nothing is more sacred, or can be more sacred, than the well-being of man. All things that tend to increase or preserve the happiness of the human race are good—that is to say, they are sacred. All things that tend to his unhappiness, are bad, no matter by whom they are taught or done.

It is perfectly certain that the Catholic Church has taught, and still teaches, that intellectual liberty is dangerous—that it should not be allowed. It was driven to take this position because it had taken another. It taught, and still teaches, that a certain belief is necessary to salvation. It has always known that investigation and inquiry led, or might lead, to doubt ; that doubt leads, or may lead, to heresy, and that heresy leads to hell. In other words, the Catholic Church has something more important than this world, more important than the well-

being of man here. It regards this life as an opportunity for joining that Church, for accepting that creed, and for the saving of your soul.

If the Catholic Church is right in its premises, it is right in its conclusion. If it is necessary to believe the Catholic creed in order to obtain eternal joy, then, of course, nothing else in this world is, comparatively speaking, of the slightest importance. Consequently, the Catholic Church has been, and still is, the enemy of intellectual freedom, of investigation, of inquiry—in other words, the enemy of progress in secular things.

The result of this was an effort to compel all men to accept the belief necessary to salvation. This effort naturally divided itself into persuasion and persecution.

It will be admitted that the good man is kind, merciful, charitable, forgiving, and just. A Church must be judged by the same standard. Has the Church been merciful? Has it been "fruitful in the good things" of justice, charity, and forgiveness? Can a good man, believing a good doctrine, persecute for opinion's sake? If the Church imprisons a man for the expression of an honest opinion, is it not certain, either that the doctrine of the Church is wrong or that the Church is bad? Both cannot be good. "Sanctity" without goodness is impossible. Thousands of "saints" have been the most malicious of the human race. If the history of the world proves anything, it proves that the Catholic Church was for many centuries the most merciless institution that ever existed among men. I cannot believe that the instruments of persecution were made and used by the eminently good; neither can I believe that honest people were imprisoned, tortured, and burned at the stake by a Church that was "inexhaustibly fruitful in all good things."

And let me say here that I have no Protestant prejudices against Catholicism, and have no Catholic prejudices against Protestantism. I regard all religions either without prejudice or with the same prejudice. They were all, according to my belief, devised by men, and all have for a foundation ignorance of this world and fear of the next. All the gods have been made by

men. They are all equally powerless and equally useless. I like some of them better than I do others, for the same reason that I admire some characters in fiction more than I do others. I prefer Miranda to Caliban, but have not the slightest idea that either of them existed. So I prefer Jupiter to Jehovah, although perfectly satisfied that both are myths. I believe myself to be in a frame of mind to justly and fairly consider the claims of different religions, believing as I do that all are wrong, and admitting as I do that there is some good in all.

When one speaks of the "inexhaustible fruitfulness in all good things" of the Catholic Church we remember the horrors and atrocities of the Inquisition—the rewards offered by the Roman Church for the capture and murder of honest men. We remember the Dominican Order, the members of which, upheld by the Vicar of Christ, pursued the heretics like sleuth-hounds, through many centuries.

The Church, "inexhaustible in fruitfulness in all good things," not only imprisoned and branded and burned the living, but violated the dead. It robbed graves, to the end that it might convict corpses of heresy—to the end that it might take from widows their portions and from orphans their patrimony.

We remember the millions in the darkness of dungeons—the millions who perished by the sword—the vast multitudes destroyed in flames—those who were flayed alive—those who were blinded—those whose tongues were cut out—those into whose ears were poured molten lead—those whose eyes were deprived of their lids—those who were tortured and tormented in every way by which pain could be inflicted and human nature overcome.

And we remember, too, the exultant cry of the Church over the bodies of her victims: "Their bodies were burned here, but their souls are now tortured in hell."

We remember that the Church, by treachery, bribery, perjury, and the commission of every possible crime, got possession and control of Christendom, and we know the use that was made of this power—that it was used to brutalise, degrade, stupefy, and "sanctify" the children

of men. We know also that the Vicars of Christ were persecutors for opinion's sake—that they sought to destroy the liberty of thought through fear—that they endeavored to make every brain a Bastille in which the mind should be a convict—that they endeavored to make every tongue a prisoner, watched by a familiar of the Inquisition—and that they threatened punishment here, imprisonment here, burnings here, and, in the name of their God, eternal imprisonment and eternal burnings hereafter.

We know, too, that the Catholic Church was, during all the years of its power, the enemy of every science. It preferred magic to medicine, relics to remedies, priests to physicians. It thought more of astrologers than of astronomers. It hated geologists, it persecuted the chemist, and imprisoned the naturalist, and opposed every discovery calculated to improve the condition of mankind.

It is impossible to forget the persecutions of the Cathari, the Albigenses, the Waldenses, the Hussites, the Huguenots, and of every sect that had the courage to think just a little for itself. Think of a woman—the mother of a family—taken from her children and burned, on account of her view as to the three natures of Jesus Christ. Think of the Catholic Church—an institution with a Divine Founder, presided over by the agent of God—punishing a woman for giving a cup of cold water to a fellow being who had been anathematised. Think of this Church, “fruitful in all good things,” launching its curse at an honest man—not only cursing him from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet with a fiendish particularity, but having at the same time the impudence to call on God, and the Holy Ghost, and Jesus Christ, and the Virgin Mary, to join in the curse; and to curse him not only here, but for ever hereafter; calling upon all the saints and upon all the redeemed to join in a hallelujah of curses, so that earth and heaven should reverberate with countless curses launched at a human being simply for having expressed an honest thought.

This Church, so “fruitful in all good things,” invented crimes that it might punish. This Church tried men for

a "suspicion of heresy"—imprisoned them for the vice of being suspected—stripped them of all they had on earth and allowed them to rot in dungeons, because they were guilty of the crime of having been suspected. This was a part of the Canon Law.

It is too late to talk about the "invincible stability" of the Catholic Church.

It was not invincible in the seventh, in the eighth, or in the ninth centuries. It was not invincible in Germany in Luther's day. It was not invincible in the Low Countries. It was not invincible in Scotland, or in England. It was not invincible in France. It is not invincible in Italy. It is not supreme in any intellectual centre of the world. It does not triumph in Paris, or Berlin; it is not dominant in London, in England; neither is it triumphant in the United States. It has not within its fold the philosophers, the statesmen, and the thinkers, who are the leaders of the human race.

It is claimed that Catholicism "interpenetrates all the nations of the civilised world," and that "in some it holds the whole nation in its unity."

I suppose the Catholic Church is more powerful in Spain than in any other nation. The history of this nation demonstrates the result of Catholic supremacy, the result of an acknowledgment by a people that a religion is too sacred to be examined.

Without attempting in an article of this character to point out the many causes that contributed to the adoption of Catholicism by the Spanish people, it is enough to say that Spain, of all nations, has been and is the most thoroughly Catholic, and the most thoroughly interpenetrated and dominated by the spirit of the Church of Rome.

Spain used the sword of the Church. In the name of religion it endeavoured to conquer the infidel world. It drove from its territory the Moors, not because they were bad, not because they were idle and dishonest, but because they were infidels. It expelled the Jews, not because they were ignorant or vicious, but because they were unbelievers. It drove out the Moriscoes, and

deliberately made outcasts of the intelligent, the industrious, the honest and the useful, because they were not Catholics. It leaped like a wild beast upon the Low Countries, for the destruction of Protestantism. It covered the seas with its fleets, to destroy the intellectual liberty of man. And not only so—it established the Inquisition within its borders. It imprisoned the honest, it burned the noble, and succeeded after many years of devotion to the true faith, in destroying the industry, the intelligence, the usefulness, the genius, the nobility and the wealth of a nation. It became a wreck, a jest of the conquered, and excited the pity of its former victims.

In this period of degradation, the Catholic Church held "the whole nation in its unity."

At last Spain began to deviate from the path of the Church. It made a treaty with an infidel power. In 1782 it became humble enough, and wise enough, to be friends with Turkey. It made treaties with Tripoli and Algiers and the Barbary States. It had become too poor to ransom the prisoners taken by these powers. It began to appreciate the fact that it could neither conquer nor convert the world by the sword.

Spain has progressed in the arts and sciences, in all that tends to enrich and ennoble a nation, in the precise proportion that she has lost faith in the Catholic Church. This may be said of every other nation in Christendom. Torquemada is dead; Castelar is alive. The dungeons of the Inquisition are empty, and a little light has penetrated the clouds and mists—not much, but a little. Spain is not yet clothed and in her right mind. A few years ago the cholera visited Madrid and other cities. Physicians were mobbed. Processions of saints carried the host through the streets for the purpose of staying the plague. The streets were not cleaned; the sewers were filled. Filth and faith, old partners, reigned supreme. The Church, "eminent for its sanctity," stood in the light and cast its shadow on the ignorant and the prostrate. The Church, in its "inexhaustible fruitfulness in all good things," allowed its children to perish through ignorance, and used the

diseases it had produced as an instrument to further enslave its votaries and its victims.

No one will deny that many of its priests exhibited heroism of the highest order in visiting the sick and administering what are called the consolations of religion to the dying, and in burying the dead. It is necessary neither to deny nor disparage the self-denial and goodness of these men. But their religion did more than all other causes to produce the very evils that called for the exhibition of self-denial and heroism. One scientist in control of Madrid could have prevented the plague. In such cases, cleanliness is far better than "godliness"; science is superior to superstition; drainage much better than divinity; therapeutics more excellent than theology. Goodness is not enough—intelligence is necessary. Faith is not sufficient, creeds are helpless, and prayers fruitless.

It is admitted that the Catholic Church exists in many nations; that it is dominated, at least in a great degree, by the Bishop of Rome—that it is international in that sense, and that in that sense it has what may be called a "supernational unity." The same, however, is true of the Masonic fraternity. It exists in many nations, but it is not a national body. It is in the same sense extra-national, in the same sense international, and has in the same sense a supernational unity. So the same may be said of other societies. This, however, does not tend to prove that anything supernational is supernatural.

It is also admitted that in faith, worship, ceremonial, discipline and government, the Catholic Church is substantially the same wherever it exists. This establishes the unity, but not the divinity of the institution.

The church that does not allow investigation, that teaches that all doubts are wicked, attains unity through tyranny—that is, monotony by repression. Wherever man has had something like freedom, differences have appeared, heresies have taken root, and the divisions have become permanent. New sects have been born, and the Catholic Church has been weakened. The boast of unity is the confession of tyranny.

It is insisted that the unity of the Church substantiates its claim to divine origin. This is asserted over and over

again, in many ways ; and yet in the Cardinal's article is found this strange mingling of boast and confession : " Was it only by the human power of man that the unity, external and internal, which for fourteen hundred years had been supreme, was once more restored in the Council of Constance, never to be broken again ? "

By this it is admitted that the internal and external unity of the Catholic Church has been broken, and that it required more than human power to restore it. Then the boast is made that it will never be broken again. Yet it is asserted that the internal and external unity of the Catholic Church is the great fact that demonstrates its divine origin.

Now if this internal and external unity was broken, and remained broken for years, there was an interval during which the Church had no internal or external unity, and during which the evidence of divine origin failed. The unity was broken in spite of the Divine Founder. This is admitted by the use of the word " again. " The unbroken unity of the Church is asserted, and upon this assertion is based the claim of divine origin ; it is then admitted that the unity was broken. The argument is then shifted, and the claim is made that it required more than human power to restore the internal and external unity of the Church, and that the restoration, not the unity, is proof of the divine origin. Is there any contradiction beyond this ?

Let us state the case in another way. Let us suppose that a man has a sword which he claims was made by God, stating that the reason he knows that God made the sword is that it never had been, and never could be, broken. Now if it was afterwards ascertained that it had been broken, and the owner admitted that it had been, what would be thought of him if he then took the ground that it had been welded, and that the welding was the evidence that it was of divine origin ?

A prophecy is then indulged in, to the effect that the internal and external unity of the Church can never be broken again. It is admitted that it was broken, it is asserted that it was divinely restored, and then it is declared that it is never to be broken again. No reason

is given for this prophecy ; it must be born of the facts already stated. Put in a form to be easily understood, it is this :—

We know that the unity of the Church can never be broken, because the Church is of divine origin.

We know that it was broken ; but this does not weaken the argument, because it was restored by God, and it has not been broken since.

Therefore, it never can be broken again.

It is stated that the Catholic Church is immutable, and that its immutability establishes its claim to divine origin. Was it immutable when its unity, internal and external, was broken ? Was it precisely the same after its unity was broken that it was before ? Was it precisely the same after its unity was divinely restored that it was while broken ? Was it universal while it was without unity ? Which of the fragments was universal—which was immutable ?

The fact that the Catholic Church is obedient to the Pope, establishes, not the supernatural origin of the Church, but the mental slavery of its members. It establishes the fact that it is a successful organisation ; that it is cunningly devised ; that it destroys the mental independence, and that whoever absolutely submits to its authority loses the jewel of his soul.

The fact that Catholics are, to a great extent, obedient to the Pope, establishes nothing except the thoroughness of the organisation.

How was the Roman Empire formed ? By what means did that great Power hold in bondage the then known world ? How is it that a despotism is established ? How is it that the few enslave the many ? How is it that the nobility live on the labor of the peasants ? The answer is in one word—Organisation. The organised few triumph over the unorganised many. The few hold the sword and the purse. The unorganised are overcome in detail—terrorised, brutalised, robbed, conquered.

We must remember that when Christianity was established the world was ignorant, credulous, and cruel. The Gospel, with its idea of forgiveness, with its heaven and hell, was suited to the barbarians among whom it

was preached. Let it be understood, once for all, that Christ had but little to do with Christianity. The people became convinced—being ignorant, stupid, and credulous—that the Church held the keys of heaven and hell. The foundation for the most terrible mental tyranny that has existed among men was in this way laid. The Catholic Church enslaved to the extent of its power. It resorted to every possible form of fraud; it perverted every good instinct of the human heart; it rewarded every vice; it resorted to every artifice that ingenuity could devise, to reach the highest round of power. It tortured the accused to make them confess; it tortured witnesses to compel the commission of perjury; it tortured children for the purpose of making them convict their parents; it compelled men to establish their own innocence; it imprisoned without limit; it had the malicious patience to wait; it left the accused without trial, and left them in dungeons until released by death. There is no crime that the Catholic Church did not commit, no cruelty that it did not practise, no form of treachery that it did not reward, and no virtue that it did not persecute. It was the greatest and most powerful enemy of human rights. It did all that organisation; cunning, piety, self-denial, heroism, treachery, zeal, and brute force could do to enslave the children of men. It was the enemy of intelligence, the assassin of liberty, and the destroyer of progress. It loaded the noble with chains and the infamous with honors. In one hand it carried the alms-dish, in the other a dagger. It argued with the sword, persuaded with poison, and convinced with the faggot.

It is impossible to see how the divine origin of a Church can be established by showing that hundreds of bishops have visited the Pope.

Does the fact that millions of faithful visit Mecca establish the truth of the Koran? Is it a scene for congratulation when the bishops of thirty nations kneel before a man? Is it not humiliating to know that man is willing to kneel at the feet of man? Could a noble man demand, or joyfully receive, the humiliation of his fellows?

As a rule, arrogance and humility go together. He who in power compels his fellow-man to kneel, will himself kneel when weak. The tyrant is a cringer in power; a cringer is a tyrant out of power. Great men stand face to face. They meet on equal terms. The cardinal who kneels in the presence of the Pope wants the bishop to kneel in his presence; and the bishop who kneels demands that the priest shall kneel to him; and the priest who kneels demands that they in lower orders shall kneel; and all, from Pope to the lowest—that is to say, from Pope to exorcist, from Pope to the one in charge of the bones of saints—all demand that the people, the laymen, those upon whom they live, shall kneel to them.

The man of free and noble spirit will not kneel. Courage has no knees. Fear kneels, or falls upon its ashen face.

The Cardinal insists that the Pope is the Vicar of Christ, and that all Popes have been. What is a Vicar of Jesus Christ? He is a substitute in office. He stands in the place, or occupies the position in relation to the Church, in relation to the world, that Jesus Christ would occupy were he the Pope at Rome. In other words, he takes Christ's place; so that, according to the doctrine of the Catholic Church, Jesus Christ himself is present in the person of the Pope.

We all know that a good man may employ a bad agent. A good king might leave his realm and put in his place a tyrant and a wretch. The good man and the good king cannot certainly know what manner of man the agent is—what kind of person the vicar is; consequently the bad may be chosen. But if the king appointed a bad vicar, knowing him to be bad, knowing that he would oppress the people, knowing that he would imprison and burn the noble and generous, what excuse can be imagined for such a king?

Now, if the Church is of divine origin, and if each Pope is the Vicar of Jesus Christ, he must have been chosen by Jesus Christ; and when he was chosen Christ must have known exactly what his Vicar would do. Can we believe that an infinitely wise and good

Being would choose immoral, dishonest, ignorant, malicious, heartless, fiendish, and inhuman Vicars ?

The Cardinal admits that "the history of Christianity is the history of the Church, and that the history of the Church is the history of the Pontiffs," and he then declares that "the greatest statesmen and rulers that the world has ever seen are the Popes of Rome."

Let me call attention to a few passages in Draper's *History of the Intellectual Development of Europe*.

"Constantine was one of the Vicars of Christ. Afterwards, Stephen IV. was chosen. The eyes of Constantine were then put out by Stephen, acting in Christ's place. The tongue of the Bishop Theodorus was amputated by the man who had been substituted for God. This bishop was left in a dungeon to perish of thirst. Pope Leo III. was seized in the street and forced into a church, where the nephews of Pope Adrian attempted to put out his eyes and cut off his tongue. His successor, Stephen V., was driven ignominiously from Rome. His successor, Paschal I., was accused of blinding and murdering two ecclesiastics in the Lateran Palace. John VIII., unable to resist the Mohammedans, was compelled to pay them tribute.

"At this time, the Bishop of Naples was in secret alliance with the Mohammedans, and they divided with this Catholic bishop the plunder they collected from other Catholics. This bishop was excommunicated by the Pope; afterwards he gave him absolution because he betrayed the chief Mohammedans, and assassinated others. There was an ecclesiastical conspiracy to murder the Pope, and some of the treasures of the Church were seized, and the gate of St. Pancrazia was opened with false keys to admit the Saracens. Formosus, who had been engaged in these transactions, who had been excommunicated as a conspirator for the murder of Pope John, was himself elected Pope in 891. Boniface VI. was his successor. He had been deposed from the diaconate and from the priesthood for his immoral and lewd life. Stephen VII. was the next Pope, and he had the dead body of Formosus taken from the grave, clothed in papal habiliments, propped up in a chair and tried before a Council. The corpse was found guilty, three fingers were cut off, and the body cast into the Tiber. Afterwards Stephen VII., this Vicar of Christ, was thrown into prison and strangled.

"From 896 to 900, five popes were consecrated. Leo V., in less than two months after he became Pope, was cast into prison by Christopher, one of his chaplains. This Christopher usurped his place, and in a little while was expelled from Rome by Sergius III., who became Pope in 905. This Pope lived in criminal intercourse with the celebrated Theodora, who with her daughters Marozia and Theodora, both prostitutes, exercised an extraordinary control over him. The love of Theodora was also shared by John X. She gave him the Archbishopric of Ravenna, and made him Pope in 915. The daughter of Theodora overthrew this Pope. She surprised him in the Lateran Palace. His brother, Peter, was killed; the Pope was thrown into prison, where he was afterwards murdered. Afterward, this Marozia, daughter of Theodora, made her own son Pope, John XI. Many affirmed that Pope Sergius was his father, but his mother inclined to attribute him to her husband Alberic, whose brother Guido she afterwards married. Another of her sons, Alberic, jealous of his brother, John the Pope, cast him and their mother into prison. Alberic's son was then elected Pope as John XII.

"John was nineteen years old when he became the Vicar of Christ. His reign was characterised by the most shocking immoralities, so that the Emperor Otho I. was compelled by the German clergy to interfere. He was tried. It appeared that John had received bribes for the consecration of bishops; that he had ordained one who was only ten years old; that he was charged with incest, and with so many adulteries that the Lateran Palace had become a brothel. He put out the eyes of one ecclesiastic; he maimed another—both dying in consequence of their injuries. He was given to drunkenness and to gambling. He was deposed at last, and Leo VII. elected in his stead. Subsequently he got the upper hand. He seized his antagonists; he cut off the hand of one, the nose, the finger, and the tongue of others. His life was eventually brought to an end by the vengeance of a man whose wife he had seduced."

And yet, I admit that the most infamous Popes, the most heartless and fiendish bishops, friars, and priests were models of mercy, charity, and justice when compared with the orthodox God—with the God they worshipped. These popes, these bishops, these priests could persecute only for a few years—they could burn only for

a few moments—but their God threatened to imprison and burn for ever; and their God is as much worse than they were, as hell is worse than the Inquisition.

“John XIII. was strangled in prison. Boniface VII. imprisoned Benedict VII., and starved him to death. John XIV. was secretly put to death in the dungeons of the castle of St. Angelo. The corpse of Boniface was dragged by the populace through the streets.”

It must be remembered that the popes were assassinated by Catholics—murdered by the faithful; that one Vicar of Christ strangled another Vicar of Christ, and that these men were “the greatest rulers and the greatest statesmen of the earth.”

“Pope John XVI. was seized, his eyes put out, his nose cut off, his tongue torn from his mouth, and he was sent through the streets mounted on an ass, with his face to the tail. Benedict IX., a boy of less than twelve years of age, was raised to the apostolic throne. One of his successors, Victor III., declared that the life of Benedict was so shameful, so foul, so execrable, that he shuddered to describe it. He ruled like a captain of banditti. The people, unable to bear longer his adulteries, his homicides and his abominations, rose against him, and in despair of maintaining his position, he put up his papacy to auction, and it was bought by a Presbyter named John, who became Gregory VI., in the year of grace 1045. Well may we ask, Were these the Vicegerents of God upon earth—these, who had truly reached that goal beyond which the last effort of human wickedness cannot pass?”

It may be sufficient to say that there is no crime that man can commit that has not been committed by the Vicars of Christ. They have inflicted every possible torture, violated every natural right. Greater monsters the human race has not produced.

Among the “some two hundred and fifty-eight” Vicars of Christ there were probably some good men. This would have happened even if the intention had been to get all bad men, for the reason that man reaches perfection neither in good nor in evil; but if they were selected by Christ himself, if they were selected by a Church with a divine origin and under divine guidance, then there is no way to account for the selection of a

bad one. If one hypocrite was duly elected Pope—one murderer, one strangler, one starver—this demonstrates that all the Popes were selected by men, and by men only, that the claim of divine guidance is born of zeal and uttered without knowledge.

But who were the Vicars of Christ? How many have there been? Cardinal Manning himself does not know. He is not sure. He says: "Starting from St. Peter to Leo. XIII., there have been *some* two hundred and fifty-eight Pontiffs claiming to be recognised by the whole Catholic unity as successors of St. Peter and Vicars of Jesus Christ." Why did he use the word "some"? Why "claiming"? Does he positively know? Is it possible that the present Vicar of Christ is not certain as to the number of his predecessors? Is he infallible in faith and fallible in fact?

PART II.

"If we live thus tamely—
To be thus jaded by a piece of scarlet—
Farewell nobility."

No one will deny that "the Pope speaks to many people in many nations; that he treats with empires and governments," and that "neither from Canterbury nor from Constantinople such a voice goes forth."

How does the Pope speak? What does he say?

He speaks against the liberty of man—against the progress of the human race. He speaks to calumniate thinkers, and to warn the faithful against the discoveries of science. He speaks for the destruction of civilisation.

Who listens? Do astronomers, geologists, and scientists put the hand to the ear, fearing that an accent

may be lost? Does France listen? Does Italy hear? Is not the Church weakest at its centre? Do those who have raised Italy from the dead, and placed her again among the great nations, pay attention? Does Great Britain care for this voice—this moan, this groan—of the Middle Ages? Do the words of Leo XIII. impress the intelligence of the Great Republic? Can anything be more absurd than for the Vicar of Christ to attack a demonstration of science with a passage of Scripture, or a quotation from one of the "Fathers"?

Compare the popes with the kings and queens of England. Infinite wisdom had but little to do with the selection of these monarchs, and yet they were far better than any equal number of consecutive popes. This is faint praise, even for kings and queens; but it shows that chance succeeded in getting better rulers for England than "Infinite Wisdom" did for the Church of Rome. Compare the popes with the presidents of the Republic elected by the people. If Adams had murdered Washington, and Jefferson had imprisoned Adams, and if Madison had cut out Jefferson's tongue, and Monroe had assassinated Madison, and John Quincy Adams had poisoned Monroe, and General Jackson had hung Adams and his Cabinet, we might say that presidents had been as virtuous as popes. But if this had happened the verdict of the world would be that the people are not capable of selecting their presidents.

But this voice from Rome is growing feeble day by day; so feeble that the Cardinal admits that the Vicar of God and the supernatural Church "are being tormented by Falck laws, by Mancini laws, and by Crispi laws." In other words, this representative of God, this substitute of Christ, this Church of divine origin, this supernatural institution—pervaded by the Holy Ghost—are being "tormented" by three politicians. Is it possible that this patriotic trinity is more powerful than the other?

It is claimed that if the Catholic Church "be only a human system, built up by the intellect, will, and energy of men, the adversaries must prove it—that the burden is upon them."

As a general thing, institutions are natural. If this Church is supernatural, it is the one exception. The affirmative is with those who claim that it is of divine origin. So far as we know, all governments and all creeds are the work of man. No one believes that Rome was a supernatural production, and yet its beginnings were as small as those of the Catholic Church. Commencing in weakness, Rome grew, and fought, and conquered, until it was believed that the sky bent above a subjugated world. And yet all was natural. For every effect there was an efficient cause.

The Catholic asserts that all other religions have been produced by man—that Brahminism and Buddhism, the religion of Isis and Osiris, the marvellous mythologies of Greece and Rome, were the work of the human mind. From these religions Catholicism has borrowed. Long before Catholicism was born it was believed that women had borne children whose fathers were gods. The Trinity was promulgated in Egypt centuries before the birth of Moses. Celibacy was taught by the ancient Nazarenes and Essenes, by the priests of Egypt and India, by mendicant monks, and by the piously insane of many countries long before the Apostles lived. The Chinese tell us that "when there were but one man and one woman upon the earth, the woman refused to sacrifice her virginity even to people the globe; and the gods, honoring her purity, granted that she should conceive beneath the gaze of her lover's eyes, and a virgin mother became the parent of humanity."

The founders of many religions have insisted that it was the duty of man to renounce the pleasures of sense, and millions before our era took the vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience, and most cheerfully lived upon the labor of others.

The sacraments of baptism and confirmation are far older than the Church of Rome. The Eucharist is Pagan. Long before Popes began to murder each other, Pagans ate cakes—the flesh of Ceres, and drank wine—the blood of Bacchus. Holy water flowed in the Ganges and Nile, priests interceded for the people, and anointed the dying.

It will not do to say that every successful religion that

has taught unnatural doctrines, unnatural practices, must of necessity have been of divine origin. In most religions there has been a strange mingling of the good and bad, of the merciful and cruel, of the loving and malicious. Buddhism taught the universal brotherhood of man, insisted on the development of the mind; and this religion was propagated, not by the sword, but by preaching, by persuasion, and kindness; yet in many things it was contrary to the human will, contrary to the human passions, and contrary to good sense. Buddhism succeeded. Can we, for this reason, say that it is a supernatural religion? Is the unnatural the supernatural?

It is insisted that, while other Churches have changed, the Catholic Church alone has remained the same, and that this fact demonstrates its divine origin.

Has the creed of Buddhism changed in three thousand years? Is intellectual stagnation a demonstration of divine origin? When anything refuses to grow, are we certain that the seed was planted by God? If the Catholic Church is the same to-day that it has been for many centuries, this proves that there has been no intellectual development. If men do not differ upon religious subjects, it is because they do not think.

Differentiation is the law of growth, of progress. Every Church must gain or lose; it cannot remain the same; it must decay or grow. The fact that the Catholic Church has not grown—that it has been petrified from the first—does not establish divine origin; it simply establishes the fact that it retards the progress of man. Everything in nature changes; every atom is in motion; every star moves. Nations, institutions, and individuals have youth, manhood, old age, death. This is, and will be, true of the Catholic Church. It was once weak; it grew stronger; it reached its climax of power; it began to decay; it can never rise again. It is confronted by the dawn of Science. In the presence of the nineteenth century it cowers.

It is not true that "All natural causes run to disintegration."

Natural causes run to integration as well as to disintegration. All growth is integration, and all growth is natural. All decay is disintegration, and all decay is

natural. Nature builds and nature destroys. When the acorn grows—when the sunlight and rain fall upon it, and the oak rises—so far as the oak is concerned “all natural causes” do not “run to disintegration.” But there comes a time when the oak has reached its limit, and then the forces of nature run towards disintegration, and finally the old oak falls. But if the Cardinal is right, if “all natural causes run to disintegration,” then every success must have been of divine origin, and nothing is natural but destruction. This is Catholic science: “All natural causes run to disintegration.” What do these causes find to disintegrate? Nothing that is natural. The fact that the thing is not disintegrated shows that it was, and is, of supernatural origin. According to the Cardinal, the only business of nature is to disintegrate the supernatural. To prevent this, the supernatural needs the protection of the Infinite. According to this doctrine, if anything lives and grows, it does so in spite of nature. Growth, then, is not in accordance with, but in opposition to, nature. Every plant is supernatural—it defeats the disintegrating influences of rain and light. The generalisation of the Cardinal is half the truth. It would be equally true to say: All natural causes run to integration.” But the whole truth is that growth and decay are equal.

The Cardinal asserts that “Christendom was created by the world-wide Church as we see it before our eyes at this day. Philosophers and statesmen believe it to be the work of their own hands; they did not make it, but they have for three hundred years been unmaking it by reformations and revolutions.”

The meaning of this is that Christendom was far better three hundred years ago than now; that during these three centuries Christendom has been going towards barbarism. It means that the supernatural Church of God has been a failure for three hundred years; that it has been unable to withstand the attacks of philosophers and statesmen, and that it has been helpless in the midst of “reformations and revolutions.”

What was the condition of the world three hundred years ago, the period, according to the Cardinal, in which the Church reached the height of its influence and since

which it has been unable to withstand the rising tide of reformation and the whirlwind of revolution?

In that blessed time Phillip II. was King of Spain—he with the cramped head and the monstrous jaw. Heretics were hunted like wild and poisonous beasts; the Inquisition was firmly established, and priests were busy with rack and fire. With a zeal born of the hatred of man and the love of God, the Church with every instrument of torture, touched every nerve in the human body.

In those happy days the Duke of Alva was devastating the homes of Holland; heretics were buried alive; their tongues were torn from their mouths, their lids from their eyes; the Armada was on the sea for the destruction of the heretics of England, and the Moriscoes, a million and a half of industrious people, were being driven by sword and flame from their homes. The Jews had been expelled from Spain. This Catholic country had succeeded in driving intelligence and industry from its territory; and this had been done with a cruelty, with a ferocity, unequalled in the annals of crime. Nothing was left but ignorance, bigotry, intolerance, credulity, the Inquisition, the seven sacraments and the seven deadly sins. And yet a Cardinal of the nineteenth century, living in the land of Shakespeare, regrets the change that has been wrought by the intellectual efforts, by the discoveries, by the inventions and heroism of three hundred years.

Three hundred years ago, under Charles IX., in France, son of Catherine de Medici, in the year of grace 1572—after nearly sixteen centuries of Catholic Christianity—after hundreds of vicars of Christ had sat in St. Peter's chair—after the natural passions of man had been "softened" by the creed of Rome—came the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, the result of a conspiracy between the Vicar of Christ, Philip II., Charles IX., and his fiendish mother. Let the Cardinal read the account of this massacre once more, and after reading it, imagine that he sees the gashed and mutilated bodies of thousands of men and women, and then let him say that he regrets the revolutions and reformations of three hundred years.

About three hundred years ago Clement VIII., Vicar of Christ, acting in God's place, substitute of the

Infinite, persecuted Giordano Bruno even unto death. This great, this sublime man, was tried for heresy. He had ventured to assert the rotary motion of the earth ; he had hazarded the conjecture that there were in the fields of infinite space worlds larger and more glorious than ours. For these low and groveling thoughts, for this contradiction of the word and Vicar of God, this man was imprisoned for many years. But his noble spirit was not broken, and finally in the year 1600, by the orders of the infamous Vicar, he was chained to the stake. Priests believing in the doctrine of universal forgiveness ; priests who when smitten upon one cheek turned the other ; carried with a kind of ferocious joy faggots to the feet of this incomparable man. These disciples of "Our Lord" were made joyous as the flames, like serpents, climbed around the body of Bruno. In a few moments the brave thinker was dead, and the priests who had burned him fell upon their knees and asked the infinite God to continue the blessed work for ever in hell.

There are two things that cannot exist in the same universe—an infinite God and a martyr.

Does the Cardinal regret that kings and emperors are not now engaged in the extermination of Protestants ? Does he regret that dungeons of the Inquisition are no longer crowded with the best and bravest ? Does he long for the fires of the *auto da fé* ?

In coming to a conclusion as to the origin of the Catholic Church ; in determining the truth of the claim of infallibility, we are not restricted to the physical achievements of that Church, or to the history of its propagation, or to the rapidity of its growth.

This Church has a creed ; and if this Church is of divine origin ; if its head is the Vicar of Christ, and, as such, infallible in matters of faith and morals, this creed must be true. Let us start with the supposition that God exists, and that he is infinitely wise, powerful and good—and this is only a supposition. Now, if the creed is foolish, absurd and cruel, it cannot be of divine origin. We find in this creed the following :

"Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic faith."

It is not necessary, before all things, that he be good, honest, merciful, charitable and just. Creed is more important than conduct. The most important of all things is, that he hold the Catholic faith. There were thousands of years during which it was not necessary to hold that faith, because that faith did not exist; and yet during that time the virtues were just as important as now, just as important as they ever can be. Millions of the noblest of the human race never heard of this creed. Millions of the bravest and best have heard of it, examined, and rejected it. Millions of the most infamous have believed it, and because of their belief, or notwithstanding their belief, have murdered millions of their fellows. We know that men can be, have been, and are just as wicked with it as without it. We know that it is not necessary to believe it to be good, loving, tender, noble, and self-denying. We admit that millions who have believed it have also been self-denying and heroic, and that millions, by such belief, were not prevented from torturing and destroying the helpless.

Now if all who believed it were good, and all who rejected it were bad, then there might be some propriety in saying that "whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic faith." But as the experience of mankind is otherwise, the declaration becomes absurd, ignorant and cruel.

There is still another clause :

"Which faith, except everyone do keep entire and inviolate, without doubt he shall everlastingly perish."

We now have both sides of this wonderful truth: The believer will be saved, the unbeliever will be lost. We know that faith is not the child or servant of the will. We know that belief is a conclusion based upon what the mind supposes to be true. We know that it is not an act of the will. Nothing can be more absurd than to save a man because he is not intelligent enough to accept the truth, and nothing can be more infamous than to damn a man because he is intelligent enough to reject the false. It resolves itself into a question of intelligence. If the creed is true, then a man rejects it because he lacks intelligence. Is this a crime for which

a man should everlastingly perish? If the creed is false, then a man accepts it because he lacks intelligence. In both cases the crime is exactly the same. If a man is to be damned for rejecting the truth, certainly he should not be saved for accepting the false. This one clause demonstrates that a being of infinite wisdom and goodness did not write it. It also demonstrates that it was the work of men who had neither wisdom nor a sense of justice.

What is this Catholic faith that must be held? It is this:

“That we worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity, neither confounding the persons nor dividing the substance.”

Why should an Infinite Being demand worship? Why should one God wish to be worshipped as three? Why should three Gods wish to be worshipped as one? Why should we pray to one God and think of three, or pray to three Gods and think of one? Can this increase the happiness of the one or of the three? Is it possible to think of one as three, or of three as one? If you think of three as one, can you think of one as none, or of none as one? When you think of three as one, what do you do with the other two? You must not “confound the persons”—they must be kept separate. When you think of one as three, how do you get the other two? You must not “divide the substance.” Is it possible to write greater contradictions than these?

This creed demonstrates the human origin of the Catholic Church. Nothing could be more unjust than to punish man for unbelief—for the expression of honest thought—for having been guided by his reason—for having acted in accordance with his best judgment.

Another claim is made, to the effect “that the Catholic Church has filled the world with the true knowledge of the one true God, and that it has destroyed all idols by light instead of by fire.”

The Catholic Church described the true God as a being who would inflict eternal pain on his weak and erring children; described him as a fickle, quick-tempered, unreasonable deity, whom honesty enraged, and whom flattery governed; one who loved to see fear upon its

knees, ignorance with closed eyes and open mouth ; one who delighted in useless self-denial, who loved to hear the sighs and sobs of suffering nuns, as they lay prostrate on dungeon floors ; one who was delighted when the husband deserted his family and lived alone in some cave in the far wilderness, tormented by dreams and driven to insanity by prayer and penance, by fasting and faith.

According to the Catholic Church, the true God enjoyed the agonies of heretics. He loved the smell of their burning flesh ; he applauded with wide palms when philosophers were flayed alive, and to him the *auto da fé* was a divine comedy. The shrieks of wives, the cries of babes, when fathers were being burned, gave contrast, heightened the effect, and filled his cup with joy. This true God did not know the shape of the earth he had made, and had forgotten the orbits of the stars. "The stream of light which descended from the beginning" was propagated by faggot to faggot, until Christendom was filled with the devouring fires of faith.

It may also be said that the Catholic Church filled the world with the true knowledge of the one true Devil. It filled the air with malicious phantoms, crowded innocent sleep with leering fiends, and gave the world to the domination of witches and wizards, spirits and spooks, goblins and ghosts, and butchered and burned thousands for the commission of impossible crimes.

It is contended that : "In this true knowledge of the Divine Nature was revealed to men their own relation to a Creator as sons to a Father."

This tender relation was revealed by the Catholics to the Pagans, the Arians, the Cathari, the Waldenses, the Albigenses, the heretics, the Jews, the Moriscoes, the Protestants—to the natives of the West Indies, of Mexico, of Peru—to philosophers, patriots, and thinkers. All these victims were taught to regard the true God as a loving Father, and this lesson was taught with every instrument of torture—with branding and burnings, with flayings and flames. The world was filled with cruelty and credulity, ignorance and intolerance, and the soil in which all these horrors grew was the true knowledge of the one true God, and the true knowledge of the one true Devil. And yet we are compelled to say

that the one true Devil described by the Catholic Church was not as malevolent as the one true God.

Is it true that the Catholic Church overthrew idolatry? What is idolatry? What shall we say of the worship of popes, of the doctrine of the Real Presence, of divine honors paid to saints, of sacred vestments, of holy water, of consecrated cups and plates, of images and relics, of amulets and charms?

The Catholic Church filled the world with the spirit of idolatry. It abandoned the idea of continuity in nature, it denied the integrity of cause and effect. The government of the world was the composite result of the caprice of God, the malice of Satan, the prayers of the faithful—softened, it may be, by the charity of Chance. Yet the Cardinal asserts, without the preface of a smile, that "Demonology was overthrown by the Church, with the assistance of forces that were above nature"; and in the same breath gives birth to this enlightened statement: "Beelzebub is not divided against himself." Is a belief in Beelzebub a belief in demonology? Has the Cardinal forgotten the Council of Nice, held in the year of grace 787, that declared the worship of images to be lawful? Did that infallible Council, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, destroy idolatry?

The Cardinal takes the ground that marriage is a sacrament, and therefore indissoluble, and he also insists that celibacy is far better than marriage—holier than a sacrament—that marriage is not the highest state, but that "the state of virginity unto death is the highest condition of man and woman."

The highest ideal of a family is where all are equal—where love has superseded authority—where each seeks the good of all, and where none obey—where no religion can sunder hearts, and with which no church can interfere.

The real marriage is based on mutual affection—the ceremony is but the outward evidence of the inward flame. To this contract there are but two parties. The Church is an impudent intruder. Marriage is made public to the end that the real contract may be known, so that the world can see that the parties have been actuated by the highest and holiest motives that find

expression in the acts of human beings. The man and woman are not joined together by God, or by the Church, or by the State. The Church and State may prescribe certain ceremonies, certain formalities; but all these are only evidence of the existence of a sacred fact in the hearts of the wedded. The indissolubility of marriage is a dogma that has filled the lives of millions with agony and tears. It has given a perpetual excuse for vice and immorality. Fear has borne children begotten by brutality. Countless women have endured the insults, indignities and cruelties of fiendish husbands, because they thought that it was the will of God. The contract of marriage is the most important that human beings can make; but no contract can be so important as to release one of the parties from the obligation of performance; and no contract, whether made between man and woman, or between them and God, after a failure of consideration caused by the wilful act of the man or woman, can hold and bind the innocent and honest.

Do the believers in indissoluble marriage treat their wives better than others? A little while ago a woman said to a man who had raised his hand to strike her, "Do not touch me; you have no right to beat me; I am not your wife."

About a year ago a husband, whom God in his infinite wisdom had joined to a loving and patient woman in the indissoluble sacrament of marriage, becoming enraged, seized the helpless wife and tore out one of her eyes. She forgave him. A few weeks ago he deliberately repeated this frightful crime, leaving his victim totally blind. Would it not have been better if man, before the poor woman was blinded, had put asunder whom God had joined together? Thousands of husbands, who insist that marriage is indissoluble, are beaters of wives.

The law of the Church has created neither the purity nor the peace of domestic life. Back of all Churches is human affection. Back of all theologies is the love of the human heart. Back of all your priests and creeds is the adoration of the one woman by the one man, and of the one man by the one woman. Back of your faith is the fireside, back of your folly is the family; and

back of all your holy mistakes and your sacred absurdities is the love of husband and wife, and of parent and child.

It is not true that neither the Greek nor the Roman world had any true conception of a home. The splendid story of Ulysses and Penelope, the parting of Hector and Andromache, demonstrate that a true conception of home existed among the Greeks. Before the establishment of Christianity the Roman matron commanded the admiration of the then known world. She was free and noble. The Church degraded woman, made her the property of the husband, and trampled her beneath its brutal feet. The "fathers" denounced woman as a perpetual temptation, as the cause of all evil. The Church worshipped a God who had upheld polygamy, and had pronounced his curse on woman, and had declared that she should be the serf of the husband. This Church followed the teachings of St. Paul. It taught the uncleanness of marriage, and insisted that all children were conceived in sin. This Church pretended to have been founded by one who offered a reward in this world, and eternal joy in the next, to husbands who would forsake their wives and children and follow him. Did this tend to the elevation of woman? Did this detestable doctrine "create the purity and peace of domestic life?" Is it true that a monk is purer than a good and noble father? that a nun is holier than a loving mother?

Is there anything deeper and stronger than a mother's love? Is there anything purer, holier than a mother holding her dimpled babe against her billowed breast?

The good man is useful, the best man is the most useful. Those who fill the nights with barren prayers and holy hunger, torture themselves for their own good and not for the benefit of others. They are earning eternal glory for themselves; they do not fast for their fellow-men, their selfishness is only equalled by their foolishness. Compare the monk in his selfish cell, counting beads and saying prayers for the purpose of saving his barren soul, with a husband and father sitting by his fireside with wife and children. Compare the nun with the mother and her babe.

Celibacy is the essence of vulgarity. It tries to put a stain upon motherhood, upon marriage, upon love—that is to say, upon all that is holiest in the human heart. Take love from the world, and there is nothing left worth living for. The Church has treated this great, this sublime, this unspeakably holy passion, as though it polluted the heart. They have placed the love of God above the love of woman, above the love of man. Human love is generous and noble. The love of God is selfish, because man does not love God for God's sake but for his own.

Yet the Cardinal asserts "that the change wrought by Christianity in the social, political, and international relations of the world—the root of this ethical change, private and public, is the Christian home." A moment afterwards, this prelate insists that celibacy is far better than marriage. If the world could be induced to live in accordance with the "highest state," this generation would be the last. Why were men and women created? Why did not the Catholic God commence with the sinless and sexless? The Cardinal ought to take the ground that to talk well is good, but that to be dumb is the highest condition; that hearing is a pleasure, but that deafness is ecstasy; and that to think, to reason, is very well, but that to be a Catholic is far better.

Why should we desire the destruction of human passions? Take passions from human beings, and what is left? The great object should be, not to destroy passions, but to make them obedient to the intellect. To indulge passion to the utmost is one form of intemperance, to destroy passion is another. The reasonable gratification of passion under the domination of the intellect is true wisdom and perfect virtue.

The goodness, the sympathy, the self-denial of the nun, of the monk, all come from the mother instinct, the father instinct; all were produced by human affection—by the love of man for woman, of woman for man. Love is a transfiguration. It ennobles, purifies, and glorifies. In true marriage two hearts burst into flower. Two lives unite. They melt in music. Every moment is a

melody. Love is a revelation, a creation. From love the world borrows its beauty and the heavens their glory. Justice, self-denial, charity, and pity are the children of love. Lover, wife, mother, husband, father, child, home—these words shed light; they are the gems of human speech. Without love all glory fades, the noble falls from life, art dies, music loses meaning and becomes mere motions of the air, and virtue ceases to exist.

It is asserted that this life of celibacy is above and against the tendencies of human nature; and the Cardinal then asks: "Who will ascribe this to natural causes, and, if so, why did it not appear in the first four thousand years?"

If there is in a system of religion a doctrine, a dogma, or a practice against the tendencies of human nature—if this religion succeeds, then it is claimed by the Cardinal that such religion must be of divine origin. Is it "against the tendencies of human nature" for a mother to throw her child into the Ganges to please a supposed god? Yet a religion that insisted on that sacrifice succeeded, and has, to-day, more believers than the Catholic Church can boast.

Religions, like nations and individuals, have always gone along the line of least resistance. Nothing has "ascended the stream of human license by a power mightier than nature." There is no such power. There never was, there never can be, a miracle. We know that man is a conditioned being. We know that he is affected by a change of conditions. If he is ignorant he is superstitious—that is natural. If his brain is developed, if he perceives clearly that all things are naturally produced, he ceases to be superstitious and becomes scientific. He is not a saint, but a *savant*—not a priest, but a philosopher. He does not worship, he works; he investigates; he thinks; he takes advantage, through intelligence, of the forces of nature. He is no longer the victim of appearances, the dupe of his own ignorance, and the persecutor of his fellow-men.

He then knows that it is far better to love his wife and children than to love God. He then knows that the love of man for woman, of woman for man, of parent for child, of child for parent, is far better, far holier, than

the love of man for any phantom born of ignorance and fear.

It is illogical to take the ground that the world was cruel and ignorant and idolatrous when the Catholic Church was established, and that because the world is better now than then, the Church is of divine origin.

What was the world when science came? What was it in the days of Galileo, Copernicus, and Kepler? What was it when printing was invented? What was it when the Western World was found? Would it not be much easier to prove that science is of divine origin?

Science does not persecute. It does not shed blood—it fills the world with light. It cares nothing for heresy; it develops the mind, and enables man to answer his own prayers.

Cardinal Manning takes the ground that Jehovah practically abandoned the children of men for four thousand years, and gave them over to every abomination. He claims that Christianity came "in the fulness of time," and it is then admitted that "what the fulness of time may mean is one of the mysteries of times and seasons that it is not for us to know." Having declared that it is a mystery, and one that we are not to know, the Cardinal explains it: "One motive for the long delay of four thousand years is not far to seek—it gave time, full and ample, for the utmost development and consolidation of all the falsehood and evil of which the intellect and will of man is capable."

Is it possible to imagine why an infinitely good and wise being "gave time full and ample for the utmost development and consolidation of falsehood and evil"? Why should an infinitely wise God desire this development and consolidation? What would be thought of a father who should refuse to teach his son and deliberately allow him to go into every possible excess, to the end that he might "develop all the falsehood and evil of which his intellect and will were capable"? If a supernatural religion is a necessity, and if without it all men simply develop and consolidate falsehood and evil, why was not a supernatural religion given to the first man? The Catholic Church, if this be true, should have been founded in the garden of Eden. Was it not cruel to

drown a world just for the want of a supernatural religion ; a religion that man, by no possibility, could furnish ? Was there "husbandry in heaven" ?

But the Cardinal contradicts himself by not only admitting, but declaring, that the world had never seen a legislation so just, so equitable, as that of Rome. Is it possible that a nation in which falsehood and evil had reached their highest development was, after all, so wise, so just, and so equitable ? Was not the civil law far better than the Mosaic—more philosophical, nearer just ? The civil law was produced without the assistance of God. According to the Cardinal, it was produced by men in whom all the falsehood and evil of which they were capable had been developed and consolidated, while the cruel and ignorant Mosaic code came from the lips of infinite wisdom and compassion.

It is declared that the history of Rome shows what man can do without God, and I assert that the history of the Inquisition shows what man can do when assisted by a church of divine origin, presided over by the infallible vicars of God.

The fact that the early Christians not only believed incredible things, but persuaded others of their truth, is regarded by the Cardinal as a miracle. This is only another phase of the old argument that success is the test of divine origin. All supernatural religions have been founded in precisely the same way. The credulity of eighteen hundred years ago believed everything except the truth.

A religion is a growth, and is of necessity adapted in some degree to the people among whom it grows. It is shaped and moulded by the general ignorance, the superstition and credulity of the age in which it lives. The key is fashioned by the lock. Every religion that has succeeded has in some way supplied the wants of its votaries, and has to a certain extent harmonised with their hopes, their fears, their vices, and their virtues.

If, as the Cardinal says, the religion of Christ is in absolute harmony with nature, how can it be supernatural ? The Cardinal also declares that "the religion of Christ is in harmony with the reason and moral nature in all nations and all ages to this day." What

becomes of the argument that Catholicism must be of divine origin because "it has ascended the stream of human license, *contra ictum fluminis*, by a power mightier than nature"? If "it is in harmony with the reason and moral nature of all nations and ages to this day," it has gone with the stream, and not against it. If "the religion of Christ is in harmony with the reason and moral nature of all nations," then the men who have rejected it are unnatural, and these men have gone against the stream. How then can it be said that Christianity has been in changeless opposition to nature as man has marred it? To what extent has man marred it? In spite of the marring by man, we are told that the reason and moral nature of all nations in all ages to this day is in harmony with the religion of Jesus Christ.

Are we justified in saying that the Catholic Church is of divine origin because the Pagans failed to destroy it by persecution?

We will put the Cardinal's statement in form :

Paganism failed to destroy Catholicism by persecution, therefore Catholicism is of divine origin.

Let us make an application of this logic :

Paganism failed to destroy Catholicism by persecution ; therefore, Catholicism is of divine origin.

Catholicism failed to destroy Protestantism by persecution ; therefore, Protestantism is of divine origin.

Catholicism and Protestantism combined failed to destroy Infidelity ; therefore, Infidelity is of divine origin.

Let us make another application :

Paganism did not succeed in destroying Catholicism ; therefore, Paganism was a false religion.

Catholicism did not succeed in destroying Protestantism ; therefore, Catholicism is a false religion.

Catholicism and Protestantism combined failed to destroy Infidelity ; therefore, both Catholicism and Protestantism are false religions.

The Cardinal has another reason for believing the Catholic Church of divine origin. He declares that the "Canon Law is a creation of wisdom and justice to which no statutes at large or imperial pandects can

bear comparison"; that "the world-wide and secular legislation of the Church was of a higher character, and that as water cannot rise above its source, the Church could not, by mere human wisdom, have corrected and perfected the imperial law, and therefore its source must have been higher than the sources of the world."

When Europe was the most ignorant, the Canon Law was supreme. As a matter of fact, the good in the Canon Law was borrowed—the bad was, for the most part, original. In my judgment, the legislation of the Republic of the United States is in many respects superior to that of Rome, and yet we are greatly indebted to the Common Law; but it never occurred to me that our Statutes at Large are divinely inspired.

If the Canon Law is, in fact, the legislation of infinite wisdom, then it should be a perfect code. Yet the Canon Law made it a crime next to robbery and theft to take interest for money. Without the right to take interest the business of the world would, to a large extent, cease and the prosperity of mankind end. There are railways enough in the United States to make six tracks around the globe, and every mile was built with borrowed money on which interest was paid or promised. In no other way could the savings of many thousands have been brought together and a capital great enough formed to construct works of such vast and continental importance.

It was provided in this same wonderful Canon Law that a heretic could not be a witness against a Catholic. The Catholic was at liberty to rob and wrong his fellow man, provided the fellow man was not a fellow Catholic, and in a court established by the Vicar of Christ, the man who had been robbed was not allowed to open his mouth. A Catholic could enter the house of an unbeliever, of a Jew, of a heretic, of a Moor, and before the eyes of the husband and father murder his wife and children and the father could not pronounce in the hearing of a judge the name of the murderer. The world is wiser now, and the Canon Law, given to us by infinite wisdom, has been repealed by the common sense of man.

In this divine code it was provided that to convict a

cardinal bishop, seventy-two witnesses were required; a cardinal presbyter, forty-four; a cardinal deacon, twenty-four: a sub-deacon, acolyth, exorcist, reader, ostiarus, seven; and in the purgation of a bishop, twelve witnesses were invariably required; of a presbyter, seven; of a deacon, three. These laws, in my judgment, were made, not by God, but by the clergy.

So, too, in this cruel code it was provided that those who gave aid, favor, or counsel to excommunicated persons should be anathema, and that those who talked with, consulted, or sat at the same table with, or gave anything in charity to the excommunicated, should be anathema.

Is it possible that a being of infinite wisdom made hospitality a crime? Did he say: "Whoso giveth a cup of cold water to the excommunicated shall wear forever a garment of fire?" Were not the laws of the Romans much better? Besides all this, under the Canon Law the dead could be tried for heresy, and their estates confiscated—that is to say, their widows and orphans robbed. The most brutal part of the common law of England is that in relation to the right of woman—all of which was taken from the *Corpus Juris Canonici*, "the law that came from a higher source than man."

The only cause of absolute divorce as laid down by the pious canonists was *propter infidelitatem*, which was when one of the parties became Catholic, and would not live with the other who continued still an unbeliever. Under this divine statute, a pagan wishing to be rid of his wife had only to join the Catholic Church, provided she remained faithful to the religion of her fathers. Under this divine law, a man marrying a widow was declared to be a bigamist.

It would require volumes to point out the cruelties, absurdities, and inconsistencies of the Canon Law. It has been thrown away by the world. Every civilised nation has a code of its own, and the Canon Law is of interest only to the historian, the antiquary, and the enemy of theological government.

Under the Canon Law, people were convicted of being witches and wizards, of holding intercourse with

devils. Thousands perished at the stake, having been convicted of these impossible crimes. Under the Canon Law, there was such a crime as the suspicion of heresy. A man or woman could be arrested, charged with being suspected, and under this Canon Law, flowing from the intellect of infinite wisdom, the presumption was in favor of guilt. The suspected had to prove themselves innocent. In all civilised courts, the presumption of innocence is the shield of the indicted; but the Canon Law took away this shield, and put in the hand of the priest the sword of presumptive guilt.

If the real Pope is the Vicar of Christ, the true shepherd of the sheep, this fact should be known not only to the vicar, but to the sheep. A divinely-founded and guarded church ought to know its own shepherd, and yet the Catholic sheep have not always been certain who the shepherd was.

The Council of Pisa, held in 1409, deposed two popes—rivals—Gregory and Benedict—that is to say, deposed the actual Vicar of Christ and the pretended. This action was taken because a council, enlightened by the Holy Ghost, could not tell the genuine from the counterfeit. The council then elected another Vicar, whose authority was afterwards denied. Alexander V. died, and John XXIII. took his place; Gregory XII. insisted that he was the lawful pope; John resigned, then he was deposed, and afterwards imprisoned; then Gregory XII. resigned, and Martin V. was elected. The whole thing reads like the annals of a South American Revolution.

The Council of Constance restored, as the Cardinal declares, the unity of the Church, and brought back the consolation of the Holy Ghost. Before this great council John Huss appeared and maintained his own tenets. The council declared that the Church was not bound to keep its promise with a heretic. Huss was condemned and executed on the 6th of July, 1415. His disciple, Jerome of Prague, recanted; but, having relapsed, was put to death, May 30, 1416. This cursed council shed the blood of Huss and Jerome.

The Cardinal appeals to the author of *Ecce Homo* for

the purpose of showing that Christianity is above nature, and the following passages, among others, are quoted:—

“Who can describe that which unites men? Who has entered into the formation of speech, which is the symbol of their union? Who can describe exhaustively the origin of civil society? He who can do these things can explain the origin of the Christian Church.”

These passages should not have been quoted by the Cardinal. The author of these passages simply says that the origin of the Christian Church is no harder to find and describe than that which unites men; than that which has entered into the formation of speech, the symbol of their union; no harder to describe than the origin of civil society, because he says that one who can describe these can describe the other.

Certainly none of these things are above nature. We do not need the assistance of the Holy Ghost in these matters. We know that men are united by common interests, common purposes, common dangers—by race, climate, and education. It is no more wonderful that people live in families, tribes, communities, and nations, than that birds, ants, and bees live in flocks and swarms.

If we know anything, we know that language is natural—that it is a physical science. But if we take the ground occupied by the Cardinal, then we insist that everything that cannot be accounted for by man is supernatural. Let me ask, by what man? What man must we take as the standard? Cosmos or Humboldt, St. Irenæus or Darwin? If everything that we cannot account for is above nature, then ignorance is the test of the supernatural. The man who is mentally honest stops where his knowledge stops. At that point he says that he does not know. Such a man is a philosopher. Then the theologian steps forward, denounces the modesty of the philosopher as blasphemy, and proceeds to tell what is beyond the horizon of the human intellect.

Could a savage account for the telegraph or the telephone by natural causes? How would he account for these wonders? He would account for them precisely as the Cardinal accounts for the Catholic Church.

Belonging to no rival Church, I have not the slightest interest in the primacy of Leo XIII., and yet it is to be regretted that this primacy rests upon such a narrow and insecure foundation.

The Cardinal says that "it will appear almost certain that the original Greek of St. Irenæus, *which is unfortunately lost*, contained either τὰ πρωτεία, or some inflection of πρωτεύω, which signifies primacy."

From this it appears that the primacy of the Bishop of Rome rests on some "inflection" of a Greek word, and that this supposed inflection was in a letter supposed to have been written by St. Irenæus, which has certainly been lost. Is it possible that the vast fabric of papal power has this, and only this, for its foundation? To this "inflection" has it come at last?

The Cardinal's case depends upon the intelligence and veracity of his witnesses. The Fathers of the Church were utterly incapable of examining a question of fact. They were all believers in the miraculous. The same is true of the apostles. If St. John was the author of the Apocalypse, he was undoubtedly insane. If Polycarp said the things attributed to him by Catholic writers, he was certainly in the condition of his master. What is the testimony of St. John worth in the light of the following? "Cerinthus, the heretic, was in a bath-house. St. John and another Christian were about to enter. St. John cried out: 'Let us run away, lest the house fall upon us while the enemy of truth is in it.'" Is it possible that St. John thought that God would kill two eminent Christians for the purpose of getting even with one heretic?

Let us see who Polycarp was. He seems to have been a prototype of the Catholic Church, as will be seen from the following statement concerning this Father: "When any heretical doctrine was spoken in his presence he would stop his ears." After this, there can be no question of his orthodoxy. It is claimed that Polycarp was a martyr—that a spear was run through his body, and that from the wound his soul, in the shape of a bird, flew away. The history of his death is just as true as the history of his life.

Irenæus, another witness, took the ground that there

was to be a millennium, a thousand years of enjoyment in which celibacy would not be the highest form of virtue. If he is called as a witness for the purpose of establishing the divine origin of the Church, and if one of his "inflections" is the basis of papal supremacy, is the Cardinal also willing to take his testimony as to the nature of the millennium?

All the Fathers were infinitely credulous. Every one of them believed, not only in the miracles said to have been wrought by Christ, by the apostles, and by other Christians, but every one of them believed in the Pagan miracles. All of these Fathers were familiar with wonders and impossibilities. Nothing was so common with them as to work miracles, and on many occasions they not only cured diseases, not only reversed the order of nature, but succeeded in raising the dead.

It is very hard, indeed, to prove what the apostles said, or what the Fathers of the Church wrote. There were many centuries filled with forgeries, many generations in which the cunning hands of ecclesiastics erased, obliterated, and interpolated the records of the past, during which they invented books, invented authors, and quoted from works that never existed.

The testimony of the "Fathers" is without the slightest value. They believed everything, they examined nothing. They received as a waste-basket receives. Whoever accepts their testimony will exclaim with the Cardinal: "Happily, men are not saved by logic."

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